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Fighting Intervention in Nicaragua in the Age of British-American Conflict 1820-1920: Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua in Rebellion 1909-1912

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Fighting Intervention in Nicaragua in the Age of British-American Conflict 1820-1920:
Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón
Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua in Rebellion 1909-1912

By

Sergio Alejandro Zeledón

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Latin American Studies
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge
Professor Beatriz Manz, Chair
Professor Margarita Melville
Professor Alex Saragoza

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Abstract

Fighting Intervention in Nicaragua in the age of British-American conflict 1820-1920: Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón
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Experts and historians have explored and narrated U.S. interventions from different viewpoints. These academics have relied almost exclusively on documents from the British Foreign Office and the U.S. State Department. These studies have often generalized the events leading to the intervention, failing to discuss in detail the British, U.S., and Nicaraguan conflict and the decision-making and policy formulation processes that caused the U.S. to become drawn into the Nicaraguan conflict.

Furthermore, they have discounted the basis of the conflict: how it developed from a clash between Spain and Britain over the control of the Rio San Juan, into a long struggle between Spain, Great Britain and the U.S. in Nicaragua that lasted more than 500 years; and how and why the U.S. allowed itself, within its own conflict with Great Britain, to be brought into the canal debate and into military interventions in Nicaragua. Although U.S. interventions in Nicaragua have been the subject of works and case studies in Latin American Studies, this dissertation unlike past studies, draws from unpublished sources: personal letters, diaries, telegrams and officials documents between generals/admirals at the war front that uniquely showcase a breakdown of the events and political implications that propelled the U.S. involvement in the region.

This manuscript analyzes not only the British and U.S. interventions themselves, but also the circumstances and catastrophic events that shaped Nicaragua’s socio-economic policies influencing the development of a particular submissive political culture in Nicaragua. With the purpose of filling in necessary and essential gaps in history and for a thorough analysis, I gathered and discuss in detail a large comprehensive amount of documents from sources. For example, I conducted research and gathered primary documents and ancillary data from the general archive of Indies in Seville, Spain, the general archive of Simancas in Valladolid, Spain, the general archive of the nation in Mexico, the general archive of Central America in Guatemala, the archive of the nation of Costa Rica, the National Archive of Nicaragua, British Foreign Office
Through the analysis of the research data and documents discussed above, I introduce a key character in the conflict, Dr. and General Benjamin Francisco Zeledón Rodríguez, the Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua in 1912. For reasons touched only in this work, Zeledón has often been left out of the history books and not given the recognition he deserves. I therefore, not only honor Zeledón in my dissertation, but also contribute to and fill in an essential and necessary part of Nicaraguan history.
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Preface

Spanish, British, and U.S. foreign policy formulations for Central America, and particularly for Nicaragua, was selfishly based upon distinct but not completely separate levels of policy goals to reinforce long-standing security interests in the western hemisphere. Unfortunately, Spain, England, nor the U.S. created, restored, nor enforced the establishment of democracy in Nicaragua through their interventions. Due to their disregard of Nicaragua’s national interests, a negative atmosphere resulted in the country that made interventions seem as if they were necessary.

U.S. involvement in Nicaragua is not a recent phenomenon. It originates from following three policies: a) U.S. President James Monroe’s Doctrine known as “America for the Americans” of 1823; b) U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt’s policy known as “Roosevelt Corollary” of 1904; c) and President William Taft doctrine known as “Dollars for Bullets” of 1910 proclaiming worldwide U.S. preeminence. Consequently, since the first half of the nineteenth century the foreign policies of U.S. State Department have not been shy about attempting to mold the opinions of various Nicaraguan governments. For example, during the Presidency of José Santos Zelaya, the U.S. assisted Zelaya’s access to power but later financed his political rivals, and ordered the U.S. military intervention to overthrow him.

Meanwhile, in Nicaragua conflict between the Liberals of Leon and the Conservatives of Granada. Both groups obsessed over the obtainment of full power and political control. In turn, both groups neglected the Nicaraguan people—a legacy that continues to this day. This power struggle opened the door for British and U.S. involvement in Nicaragua. Great Britain took advantage of the breakdown of the Central American Federal Republic to establish their protectorate over Nicaragua’s Atlantic region. Furthermore, some local Nicaraguan politicians used American private adventurers and later the U.S. military as a proxy force in their struggle. Ultimately they succeeded in having the U.S. take a political side and aid them in the quest for power.

Irrespective of internal political interest, however, there was a larger motivation for Spanish, British, U.S. interest in Central America, the interoceanic canal. The prospect of a canal attracted the interest of many nations. As early as the first half of the 1500s, the Spanish, British, and French launched surveys of potential navigation routes and continued through the next four centuries. Therefore, for centuries, the most basic goal of foreign policy in Nicaragua was the protection of the canal route for their benefit. While, for the Spanish, British and the U.S., the focus was on their own rivalry as well as the potential vulnerability of the interoceanic passage in Nicaragua.

Consequently, Spain and Great Britain focused on the waterways, fighting over a dozen battles to obtain control of the Rio San Juan route in Nicaragua. Numerous treaties were signed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century: a) first by Spain and Great Britain; b) by Great Britain and the U.S.; c) by Nicaragua and the U.S.; d) and by
Nicaragua and Great Britain laying out the foundations for a navigation canal route. As a result of all the political and financial conflicts, from the 1500s to the 1900s numerous projects for a Nicaraguan canal were planned and considered but never materialized.

Consequently, this manuscript focuses on the study of events surrounding the Spanish discovery and exploration of Nicaragua in search of the “Doubtful Strait” communicating the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the attempts to open a navigation and trading route by the San Juan River, the Great Lake, and the Isthmus of Rivas in Nicaragua. Furthermore, my work discusses the British establishment of a colony in the island of Santa Catalina off the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, and its protectorate over Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast. In addition, this work covers how Nicaraguan policy was influenced by U.S. foreign policy towards Central America, and ultimately the birth of Nicaragua’s political parties.

Lastly, this work details the military interventions of U.S. military forces in 1909 and in 1912 that brought about the rise of General Benjamin F. Zeledón Rodriguez, a prominent attorney, diplomat, political leader, military man, and President of the Nationalist Liberal party of Nicaragua. Zeledón, with charisma and leadership, led the Nationalist Liberal forces in alliance with the Nationalist Conservative forces to fight against the U.S. military forces from 1909 to 1912. Zeledón rejected surrendering and assumed leadership of the Nicaraguan government as Supreme Chief of Government-in-Rebellion fighting the intervention to the ultimate sacrifice, his death.

As the dissertation will describe in further detail, Zeledón’s assassination on October 4, 1912, and the signing on August 5, 1914 of the Bryan-Chamorro interoceanic canal treaty between the U.S. Plenipotentiary Representative William J. Bryan and Nicaragua’s Ultra Conservative Plenipotentiary Representative Emiliano Chamorro, resulted in the selling off of Nicaragua’s right to build a canal by the San Juan River and for all practical purposes in the establishment of a U.S. protectorate with all its political, economic and cultural consequences on Nicaragua.

In sum, I want my work to be the voice of the voiceless. On October 4, 2012, Nicaragua will commemorate the centennial anniversary of Benjamin F. Zeledón’s assassination. This research will be a tribute to my grandfather, Benjamin F. Zeledón, and all his fellow patriots who ultimately paid the price for honor.
"...And the North American empire extended over Nicaraguan territory, and the implicit loss of sovereignty was a sad reality even though no clear declaration existed. Men of some influence ..... of Granada had already encouraged the designs of the interventionist group... And the occasion could have not been more suitable for Knox and company to repeat the Cuban and Panamanian experiences. From the warships anchored in the ports of Corinto and Bluefields the troops disembarked to impose order, "to protect Missions." In the interior, hatred between Granada and Leon was renewed, and in the spectacle of war the country moved back fifty years; hates of belfries, factional hates, hateful hatreds of grotesque Montagues and absurd Capulets. Fire and butchery were again seen between the two rival cities; fires like the one that destroyed Granada in the past, butcheries like that in which the body of my great uncle "the Indian Dario" was dragged tied from a horse tail. And the U.S., with the approval of the Nations of Europe -and maybe with that of some from America- will occupy Nicaraguan territory, territory that is important to them, both because of its proximity to Panama as well as for the possibility to create inter-oceanic pass through Nicaragua; because of commercial necessities, or due to other causes. And Nicaraguan sovereignty will only be a vague memory in the history of the American republics…"

Ruben Dario. "The End of Nicaragua."¹

Acknowledgements

To my wife Sonia and to my children Máximo César, Sonia Alexandra, Esther Beatriz and Benjamin Sergio for their love, patience, encouragement and understanding and for even taking time from their own academic, professional and personal endeavors to assist me in my long research in libraries, museums and archives in several countries, and in reviewing my manuscript.

I wish to express my utmost gratitude and respect to my father, Dr. Benjamin F. Zeledón Ramírez who for decades kept and protected his father’s personal papers for us his descendants, to share with his people. To John Ocampo for the translation of Dr. and General Benjamín F. Zeledón Rodríguez documents from the Spanish to the English language. Finally I want also to thank Dr. Margarita Melville, Dr. Beatriz Manz and Dr. Alex Saragoza for taking the time to edit, guide, and support me through my dissertation.
Chapter 1

A History of the People of Nicaragua
Fighting Spanish, British and U.S. Interventions: 1492-1920

The Beginning

The diverse human groups that throughout the centuries-long migratory process came to populate what is today known as Nicaragua initially encountered a natural world full of contrasts and chaos. They found a region lacking significant mineral resources and bereft of much cultivable land (the lower-lying expanses of the Atlantic Coast region); surrounded by volcanoes that dotted the landscape (the Pacific Coast region) presenting permanent threat of destructive earthquakes and eruptions; and they faced the continuous danger of tropical devastating hurricanes. It was a frontier region without defined borders that was, however, constantly and decidedly “defining localisms and regionalisms.”

Due to its inter-continental and oceanic location, the region of Nicaragua in Central America was used as a bridge and subjected to the influences and designs of grand and powerful regional, continental and world powers such as Maya, Toltec, Aztec, Spanish, English, French, German, Dutch, American and Russian. All these varying factors contributed to the establishment of a diverse range of ethnic groups, social arrangements, cultures, and nations.

The geographical and topographic nature of Central America influenced and determined the livelihood of its people. As mentioned previously, Nicaragua is a country in constant threat of earthquake, volcanic eruption and hurricanes which sits on the second largest rainforest region in the world, making a great portion of the country’s land barren and incapable of sustainable fertile farming. Scarcity of foodstuff and other products created tribal conflict and a ruling class that controlled the very limited and few natural resources. In the face of these upheavals, the overwhelming majority of the population had not the slightest hope for a better future. For them there existed no valid intermediaries and the established social order lost all claims to legitimacy, since it was characterized by a brutal and fratricidal struggle for control and power.

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1 Sofonías Salvatierra, Contribución a la Historia de Centroamérica, Monografías Doc. tomo II. (Managua: Tipografía Progreso, 1939) pp. 217-223.

On the one hand, the original inhabitants of Central America were of diverse origin and did not share a common language, culture and social structure; they were as diverse as its topography and in constant conflict. On the other hand, European conquistadors that came to Central America were driven by an insatiable thirst for easy riches and soon found themselves locked in constant mutual conflict. This theme carried on to Central America and to Nicaragua where local and foreign political rivalry destroyed any possible national unification and identity.\(^3\)

**The Arrival of Spanish Conquistadors in Nicaragua and the Search for a Passage to Connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans**

From 1492 to 1550, Central America’s history was one of discovery by travelers and navigators and of occupation by military men from Spain and other nations, such as: Cristóbal Colón, John Cabot, Rodrigo De Bastidas, Vasco Núñez De Balboa, Gil González-D’Avila, Francisco Hernandez De Cordova, Pedro Arias D’Avila (Pedrarias), Hernán Cortés and Pedro De Alvarado. Since early on, explorers were looking for the mythical waterway communicating the Northern (Atlantic) and Southern (Pacific) oceans, the so-called “Doubtful Strait.”\(^4\)

Balboa and his men in Darien, Panamá, received important information from Panciano, the older son of local native Chief Comagre. He informed Balboa that across the southwestern mountain range from where they were, traversing the sierra of Quarequá, was another ocean like the one nearby to. Consequently, Balboa organized an expedition and on September 6\(^{th}\), 1513 departed with one hundred ninety of his men and a group of guides provided by Comagre. On Saturday, September 29, 1513, Balboa, after overcoming great difficulties, with 26 of his best men took possession of the Southern (Pacific) Ocean in the name of God and the King of Spain.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Espinoza’s book states that Giovanni Cabotto (John Cabot), an Italian explorer, sailing under the British flag visited Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast before Colón on June 24, 1497. Cristóbal Colón visited Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast from September 12 to 25, 1492 using a map prepared by Juan de la Cosa with information provided by Cabot and his companions. A copy of the map is in this work as Appendix 1. See: Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Central America*. 2 vols. (San Francisco: The History Co Pub, 1886); Jorge Espinosa Estrada. *Nicaragua Cradle of “America”*. *Nicaragua Cuna de América* (Managua: Ed. Alemana, D.N., 1969) pp. 1-23.
Balboa immediately began exploring for a natural passage between the two oceans and sent Andrés de Garabito into the country looking for the shortest and best route between the seas. His aim was to use the arteries of the existing rivers in the Isthmus of Darien for that purpose. Shortly after, an attempt was made to unite the two oceans in 1514, but when the Spanish ascertained that there was no natural passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific, they conceived the idea of cutting a canal through the spurs of the “Cordilleras”.

After Balboa’s killing by Pedrarias on January 15, 1519, Angel Saavedra in 1520 proposed to the King of Spain the construction of a canal through Darien’s Isthmus, while Hernán Cortez had the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico surveyed for the construction of a canal. Later in 1524, after realizing the riches of Peru and Asia and counting the time it took the gold and merchandise to reach the ports of Spain, it was suggested to King Charles V, that by cutting out a piece of land somewhere in Panamá, the trips would be made shorter and the lesser risk of taking the treasures through the isthmus would justify such an enterprise.

The Discovery and Exploration of the San Juan River in Nicaragua

During the Spanish exploration of Panamá and Central America and while looking for a natural communication between the oceans Spanish explorers, Gil González-D’Avila, and Andrés Niño visited Nicaragua under the orders of Pedrarias. González-D’Avila continued by land and encountered the two great lakes and was advised about the river at the southeastern point of the Great Lake of Nicaragua. Meanwhile Niño sailed north, he discovered a Gulf named Fonseca honoring Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, the powerful Bishop of Seville and González-D’Avila’s protector, and continued to Tehuantepec in Mexico.6

While Niño and González-D’Avila were discovering Nicaragua, Cortes in Mexico received word from Mexican natives and from Spaniards coming from the island of Hispaniola of the existence in the southern lands of the Mexican empire of a strait with a river communicating the Atlantic Ocean to the Southern Pacific Ocean with two great lakes and a short Isthmus. Shortly after the discovery of the two lakes in Nicaragua, Pedrarias in Panamá and Cortés in Mexico received instructions from King Charles of Spain to go to the new lands. On May-June 1523, Cortés sent three of his best captains, Pedro de Alvarado by land and Cristóbal de Olid and Francisco De Las Casas by sea, to Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Cortés later informed the King that he was also looking at Mexico’s Tehuantepec Isthmus for that purpose.

On November 25, 1523, Pedrarias sent an additional expedition under the command of one of his personal assistant Captain Francisco Hernández De Cordoba to explore Costa Rica and Nicaragua and to find the waterway communicating the two oceans. De Cordoba explored the region and subsequently in 1524 founded the first

6 Osman Quintana, Apuntes de Historia de Nicaragua (Managua, 1977); Sofonías Salvatierra, op cit. p.50.
permanent Spanish settlements in Central America, León, Granada, Rivas, Nueva Jaén, and Nicoya in Nicaragua.

**The Founding of the Cities of León and Granada in Nicaragua**

Pedrarias spent his time sending men to explore the potential navigation waterway between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans through Nicaragua’s San Juan River, founding cities throughout the region and exporting enslaved Central American indigenous people as forced labor to his partner in the conquest of Peru, Francisco Pizarro.

De Córdoba under Pedrarias’ instructions founded the City of León in Nicaragua on Sunday, June 19th 1524 to commemorate Holy Trinity day. On December 8, 1524, to commemorate the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Córdoba founded Granada. However, the original documents accrediting the foundations of both cities disappeared during an attack led by British seaman and discoverer William Dampier set in the government archives of the city of Granada from April 7 to 14, 1685 and León from August 28 to September 15, 1685. Due to the loss of such important documents a controversy exists as to which city, was founded first by De Cordoba. Some historians cite Granada as being founded on April 21, 1525.

A letter from the King of Spain dated March 30, 1732 addressed to Bishop of León Dionisio De Villavicencio (1726-1735) requested information about life in the ecclesiastic province under the Bishop’s jurisdiction. De Villavicencio responded to the King, among other things, that, in 1685 pirates burned down the city’s ecclesiastic Archives and that: “…the first city founded in Nicaragua was León, on Sunday June 19, 1524, celebrating The Holy Trinity festivity.

On October 24, 1524, Cortés and De Cordoba sent letters to each other and met while Cortés was in Honduras. Cortés and some of his own men convinced Hernández to throw off his alliance with Pedrarias, grant it to Cortés, and declare himself governor of Nicaragua under his protection.

A power struggle unfolded between Cortes, and Pedrarias when on July 25, 1526, Pedrarias learned of the correspondence and meeting between De Córdoba, Cortés and his envoys: Pedrarias captured, accused, tried, and sentenced Cordova to death by decapitation.

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On May 16, 1527 the Council of the Indies appointed Pedrarias Governor of Nicaragua. The King of Spain ratified him on the 1st of June of the same year.12 Ironically, according to the Registries of the Spanish Catholic Inquisition from the cities of Toledo, Segovia, Avila, and Valladolid. Pedrarias parents’ Diego Arias and Elvira González were practicing Jews. Inquisition documents established that: "... The Arias were a family of warriors interested in weapons, adventures, grandeur and magnificence..." 13

Meanwhile in 1529 Pedrarias, sent an expedition led by Martín De Estete and Gabriel De Rojas.:

To discover the river flowing from these lakes into the Northern Ocean, a group of 90 soldiers and 50 horsemen were sent to explore, populate and to search for gold.14

Estete went to the San Juan River area but could not pass the rapids and founded the settlement of Nueva Jaén by the entrance of the San Juan River, today’s port of San Carlos before returning to León. Rojas went north to explore the Coco River region and founded the settlement of Santa María de la Esperanza by the actual city of Antigua in Nueva Segovia. Pedrarias stayed in Nicaragua until his death in the city of Leon on March 6, 1631.

The Exploration and Opening of the Navigation Route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the San Juan River and the Great Lake in Nicaragua

Throughout the mid 1500s, the Spanish attempted to navigate and settle the San Juan River. Many tried the journey with the help of native indigenous guides, but with no success. Consequently, in the process of exploring and settling near the Río San Juan, as it was discussed above the principal cities of Nicaragua were founded.

Finally, on April 7, 1539 the son-in-law of Pedrarias and new Governor of Nicaragua, Rodrigo de Contreras, sent an expedition to navigate and explore the San Juan River from Lake Nicaragua to the Atlantic Ocean. Captains Alonso De Calero and Diego De Machuca Suárez led the expedition with 100 men of Spanish and natives, in one ship with four small boats. They left Granada and sailed first to Solentiname Island near San Juan River’s mouth and on the second day arrived at the river’s mouth. The Captains split and Machuca decided to go by land while Calero navigated the river.

14 Hubert Howe Bancroft, op cit.
Machuca got lost and later returned to Granada, while Alonso explored the river all the way to the Atlantic Ocean coast and waited for Machuca until his supplies were exhausted. He decided to go further by sea to Nombre De Dios in Panamá arriving there with 8 Spanish soldiers and 25 natives. Alonso De Calero consequently opened the San Juan River navigation and commercial route between Nicaragua, Hispaniola, Cuba, Nueva Granada, Panamá, Spain and the World.  

In 1550, Portuguese navigator Antonio Galvao wrote and published a document showing that it was possible to open a navigation canal between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans either through Mexico, Nicaragua, Panamá, and the southern Darien Isthmus.

**The Slave Trade and Genocide Committed by the Spanish Conquistadors Against the Natives in Nicaragua**

Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, a famous chronicler of the Indies, documented a genocidal slave traffic that took place in Nicaragua and in Central America. Oviedo sent a letter to the King of Spain accusing Pedrarias of exporting thousands of Nicaraguan Indigenous people from the port of El Realejo in Nicaragua to Perú and other Spanish colonies in America. He also denounced that more than 400,000 persons perished as a result of the slave traffic, Spanish mistreatment, and bad administration.

On September 22, 1523, Pedrarias with De Córdoba, Alonso De La Puente, Diego Marquéz, and Juan Rodríguez De Alarconcillo, signed contract to provide for the Discovery and Conquest of Nicaragua. On May 20, 1524, D'Avila also signed with Francisco Pizarro, Diego de Almagro and the priest Hernando de Luque, a contract for the constitution of a society to provide for the Discovery and Conquest of Perú. Pedrarias provided indigenous labor, auxiliary troops, miners and ships to Francisco Pizarro in Perú from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras.

Dr. David R. Radell documented that between 1527 and 1536, an estimated 448,000 indigenous Nicaraguans were exported as slaves in 1,280 trips of 350 persons per ship from the port El Realejo in Nicaragua to Panamá and Perú. Radell affirmed that in less than 60 years Nicaragua’s native population declined from more than 1,000,000 people in 1523 to less than 10,000 in 1580.

The Spanish priest Fray Bartolomé De Las Casas, on a visit to the Nicaraguan region, was appalled when he saw ships full of native Nicaraguan indigenous being sent

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to Peru as slaves. De la Casas denounced the act to the King of Spain and stated that by 1572, between 500,000 and 600,000 indigenous disappeared from the region. \(^{19}\) To the Spanish conquistadors, the land and its people became a source of free goods and people.

**The Navigation Canal Project of Phillip IV King of Spain from Gulf of Nicoya (Papagayo), the Great Lake and the Rio San Juan in Nicaragua Approved by the Council of Indies**

During the mid 1620s, Diego De Mercado, a Flemish seaman and engineer at the service of the Kingdom of Spain and resident in Guatemala, sent King Phillip III a project comprising of a navigation canal between the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. The project was the most detailed navigation canal through Nicaragua conceived at the time. The king was so impressed that he passed the information to the The Royal Council of the Indies in Seville for consideration. In 1638, the new King Phillip IV of Spain asked the Council of the Indies for the approval of the project with the financing of the crown. The Council approved it and therefore, the King sent some of his most capable captains and trusted men to Nicoya to take charge of the canal project. \(^{20}\)

**The Opening of the Camino Real, Trading Route, between Port of Caldera in the Pacific and Port of Matina in the Atlantic Coast of Costa Rica**

On January 16, 1640, King Philip IV of Spain, appointed one of his trusted men in the Court, General Captain Zeledón de Morales, through a Royal Decree, as Alcalde Mayor, and Adelantado (Governor, General Captain) of the province of Nicoya with the Royal order to open a route for navigation and commerce between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans through Nicoya, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Due to insurmountable obstacles and difficulties, Zeledón de Morales was unable to fulfill the royal desires, but was able to open the first permanent “Camino Real” or Royal Road. The “Camino Real” went from the port of Caldera by the Pacific Ocean coast in Costa Rica, passing by Cartago the capital city of Costa Rica in the highlands, to the port of Matina by the Atlantic Ocean coast of Costa Rica.

Zeledón resided in Nicoya until 1648 when he moved to Boruca to become Governor, Treasurer and Judge and where he died fighting the Talamanca and Borucan indigenous. He is considered to be the origin of the Zeledón family in Costa Rica and in Nicaragua. \(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) Mario Barrantes Ferrero, *Progenitores de los Costarricenses* (San Jose: Academia Costarricense de Ciencias
The Spanish Colonial Administration in Central America

Between 1523 to 1821, the Central American region was made into an integral part of the Vice Royalty of New Spain, the political unit of the Spanish Empire with jurisdiction over the territories of Mexico and Central America in North America, Cuba, other Caribbean islands, the Philippines, and the Asia-Pacific islands of Guam and the Marianas.

On September 13, 1543, the Spanish King created the General Captaincy of Guatemala with jurisdiction over the provinces of Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. The King organized the “Audiencia de Guatemala,” an administrative entity and a court of law, functioning as an appellate court with jurisdiction within the territory of the General Captaincy of Guatemala. The Captaincy along to the “Audiencia,” were the first institutions defining Central America as a regional political entity within the Spanish Empire that lasted until 1821.22

By the mid sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the principal routes for an interoceanic canal were outlined. However, the exploration and the implementation of a canal were too daunting of a task during that period of time. The Spanish explorers and engineers dealt with the following obstacles: 1) virgin tropical forest and difficult mountainous terrain; 2) the capital required to build a structure to allow ships to pass; and 3) the religious consideration that no human being should alter God’s work. 23

Therefore, it was not until Great Britain began considering its military, political, and commercial interests in the region that the issue of the canal resurfaced. The British considered control of the navigation route between the Atlantic and Pacific coast crucial to trade and to their national security, and made every effort to secure possession of the passage through the Central American Isthmus.

By 1630 British settlers began occupying land and isles in strategic positions in the Caribbean coast of Central America, from Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, to Costa Rica. In 1631, the British Puritans founded the colony of Providence in Santa Catalina Island in the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua and in 1780 the British Navy sent a large expedition to occupy the San Juan River that runs between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. This marked the beginning of direct British involvement and interventions in Nicaragua that lasted until 1905.24

22 Mario Barrantes Ferrero, op cit. p.12.
**British Puritans Established their Providence Colony in Santa Catalina Island on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua**

On February 2, 1631, the ship Seaflower sailed from London, England carrying one hundred puritan men and women to colonize and settle the Island of Santa Catalina located in the San Andres Archipelago in the Atlantic / Caribbean coast of Nicaragua.

The Providence enterprise was organized in 1629 by a group of prominent English puritans who had come together to form the Providence Island Company, whose purpose was to colonize the island of Santa Catalina. The Puritans founded the colony of Providence to create a society very much like the one they were building in Plymouth in the bay of Massachusetts. The Providence Island Company stockowners were the greatest puritan political leaders in England at the time; among them British statesman and parliamentarian John Pym (1584-1643) and British admiral and colonial administrator, Robert Rich (1587–1658), Second Earl of Warwick.

The puritan settlers in Santa Catalina /Providence encountered a difficult natural setting and faced insurmountable problems in developing profitable agricultural activities on the island. Due to the difficult nature of the cultivation of tobacco and sugar, the British engaged in large-scale importation and use of African origin people as slaves.

The existence of British settlements made life impossible for the Spanish commercial fleets in the area. On May 25, 1641, a Spanish armada of seven large ships led by General Francisco Díaz De La Pimienta was assembled in Cartagena de Indias in the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada. De La Pimienta attacked and captured the British colony of Providence on May 25, 1641. The Spanish captured 350 English settlers and 381 African slaves. The Spanish kept the slaves and sent the British settlers to Spain to be returned to England. Nevertheless, scores of settlers and slaves escaped to Nicaragua’s mainland where they owned plantations and commercial posts. They stayed there, intermarried with the local indigenous population, created families and blended with the local culture. This enclave of native Nicaraguans, British settlers, and Africans established several settlements.

De la Pimienta tried to recreate a Spanish colony, but such endeavor proved to be a very difficult enterprise. In general, it is difficult to say what prevented the Spanish from successfully colonizing the Atlantic islands of the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. However, after several attempts to maintain control of the Atlantic coast, in the 1650s, the Spanish lost control of the area and the British regained their lost territory. Eventually though, the British also lost control of the islands.

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26 In page 15 of the paper, the Expectation ship is registered as arriving to Providence in 1635, and Mr. Albertus Bluefields is registered as a disembarking passenger. Mr. Albertus Bluefields later owned a plantation in today’s Bluefields Bay in Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast and in May 1641 he was there when Providence was taken by the Spanish Armada. It is then possible to assume that it is from his name that the name of the Bluefields Bay and the city of Bluefields, Nicaragua were taken. See: R. L. Gilmor, *ibid* p. 15. Gilmor’s paper contain a complete list of ships and passengers registered as traveling from England to Providence in Santa Catalina Island from 1630 to 1641.
In accordance with Dr. Karen Ordahl Kupperman’s account, the British colony in Santa Catalina Island failed for several reasons. One reason is because the leaders did not provide the basic institutional arrangements found in all British successful colonies in New England or in Chesapeake such as: land treated as private property, control of taxation, and civilian control of the military establishment.  

In view of the constant attacks on the mainland cities and Spanish commercial posts by the Zambo and Miskito natives supported by British settlers in the Atlantic coast, on May 16, 1672 the Spanish governor of Nicaragua Fernando De Escobedo ordered the construction of a fortress in the San Juan River. The construction was finished on June 29, 1675 and was inaugurated by the new governor Pablo de Loyola, under the name of “The Immaculate Conception of Mary San Juan River Castle.”

The Establishment of the Protectorate over the Miskito and Zambo Indigenous Territory in Nicaragua by Great Britain

On October 30, 1730, Great Britain formally established a political and military protectorate in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. The British also created settlements with political and administrative entities with local autonomy in Cape Gracias a Dios and in the Black River. They were provided with administrative and military institutions, courts of law, etc., under the jurisdiction and protection of the Governor of Jamaica. Finally, on April 16, 1740, the Miskito and Zambo Indigenous enclaves in the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua were formally adopted under British protectorate.

Jamaica’s governor subsequently sent Roberto Hodgson as his envoy and superintendent. Hodgson arrived immediately, recognized, in the name of the King of England and of the Governor of Jamaica, the Miskito King, his flag, his government, his courts and his civilian, military and religious authorities as legitimate, establishing political, military, economic relations and a protectorate ship.

On February 15, 1731 a Spanish expedition departed from Matagalpa and Sëbaco to explore and open a “Camino Real or Royal Road” from the highlands of Sëbaco and Matagalpa, to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, similar to the one opened in Costa Rica from the port of Caldera in the Pacific Ocean, to Cartago in the highlands, and to Matina in the Atlantic coast, as we already discussed. The expedition was composed of military men, indigenous guides and Fray Juan Zeledón De los Reyes De Argüello, a priest from Cartago, Costa Rica. The mission could not accomplish its purpose due to insurmountable obstacles such as: impenetrable mountain ranges and dense forests, heavy rains and dangerous rivers, as well as little or non-existing important indigenous


settlements, and finally by the constant harassment from Zambo, Miskito natives and British settlers in the “Rio Grande and Rio Escondido” zone.  

On July 29, 1762, Zambo and Miskito Indigenous, assisted by some British settlers, as a reprisal for the imprisonment and death of one of their principal chiefs named “Yarrince”, attacked the Immaculate Conception fortress in the San Juan River in Nicaragua. The Governor of the fortress, Captain Jose de Herrera-Sotomayor was seriously ill and died within days. Under the circumstances, the defenders wanted to surrender the fortress to the attackers.

Herrera’s 18 years old daughter, Rafaela Herrera Sotomayor assumed command of the fortress, organized the defenses, and arranged a counter attack to successfully disallow the invaders. Years later, on November 1781, the King of Spain, as a reward for her actions in defense of the San Juan River fortress in 1762, approved Rafaela Herrera request for a Royal Pension retroactive to January of the same year 1781.

On October 24, 1779 British naval forces and the Zambo and Miskito Indigenous groups arranged a surprise attack on the river’s fortress in Central America. As a result, they gained control of the Castle of San Fernando de Omoa in the Atlantic coast of Honduras and captured weapons, ammunition, and money. Spanish Commander Simón Desnaux and Deputy Commander Juan Dastiex signed the documents surrendering the fortress to British Comander William Darymple and Deputy Comander John Lutrell.

**The British Armada Attack, Siege and Surrender of the San Juan river, Immaculate Conception Spanish Fortress in the San Juan River of Nicaragua**

During the months of February and March 1780, a large British armada was organized with Zambo and Miskito indigenous allies. The Armada was under orders of the British High Command in London and Jamaica’s governor Sir John Darling. It was put under the command of Brigadier General Stephen Kemble, Major John Polson and 23-year old Royal Marine Captain Horatio Nelson by Governor Darling.

The armada sailed from Kingston, Jamaica and arrived at the mouth of the San Juan River in the South Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. The troops disembarked and navigated the San Juan River in specialty built boats and attacked and lay siege to the Immaculate Conception fortress on the river. The British attacked the fortress to take control of the San Juan River and to build a navigation canal route in Nicaragua.

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32 José Dolores Gámez, op cit, pp. 263-264.
The British forces consisted of 1,500 men comprised of sailors and official military personnel. In addition, the British forces were accompanied by approximately 2,500 men from the Zambo and Miskito indigenous groups. The Spanish forces defending the fortress were made up of roughly 500 military men, service personnel, slaves, and religious leaders under the command of General Captain Juan De Ayssa, Military Engineer Lieutenant Joaquín Issasi and Colonel Pedro Brizzio.

After almost a month of siege, bombardment, and combat led by British Captain Horatio Nelson, the Spanish defenders were left without water, short of ammunition, with many men dead, wounded or gravely ill and with the fortress in ruins. The British gave them an ultimatum and opened negotiations for a surrender by April 28, 1780. De Ayssa, and his military engineer Joaquin Issasi, negotiated the capitulation documents, and on April 29, 1780 signed the documents surrendering the fortress to British Major John Polson.

In accordance to Brigadier Kemple’s diary, Captain Horatio Nelson fell ill from dysentery and was transported back to the mouth of the San Juan River on May 2, 1780. After the British, Zambo, and Miskito forces took possession of the Rio San Juan fort, they found it badly damaged and entirely uninhabitable. The troops were forced to build living quarters by the edge of the river, and had to endure clouds of mosquitoes, relentless rain, and humidity. Scores of soldiers and officers became sick from dysentery and malaria and consequently died. The British forces were unable to continue at the fort and Brigadier General Stephen Kemple decided to move the men not only since he could obtain neither enough supplies nor reinforcements but also because the Spanish were reinforcing their forces by San Carlos.

By the end of 1780, and the beginning of 1781, Spanish forces sent by General Captain Matías de Gálvez, Governor of Nicaragua, recovered what was left of the castle and the port in the mouth of the San Juan River. De Ayssa kept a diary and once back in Nicaragua in 1781 wrote a report stating that 250 Spanish were taken prisoners at the surrendering of the fortress, including himself and 5 of his officers, (also Spanish) who were transported to San Juan del Norte and later to Jamaica, and that the British kept a similar number of their slaves for themselves.

Scores of Spanish men died on the trip from dysentery and other tropical diseases. On October 3, 1780, surviving prisoners were released in Jamaica and traveled from Kingston to Cuba, a terrible hurricane hit Jamaica and its surrounding areas destroying
the ships: the Monarch and the Victoria. The ships were en route to Cuba, and the storm killed all people aboard. De Ayssa lost all but three of his men, Colonel Pedro Brizzio, Deputy Lieutenant Antonio Antoniotti and soldier Carlos Aguirre who were sick and in Kingston Jamaica, for medical treatment.

De Ayssa noted that the British lost nearly 4000 men in the invasion of Nicaragua, including marine officers, soldiers, and indigenous allies. Additionally, while he was in Jamaica as war prisoner he was informed that the enterprise cost the British nearly 3 million pesos in gold. The British Commander-in-Chief of the forces invading Nicaragua, Brigadier General Stephen Kemble and Major John Polson, kept personal diaries and wrote reports to their superiors; their reports confirmed most of Juan De Ayssa’s assertions. 36

Sometime after in his autobiography, British Admiral, Knight and Viscount Horatio Nelson, the greatest hero in British naval history who was killed on August 21, 1805 in the battle of Trafalgar (a statue erected in his honor is on the top of a great column in London's Trafalgar Square), wrote about his failure on Nicaragua’s San Juan River fortress: 37

In January 1780 an expedition was resolved on against San Juan. I was chosen to command the sea part of it. Major Polson, who commanded, will tell you of my exertions. How I quitted my ship, carried troops in boats 100 miles up a river, which none but Spaniards, since the time of the Buccaneers, have ever ascended. It will then be told how I boarded (if I may be allowed, the expression) an outpost of the enemy situated on an island in the river; that I made batteries and afterward fought them, and that I was a principal cause of success. 38

Years later, the above events were narrated by Guatemalan Archbishop Francisco de Paula García Peláez in his work, “Memorias para la Historia del Antiguo Reino de Guatemala.” It was written as if Rafaela Herrera confronted and defeated a large British naval force led by Brigadier Geneal Kemple and Captain Horatio Nelson, killing Kemple and wounding Nelson.

Further it described De Ayssa as the hero of the events rather than the defeated one. In this manner, a mythical character, Rafaela Herrera was created manipulating the

38 Horatio Nelson, Viscount, and Freemason, ibid.
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dates of the events and the main characters, a story believed and repeated by local historians in Nicaragua and in Central America, even today.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Nicaragua’s Independence from Spain and from México}

In the early 19th century, Napoleon’s occupation of Spain led to the outbreak of revolts all across Spanish America. On September 16, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, launched the Mexican War of Independence with the issuing of his "Grito de Dolores," or "Cry of Dolores." The revolutionary tract called for the end of Spanish rule in Mexico, redistribution of land, and racial equality. After some initial successes, Hidalgo was defeated, captured, judged by the Inquisition as a traitor and executed. However, he was followed by other leaders, such as José María Morelos y Pavón, Mariano Matamoros, and Vicente Guerrero, who all led armies of native, racially mixed and Creoles or (Criollos) revolutionaries against the Spanish and local Royalists.

Ironically, it was the Royalists--made up of Mexicans of Spanish origin and other conservatives--who ultimately brought about independence. In 1820, liberals took power in Spain, and the new government promised reforms to appease the Mexican revolutionaries. In response, Mexican conservatives supported by the Catholic Church hierarchy, called for independence as a means of maintaining their privileged position in Mexican society.

In early 1821, Agustín de Iturbide, the leader of the Royalist forces, negotiated the Iguala coalition with Vicente Guerrero a self-educated Mestizo leader of the popular resistance against the Spanish. Under the coalition, Mexico would be established as an independent constitutional monarchy, the privileged position of the Catholic Church would be maintained, and Mexicans of Spanish descent or Creoles (Criollos) would be regarded as equals to pure Spaniards. Mexicans of mixed or pure Indigenous blood would have lesser rights.

On August 24, 1821, the Spanish Superior Political Chief in New Spain, Mexico, Juan O’ Donojú signed the Treaty of Córdoba, thus ending New Spain's, i.e. Mexico’s dependence on Old Spain. In 1822, as no Bourbon monarch to rule Mexico had been found, Iturbide was proclaimed the emperor of Mexico. However, his empire was short-lived, and in 1823 republican leaders Santa Ana and Guadalupe Victoria deposed Iturbide and set up a republic with Guadalupe Victoria as its first president.

As news of Mexico’s independence made it to Guatemala’s General Captaincy, the inhabitants sought after their own independence. Captain General Gabino Gainza called for an emergency meeting of the Chamber of Deputies to deliberate the issue of independence. After a long and heated debate, the Chamber of Deputies decided to break all ties with Spain and began drafting a declaration of independence of the Provinces of Central America. The document was written, discussed, approved and signed on

\textsuperscript{39} Tomás Ayón, \textit{op cit}, pp. 116-123; Francisco de Paula García Pelaéz, \textit{op cit}; Memorias is a work that American Historian and Central American expert and Professor of Tulane University in Lousiana, Dr. Ralph Lee Woodward considered as “poorly organized and ordinary is stile.”
September 15, 1821 and several originals were signed and sent to each capital city of the provinces. 40

On September 25, 1821, a copy of the Declaration of Independence of Central America signed in Guatemala arrived in León, Nicaragua. The Spanish Catholic bishop of Nicaragua & Costa Rica, Fray Nicolás García Jerez, not pleased, drew up a new document or Declaration of Independence of Nicaragua and Costa Rica declaring independence from Guatemala and Spain, “until the clouds of the day clear.”

The so-called “Act of the Clouded,” was signed in León, on September 28, 1821, by the key religious and military leaders and some influential citizens of the city, among them: Lic. Miguel González Saravia, Governor Major, Nicolás García Jerez, Catholic Bishop of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Joaquín Archivaldo Arrechavala, Military Commander of León, Colonel Domingo N. Galarza Briceño, Vicente Agüero Lacayo, Pedro Solís, Pedro Portocarrero, Agustín Gutiérrez, José María Ramírez, Manuel López de La Plata and Lic. Juan Francisco Aguilar Del Villar, Secretary. 41

The Provincial Chamber of Deputies agreed to join the Mexican Empire and the so-called “Plan de Iguala.” San Salvador in El Salvador and Granada and Matagalpa 42 in Nicaragua agreed to join Guatemala on October 11-14, 1821, and on January 02, 1822 Guatemala decided to join the Mexican Empire. 43

On May 4, 1822, the government of the U.S. under President James Monroe’s administration recognized the Independence of the former Spanish colonies in America: Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Perú and that of Central America. 44 A few weeks later, Agustín Iturbide dissolved congress, proclaimed himself Emperor of Mexico, and decided to send an army to Guatemala to assist and protect his allies there. On March 19, 1823, Iturbide was overthrown and forced to abdicate; eventually he was tried and executed in Mexico City on July 19, 1824.

On April 17, 1823, Nicaragua declared her independence from Mexico, indicating that she was free to organize a new provisional government. Later, Nicaragua accepted Guatemala’s invitation to elect representatives for a new Central American Congress to organize a government. A month later on July 1, 1823, the Supreme Executive Power for the United Provinces of Central America issued the Central American Declaration of Independence in Guatemala City, Guatemala. 45 Nicaragua convoked a National Congress

40 Gámez, José Dolores. op cit, pp. 327-328; Chéster Zelaya, Nicaragua en la Independencia (San José, 1971) pp. 87-93.
41 Chéster Zelaya, op cit, pp. 94-95.
42 Matagalpa’s City Council Signed Nicaragua Declaration of Independence. On October 14 1821 Matagalpa’s city council unanimously voted in favor of the declaration of independence. The Act was signed by: Juan de la Rosa González, Faustino Arnesto, Tomás Cordero, Manuel Mairena, Fermín Montenegro, Sixto Tinoco, José Ramón Zeledón Mora, Ramón Araúz, Guillermo Melia, Eustaquio Picado, Felix Morales, Rafael Samper, Felipe Rayo, Dionisio Fajardo, Melchor Bermúdez, Luis Masis, León Alamarano, Antí Mi Ricardo Araúz Secretary. See: Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano. 96 (1968).
43 Chéster Zelaya, ibid, p. 313.
45 The Declaration of Independence of Central America. The document was signed by José Matías Delgado, by Mr.
and unanimously approved to join the rest of the Central America in a Federation of Central American States. Finally, on August 24, 1824 news was received indicating that Mexico had recognized the independence of Central America.

_U.S. President James Monroe’s Doctrine: 1823_

In his address to Congress on December 2, 1823, President James Monroe outlined a new policy for the Western Hemisphere backing the newly independent Latin American states, while simultaneously opposing European interference in their affairs. The new policy, known as the Monroe Doctrine, was a shrewd political strategy by both President Monroe and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams (Secretary Adams). It was based on three key principles: separate spheres of influence or “America for Americans,” non-colonization, and non-intervention. President Monroe in his Seventh Annual Message to Congress on December 2, 1823 said:

> With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence… we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny… in other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the U.S.…But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to them, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the U.S. to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course.

The Monroe administration had some concerns at the time. On the one hand, there was the fear that Spain would reclaim some or all of its lost colonies in the region; on the other, was the threat of growing British influence in the region, particularly in the Caribbean zone. Both the American and British governments had an interest in keeping Spain out of the region, but Secretary Adams had ruled out a bilateral agreement between the two nations earlier that year. Secretary Adams believed the British had no interest in preserving Latin American independence and bilateral ties would only hamper future American expansion.

Juan Francisco Soza, and Mr. Mariano Gálvez. It was ratified by the President of the Supreme Power, Dr. Pedro Molina, and by its members Mr. Juan Vicente Villa-Corta and Mr. Antonio Rivera.

47 British and Foreign State Papers 1823-1824, _ibid_.
48 The National Archives, Our Documents, 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives (National Archives, 1999); Quoted from U.S. President James Monroe Seventh Annual Message to U.S. Congress on December 2, 1823, that established the now known as Monroe Doctrine.
Essentially, the U.S. informed the powers of the Old World that the American continent was no longer open to European colonization, and that any effort to extend European political influence into the New World would be considered by the U.S. "as dangerous to our peace and safety." The U.S. would not interfere in European wars or internal affairs, and expected Europe to stay out of American affairs.

In this manner, Spain was effectively removed from the regional scene and England was accorded a limited, yet significant, amount of influence on the American continent. At the same time, the U.S. was negotiating with Spain to purchase Florida, and once that treaty was ratified, and as has been already discussed, the Monroe administration began to extend recognition to the new Latin American republics -- Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, and the Central American Republic, were all recognized in May 4, 1822.49

Although it would take decades to translate into an identifiable policy, Secretary John Adams did raise an independent American foreign policy so strongly that future administrations could not ignore it. Nevertheless, the policy succeeded because it met British interests as well as American, was secured by the backing of the British fleet, and that as U.S. economic and military power increased in the 19th Century, the Monroe Doctrine became the basic framework of expansion in Latin America and beyond.

Years later U.S. President William Taft and U.S. Secretary Philander Knox sought to institutionalize the preventive superintendence embodied in the so-called Theodore Roosevelt “Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine” by establishing protectorates. Under the rubric of “Dollar Diplomacy” they promoted loans by U.S. Bankers as a means of gaining customs receiverships and other mortgages on sovereignty. These arrangements appeared to offer the best of all possible worlds giving the U.S. maximum control with minimum responsibility. They also served to displace European financiers and promote investment by American enterprise. Though, the policy of U.S. lordship over was openly proclaimed by Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) and William Howard Taft (1909-1913), it was consummated behind the moralizing hypocrisy of Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921.)50

Meanwhile by mid 1823, Manuel Antonio De La Cerda, Congressman for Nicaragua, presented for consideration before the Central American Federal Congress, a project to build an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. In the end, however, the Central American Federal Congress was too busy organizing the Federal Government that they did not pass any resolution.

By the beginning of 1824, Antonio Cañas was appointed as first Diplomatic Envoy and Plenipotentiary from the Central American Federation of States before the


Government of the U.S. Cañas met U.S. Secretary of State Henry Clay on March 8, 1824, during the inauguration ceremonies of U.S. President John Quincy Adams. In this meeting, Cañas requested Clay to communicate with President Adams, the interest of his government in signing a Treaty to built and open to navigation and trade an interoceanic canal in Nicaragua with the support of the U.S. 

52 ibid.
Chapter 2

Struggle for Independence, the Birth of Nicaragua’s Political Discourse and the Interoceanic Canal through Nicaragua

Conflict in Nicaragua

Shortly after its independence on September 15, 1821 and during the following decade, Nicaragua was in turmoil. Government juntas were created in the cities of Granada, León, Matagalpa and Nueva Segovia. Royalists from Granada led by Pedro José Chamorro Argüello and Crisanto Sacasa Parodi53 united and organized an army to fight Republicans anti-Royalist’s led by Colonel Cleto Ordóñez Yrigoyen, and Raymundo Tiffer.54 Royalists were backed and supported by: the Bishop of Nicaragua; ex-colonial governor of Nicaragua; Costa Rican citizen Fray Nicolas Garcia Jerez and Father Policarpo Yrigoyen. Years of turmoil and chaos followed leaving most of the major cities of Nicaragua devastated.

By September 16th, 1824, as Nicaragua was in complete anarchy, the Central American states urged the government of Central America to intervene in the conflict. The Central American Head of State, José Cecilio Del Valle, sent federal troops under the command of General Carrascosa to pacify the country. As soon as Carrascosa arrived in León, he began to negotiate a cease-fire with the rebel forces. By January 1825, Carrascosa had disbanded the armies and sent General Cleto Ordóñez on a Federal military commission to Guatemala. Shortly after, Carrascosa called for elections in Nicaragua and Lic. Manuel Antonio De La Cerda and Lic. Juan Argüello Del Castillo were elected respectively, as first Chief and first Vice-Chief of the State of Nicaragua, in April 22, 1825.

Series of Treaties Signed by the Central American Federal Republic to Build an Interoceanic Canal in Nicaragua in the Early 1800s

On February 8, 1825, Antonio Cañas, Central America’s diplomatic envoy to the U.S., met U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Clay. At that meeting, Cañas proposed that the U.S. sign a treaty to build an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Hence, Henry Clay proposed the treaty to President Adams suggesting that the treaty would benefit U.S. interests.55 Shortly thereafter on April 22, 1825, William Miller was appointed to be U.S. Diplomatic Envoy and Plenipotentiary in Central America.56 Six months later, on

53 See: Appendix #3 for a genealogical history of Pedro J. Chamorro and J. Crisanto Sacasa’s prominent political dynasties in Nicaragua.
54 Chéster Zelaya, Nicaragua en la Independencia (San José, 1971) pp. 181, 314-315.
October 1826, a treaty was signed between the U.S. and Central America to build and fund an interoceanic canal. 57

Ten years after the ratification of the treaty, Juan de Aycinena, Central American Minister to the U.S. published a document titled, ”Memory about the Projected Canal in the Nicaraguan Isthmus.” The document outlined the advantages of a canal through the river San Juan, and made a comparison between the San Juan Canal and the canal of the rivers built by Americans in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. 58 A canal, De Aycinena stated through Nicaragua would facilitate the navigation of ships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, thus increasing commercial activities and profits.

On May 20, 1837, the President of Central America, General Francisco Morazán De Quesada, contracted John Bailey to prepare a feasibility study for the construction of an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Bailey conducted his study, which was published in the U.S. some years later by U.S. Diplomat, John Stephens. 59 As a consequence, U.S. President Martin Van Buren in 1841 sent Stephens to Central America as an American Diplomat. He traveled throughout Central America to gain a thorough understanding of the region and to combat the British influence in the region. On his arrival in Nicaragua on February 15, 1841, Stephens met engineer Bailey and learned the specifics of the canal route exploration study. Bailey calculated that the cost of the canal would run between 20 and 25 million dollars.

The Separation of Nicaragua from the Federal Republic of Central America

In the mist of the exploration of the canal route, on April 1, 1838 the government of Nicaragua called for the organizing of a National Constituent Assembly, with the purpose of deciding to separate from the Central American Republic and to issue a new national Constitution. On April 1, 1838, Assembly members: Pablo Buitrago Benavente, Hermenegildo Zepeda Fernández, Fruto Chamorro Pérez, Pío José Castellón Baca, and Pedro Solís met and on April 30, 1838 voted in favor of the separation of Nicaragua from the Central American Republic. Nicaragua was declared a free, sovereign, and independent State, and on November 2, 1838, the Constituent Assembly issued the first Nicaraguan National Constitution. 60

The Return of the British Armada to Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast

On August 2, 1841, the Miskito King, Belize’s British Superintendent Alexander MacDonald, and a contingent of British soldiers, assaulted and took possession of the port and mouth of the San Juan River. The British captured Colonel Quijano, Nicaraguan

59 José Dolores Gámez, Historia de Nicaragua. Colección Cultural Banco de América (Managua; Banco de America, 1889) pp. 482; Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano, op cit, pp. 8.
commander of the port of San Juan Del Norte, alleging that Quijano was acting illegally in Miskito territory without authorization, and that the Miskito Kingdom had been recognized by the British Empire and was under her Protectorate.  

The government of Nicaragua sent a high-ranking mission to Guatemala composed of Dr. Gregorio Juárez S and Lic. Pedro Zeledón Mora, to assert Nicaragua’s concern before the British government’s diplomatic representative in Central America. The British Consul in Guatemala, Frederick Chatfield, received Nicaragua’s concern regarding the unprovoked incidents that occurred with the Miskito Indigenous, British government civilians and military officials from Belize. Chatfield maintained the British position and refused to discuss the issues. As a result, Nicaraguan envoys delivered the “White Book” containing the country’s position in the matter with Great Britain.

Nicaragua’s government continued to diplomatically assert its position regarding the Miskito and the occupied land issue. Hence, on July 1844, Nicaragua sent Lic. Francisco De Castellón Sanabria and Dr. Máximo Jerez Tellería, to propose a treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation.

The British government rejected Nicaragua’s proposal unless Nicaragua resolved pending claims regarding British interests. While, the British government and Nicaragua were undertaking negotiations, on July 6, 1844, the British Armada took over the port of Bluefields, and established a blockade at the mouth of the San Juan River. Great Britain was showing the world, and most particularly, the U.S. that they maintained rights over the Miskito Kingdom and controlled the entrance of the future interoceanic canal via the Nicaragua route.

Despite its setback in London, the Nicaraguan mission continued its journey through Europe. On August 20, 1844, Francisco De Castellón and Dr. Máximo Jerez arrived in France to visit Emperor Luis Napoleón Bonaparte III, at prison to discuss the canal issue. Later, on April 20, 1846, the Nicaraguan Charge of Affairs signed a contract with Louis Napoleon Bonaparte to build an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Bonaparte prepared “The Nicaragua Channel” discussing the Nicaraguan canal project.

The British government continued to assert its right to the Miskito country. The demonstrated persistence and force concerned Nicaragua greatly and it began to search for alternative methods to stop the British from controlling critical areas and potentially

63 José Dolores Gámez, *op cit.* p.505.
the entire canal passage. Nicaragua’s President, Dr. José Guerrero Casco, requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to draft a letter to U.S. Secretary of State James Buchanan, seeking the assistance of U.S. President James K. Polk’s government to serve as mediator before the British government. Thus, a Nicaraguan delegation began to court the U.S. government to obtain assistance to neutralize the British.

**The British Armada Occupies Nicaragua’s Interoceanic Canal Route**

British military forces and their Zambo and Miskito Indigenous allies organized a “Royal Bluefields Militia” under the command of British Consul, Patrick Walker to occupy the San Juan River. In January 1848, the Royal Bluefields Militia attacked and occupied the port of San Juan Del Norte at the mouth or the river. The militia captured Patricio Rivas, the Nicaraguan Customs Administrator, and substituted him with Mr. George Hodgson as the new port governor.

Nicaraguan troops under the Commander of the national army, General José De La Trinidad Muñoz Fernández (“Muñoz”), counter-attacked and retook the port capturing Hodgson and other officers. Muñoz took weapons, ammunition, and supplies and fled to the interior of his country with his prisoners.

British ships returned to San Juan del Norte and regained control of the area. The British military forces bombarded and destroyed the city government facilities and the port of San Juan and sailed on to capture the river forts, the port of San Carlos, the islands in the great lake and to lay a siege to the city of Granada.

Nicaragua, with a large part of its territory occupied and a British naval force menacing Granada, was forced to negotiate and recognize the British protectorate over the Atlantic Coast. Subsequently, on March 7, 1848 the “Treaty of the Island of Cuba,” or “De Castellón- Zavala-Estrada-Lorch Treaty,” was signed in a little island in the vicinity of Granada. Thus, the “Treaty of the Island of Cuba or De Castellón,-Zavala-Estrada-Lorch Treaty” was ratified by the Nicaraguan National Assembly on March 8, 1848. As a result, Nicaragua granted recognition to the British Protectorate over the Atlantic region and the Miskito Kingdom, set Hodgson free and the rest of British imprisoned subjects, and declared San Juan del Norte a free port.

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66 The U.S. National Archives *op cit.*
67 Francisco Monterrey, *op cit.*
68 José Dolores Gámez, *op cit.* pp. 406-408.
José Guerrero, *Director Supremo del Estado de Nicaragua (1847-1949).* Manifiesto que el ex-Director Supremo del Estado de Nicaragua hace a los gobiernos de América: respectivamente al tratado celebrado el 7 del corriente entre el comandante Inglés señor Granville G. Lock y los comisionados de este S. Gobierno (León: Imprenta de la Paz, 1848); The U.S. National Archives. *op cit.*
The Birth of U.S. Involvement in the Interoceanic Canal through Nicaragua

Even after the ratification of the Treaty of the Island of Cuba, Nicaragua continued to find alternative ways to deal with the British occupation of the Rio San Juan route and the Atlantic Coast. On August 22, 1848, Nicaragua appointed Francisco De Castellón Sanabria as Itinerant and Plenipotentiary Diplomatic Envoy of Nicaragua in Belgium, The Netherlands, France, and England. De Castellón was sent to England to settle the dispute between Nicaragua and Britain. On November 5, 1848, while in New York en route to England, De Castellón delivered to U.S. Secretary of State James Buchanan, a letter to the President of the U.S., Zachary Taylor, explaining British occupation on Nicaragua and potential U.S. interests in the region. The letter asked for U.S. mediation in Nicaragua’s dispute with the British Empire. 70

In addition, at the request of De Castellón the government contracted José de Marcoleta, an experienced Spanish diplomat, to assist De Castellón in promoting Nicaragua’s interests in Europe and in the U.S. 71 Once in Europe, De Castellón dispatched a note prepared to the British Foreign Office Secretary, John Temple Viscount of Palmerson, advocating Nicaragua’s position with regards to the Miskito territory. 72

Nicaragua’s advocacy and De Castellón’s letter to U.S. President Taylor sparked a series of actions generating the interest of the U.S. in the country’s dispute with Great Britain. The U.S. government began to acknowledge both the importance of the canal navigation route through Nicaragua and the danger to U.S. national interests if British aggressive policy against Nicaragua succeeded in controlling the interoceanic canal route.

As a result, U.S. President Taylor accepted the request made by De Castellón in his November 5, 1848 letter, to mediate in the dispute with Great Britain. The U.S. government sent Elijah Hise and Ephraim George Squier as the U.S.’s first two Diplomatic Representatives with the task to negotiate a Treaty of General Friendship, obtain canal concessions, and to assure the U.S. the control of the interoceanic canal route. 73

U.S. President Taylor instructed U.S. Secretary of State, J. M. Clayton, to notify Great Britain of the U.S.’s position towards the Protectorate, the occupation of the canal route, and the presence of British troops blocking Nicaraguan ports on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. J.M Clayton immediately informed the U.S. Diplomatic Envoy and Plenipotentiary in London, Laurence Bancroft that President Taylor had carefully studied and researched Nicaragua’s request for support and determined that the British claims were not valid or justified. Furthermore, Clayton informed Bancroft that President Taylor supported Nicaragua’s point of view and asked him to present the British government

70 The U.S. National Archives. ibid.
71 José Dolores Gámez. op cit. pp. 538.
72 ibid.
Nicaragua’s position in an amicable manner. Finally, the U.S. position induced Great Britain to abandon its territorial pretensions over Nicaragua.  

Later that same year, Ephraim Squier arrived in the port of San Juan del Norte in the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. Squier, a geographer and aficionado archeologist, was under the specific instructions of U.S. President Taylor and Secretary Clayton, to negotiate and sign a treaty to provide for the construction of an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Squier arrived in León on June 25, 1849.  

In addition, Gregorio Juarez and Hermenegildo Zepeda F., Plenipotentiaries of the Nicaragua Government, and Joseph White Representative of the American Company for the Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific, signed the “White-Zepeda-Juarez Treaty on August 27, 1849.” The purpose of the treaty was to provide for the construction of an interoceanic Canal in Nicaragua and the creation of the “American Company for Canal in Nicaragua.”  

The most important stockowner of the American Company was American shipbuilder and financier, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt; considered the first of many private capitalists entrepreneurs who negotiated concessions over the right to build a canal with the Nicaraguan governments.  

With the California gold rush in full swing, the prospects for and political benefits of a canal seemed enormous, and both interest from the American Government and U.S. public support for the building of a Nicaraguan canal grew.  

Finally on September 3, 1849, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hermenegildo Zepeda Fernández, and Ephraim Squier, signed a General Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the two countries to provide for the construction of an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Squier later went on to write works that created much popular demand for Nicaragua in the U.S.  

Squier wrote:  

… Nicaragua…is the key to the continent, destined to unlock the riches of two hemispheres, and which eager nations even now are aiming to snatch, with felon hand, from its rightful possessors. To us is given in this modern time, the ability...of acquiring the rule of the East....of transferring into our unarmed hands...

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that passage for which Columbus strove in vain, that vast and incalculable trade
upon which is mainly based the maritime power of England... The fortune of war
has planted our eagles on the Pacific: across the entire continent...our Republic is
supreme. Our trim built fairies of the deep...sweep in the trade of Europe on one
hand, and on the other bring to the mouth of the Sacramento the treasures of the
Oriental World... To gird the world as with a hoop, to pass a current of American
Republicanism...over the continent of the earth, it needs but one small spot should
be left free from foreign threats and aggression... 78

Squier’s writings were instrumental in provoking the appetite of many American
expansionists and financiers for the Nicaragua interoceanic canal. Moreover, Squire’s
books also contributed to heat a controversy between the U.S. slave and non-slave
supporting states for control of the territories south of the border:

Modern American historians believe that Squier, with his personal archeological
excavations and export related activities in Nicaragua, was responsible for the creation
of the favorable conditions that contributed to the indiscriminated looting of Nicaragua’s
archeological centers that lasted for centuries.

Squier’s partners Earl Flint and Carl Bovalius 79 a Swedish geographer and
anthropologist organized dozens of digging expeditions to the principal arqueologocal
sites in Nicaragua. Entire indigenous ceremonial centers in the islands of Zapatera and
Ometepe as well as in other places in the country, were dismantled and ransacked. The
relics and statues were sent to museums and research centers in the U.S. and abroad, such
as The Peabody Museum and the British Museum, where they continue to exist today.
As a consequence, Nicaragua lost a large volume of its archeological riches to the extent
that today only a few indigenous religious ceremonial sites remain. 80

While Nicaragua negotiated a treaty with the U.S. to build a canal, Felipe Molina,
of Costa Rica in Britain signed a Contract to build an interoceanic canal with Great
Britain from Gulf Papagayo (Nicoya) to the Nicaraguan Great Lake and the San Juan
River on July 11, 1849. Under this treaty, the area from the southern shore of the great
lake of Nicaragua to the San Juan River, ending in the Atlantic Ocean were considered as
part of Costa Rica. 81

Under these arrangements on September 24, 1849, the U.S. announced it would
not allow any country in the world to obtain absolute control over the interoceanic canal
route through Nicaragua. Additionally, the U.S. proclaimed that it would not seek
absolute rights or privileges, rather, it sought a common benefit for humanity, would not

78 George E. Squier, *ibid.* pp. 7-8; Richard W. Van Alstyne, The Rising American Empire. A provocative analysis of
the origins of the U.S. as a national state. (New York: W.W. Norton) p. 159.
Soner, 1886).
80 David E. Whisnant, Rascally Signs in Sacred Places. The Politics of Culture in Nicaragua. (Chapel Hill: The U of
81 Miguel Ángel Álvarez Lejarza, De cómo perdimos las provincias de Nicoya y Guanacaste (Managua, 2001).
consent a control of an important route to fall under the absolute control of any commercial power.

British Foreign Office Secretary, John Temple Viscount of Palmerson, assured the U.S. that England had no interest in establishing a new colony in San Juan del Norte, and could exert their good influence with the Miskitos and Costa Ricans, with the purpose of eliminating the obstacles in order to develop the canal.  

In Managua, Squier, wrote to the Government of Costa Rica informing it that the U.S. government recognized Nicaragua’s total sovereignty over the San Juan River.  

On November 1st, 1849, British newspaper London Times, in an editorial in reference to the British dispute between Nicaragua and U.S., the editorial expressed that:

…Nicaragua’s triumph has put that country in such a position that will be of little benefit to treat her with violence or disrespect, we then suggests a pacific and conciliatory policy with that country.

On November 6, 1849, the Nicaraguan government appointed Dr. Eduardo Carcache Lacayo (“Carcache”) Diplomatic Representative in the U.S. Without delay, Carcache, whose first instruction from his government was to obtain the U.S. Congress approval of the Squier-Zepeda, treaty put himself to work. Later on that year, the British government proposed and successfully implemented with the U.S. a negotiation for a treaty to resolve their disputes.

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty between Great Britain and the U.S.

In 1850, always wary of European interference in the Western Hemisphere, especially over the prospect of an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua the U.S. and Great Britain negotiated and signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty that provided for joint U.S.-British construction and fortification of any such canal. This treaty was politically satisfactory at the time, as the U.S. was in the early stages of developing its newly-acquired Pacific coast and because the country did not have the financial resources available to build a canal in the near term.

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty resolved the disputes between the U.S. and Great Britain over Nicaragua’s interoceanic canal. As stipulated in the first two agreements in the treaty, the U.S. and Great Britain were to share in the construction and control of the canal route and to provide the necessary instruments to resolve their differences in Central America.

Article 1 of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty established that:

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82 Mary Wilhelmine Williams, op cit. pp. 72-90 & 80-81.
84 Mary Wilhelmine Williams, ibid, pp. 80-81.
...The government of the U.S. and Great Britain hereby declare that neither the one nor the other will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over said ship-canal; agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same, or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Moskito Coast, or any part of Central America...  

Throughout the late 1800s, the policy of the U.S. was consistently in favor of an interoceanic canal. There was practically no official divergence from this policy until a variety of factors emerged between 1880-1884 that would propel the U.S. to reject the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. First, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty specified that no party would obtain or keep absolute rights or control over the canal; no fortifications would ever be erected, or colonies will be ever built to occupy Nicaragua or her neighboring areas; if a canal was built, it would be in a concerted, conjunct, and convenient manner to their interests, and both sides should provide protection to the canal. Finally, even though Nicaragua did not participate directly in the negotiations between England and the U.S., Nicaragua’s positions and national interests were taken into consideration as part of the U.S. proposals negotiated with the British.

The British newspaper The London Times, on June 13, 1850, published an editorial discussing the negotiations between Nicaragua, U.S., and Britain over the interoceanic canal. The editorial stated that:

.... The British government should have clearly realized, that the American people would have not allowed the pacific establishment of that kind of foreign monopoly there.

On August 14, 1851, the “American Company for the Canal in Nicaragua” was renamed the “American Accessory Transit Company.” The new company would provide transportation and shipping services around from the port of San Juan del Norte, the Great Lake, and the Isthmus of Rivas in Nicaragua. The principal American stockholder, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, would work in Nicaragua, with a Guatemalan citizen of German origin, Enrique Gottel, and General Evaristo Carazo Rivas (President of Nicaragua 1887-1889), to provide the services to passengers.

On February 18, 1853, U.S. President, Millard Fillmore, sent a special message to the U.S. Congress accompanied by a report discussing the interoceanic canal in

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87 U.S. National Archives. op cit.
88 Spain recognized Nicaragua’s independence on July 25, 1850 through the signature of the Treaty of Peace, General Friendship and Commerce, negotiated and signed by Plenipotentiary of Spain, Marquise Pedro José Pidal and the Plenipotentiary for Nicaragua José de Marcoleta; Bancroft Library. op cit.; Tratado de Paz y Amistad entre Nicaragua y España, Celebrado en Madrid el 15 de Julio de 1850 (Managua: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1868); British and Foreign State Papers 1848-1849. op cit. pp. 1330-1338.
89 Mary Wilhelmine Williams, op cit. pp. 72-90.
Nicaragua. The President explained the extreme importance of the relations between the U.S. and the Central America, due to the presence of Great Britain in Nicaragua.  

**Zeledón-Ouseley and Zeledón-Wyke treaties between Nicaragua and Great Britain**

On January 18, 1859, Pedro Zeledón Mora (“Zeledón Mora”), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and British Special Diplomatic Envoy and Plenipotentiary, Sir William Gore Ouseley, negotiated and signed the first of a series of treaties to resolve the disputes over the British control of the Miskito territories. A year later, on January 28th, 1860, Zeledón Mora, and Sir Charles Lennox Wyke, Diplomatic Minister of Great Britain signed another treaty to resolve the Miskito Indigenous British Protectorate issue.

Great Britain and the Miskito Indigenous recognized Nicaragua’s sovereignty over disputed territories in exchange Nicaragua granted a special status to the Miskito Indigenous and paid a monetary compensation over a period of time. The port of San Juan Del Norte was declared a free port under the sovereignty and legal authority of Nicaragua. The British in Hong Kong and Singapore to maintain control of navigation and commercial routes used this similar scheme. In the end, both parties recognized the old Miskito Kingdom with a special status as a “Miskito Reserve.” The treaty put an end to the Protectorate established by the British over the territories in the XVII century.

On February 11, 1860, Zeledón Mora and Charles Lennox Wyke negotiated and signed The General Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation that established formal relations between the two countries and assured the neutrality and pacific navigation of British ships over a possible interoceanic canal through Nicaragua. Finally, Zeledón Mora and Special Envoy and Diplomatic Minister of the U.S. of America in Managua Nicaragua, General Mirabeau B. Lamar, on May 10, 1859, negotiated and signed a treaty establishing the neutrality over the interoceanic canal route through Nicaragua.

**The British Railroad to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua**

In 1865, the President of Nicaragua, General Tomás Martínez Guerrero, and British Engineer and Captain, Bedford Clapperton Trevelyan Pim (“Pim,”) signed a treaty to provide for the construction of a railroad between the Atlantic coast of

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91 Message from the President of the U.S. to the Senate of the U.S. Communicating in compliance with a Resolution of the Senate, certain correspondence in relation to Central America. 32nd. Congress 2nd session ex.doc. 27.
93 *ibid.*
Nicaragua and the eastern coast of the Great Lake of Granada. Pim along with two engineers prepared a feasibility study to build a railroad in the south Atlantic region of Nicaragua. The report was presented to the English Royal Geographical Society in London in 1867. Captain Pim proposed that the railroad run from Punta Mico in the Atlantic to the port of San Miguelito in the Great Lake of Granada’s eastern coast. For the purpose of supporting the interoceanic canal, the British wanted the railroad extended south by the San Juan River.

Years later, Nicaragua’s President, General José Santos Zelaya López, resurrected the project and obtained 2.5 million British Pounds with the Ethelburga financial syndicate in London. Unfortunately, U.S. interest in Nicaragua financed a revolution that eventually overthrew Zelaya. The new U.S. sponsored government abandoned the project using the funds to pay war claims to well connected politicians and their families. In the end, the railroad was never built.  

The Recovery of Miskito Land

After a series of incidents and demands of the British, on November 20, 1894, the Government of President Zelaya ordered the Nicaraguan army to take control of the city of Bluefields and the Miskito territory, incorporating the Miskito Reserve into the territorial sovereignty and civilian rule of the State of Nicaragua.

On April 25, 1895, British naval forces under the command of Rear Admiral H. L. Stethephenson, in reprisal for the occupation of Bluefields and the Miskito Territory, attacked and occupied the port of Corinto in the Pacific Ocean. The British naval forces gave an ultimatum to the government of Nicaragua for the payment of war reparations to British subjects removed from Bluefields and the Miskito territory. As a result, Nicaragua through third country mediation accepted and agreed to pay 150,000 British Pounds as war reparations and the British Naval forces evacuated the port of Corinto.

Three New Canal Treaties

On December 1, 1884, ex-President of Nicaragua, Joaquin Zavala Solís (Zavala), and U.S. Secretary of State, Frederick F. Frelinghuysen, signed a treaty to provide for the construction of a canal through Nicaragua. Zavala was in Washington on transit to Europe looking for financial assistance for Nicaragua when he decided to pay a courtesy visit to Frelinghuysen. Together they agreed to negotiate and signed a treaty for the construction of a canal for Nicaragua by the U.S., and Nicaragua would preserve its ownership. The British government immediately objected alleging that the Clayton Bulwer treaty was in force and established that only U.S. and Great Britain would build

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the canal. Furthermore, the following year the U.S. administration lost control of congress that was set to sign the contract, and the treaty was eventually not approved.98

President of Nicaragua, Dr. Adán Cárdenas Del Castillo, and Cuban-born U.S. Captain and Engineer Aniceto G. Menocal, signed a treaty to provide for the construction of an interoceanic canal for Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan government gave the company a 99-year concession and declared the work as a public benefit. In turn, the treaty provided the government U.S. $100,000.00 as a warranty for the construction and the new government of President Evaristo Carazo on April 24 ratified the convention.99

On February 27, 1888, The U.S. Senate approved the legislation that allowed the creation of the "Company of the Canal for Nicaragua" as well as its canal project proposal that was considered the last step to proceed with the construction of the canal.100 Finally, U.S. Secretary of State, John Hay, and Luis Felipe Corea, Nicaraguan Diplomatic Minister, on December 1, 1900, signed a treaty providing for the construction of an interoceanic canal for Nicaragua.101

**U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine: 1904**

With the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the so-called Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the Monroe Doctrine converted itself into a unilateral political tool, giving the U.S. the right to intervene militarily in the affairs of Latin American states. Essentially, it was a policy specifically directed at Caribbean and Central American states that had defaulted their debts. President Theodore Roosevelt on his message to Congress of May 21, 1904 said:

> All that we desire is to see all neighboring countries stable orderly [sic] and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our heartily [sic] friendliness. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with decency in industrial and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, then it needs fear no interference from the U.S. Brutal and chronic wrong doing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may, in America as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the western hemisphere the adherence of the U.S. to the Monroe Doctrine may force the U.S., however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrong doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.102

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100 Manuel Castrillo Gámez, *ibid.* p. 42.
102 For a detailed study of President Theodore Roosevelt's so called, Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine see: House of Representatives. doc. 1, no 1 58 cong. 3 sess., President T. Roosevelt Annual Message to Congress and Foreign Relations (1904); Raymond Lee Hazlet, *U.S. Foreign Policy in Nicaragua 1909-1928*, thesis. (U of California
The war of 1898 demonstrated the economic, military, and naval power, which the U.S. had developed. Moreover, the victory over Spain propelled the U.S. into the colonial world with the acquisition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippine Islands and other Asian possessions from Spain. The U.S. faced difficulty, however, in having to protect territory far away from the insular security of continental America.

The U.S. had long envisioned a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through the isthmus of Central America; an idea one historian called the chief interest and motivating force behind the relations of the U.S. not only with Nicaragua but also with all of Central America. The prospect of a Nicaraguan canal had attracted the interest of many nations in the nineteenth century, and as we have already examined, the Spanish, British, French along with the U.S. had launched preliminary surveys of potential canal routes as early as the 1550s.

**The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty between the U.S. and Great Britain**

In the aftermath of the War of 1898, the Americans confirmed the lack of a canal as a palpable strategic weakness that would have to be corrected. U.S. Secretary of State, John Hay, took the first step the fifth day of February of 1900, when after a series of negotiations with Central American governments over the canal issue; he signed an agreement with Sir Julian Pauncefote British Diplomat in Washington. The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1900 gave the U.S. exclusive rights to build and manage a canal, but not fortify it.

Theodore Roosevelt, governor of New York at that time, was not pleased with the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty. Roosevelt and other Republicans, along with the renowned naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, were outraged that the primary purposes of the canal—insuring American interests in a time of war—was being compromised unnecessarily. Once Roosevelt became vice-president he acted promptly to renegotiate Hay-Pauncefote with the British who were meanwhile preoccupied fighting a bloody colonial war against the Boers, Dutch and German origin colonists in South Africa.

The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty signed in Washington on November 18, 1901, gave the U.S. and Roosevelt what they had sought-- the right to fortify the canal-- with the understanding that the U.S. would treat all other nations equally in its use.

The Hay Pauncefote’s treaty Article I stated: The High Contracting Parties agree that the present Treaty shall supersede the aforementioned Convention [the Clayton Bulwer treaty] of April 19, 1850. 103

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103 British and Foreign State Papers 1900-1901. Treaty between Great Britain and the U.S., relative to the Establishment of a Communication by Ship Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Washington D.C.,1901); BD Willoughby Mycock Esq. Superintendent of the Treaty Department, Foreign Office. Printed for
It should be noted that the entrance of the U.S. into the industrial era, the transformation of the society into an industrial power, and her growing necessity for resources was an impulse to expansion and conquest. There existed a need of new lands and markets for raw materials and finished products, for secure navigable routes to open port facilities, and for resupplying stations for U.S. commercial and military fleet provisions, etc.\textsuperscript{104} The canal, though, still had to be built. The struggle over where and when it would be built brought the republics of Central America into the picture.

The U.S., through the Walker Isthmian Canal Commission, studied the issue for two years, and concluded that the best route for a new canal lay in Nicaragua. In January 1902, the House of Representatives approved the Hepburn Bill, which called for the construction of the canal through Nicaragua. However, the new Panamá Canal Company with the help of Philippe Bunau Varilla along with a number of U.S. lobbyists urged the U.S. Senate to reconsider the Walker Commission and House decision.

In late 1901, John Hay and President Theodore Roosevelt presented to the U.S. Congress a Report of the U.S. Isthmian Canal Commission 1899-1901. Professor Emory B. Johnson report consisted of a survey on the industrial and commercial value of two canals; Nicaragua and Panamá. Further, the report included a complete set of 86 plates that included maps of the proposed canal, countries, harbors, locks, panoramic views, profiles and illustrations.

Specifically, the Report summarized the following:

1- Both routes have plentiful navigation water.
2- Panamá has an existing Panamánian Interoceanic railroad, putting itself in better position for the canal. Nicaragua does not have any such railroad.
3- Panamá has deep natural bays nearby, open roads, railroads and dredge bays. Nicaragua would need to develop such infrastructure.
4- Construction time for canal: 10 years in Panamá; 8 years in Nicaragua. However, infrastructure in Nicaragua would take many years to build.
5- Construction costs will be U.S.$ 45,000,000 dollars more in Nicaragua than in Panamá.
6- Maintenance costs will be U.S.$ 1,300,000 dollars more in Nicaragua than in Panamá.
7- Length of the route from sea to sea is 134.6 miles (215.36 Kmts) shorter in Panamá than in Nicaragua, as well as number of locks to be built and actual construction canal miles.
8- Actual transit time for a ship through the Nicaraguan canal would be 33 hours in comparison to 12 hours through the Panamá canal, not considering, winds, currents, and other issues. Operating in good conditions time saved for a trip from

coast to coast from the U.S. through Nicaragua would be one day and two from ports in the Gulf of Mexico. But coming from or going to Europe and Asia and South America, cargo ships through the Panamá will save 2 days.

9- Nicaragua currently has best hygiene, but there would be a need to develop better infrastructure.

10 - Finally, taking into consideration existing changing conditions, the facts and circumstances, the commission’s opinion is that the most practical and possible route for an Interoceanic Canal under the Control, Management and Property of the U.S. of America is the one known as The Panamá Route.

After a $40 million Panamá Company’s negotiated contract price, Panamá and Bunau-Varilla received some help from an “Act of God.” A volcano on Martinique erupted, killing thousands of people, and in the mist of the canal negotiations, the Panamá advocates used the volcano issue as a political weapon, and with the aid of 90 postage stamps bearing the likeness of Momotombo distributed among U.S. senators and politicians, convinced the Senate to build the canal in Panamá. The income, jobs, and long-term prospects for economic growth that the canal represented vanished from Nicaragua with the passage of an amendment in the U.S. Senate.

According to historians, in 1898, the chief of the French Canal Syndicate, a group that owned large pieces of land across Panamá, hired William Nelson Cromwell from the U.S. law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell to lobby the U.S. Congress to build a canal across Panamá. In 1902, using a 10-cent Nicaraguan postal stamp produced by the American Bank Note Company erroneously depicting a fuming Momotombo volcano (which was nearly dormant and stood more than 100 miles (160 km) from the proposed Nicaraguan canal path), and taking advantage of a particularly volcanic year in the Caribbean, Cromwell planted a story in the New York Sun reporting that the Momotombo volcano had erupted and caused a series of seismic shocks. Ultimately, the decision on which canal to build was made in June 28, 1902 by a Senate vote. News of an eruption in Saint Pierre Martinique, which killed 30,000 people, was enough to persuade the U.S. Congress to vote in favor of Panamá, leaving only eight votes in favor of Nicaragua. The final decision to build the Panamá Canal passed by four votes and William Nelson Cromwell was paid U.S. $800,000 for his lobbying efforts.

The final obstacle that Washington had to overcome before the construction of the canal could begin was the negotiations with Colombia over the use of its territory for the canal. Secretary Hay and Colombian Diplomatic Representative Thomas Herran reached an agreement in January 1903, which gave the U.S. virtual sovereignty over a ten kilometer wide strip of Colombia’s Panamá territory for $10 million up-front and

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105 U.S. National Archives. Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission 1899-1901. Doc. 222. op cit; Rear Admiral John G. Walker, President, Honorable Samuel Pasco, Secretary, Mr. Alfred Noble, Mr. G. S. Morrison, Eng. Peter C. Hains, Mr. W. H. Burr, Eng. O.H. Ernst, Mr. Lewis M. Haupt and Mr. Emory Johnson; U.S. Senate. op cit.; Message from the President of the US, transmitting the Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission upon de proposition of the new Panamá Canal Company to sell and dispose of all its rights, property, and unfinished work to the U.S.

106 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaraguan_Canal
$250,000/per year. The Hay-Herran Treaty was quickly ratified in Washington, but in Colombia there was significant public resentment over the surrender of Colombian sovereignty to the U.S., and the treaty did not pass.

Roosevelt, who was president after McKinley’s assassination, was outraged. Though the details are unclear, the president and the Panamá Canal interest representative Bunau-Varilla conspired to foment a revolution in Panamá. The revolt began in the first week of November 1903, when forces funded by Bunau-Varilla took power in Panamá; it only succeeded however, when the U.S. Ship Nashville arrived in Colon and prevented Colombian reinforcements from crushing the rebels.

Panamá, thanks to the new Canal Company and President Roosevelt, was independent, and the U.S. on November 6 and 7 unofficially recognized the new country and a few days later on November 13, 1903 did it officially. France and other 15 countries immediately followed.

It took just a few days for the U.S. and Panamá, which was now represented in Washington by Bunau Varilla, to sign an agreement on U.S. canal rights in Panamá. Although Bunau-Varilla was present as the diplomatic representative of Panamá (a role he had purchased through financial assistance to the rebels), no Panamánians signed the treaty. Bunau-Varilla had not lived in Panamá the previous seventeen years before the incident and he never returned. The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, however, was still signed on November 18, 1903 and gave the U.S. control over the Canal Zone for approximately the same terms that had been offered to the Colombians.

The End of the British Affair with Nicaragua: The Altamirano-Harrison Treaty between Nicaragua and Great Britain

On April 19, 1905, Nicaragua and Great Britain signed the Altamirano-Harrison treaty where England recognized Nicaragua’s full sovereignty over the former British Protectorate on the Miskito Territory. Nicaragua, in consideration to the protectorate exercised by England upon the Miskitos, exempted them for 50 years from military service, payment of personal and property taxes, and allowed the former Miskito King Roberto Henry Clarence to reside in the Republic under the protection of Nicaraguan laws.107

Article 3 sections b, c and e, of the Treaty states:

b. The Government shall allow the Indians to live in their villages in enjoyment of the concession granted under this Convention, and in accordance with their own customs, insofar as they are not contrary to the laws of the country and public morality.

c. The Government of Nicaragua shall grant them a period of two years to legalize their rights to the property they have acquired in conformity with

the provisions that governed the reserve prior to 1894. The Government shall not charge for their lands or for the concession of titles. For that purpose, titles that were owned by the Indians and Creoles prior to 1894 shall be renewed in conformity with the law; and where such titles do not exist, the Government shall give each family eight squares of property in their place of residence.

e. Should any Miskito or Creole Indian prove that the property he owned in accordance with the provisions in force prior to 1894 has been revoked or adjudicated to another person, the Government shall compensate him by granting him idle land of like value, as close to his place of residence as possible. 108

Chapter 3

The Birth of the Political Parties in Nicaragua

Máximo Jerez and the Creation of the Liberal Party in Nicaragua

Political parties began having presence in Nicaragua in the early 19th century. The earliest liberals mostly from the city of León were called “Calandracas” (flacos or skinners) and their leaders were: Dr. and General Máximo Jerez Tellería (“Jerez Tellería”), Lic. Francisco De Castellón Sanabria (“De Castellón”), and their followers. Conservatives on the other hand, were mostly from the city of Granada and called “Timbucos” (barrigones or big belly). Among the early leaders were: General Fruto Chamorro Pérez (“Chamorro”) and his followers. These nicknames changed and later they were referred to as: “liberals” and “conservatives.”

The political struggle between the Granadinos and the Leoneses began when the two cities were founded by the Spanish. The events that led up to the founding and subsequent destruction of the two cities (discussed earlier) gave birth to the political struggle that continues to this day.

Historians have mentioned that Jerez Telleria was the founder of the Liberal Party of Nicaragua. He was instrumental in the shape of political and ideological framework for the liberals in Nicaragua. Therefore, it is noteworthy to discuss Jerez’s Telleria background and beginnings.

Jerez Tellería was born June 11, 1818 in the city of León in Nicaragua. He was the oldest son of Julio Jerez Grandón, former Mayor of the city of León, Nicaragua and Mrs. Victoria Tellería Polinar also from León, Nicaragua. Julio Jerez Grandón arrived in León, Nicaragua, from Murcia, Spain in 1810 with his grandmother, brother Vicente, and uncle, the new Catholic Bishop of the Dioceses of Nicaragua, Fray Nicolás García Jerez. Later in the post independence years, the family of Bishop García Jerez, one of the last Spanish governors of Nicaragua, as well as many other Spanish military, civilian and Church officials, suffered persecution and were forced into exile.

Julio Jerez Grandón with his wife and family were forced into exile in Costa Rica where they faced difficult times. Nevertheless, young Jezzería excelled in his studies and was recognized by his instructors for his talent, intelligence, perseverance, resilience and spiritual superiority.

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110 He was baptized on June 22, 1818 in the Church El Sagrario in the City of León, Nicaragua, by priest Manuel Leandro Ortega, under the name of Máximo José De Jesús Jerez Tellería. His godmother was Mrs. Jacinta Morales. The Baptism entry was registered by his parents and certified by the official priest on June 22 of 1818, under Folio Number 15 of the Book of Baptisms of 1818. See: Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Zelaya, Máximo Jerez y sus Contemporáneos. Estudio Histórico-Critico (Managua: Editorial La Prensa, 1948) p.20.
111 Jorge E. Arellano, Historia de la Universidad de León. tomo I. (Managua: ed. Universitária, 1973) pp. 283-285; Sofonías Salvatierra, Contribución a la Historia de Centroamérica, Monografías Doc. tomo II. (Managua:
When his family returned from exile, Jerez Tellería graduated as a Doctor in Canonic Law in 1837, Doctor of Philosophy in 1838, and Doctor of Civil Law in 1848. To prepare for diplomatic posts, Jerez became fluent in Spanish, Latin, English and French. In the end, he practiced law with success, and entered into politics. Jerez wed Paula Guerrero Casco Quiñónez, daughter of Dr. José Guerrero Molina, Supreme Director of the State of Nicaragua (1847-1849), and Juana Casco Quiñónez del Valle. Together, Máximo and Juana had three children Juana De Dios, José De La Cruz, and Ramón Jerez Guerrero.

As a philosopher, Jerez Tellería believed in the liberal doctrine of John Locke, Count Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu, Henry David Thoreau, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Jerez Tellería admired John Locke’s belief in democracy practiced by the ancient Greeks, the democracy of the ideas of the enlightenment, and of the European Renaissance. Jerez Tellería believed that there were some rights inherent to all human been such as the right to life, freedom, and property. Government, in Jerez’s opinion, was created to protect and respect those rights. If government violated those rights (the social contract), Jerez Tellería believed the people had the right and duty to revolt to change the institution in place.

Jerez Tellería believed in the right of “civil disobedience” as advocated by Henry David Thoreau, when the government transformed itself into agent of injustice. He also promoted the “separation of powers” practiced by the revolutionary founding fathers of the U.S. he admired: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and George Washington. In essence, Jerez Tellería was versed in the thoughts and writings of the founding fathers and especially of Thomas Jefferson and his “Preamble to the Declaration of Independence of the U.S. of America.”

Jerez Tellería was well aware of national, as well as, international politics. From an early age, he traveled throughout Central America, the U.S., and Europe in diplomatic missions and kept personal contacts. He visited France, the Netherlands, and England and witnessed the nationalist movements and the struggle for National Unity in Germany and Italy. He related to the Masons (to which he belonged), and to the Carbonary, and liberal movement leadership exiled in France and England. Thus, Jerez Tellería visited fellow Mason, Carbonary and liberal Emperor Luis Napoleon Bonaparte along with Francisco

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Preamble to the Unanimous Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen U.S. of America. In Congress on the 4 of July of 1776. “…We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security…” see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence.
De Castellón Sanabria at the prison of Ham where he was incarcerated after the failure of one of his multiple attempts to seize power in France. Louis Napoleon had interest in Mexico and Central America and was writing a project to build an interoceanic canal through the Nicaraguan route.  

**Máximo Jerez and Fruto Chamorro: The Liberal and Conservative conflict in Nicaragua**

In a very close election, on April 1, 1853, Fruto Chamorro was elected Supreme Director of the State of Nicaragua. Even as the liberals protested, Chamorro offered a government position to Jerez Tellería and De Castellón. Unfortunately, Chamorro’s party did not concur in Chamorro’s decision, and the offer of a government position was not honored.

As soon as Chamorro was able to control Congress, he abolished Nicaragua’s Constitution of 1838 and replaced it with one with conservative ideology. In addition, Chamorro changed the name of the head of state from Supreme Director of the State to President, breaking for once and for all, the Central American Federal Republic pact. Chamorro’s act had long lasting consequences and shifted the control of Congress to the President, and resulted in making himself the first President of Nicaragua.

Jerez Tellería and his followers opposed Chamorro’s changes and asked the people to revolt against the usurper. On November 28, 1853 Chamorro ordered the opposition banished from the country. Jerez Tellería founded the Liberal Party, and organized a revolt against Chamorro. Jerez, along with other liberal leaders went into exile, among them were. Lic Francisco De Castellón Sanabria, General Mateo Pineda Ugarte, General Jerónimo Ramírez Madregil Mayorga Arietta, Dr. Francisco Díaz Zapata, Lic José Guerrero Casco Quiñónez, Lic José Sebastián Salinas De La Rocha, Lic. Pedro Zeledón Mora, Dr. Gregorio Juárez Sacasa, Dr. Francisco Baca, Dr. Rosalio Cortés Sánchez, Colonel José María Valle, Colonel Clemente Rodríguez Lanzas, Sr. Matías Somarriba, Sr. Esteban Valle, Sr. Coronado Morales and Sr. Manuel Cisneros.

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115 Máximo Jerez, *1818-1881 Contestación al manifiesto del presidente de la república de Nicaragua, fecha 29 del próximo pasado a los pueblos de Centroamérica sobre el asunto de la nacionalidad* (Imprenta de la Fraternidad, 1862); Francisco Díaz Zapata, *Primera respuesta a la perfidia 1851* (Tegucigalpa: Imprenta de J. Maria Sanchez, 1851); ---Colectión de varios trabajos importantes del Dr. Francisco Díaz Zapata, representante por el Distrito de León de Nicaragua, a la legislatura de aquel estado en sus sesiones del corriente año (Imprenta de A. Lievano, 1852); --- Mociones hechas por el representante en la Cámara a que pertenece (Managua: Imprenta de la Paz, 1852); Pedro J. Zeledón Mora el 2 de julio de 1823 en León donde estaba estudiando derecho en la universidad, escribe un documento esta considerado como el primer documento referente al liberalismo del que se tiene referencia escrita en Nicaragua. See: Pedro J. Zeledón Mora, *Genio del Liberalismo* (Managua: Archivo Nacional de Nicaragua); --- Contestación que da el Señor licenciado Don Pedro Zeledón al papel que con fecha 27 de enero publicó en Granada el Señor Don Nicacio del Castillo (León, Imprenta de Minerva, 1864); ---Convención Postal Zeledón-Ourseley entre Nicaragua y S.M.B. ajustada en León por los Sres Ministros D. Pedro Zeledón y Sir W.G. Ourseley el 27 de
On January 20, 1854, Jerez Tellería was appointed Secretary to the President of Honduras. As Secretary, Jerez Tellería organized a military force to fight against Chamorro’s pretensions. Shortly after, De Castellón was appointed as Democratic/Liberal president and Jerez Tellería as Vice-President and later promoted to Commander-In-Chief of the Liberal Armed Forces. Finally Jerez Tellería was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic/Liberal government in exile. With these high ranking positions, on May 5, 1854, Jerez Tellería, De Castellón, Jerónimo Ramírez Madregil Mayorga, and his forces disembarked in the port of El Realejo and in their first encounter in “El Pozo,” defeated Chamorro’s forces.

Between June 9 and 11, 1854, the liberals reorganized its own interim government and selected De Castellón Sanabria as Liberal President, Máximo Jerez Tellería as Vice President, and José De La Trinidad Muñoz Fernández as Chief of the Army. The liberals issued a public declaration to the people of Nicaragua and to the Central Americans, giving them notice of the installation of a Liberal Provisional government as it had been proclaimed by the people and by the army of the people in use of “the people’s right to rebellion and civil disobedience.” The Liberal government was responding to Fruto Chamorro’s arbitrary and unjust government. Honduras recognized them on June 28, 1854.

William Walker Disembarks in Nicaragua: The Nicaraguan National War

When De Castellón became president of the liberals, he inherited a morass of problems. The liberals and conservatives were engaged in a heavy and bloody battle for control and power. Shortly after taking control of the party, De Castellón sought the help of American mercenaries to assist in regaining control of Nicaragua.

On October 11, 1854, De Castellón and Byron Cole, an American adventurer in Nicaragua, signed a contract to organize and bring a group of North American men or what De Castellón called an “American Phalanx.” The purpose of this group was to assist his army as a separate military corps, in defeating Fruto Chamorro’s Conservative military forces, with special regard to his presidential military guard called, “French
Phalange.” The Head of State of Nicaragua created the French Legion with former French military officers escaped from persecution from the French colonies of Haiti and from the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the years after the fights for independence from France.\footnote{Jerónimo Pérez, \textit{ibid.} p. 246.}

Cole traveled to California and on December 28, 1854 transferred his contract to William Walker, a medical doctor, attorney, journalist and adventurer under the promise of assisting De Castellón’s liberal forces against Chamorro’s Conservative forces.

On March 12, 1855, Chamorro Pérez, died of dysentery and the party assembly elected as his successor: Lic. José María Estrada. Ironically, a few months later on September 2, 1855, Lic. Francisco De Castellón President of the liberals died from cholera, and the party assembly elected as his successor: Lic. Nazario Escoto. Subsequently, Jerez Tellería became minister of government and General José De La Trinidad Muñóz Fernández, the commander of the liberal army.

On June 5, 1855, William Walker and his men set sail for Nicaragua arriving on June 16, 1855 to the port el Realejo in the Pacific coast; by June 18, he was met by Colonel Félix Ramírez Madregil Mayorga. Shortly after his arrival in Nicaragua, Walker attacked and took control of the port of San Juan Del Sur, Rivas, and went forward to attack Granada. Appointed as Brigadier General of the army, Walker began his quest for power in Nicaragua.

\textit{Democratic Forces and William Walker’s “American Phalange” Defeat the Legitimist Army and Occupy Granada. The “French Phalange” is Disbanded}

After attacking and taking over Granada on October 18, 1855, William Walker and General Ponciano Corral Acosta signed capitulation accords. Corral agreed to a general political amnesty and to Walker’s decree disbanding the Legitimist Presidential Guard or “French Phalange,” its members were given the option to leave the country, or to stay as members of the new army swearing allegiance to Nicaragua and receiving in exchange salary and a grant of land.\footnote{Some former officers from the French Phalange / French Legion, remained in Nicaragua with their families or inter married to local family’s daughters in Granada and León. It is known in Nicaragua that some family names as Bernard, Debylle and Pallais, among others could have had that origin. In 1859 when Luis Napoleon III, Emperor of France was interested in the interoceanic canal in Nicaragua; through the Nicaraguan Diplomatic mission in Paris sent President Tomás Martínez the French Commemorative Honor Medal of Saint Helen to be given to Mr. Martín María Benard Lache, a former military officer in Napoleon I army, and a resident in Granada, Nicaragua. See: Jerónimo Pérez, \textit{op cit.} p. 144.}

Walker and the liberals forces immediately organized a Provisional government for Nicaragua with the following people in the ranks: Patricio Rivas as new president of Nicaragua; General Ponciano Corral Acosta as minister of war; General Máximo Jerez Tellería as minister of foreign relations; Lieutenant Colonel Parker French as minister of
finances; Fermín Ferrer, as minister of public credit, and General William Walker as chief of the Army.\textsuperscript{120}

Even though both parties agreed, Walker rapidly removed Rivas as president and appointed an American, Fermín Ferrer as Rivas’s successor. To Walker’s surprise and dismay, President Rivas declared him a traitor, usurper and enemy of Nicaragua, issuing a decree to remove him from his military position, and called all Nicaraguans to assist in destroying him.

William Walker on January 22, 1856 cancelled the navigation transportation shipping concession granted to U.S. Commodore Conelius Vanderbildt in Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{121} Approximately, six months later on July 10, 1856, Walker made himself in an illegal election, President of Nicaragua. Walker legalized slavery and confiscated properties owned by Nicaraguans who fought against his regime.\textsuperscript{122}

Jerez Tellería, on July 3, 1856 sent a letter to U.S. President Franklin Pierce with a note to U.S. Secretary of State W. Mercy, requesting support to stop William Walker.\textsuperscript{123} While Jerez Tellería was seeking aid, Walker began taking control of the Nicaraguan institutions, eliminating those who opposed his views. The Commander of the Democratic Army, General José De La Trinidad Muñóz, was not in agreement in giving command of Nicaraguan troops to William Walker. As a result, Muñóz was killed after a battle and it was later known, by the author’s confession that Walker arranged for his assassination.

Walker went on a rampage to oust the Nicaraguan leadership; Walker accused Lic. Mateo Mayorga De La Cuadra, former Conservative Minister of Foreign Relations, of treason and executed him on October 22, 1855; He accused General Ponciano Corral Acosta, former Conservative Chief of the Army, of treason and executed him on November 8, 1855; Colonel Francisco Ugarte Argüello, a rich and prominent liberal citizen from Rivas, was accused of treason and hanged. Finally, he accused Mariano Salazar Montealegre, a prominent liberal merchant and banker from Leon of treason and executed him.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{120} José Ramirez M., \textit{José de Marcoleta Padre de la Diplomacia Nicaragüense}, tomo II. (Imprenta Nacional, 1977) p. 66.
\textsuperscript{121} Rafael Obregón Loria, \textit{Costa Rica y la Guerra del 56} (San Jose: ed. Costa Rica, 1976)
\textsuperscript{123} Sofonías Salvatierra, \textit{Máximo Jerez Inmortal. Comentario Polémico} (Managua:Tipografía Progreso,1950) pp. 16-18; 46-47; 68-69; 80-81; 86-96;104-107; 107-322; The U.S. National Archives. \textit{ibid.}
The Liberal, Conservative “National Providential Pact”

Nicaraguan liberals, conservatives, and Central American leaders grew concerned over the implications of William Walker. As parties were significantly weakened by Walker’s political and military power, Generals Máximo Jerez and Tomás Martínez met on September 6, 1856. They decided to join forces against William Walker, and on September 13, 1856 together signed the National Providential Pact.125

After receiving notice of the capture of the San Juan River fortifications by the Costa Rican army, surrounded and confronting an imminent defeat by the Nicaraguan and Costa Rica army in the city of Rivas, on May 1, 1857, under the mediation of U.S. Navy Second Lieutenant James Wiley Captain of the U.S. Ship St Mary, William Walker surrendered his weapons to Captain Wiley. Walker and his surviving troops were placed on board the St. Mary's anchored in San Juan del Sur and taken out the country. 126

The Liberal Conservative “Binary Government” of Nicaragua

The political and military struggle against William Walker left Nicaragua with a political morass and a struggle to regain control of the government. Jerez Tellería and Martínez were left to pick up the pieces of a country with a thirst for any semblance of stability. Both men were concerned with gaining control of the military and to prevent any civil and political unrest. Thus, on May 1857, Jerez Tellería and Martínez created a government junta or “Binary Government” (an interim government composed of the best minds in each of the two parties), to establish and create political, civil, and economic stability.127 Jerez Tellería drafted the “Inaugural Manifesto” which outlined the purpose of the junta to the citizens of Nicaragua. A key passage of the Inaugural Manifesto stated that:

We do not have anything to tell you about party reconciliation. The Junta is carrying the flag of union, and all Nicaraguans surrounding it, very soon will be back to the constitutional order that is the road to solid prosperity [sic]. –We pay tribute and give infinite thanks the Almighty [sic], the Universal Father of Mankind because Nicaragua still exists and because her children will take advantage of the lessons coming from a painful experience and will be more conscientious of her conservation and greatness.128

The Binary Government reorganized the administrative positions throughout the Nicaraguan government. Mixes of both liberal and conservative cabinet members were

127 Jerónimo Pérez. op cit. pp. 589-600; Aldo Díaz Lacayo. op cit. p. 34.
128 José Dolores Gámez, op cit. p.147.
appointed. The appointed cabinet members were chosen among the best liberals and Conservative men in the country. The incorporation of both conservative and liberal cabinet members was intended to propel the beginning of a cohesive, cooperative government.

With the new administration in place, Jerez Tellería and Martínez Guerrero, co-Presidents of Nicaragua on July 27, 1857, addressed a letter to U.S. President James Buchanan. They informed him about the latest events in Nicaragua; the union of the national political parties to provide for the defense and salvation of the homeland; the defeat of the filibuster William Walker; ex-President Patricio Rivas’s abdication, and about their desire to celebrate treaties of alliance, friendship, commerce, and trade with the U.S.

The Binary Government assembled a commission to draft the first bilateral constitution. The constitution was written as a solemn declaration of the peace process between the liberals and conservatives. The commission was comprised of a fusion of liberal and conservative leaders whose mandate was to draft a constitution that would blend both liberal and conservative ideologies. The constitution was unanimously approved and signed by the Nicaraguan assembly on November 1859.

Historians recall this period in Nicaragua as one of great skepticism. The military was cautious about the binary agreement and the drastic changes that followed. Mainly, they were concerned that the binary government would have no positive impact for Nicaragua. Despite the negative prognosis, Nicaragua underwent positive political and economic change.

General Domingo De Goicuria a prominent, wealthy, educated individual member of the Cuban Government Junta in Exile” was chosen by William Walker to be his ambassador in England and France. While in New York and on his way to Europe, he heard about Walker’s decrees re-establishing slavery in Nicaragua and the confiscation of properties of the Nicaraguan patriots to be given to Americans. Hence, he decided to resign his appointment as ambassador, withdrawing his support for Walker and gave it to the Nicaraguan patriotic cause. De Goicuria while in Nicaragua had developed a good friendship with Jerez Tellería and his family. He sent a letter to Jerez Tellería on January, 1856, alerting him about Walker’s new plot to return to power and advocating the restitution of the revoked and confiscated navigation concession to Vanderbilt by Walker. He informed Jerez Tellería also that Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt son-in-Law Mr. Allen, was traveling to Nicaragua, with full legal power, to settle the matter in a positive manner.

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130 The U.S. National Archives. op cit.
131 The commission comprised of the following leaders: Lic. Hermenegildo Zepeda Fernández, President of the Assembly, Dr. Rosalío Cortés Sanchez, Secretary of the Assembly, Lic. Pedro Zeledón Mora, Ministry of Government, Member of the Commission and of the Constitutional Assembly, Dr and General Máximo Jerez Tellería, leader of the democratic / liberals, Member of the Commission and of the Constituent Assembly.
133 Author’s Note: Vanderbilt steamships and commercial posts were ransacked during the Nicaraguan National War
The End of William Walker

U.S. President James Buchanan, on October 30, 1858, issued a message alerting his fellow Americans of William Walker’s plan to again invade Nicaragua. President Buchanan pleaded with Americans not to assist Walker. Despite Buchanan’s pleas, on August 6, 1860, William Walker once again had landed in Central America armed, with military supplies, and a few hundred men. 134

Pedro Zeledón Mora, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, using the recently signed treaties with Great Britain, requested the assistance of the British navy to locate and capture William Walker. Thus, the British navy located him on the Atlantic Coast of Honduras captured and then surrendered him to the Honduran authorities on September 3, 1860.

Walker was charged with piracy and filibusterism and faced a military tribunal in the city port of Trujillo, Honduras, on September 11, 1860. The Honduran military tribunal found William Walker guilty of all charges and sentenced him to death by execution. On September 12, 1860, William Walker, the American filibuster and ex-president of Nicaragua, was executed by a firing squad of Honduran soldiers in the city of Trujillo in Honduras. 135

Máximo Jerez: His Last Years

On April 15, 1858, President of Nicaragua, Martín ez Guerrero appointed Jerez Tellería as Nicaragua’s Extraordinary Ambassador to negotiate and sign a treaty with General José María Cañas, Ambassador of Costa Rica. The treaty establishing the limits between Nicaragua and Costa Rica by the San Juan River known as Jerez-Cañas Treaty. 136

and once the concession was returned to him by the “Binary Government” he rebuilt them and reopen At the time he was already facing the competition of the interoceanic Railroad in Panamá opened for business on January 28 1855, and with the opening for business of the Transcontinental Railroad in the U.S. in May 10, 1869, the great mechanized transportation revolution began. Tons of merchandize and millions of people began traveling rapidly and cheap from east to west and vice versa in the U.S. By 1872 Vanderbilt’s concession in Nicaragua was bankrupt and he put it on sale. His administrator John Edward Hollenbeck and two other former workers purchased it from him and managed to keep it alive until 1876 when they sold it back to the government of Nicaragua. He returned to the U.S. and was appointed Plenipotentiary Representative of Nicaragua. He finally went to East Los Angeles California, where he purchased land and began planting vines and involved in other business. He became a rich merchant and a prominent banker in L.A. He built the Hollenbeck Mansion, one of the finest in the city and in California at the time. The house is today a retirement home for elderly people located by the Hollenbeck Park in East Los Angeles. Finally in 1877 Francisco, Alfredo Pella’s an Italian immigrant with commercial activities in Bluefields and San Juan del Norte in Nicaragua obtained from the government of Nicaragua what remained of Hollenbeck’s operations by the San Juan River. See: The U.S. National Archives. op cit.; See: La Campaña Nacional contra los Filibusteros 1856-1957. Revista Ande. no. 26-29. (San José, 1968).


Martínez Guerrero, on April 11, 1859 appointed Jerez Tellería to be Nicaragua’s Diplomatic Envoy and Plenipotentiary to the U.S. In his official capacity as Diplomatic Envoy, Jerez Tellería was instrumental in the negotiation and implementation of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation signed by the U.S. and Nicaragua.\(^{137}\)

Jerez Tellería was given the title of “The Lion of the Isthmus” after the triumph in the battle of Coatepeque in February 1863, where he helped his friend and fellow Central American unionist, the Salvador President General Gerardo Barrios.\(^{138}\) In 1864, Jerez moved to Costa Rica where he founded the “Liceo de Costa Rica” an elementary and secondary school where he was its Principal and a teacher too. In 1868 he returned to Nicaragua and entered again into an alliance with Tomás Martínez, to fight against President Fernando Guzman. As the plan failed, Jerez and Tomas Martinez were captured and sent to exile: Jerez to Costa Rica and Martinez to El Salvador. Jerez’s exile was short lived.

In 1870, Jerez returned to Nicaragua and founded one of the first private educational centers in Nicaragua, “El Colegio de Rivas,” a primary and secondary educational institution. This institution was founded before the “Colegio de Granada.” Jerez Tellería continued his political life, and in the elections of 1873, was elected Senator of Nicaragua for the Liberal party.

By the year of 1881, U.S. Secretary of State, James G. Blaine informed the Nicaraguan Diplomatic Envoy José Dolores Rodríguez, that the U.S. had regained interest in the construction of an interoceanic canal through the Nicaraguan route. The president of Nicaragua, General Joaquín Zavala Solís, sent Jerez Tellería to discuss, and potentially negotiate, a new treaty between the U.S. and Nicaragua to build an interoceanic canal. Secretary of State Blaine and Jerez, discussed also the U.S. interest in removing the British from the Caribbean Sea, and to build a canal route through Nicaragua.

Jerez Tellería and U.S. President James A. Garfield agreed to initiate the negotiations for the signing of a treaty between the two countries for the construction of the interoceanic canal through Nicaragua.\(^{139}\) Jerez did not live to see the fruit of his work. He died in Washington DC on August 11, 1881 shortly after visiting President Garfield at the hospital where he was receiving treatment for injuries received in an attempt against his life President Garfield died on September 9, 1881.

Few men in the history of Nicaragua and in Central America generally enjoyed more respect and popularity than Máximo Jerez Tellería. Jerez’s character and intellect collectively gave him the qualities of “The Lion of the Isthmus”. He is considered as one

\(^{137}\) British and Foreign State Papers 1859-1860. \textit{ibid}; The U.S. National Archives. \textit{op cit.}

\(^{138}\) Sofonías Salvatierra \textit{op cit.} pp. 197-270.

\(^{139}\) Sofonías Salvatierra, \textit{ibid}. pp. 271-337.
of the most fecund intellectuals and an advocate of the liberal ideals, the Union of the Republics of Central America and as the founder of the Liberal Party of Nicaragua.\footnote{Jorge E. Arellano, \textit{El León del Istmo} (Bogotá: ed. Guadalupe,1989) pp. 109-117; Jerónimo Pérez. \textit{op cit}. p. 255; Sofonías,Salvatierra, \textit{ibid}.}
Chapter 4

The Liberal Revolution in Nicaragua (1893-1910)

José Santos Zelaya López’s Ascension to Power in 1893

Zelaya’s ascension to power was made possible by the local political chaos engendered by the world economic depression of the 1890s, as well as by personal, political, and ideological circumstances. On August 1, 1889 conservative President Evaristo Carazo (“Carazo”) died in Granada as a consequence of injuries sustained in an accident while traveling to visit the city of Rivas. Vice President Dr. Roberto Sacasa Sarria (“Sacasa”) a moderate conservative from León, on August 9, 1889, was sworn in by Congress to finish Carazo’s period.

Even though reelection was not allowed by the constitution, once Carazo’s term ended, Sacasa and his followers reinterpreted the Constitution so he could run as a candidate for president during the next election. When Sacasa registered, he requested permission from Congress to leave the presidency while he was campaigned. General Ignacio Chávez López Senator for Jinotega temporarily assumed Sacasa’s duties. On March 1, 1891, Sacasa declared himself President once again.

Anti-Sacasa conservatives from Granada were not pleased with the outcome, and in response, on April 28 and 29 1893, Generals Joaquín Zavala Solís, Eduardo Montiel, Pedro Balladares, and Coronel Anastasio J. Ortiz, with the support of liberal Generals Paulino Godoy and Benito Chavarría, occupied the military garrisons of San Juan del Sur, Granada, Rivas, Masaya, San Carlos, Chinandega, Ocotal and León.

As the political and economic situation worsened, U.S. Diplomatic Representative to Nicaragua, Lewis Baker, 141 offered the President, the merchants and farmers groups, to mediate. Sacasa accepted, and after three a days meeting in “Sabana Grande,” a compromise was achieved and a “Junta” was organized. During the talks the sides were represented by: General Salvador Machado and Dr. Fernando Sánchez representing the government; Dr. Miguel Vijil, Luciano Gómez and Francisco Del Castillo representing the rebels. As a result on June 16, 1893, President Roberto Sacasa decided to resign from the presidency.

A new government Junta was organized with the help of Baker. This “Junta” included Conservatives leaded by former president, General Joaquín Zavala Solís and Eduardo Montiel. Liberals were represented by their new leader, General José Santos

Zelaya López, an European educated, coffee grower, highly skilled politician, strong administrator and capable military man. \(^{142}\)

The Conservative coalition did not endure, due to their ideological divisions and their inability to agree on anything. There were concerns over Zelaya’s participation in the “Junta.” Accordingly, the conservatives recalled Zelaya to active military duty to keep him cut off any government decision-making opportunity. Zelaya was not pleased with his new military assignment, thus he began plotting his counter-revolution. Zelaya began by seeking the appointment of General Rubén Alonso Jerez to be military Commander of León, whom Zelaya’s trusted as an ally.

Zelaya’s request remained unanswered. Alonso proposed to Zelaya to use a different tactic: to request the appointment of General Paulino Godoy to be military Chief of León, and General Benito Chavarría, to police Director. The potential appointment would benefit Zelaya politically. Godoy and Chavarría would gather all weapons, held by the Conservative that could be needed for future military operations.

Godoy and Chavarría were appointed to their posts as requested. General Anastasio Ortíz Argeñal was appointed General Commander of the City of León. On June 1893, Ortíz Argeñal invited Zelaya to visit him in León. On July 11, 1893, Zelaya, Ortíz Argeñal and advisors met in the Port of Momotombo and signed the so-called “Pact of Momotombo.” The document was signed by Liberals: Generals Paulino Godoy, Rubén Alonso Jerez, Benito Chavarría and José Dolores Gámez, and Conservatives: General Anastasio Ortíz Argeñal, Leonardo Lacayo and Modesto Barrios. The pact outlined an arrangement, to win the revolution, and called for a Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution and appointed Zelaya as President of Nicaragua and Ortíz Argeñal as Vice-President.

On July 21, 22 and 23 Zelaya’s forces attack “Mateare,” la Cuesta and Managua was under blockade, in view of that conservative forces abandoned the city, and on July 25, 1893, Zelaya entered Managua triumphantly as the new leader of Nicaragua. Zelaya’s first order of business was to offer a cease-fire and immunity to all. In light of that, on July 30, 1893, ex-President, Joaquín Zavala Solís, surrendered his weapons to Zelaya’s under an agreement that guaranteed immunity to his forces. \(^{143}\)

On July 14, 1894, Zelaya put together a Constituent Assembly and drafted a Constitution. The Constitution guaranteed freedom of worship and abolished state religion, thus secularizing the state for the first time in history. The Constituent Assembly confirmed José Santos Zelaya López as President of the Republic. The Assembly further resurrected the Vice-President position and was given General Anastasio Ortíz. The inauguration of Zelaya and Ortíz occurred on February 1, 1894 in Managua.

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\(^{142}\) Benjamin Teplitz, *ibid.*

\(^{143}\) Benjamin Teplitz, *ibid.* U.S. National Archives, *Lewis Baker to US Secretary of State, July 18, 1893*, no. 48;55; 64; roll 76. (Washington D.C.).
Zelaya’s first order of business was to seize and nationalize all properties owned by the Catholic Church and allowed the establishment of other religious dominations. Municipal governments were freed from state central control; suffrage was made obligatory and secret, a unicameral legislature was established, and primary schools were made free and obligatory. Zelaya began the process of assimilating indigenous populations into the broader nation and propelled the proletarization of the rural population for first time in Central America, thus financially, he brought a measure of stability to Nicaragua by paying off its debts and commissioned important public works with local financing.

Among the modern policies instituted by Zelaya’s government were: a) freedom of thought; b) freedom of cult; c) state secularization; d) separation of State and Church; e) a secular government; f) the granting of civil rights to women, direct, and universal rights to vote; g) municipal autonomy; h) introduction of civil marriage and divorce; i) abolishment of special privileges; and j) freedom of movement. 144

Zelaya’s government laid the foundation for developing a modern Nicaraguan nation-state, by implementing important changes regarding the political systems. This occurred despite the fact, that he neither brought about a social revolution, at least in modern terms, nor accomplished the construction of an advanced industrial state, nor assumed the role of strong man or “caudillo” and dictator by prohibiting free elections in Nicaragua. 145

According to historians,146 the period of Zelaya’s reign marked the most drastic phase of modernization in Nicaraguan history. Unfortunately, however, no definitive assessment of the ultimate success or failure of his policies is possible due to the foreign interventions that interrupted this national project. The most pernicious effect of foreign meddling during that period was the creation of a power vacuum that led to almost nine decades of nationalist wars of resistance, interspersed by short periods of peace. The influence of foreign interests in Nicaragua during the first decade of the 20th century tended to retard, if not utterly destroy, the progressive policies of change implemented by Zelaya. 147

**U.S. First Military Intervention in Nicaragua; José Santos Zelaya’s government overthrown by the U.S.: 1909**

A serious conflict ensued during Zelaya’s presidency over foreign ambitious interests of the potential interoceanic canal. Nicaragua, in response to the U.S. over the projected canal convention, did not accept the terms under which the country was to cede in perpetuity its territorial sovereignty and rights over the canal route and infrastructure.

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144 Benjamin Teplitz, *op cit.*
For a variety of reasons (financial, political, and geographical) even if the money requested was later reduced to a mere $1,000,000, after the de facto creation of the Republic of Panamá by the U.S., the canal construction issue was resolved in favor of Panamá.

In the early 1900s, U.S. and Central American governments made a concerted effort to reduce regional tensions, in spite of that by 1906 Central America was in chaos. A war had broken out between Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and though the U.S. and Mexico attempted to mediate the conflict, regional tensions continued to flare. A peace conference in Costa Rica failed due to the intransigence of President Zelaya, who had successfully fomented a revolution in Honduras, and was attempting one in El Salvador in the midst of the peace process. When Guatemala, the Central American regional power, threatened to intervene, a regional war seemed likely. The U.S. and Mexico, however, interceded, and called for a conference to settle the area’s dispute. In 1907, Central American representatives met in Washington DC, and drew up a series of treaties designed to prevent the sort of trouble that had recently plagued the area. A Central American Court (“The C.A. Court”) of Justice was established in the hope that all disputes would be settled peacefully. Dr. and General Benjamín F. Zeledón Rodríguez (“Zeledón,”) nominated by Nicaragua and confirmed as Justice to the Central American Court of Justice. 148

In these arrangements, Honduras was made neutral to keep the more powerful neighbors as a base to launch filibustering expeditions. The signed treaties were the first hopeful signs for Central America until political leaders in several of the republics namely Nicaragua and Guatemala continued to stir up trouble. Despite cooperation between Mexico and the U.S., including joint naval patrols of the west-coast of Central America, revolutions continued to flare in Honduras and El Salvador. Only additional strong protests from Mexico and the U.S. prevented large-scale conflicts from erupting in the wake of the treaties.

In Nicaragua, Zelaya continued to present problems for U.S. policy-makers. For years he had been stirring the pot of revolution and change in Central America and battling Conservative President Manuel Estrada Cabrera in Guatemala for a claim as the region’s most influential leader.

In 1909, a revolution began on the Nicaraguan east coast between ultra conservative General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas, and Zelaya’s governor of the eastern providence, General Juan Estrada. The rebels had the advantage of geographic isolation, and used their position in Miskito territory and the support of U.S. wood cutting and gold-mine concessionaries to harass the government’s holdings in that region.

The U.S., though concerned primarily with the canal question, based its objections to Zelaya’s government and justifications for its intervention on a different set of pretexts. The Nicaraguan government after the U.S. rejection of the Nicaraguan route

148 Central American Court of Justice, Anales de la Corte Centroamericana de Justicia, (San José, 1908); Zeledón was a young and prominent attorney, Lieutenant, Colonel, Army auditor, and Managua’s Attorney General.
for the interoceanic canal had sought financial assistance from Japan, France, and Germany. Finally in January 1909, Nicaragua obtained 2 million sterling pounds from the British Ethelburga Syndicate, to build a railroad from the Atlantic coast shores of the great lake of Granada.

On March 4, 1909, William Howard Taft, was elected U.S. President and Philander Chase Knox became U.S. Secretary of State. Secretary Knox, formally Attorney General under President Roosevelt was an attorney and politician from Philadelphia eager to prevent Europe from interfering in Latin America. President Taft and Secretary Knox determined that to prevent European interference, U.S. must replace European financial influence with that of the U.S.

Secretary Knox’s involvement with Nicaragua was through his private legal firm representing the Fletcher family from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, principal stockowners owners of “The U.S. and Nicaragua Company and its subsidiaries La Luz and Los Angeles Mining Company.” With mining and logging business activities in the Atlantic region of Nicaragua, the Fletchers were bitter adversaries of President Zelaya. Unsurprisingly, Knox himself who was a relative by marriage of the Fletchers is thought to have owned stock in the company. The corporate secretary of the company was Adolfo Díaz Recinos, a Nicaraguan accountant.

President Taft’s “Dollar Diplomacy” foreign policy, as it has been called, was intended to decrease the probability of future American military intervention, and to solidify U.S. political and economic dominance by replacing American “Bullets with U.S. Dollars” foreign policy. It was hoped that stable economic growth would reduce or eliminate outside threats to the Central American governments.

Furthermore, much was made of the execution of two American citizens living in Nicaragua. The first American, Mr. Lee Roy Cannon, was a U.S. civil engineer who resided and had a business in Matiguás, Matagalpa. He bought and sold rubber throughout the country. The second American, Leonard Groce, resided in Nicaragua had a Nicaraguan wife and four children. Both men had high ranks in the Army led by General Emiliano Chamorro. They were captured while planting landmines and dynamite along the San Juan River with intentions to blow up the riverboat “Diamante” that was transporting 500 government soldiers. The men were put on trial and accused of rebellion and subsequently found guilty. They were sentenced to death and executed on November 16, 1909. The U.S. strongly objected the executions of two citizens, and the event quickly provoked American displeasure with the Nicaraguan regime.

The U.S. broke off diplomatic relations with Nicaragua, and though it was never official policy, it tacitly took sides against the government of Zelaya. On December 1, 1909, U.S. Secretary of State Knox, sent a note to the Nicaraguan diplomatic representative in Washington, Felipe Rodríguez, announcing that the U.S. did not

recognize Zelaya’s government, and suggested that Zelaya step down or suffer additional U.S. reprisals.

What follows is a literal transcription found in U.S. the government archives of U.S. Secretary of State Philander Knox note to Mr. Felipe Rodríguez Nicaragua’s Chargee D’Affairs in Washington D.C.:

Department of State, Washington. December 1, 1909.  
To Mr. Felipe Rodriguez, Nicaraguan Chargee D’Affaires

Sir: Since the Washington conventions of 1907 it is notorious that President Zelaya has almost continuously kept Central America in tension and turmoil, that he has repeatedly and flagrantly violated the provisions of the conventions and baleful influence upon Honduras, whose neutrality the conventions were to assure, has sought to discredit those sacred international obligations to the great detriment of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala, whose governments meanwhile appear to have been able patiently to strive for the loyal support of the engagements so solemnly undertaken at Washington under the auspices of the U.S. and Mexico.

It is equally a matter of common knowledge that under the regime of President Zelaya republican institutions have ceased in Nicaragua to exist, except in name; that public opinion and the press have been throttled and that prison has been the reward of any tendency to real patriotism. My consideration for you personally impels me to abstain from unnecessary discussions of the painful details of a regime which unfortunately has been a plot upon the history of Nicaragua and a discouragement to a group of republics whose aspirations need only the opportunity of free and honest government. In view of the interests of the U.S. and of its relations to the Washington conventions, appeal against these situations has long since been made to this government by a majority of the Central American republics. There is now added the appeal through the revolution of a great body of the Nicaraguan people. Two Americans, who this government is now convinced were officers connected with the revolutionary forces and therefore entitled to be dealt with according to the enlightened practice of civilized nations, have been killed by direct order of President Zelaya. Their execution is said to have been preceded by barbarous cruelties. The consulate at Managua is now officially reported to have been menaced.

There is thus a sinister culmination of an administration also characterized by a cruelty to its own citizens which has, until the recent outrage, found vent in the case of this country in a succession of petty annoyances and indignities which many months ago made it impossible to ask an American Minister longer to reside at Managua. From every point of view it has evidently become difficult for the U.S. further to delay more active responses to the appeals so long made to its duty to its citizens to its dignity, to Central America and to civilization. The government of the U.S. is convinced that the revolution represents the ideals and the will of a majority of the Nicaraguan people more faithfully than does the government of President Zelaya and that its peaceable control is well nigh as extensive as that hitherto so sternly attempted by the government at Managua.
There is now added the fact as officially reported from more than one quarter that there are already indications of a rising in the western provinces in favor of a Presidential candidate intimately associated with the old regime. In this it is easy to see new elements tending toward a condition of anarchy which leaves at a given time, no definite responsible source to which the government of the U.S. could look for reparation for the killing of Messrs. Canon and Groce, or, indeed, for the protection which must be assured American citizens and American interests in Nicaragua.

In these circumstances the President no longer feels for the government of President Zelaya, that respect and confidence which would make it appropriate hereafter to maintain with it regular diplomatic relations, implying the will and the ability to respect and assure what is due from one state to another. The government of Nicaragua, which you have hitherto represented, is hereby notified, as will be also the leaders of the revolution, that the government of the U.S. will hold strictly accountable for the protection of American life and property the factions de facto in control of the eastern and western portions of the Republic of Nicaragua.

As for the reparations found due, after careful consideration, for the killing of Messrs. Groce and Canon, the government of the U.S. would be loath to impose upon the innocent people of Nicaragua a heavy burden of expiating the acts of a regime forced upon them or to exact from a succeeding government if it have quite different politics, the imposition of such a burden. Into the question of ultimate reparation there must enter the question of the existence at Managua of a government capable of responding to demands.

There must enter, also the question how far it is possible to reach those actually responsible and those who perpetrated the tortures reported to have preceded the execution, if these be verified, and the question whether the government be one entirely dissociated from the present intolerable conditions and worthy to be trusted to make impossible a recurrence of such acts, in which case the President, as a friend of your country, as he is also of the other republics of Central America, might be disposed to have indemnity confined to what was reasonably due to relatives of the deceased and punitive only in so far as the punishment might fall where really due. In pursuance of this policy the government of the U.S. will temporarily withhold its demand for reparation, in the meanwhile taking such steps as it deems wise and proper to protect American interests.

To insure the future protection of legitimate American interests, in consideration of the interests of the majority of the Central American republics, and in the hope for making more effective the friendly offices exerted under the Washington conventions, the government of the U.S. reserves for further consideration at the proper time the question of stipulating also that the constitutional government of Nicaragua obligates itself by convention for the benefit of all the governments concerned, as a guarantee for the future loyal support of the Washington conventions and their peaceful and progressive aims. From the foregoing it will be apparent to you that yours quality is terminated. I shall be happy to receive you, as I shall be happy to receive the representative of
the revolution, each as the unofficial channel of communication between the government of the U.S. and the de facto authorities to whom I look for the protection of American interest pending the establishment in Nicaragua of a government with which the U.S. can maintain diplomatic relations. Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration. Signed: Philander C. Knox. U.S. Secretary of State. 150

Shortly after Secretary Knox’s note, U.S. President Taft ordered U.S. Secretary of the Navy to sail on December 6, 1909; U.S. Navy Admiral William Wirt Kimball sailed to Nicaragua with nine U.S. battleships: the Des-Moines, Tacoma, Marietta, Yorktown, Albany, Princeton, Vicksburg, The Prairie, and Buffalo (initially acted as Flagship, later substituted by the USS Albany). The battleships were part of the “White Fleet,” the new and powerful U.S. naval force created by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. The ships arrived off the coast of Nicaragua on December 16, 1909. By December 20, 1909, the ships were anchored in Port Corinto off the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. A force of 32 officers and 709 marines landed in the Port under the command of Colonel James E. Mahoney.

The following is a literal English transcription of a letter containing Admiral William W. Kimball order to shop sail to Nicaragua:

Office of the Secretary
Department of the Navy Washington L-BRD.
December 15, 1909.
Sir:

1. The Department desires you to prepare, or cause to be prepared and submit war plans for landing in Nicaragua on both coasts under circumstances similar to the present with a view to holding the important coast ports. You will also please submit additional plans as far as may be practicable relative to an advance into the interior of the country from both coasts.

2. A copy of this letter has been forwarded to the Senior Officer Present on the East Coast direct with instructions to carry on the work indicated in that locality. Very Respectfully

3. To: Commander Nicaraguan Expeditionary Squadron. USS BUFFALO.
Signed: George Von L. Mayer Secretary of the Navy 151

After the U.S. Navy landed on both coasts of Nicaragua, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin F. Zeledón R. was sent to command Nicaraguan troops defending the port of San Juan Del Sur. 152


151 U.S. National Archives, folder 5.6. op cit.

President José S. Zelaya, under such intense pressure, resigned as head of state of Nicaragua before the National Assembly on December 16th, 1909, expressing, on his resignation letter, that:

Messrs Deputies:

The difficult circumstances through which the Republic is passing demands acts of true abnegation and patriotism of good citizens who cannot contemplate with indifference the sorrows of the common mother unjustly overwhelmed by a hard destiny. You well know that there is burning in the country a revolution immoral and shameful which even threatens to destroy the sovereignty of the fatherland. You also know the hostile attitude of a powerful nation which against all right, has intervened in our political affairs and publicly furnished the rebels the aid which they have asked for, upon being conquered everywhere by the heroism of our army, and as the revolutionary chiefs have declared that they will deposit the fratricidal arms when the present ruler leaves power; desiring to avoid increased shedding of blood and to contribute efficiently to the pacification of the country, I manifest to the honorable National Assembly that I am disposed to separate myself from the government and to deposit consequently the supreme power for the remaining period of my term to the person who may be designated in conformity with article 78 of the constitution. I desire that this determination shall contribute to the good of Nicaragua by the establishment of peace and above all, the suspension of the hostility manifested by the American government to whom I do not desire to be a pretext, that it may continue intervening in any way in the destiny of the country.153

Important mining, logging, primarily financed the movement that toppled Zelaya, and financial sectors based in the eastern U.S. The Fletcher family bankrolled the revolution by funding mining interests in Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast. The Fletcher family passed a portion of the monies raised onto the corporate secretary of the Fletcher’s company, Adolfo Díaz. Adolfo Díaz Recinos, between 1909 and 1933, during the U.S. military occupation of Nicaragua, was named President of Nicaragua on three separate occasions.154

General Juan José Estrada, one of the leaders of the revolt against President Zelaya, and also ex-President of Nicaragua (1910-1911) confessed in an interview published by The New York Times on September 9, 1912, that:

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154 Harold Norman Denny, Dollars for Bullets. The Story of American Rule in Nicaragua (Connecticut: Greenwood P, Westport, 1929) pp. 63-83; Professor Denny, interviewed Diaz during the course of the writing of his book, and he was unable to explain the origin of the U.S$ 600,000.00 which he had provided to the anti Zelaya revolutionaries in their bid to overthrow his government. Diaz’s salary as an accountant for the mining companies could have not accumulated him such an enormous amount of money.
...Commercial interests from the U.S. east coast had contributed to the armed movement to topple Zelaya. That he had been given a million dollars $1,000,000, by American companies located in Nicaragua; plus two hundred thousand dollars $200,000 from the firm of Joseph Beers and one hundred fifty thousand dollars $150,000 from Samuel Weil … and that ships of the United Fruit Company carried men and ammunition. 155

Under the personal protection of the Mexican diplomatic envoy in Managua, Zelaya took a train from Managua to Corinto. President General José S. Zelaya received a 21 cannon gun farewell salute from the Port of Corinto, boarded the Mexican war ship, “General Guerrero,” and left Nicaragua on December 24, 1909, never to return.

The country’s financial stability, achieved under Zelaya’s presidency, would eventually change into instability. Years of foreign military political intervention followed. The railway to the Atlantic was never built. The rails and machinery were sold as scrap-iron by family members of government officials for personal benefit, the sleeping cars rotted in the jungle, and the adjacent lands were distributed amongst governing families.

Finally, Dr. Salvador Castrillo Gámez, the anti-Zelaya rebel’s envoy to the U.S., later affirmed that he was responsible for the intervention, “understanding that only by turning a key to Washington could Zelaya be overthrown, acknowledging that which is today plain as day,” Castrillo wrote:

The fall of Zelaya, brought disgrace to Nicaragua …The evils to be remedied were relative, and we could have washed that dirty laundry in the family … It was a paradise compared with today. And the Atlantic Railroad, which he was building which only he with his great strength and energy could have succeeded in completing – would have rebounded to the grandeur of Nicaragua, which instead has retrogressed to the days of 1855 and 56. 156

Not everyone wanted the Americans out of the U.S. on December 19, 1909, a group of influential and prominent citizens from the city of Granada sent a letter to the U.S. consul in Managua, requesting the landing of U.S. troops: 157

We, the undersigned residents of Granada, citizens of the U.S. and Nicaraguans, respectfully request an immediate landing of troops from the American warships, now in Corinto harbor, and the dispatch without delay of a strong force of marines to Granada, as a protection to our lives and properties Signers: David Arellano,

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156 Karl Bermann, Under the Big Stick. Nicaragua and the U.S. since 1848. (Boston: South End P, 1986) pp. 130-150, 312; Castrillo Gámez’s statements were published at the time Zelaya’s remains were returned to Nicaragua. See: Enrique Aquino, La Personalidad Política de Zelaya. El Libro de su Vida (Managua: Talleres Gráficos Pérez, 1930) pp 113-115.

On December 21, 1909, another group of citizens from Granada, Conservatives, sent a letter to Olivares the U.S. consul in Managua expressing:

We earnestly urge and beseech therefore that you disembark troops at Corinto immediately and dispatch with all haste a strong detachment of blue jackets or Marines to assume control of the situations here, that our lives and property be safe ... It is evident that the government is either unable or unwilling to guarantee us any protection and that any delay in your coming to our aid must result in authorized pillage and murder. Though under the greatest provocation we have stay sending such a petition but a feeling of duty towards ourselves and our families constrains us to delay longer taking such a step. This petition does not cancel the one dated the 19th instead but rather endorses it.

Admiral William W. Kimball, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Navy on December 31, 1909, discussing a trip to the capital city of Managua, and describing the conversations he had with David Arellano, a prominent businessman from Granada:

David Arellano was most interesting in the exposition of his ideas. Like most of the ardent Granadino conservatives he wears a Knox button and is ardent interventionist. He is an intelligent, U.S. educated, coffee merchant.... He expressed the opinion that we should in some way, with or without force, intervene and put this country on its legs as we did in Cuba's case: that was the only hope for his country, enormously rich in natural resources and with a people the body of which was all right. 

Do you mean to say I asked, that because conditions connected with war responsibilities made it absolutely necessary for us to lend Cuba a hand, we must therefore dry nurse Central American countries? He smiled in a deprecatory way and replied: Well you have got to do it sometime soon and the sooner the better for us and easier for you. Why did, you with other prominent Granadinos sign those fool petitions asking me to send an armed force to protect Nicaraguans against other Nicaraguans? I asked him...

We hoped in that way to induce intervention, You were perfectly aware of that, he replied.

158 *ibid.* folder 2.
160 Translation taken from: U.S. National Archives, Washington DC. *op. cit.* folders 5-8;
The conservatives of Granada persisted further, and on January 4th, 1910, a group of them invited Admiral Kimball to visit Granada:

We tender this invitation in our name and also in behalf of the immense majority of our fellow townsmen, who are all anxious to give Admiral Kimball and his officers a heartily welcome and a public testimony of the deep sense of gratitude we feel towards them and the people and government of the U.S. they represent, for the sympathy they have shown towards the people of Nicaragua in the tremendous crisis we are now experiencing, and the interests they are taking in helping us to get through it in safety.  

Zelaya’s Aftermath: The Presidency of Dr. José Madriz

After Zelaya’s departure from Nicaragua, the National Congress unanimously elected Dr. José Madriz Rodríguez to take over the presidency. Madriz, a highly respected liberal, hoped relations with the U.S. would be restored once Zelaya was ousted and the government could suppress the rebel forces, and that the government could crush the rebels. Neither proved to be the case.

Shortly after Madriz’ ascension to power, on April 9, 1910, Admiral Kimball informed President Madriz that he was disbanding the U.S. military expeditionary force in Nicaragua:

No. 493 WWK/AJC.
US.S. ALBANY, Flagship.
Corinto, Nicaragua. April 9, 1910
Sir:

1. I have the honor to inform you that the Nicaraguan Expeditionary Squadron is disbanded and that I propose to sail for Panamá in this ship on Monday, the 11th instant.
2. The Princeton will be left in this port and the Paducah on the East Coast.
3. Allow me to express my sincerest appreciation of the friendly and attentive manner in which my somewhat complicated duties in Nicaragua have been forwarded by your government.

Very Respectfully,

W.W. Kimball
Rear Admiral U.S. Navy, Retired,
Commander Nicaraguan Expeditionary Squadron.

To Dr. Jose Madriz  
Campo de Marte,  
Managua, Nicaragua.  

Admiral Kimball, wrote a personal and confidential letter to Madriz where he deplored and criticized U.S. Secretary of State Knox’s orders and U.S. government policies towards Nicaragua. In this letter he opposed military interventions. An excerpt of the letter below:

Kimball letter states:

(Confidential) ALBANY. Corinto, April 9, 1910

My Dear Dr. Madriz:

I had hoped that before I left Nicaraguan waters the affairs in Nicaragua and the U.S. would have reached a more settled condition than at the present obtains: but it seems that that is not to be at present.

As I have just officially informed you, I am homeward bound on Monday, taking the big stick along. Since I have been here I have rejoiced that I visited you early in my stay and that we established such mutual relations that I could always be sure that in spite of the fact that at times I displayed certain brusqueness in correspondence you would clearly understand the conditions that controlled my actions.

It has touched me more than I can say to know from your actions, that in spite of the humbug, malice and falsehood which have so thoroughly beclouded the relations between our countries you have always had faith in the kindly feeling and intentions of the American people toward Nicaragua.

And you are right. It is lamentable that some so-called American interests have been able so far succeeded in overwhelming the real interest of the U.S. in Nicaragua.

I thank God that there are strong indications that the strength of organized falsehood is weakening—-that truth, who has been living at the bottom of her well, because, poor goddess she was not allowed to show her head, will arise; for after all we believe that “Truth is mighty and will prevail.”

I have constantly admired the way you have met obstacles the seemed insuperable. You have many more to meet. But you are young and strong and are working for the highest thing a man can work for, the prosperity, happiness, honor and dignity of your country.

You have succeeded more perhaps than is apparent to you in the mist of your troubles. As a “looker-on here in Verona,” I can perhaps see the success more clearly than one in the centre of the fray. How far, God alone knows; but if you can succeed in your intention to hold elections and work for a return to constitutional form of government and then withdraw to private life, you will conquer the admiration of the world, and will hold the future of Central America in your hand.

As you have clearly shown without the necessity of an explanation from me, I have been opposed to intervention in Nicaraguan affairs, either moral or by force for the reason that national tutelage is repulsive from both the nation which extends and that which receives.

But I have, as you have, a dream of the coming of the Central American Republic with a government strong enough to abolish the criminal waste of revolution and good enough to abolish the reason for revolution.

And for his I hope my country can help. It can if it sees the right way. Under conditions likely to exist during the present generation, the federation of the Central American republics is not likely to come about wholly from within. If my country could see that it could require the union to be made it would see that the desired result could be brought about by expressing that requirement and by the use of moral force alone. It would also see that in exercising that force there could be no question of acquisition of territory an accusation that you know and I know terrifies the people of the United States in spite of the fact that we are known as American hogs, rooting about to find some weak country to devour.

In the case of the Republic of Central America, which we might help to bring about by a somewhat arbitrary attitude, but without armed force, there would be no fear that we where bullying a weak country for territorial aggrandizement, for it would be too big and too fine a country to allow such an idea to have place. You see my hope is that my country can furnish the cement only, the only thing [sic] lacking, but a most necessary thing for the construction of the great and beautiful edifice of the Republic of Central America.

Apart from the altruistic point of view, the practical one is inviting for my people; for with the Central American Republic in being our commercial relations would be large and satisfactory.

Wishing you success, and success and again success, in your patriotic intentions. Faithfully. W.W. Kimball

The U.S. Navy and Marine expeditionary force remained in Nicaragua until April 11, 1910 when it departed from the port of Corinto. On April 9, 1910, days before leaving Nicaragua, Kimball sent a Memorandum to U.S. Navy Department Commander Hayes:

U.S.N. Albany Flagship.
Corinto Nicaragua,
April 9, 1910
CONFIDENTIAL

163 U.S. National Archives, op cit. folder 8.; A photographic copy of Rear Admiral W. W. Kimball’s letter to President José Madriz was given by Madriz widow to Mr. Juan Leets, and Mr. Leets supplied a photographic copy of the letter to the New York Times. The newspaper published the letter on its January 23, 1914 edition. Copy to me courtesy of Mr. José Mejía; See: The New York Times, January 23, 1914; Madriz’s wife kept the letter with her husband’s personal papers. After Madriz death on May 14, 1911 she provided a photographic copy to Mr. Juan Leets, a member of a group of Nicaraguan liberals in the U.S. fighting to defeat the approval of the proposed Bryan-Chamorro canal treaty in Nicaragua before a U.S. Senate appointed sub-committee. When Leets received an appointment to give his testimony before the U.S. Senate Sub-Committee, he read Kimball’s letter to the Senators.
Memorandum for Commander Hayes.
1. There are no unexecuted orders from the Department.
2. The accompanying papers give all the information I have in regard to our government policy in Nicaragua.
3. Captain Fowler, late of Chamorro’s forces, has been offered asylum by me, he to arrive alongside without assistance. I have agreed with the authorities de facto that he will not enter Nicaraguan territory until after peace is declared. Fowler understands this. Suggest that you receive him and send him out of country at your discretion.
4. Consul Olivares is in difficulties with vice-consul Caldera. Both These men apparently have strong conservative sympathies. I distrust Olivares from every point of view.
5. Consul Johnson is dependable. Vice-consul Leonard is, in my opinion, the man of best judgment in the consular corps in Nicaragua, and entirely reliable.
6. Consular agent De Savingny at Matagalpa, has nerve and force but poor judgment.
7. Dr. Salinas, Comandante de facto, will probably leave shortly after I do.
8. Dr. Madriz is inclined to be very considerate of American interests, although he is constantly bullied and hectored by Consul Olivares.
9. Dr. Baca, Minister General, is a Leonese and a strong liberal in politics. He may be relied on to keep any promise regularly made.
10. I do not know Irias.
11. David Arellano of Granada, now in hiding, is, perhaps, the leading man for that faction of the Conservative Party, which is working for intervention by the U.S.
12. Captain Ryder, wharf superintendent, is a reliable man; rather opposed to the Madriz government.

W.W. Kimball Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Retired
Commander, Nicaraguan Expeditionary Squadron


The Madriz’ government was unable to defeat the rebels so long as U.S. Marines protected them. Madriz and his supporters believed that their cause was hopeless and their military forces were useless against the shield of the U.S. Marines. After several

164 U.S. National Archives. op cit.
165 José Madriz Zelaya, Tirano de Nicaragua y Perturbador de Centro América (Managua: Banco Mercantil, 1995); pp.55-59.
attempts to establish direct contact with the U.S. government, it was clear to Madriz that U.S. recognition and cooperation would not come.  

**The Presidency of General Juan J. Estrada**

In the turmoil that followed, Madriz, under strong military and political pressure, resigned on August, 20 1910 from the presidency and left Nicaragua, General Juan José Estrada the former governor of Bluefields replaced Madriz and by December 1910 Congress confirmed him as President of Nicaragua and Adolfo Diaz Recinos was appointed as his vice-President.

On January 1, 1911, the U.S. recognized Juan Estrada as president of Nicaragua and Adolfo Diaz, as vice-President, and immediately thereafter a financial agreement was forged through a U.S. special representative, Mr. Thomas C. Dawson, but trouble for the fragile coalition government was inevitable.

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166 ibid. p. 79.
Chapter 5

Dr. and General Benjamin Francisco Zeledón Rodriguez
Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua in Rebellion

President Adolfo Diaz wrote to the U.S. government seeking for assistance:

In my administration I shall try to rehabilitate and develop the public finances and to refund the national debt, and to that end ask the aid of the American government to place a loan on the security of part of the customs duties whose security collection will be made in a manner agreed upon between the United States and Nicaragua … with the object of facilitating the fulfillment of these and other arrangements I ask that the government of the U.S. send to Managua a commissioner in case any of these negotiations require the formality of a convention.\(^\text{167}\)

The U.S. State Department sent Tomas C. Dawson, a U.S. Representative in Panamá, to negotiate an agreement with Nicaragua. The agreement provided for a $15 million loan secured by U.S. control of the customs collectorship: from the administrator of the railroads, banks and steamships administration. The U.S. arranged for the establishment of a Nicaraguan National Bank, and reorganized the Nicaraguan National Railroad. U.S. private firms took control of 51 percent of both the bank and railroad (already being managed privately), in exchange for capital improvements and immediate cash infusion and long-term financial assistance. Under the "Dawson-Díaz," pact, Díaz placed the local economy and government properties under the control of U.S. financial institutions: the Brown & Seligman Bros. Bank, D. Emergency Bank and others.

In May, 1911, since both President Estrada and war Minister, General Luis Mena, opposed the Dawson Díaz pacts they were forced to resign. Vice President Adolfo Díaz and General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas were appointed vice president. Irrespective of the succession, Mena was determined to grab the presidency at the next “election.” Mena still controlled most of the Nicaraguan conservative army and weapons. Further troubles were clearly ahead.

By June, 1911, Mena was in open revolt against Díaz and the Chamorro government, thus working to forge agreements with the Liberals led by General Benjamín F. Zeledón R., who were also in revolt against Díaz and Chamorro.

General Mena obtained control of the Nicaraguan National Assembly. The Assembly withdrew recognition for the U.S. sponsored government of Adolfo Diaz and

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167 Clifford D. Ham, Colonel and U.S. Collector General of Customs Americanizing Nicaragua, How Yankee Marines, Financial Oversight and Baseball are Stabilizing Central America, The American Review of Review (1916) p. 190; (Colonel Clifford Ham was the U.S. collector general of customs in Nicaragua from December 1911 to June 1928; and formerly a high ranking customs official in the Philippines under US military occupation).
Emiliano Chamorro and were thus impeached. On August 10, 1911, the National Assembly, elected General Luis Mena as president, and authorized him to use all means necessary to preserve the republic’s freedom and the reestablishment of peace.168

**U.S. Second Military Intervention in Nicaragua.: 1912**

On August 3, 1912, a group of American companies and businesses in Nicaragua, including an American financial company controlling the railroad from Corinto to Granada sought the help of Diaz to help control the volatile situation left behind from the previous conflict. Diaz and Chamorro urged prompt measures for the safety of their interests. However, the Diaz’s Minister of Foreign Affairs responded to the group by stating:

Our government regret, to inform you, that would not be able to offer such protection and that in consequence our government desires that the Government of the United States guarantee with his forces security for the property of American citizens in Nicaragua and that it extend its protection to all inhabitants of the Republic.169

U.S. Minister in Managua, George T. Weitzel, on August 4, 1912 requested the assistance of the U.S. government to send armed guard to protect the U.S. Legation as well as the lives and properties of Americans and foreigners in Managua.170 On August 24, 1912, U.S. President Taft, U.S. Secretary of State Knox ordered U.S. Secretary of the Navy Beekman Winthrop to dispatch a U.S. Navy fleet of 10 war ships from the “White Fleet”: the Annapolis, Tacoma, Justin, Denver, California, Glacier, Prometheus, Saturn, Colorado and Cleveland to Nicaragua, under the Command of Rear Admiral William Henry Hudson Southwell with twenty-nine high rank officers and more than two thousand five hundred men. In addition, there were seven hundred and fifty U.S. Marines under the command of Colonel Joseph Pendleton.

The fleet sailed from Philadelphia Pennsylvania to Nicaragua and arrived at the port of Corinto early in the morning on September 4, 1912. The Fleet left a battle ship blocking the port of Bluefields in the Atlantic Ocean and began disembarking and sending troops to León, Managua, and Granada.171

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Unlike past historical events, two leaders, a Liberal Nationalist and a Conservative Nationalist joined forces to confront the intervening forces. On August 1, 1912, Generals Zeledón and General Mena signed an agreement sealing a political and military alliance, calling for a national mobilization and declared the Republic in a state of war.

However as Mena had become ill by mid August, Zeledón assumed the leadership and command of the national army and of the government of Nicaragua. Zeledón became The Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua in Rebellion. By the end of August 1912, the forces under Zeledón controlled the cities of Chinandega, León, Chichigalpa, El Viejo, El Sauce, Tipitapa, Jinotepe, Diria, Masaya, Granada, Rivas, Managua, and other important places. The capital was under siege.

Who Was Dr. and General Benjamín Francisco Zeledón Rodríguez?

Benjamín Francisco Zeledón ("Benjamin Zeledón") was born in the city of La Concordia in the Department of Jinotega, Nicaragua on October 4, 1879 to Judge José Marcelino Zeledón Ugarte, Judge of the city of La Concordia and to his wife Professor María Salomé Rodríguez Vilchez-Ubeda. José Marcelino and María Salomé together had ten children: Juan Agustín, Josefa, Julia Francisca, Luis Felipe, Antonia, Angelina, Rosa, Donatila, Jesús and Benjamín Francisco Zeledón Rodríguez.

Benjamin Zeledón received his elementary education at home taught by his mother, a teacher, and was later sent to study at the Spirit of the Century Institute in

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174 Municipality of Jinotega, Nicaragua, Civil Registry of the Civil Status of the Persons. Death Certificates of Marcelino Zeledón Ugarte (06/04/1927); María Salomé Rodríguez (07/08/1930); Archives of the Church of San Rafael del Norte, Nicaragua. Certificate of Birth 04/26/1845 of Marcelino Zeledón Ugarte and of birth of María Salomé Rodríguez 09/25/1845. Certificate of Marriage between Marcelino y María Salomé and of birth of most of their Children; Genealogical Data: Judge José Marcelino Zeledón Ugarte was the son of Alderman (Regidor) José Ramón Zeledón Mora and his wife Saturnina Ugarte Hernández; José Ramón Zeledón Mora was a Spanish Mestizo military man born in San José de Costa Rica. He was one of the members of the City Council of the City of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, signatories of the Declaration of Independence of Central America and Nicaragua on the 13/14 of October of 1821. Jose Ramon was the son of Royal Notary, Governor, Mayor, and Treasurer of San José in Costa Rica José Hilario Zeledón Masís and his wife Antonia de las Mercedes Mora Fernández. She was the sister of presidents of Costa Rica Juan Rafael Mora Fernández (August 19, 1824 to March 09, 1833) and José Joaquín Mora Fernández (March 01, 1937 to April 17, 1837); José Hilario Zeledón Masís, was born in Cartago, Costa Rica and was the son of Captain José Francisco Zeledón de los Reyes de Aguilar and his wife María Francisca Masís Fernández Acosta del Val; José Francisco was the son of Captain José Miguel Zeledón de los Reyes de Argüello from Cartago Costa Rica one of the founders of San José, Costa Rica and his wife María de Aguilar de Santiago; José Miguel was the son of Captain Gaspar Zeledón de los Reyes and his wife María Jacinta de Argüello de los Cobos; Gaspar was the son of Captain, Governor, Mayor and Treasurer of Nicoya and Boruca (1639-1648) Zeledón De Morales y de María De los Reyes. Saturnina Ugarte Hernández was the daughter of Captain José Andrés De Ugarte Blandón and Mariela Hernández; José Andrés was the son of Colonel José Francisco De Ugarte de Argüello and María Tomas Blandón De Fonseca; Francisco, was the son of Colonel Francisco Antonio De Ugarte De la Cerda and Juana De Argüello De Viveros; Francisco Antonio was the son of General Captain José Francisco De Ugarte and Teresa De la Cerda Ladrón De Guevara; José Francisco was the son of General Captain Juan José Mateo De Ugarte.Zeledón and Ugarte the founders of these families were Spanish military men from the regions of Lezama, Larrabetzu, Gorkolexea (San Zeledón Parrish), Ugarte, Múxica y Guernika in Vizcaya and Alava in the Basque Country in the North East of Spain.
Tegucigalpa, Honduras. On December 27, 1899, he obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Science, Literature, and Philosophy. Shortly after, on July 5, 1900 Benjamín Zeledón was named Professor at the Superior School of "Granada" and three years later on July 31, 1903 was appointed district judge of Managua.\textsuperscript{175}

In his personal life, Benjamín Zeledón was married to Esther Ramírez Jerez on May 10, 1904. Esther was the daughter of Dr. Jerónimo Ramírez Ramírez and Esther Jerez Granizzo. Esther was the great granddaughter of Dr. and General Máximo Jerez Tellería, former President of Nicaragua and founder of the Liberal Party. Benjamín Francisco Zeledón and Esther Ramírez Jerez together had four children: Benjamín Francisco, born May 13, 1905, Victoria, born April 21, 1907, Marco Aurelio, born June 15, 1909; and Olga María, born July 04, 1912.

On September 14, 1903, Zeledón represented Nicaragua at the Third Congress of Law of Central America and the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{176} That same month, on September 17, 1903 he received the degree of doctor of Law and Notary of the Republic of Nicaragua from the hands of Nicaragua’s President José Santos Zelaya.\textsuperscript{177} Later, he continued on with great success and was appointed district judge and teacher in the Atlantic Coast district judge and teacher in Managua. In January 1907, Benjamín Zeledón was appointed Attorney General of Managua.

From the early years as President of The National Liberty Club, Zeledón believed in protecting individual liberties in a modern democracy. In addition, Zeledón followed the belief of a two party system. If the Liberal Party was in power, he thought, the liberal should govern with free reign. He believed that people should not hold half truths nor believe in myths.

**Benjamín F. Zeledón a Nationalist Liberal and a Political Man**

Zeledón as President of the Nationalist Liberal Club of Managua had a quite unambiguous idea about liberalism in Nicaragua. In a talk given to the Club members he stated:

**THE LIBERAL PARTY**

Gentlemen: I have no qualms at present, nor do I fear the verdict that is to come. I trust your sane opinion, and take no notice of the sad partiality. I occupy this space without sheltering fears, and direct towards you my humble word in name of a political association that is neither abject not servile; in name of a collectivity that is the owner of its actions and, consequently, responsible; in name of a collectivity that has arisen from ideas and principles; in the name of the Nationalist Liberal Club of this capital....

The political association I now represent, composed of those men who fight with valor in favor of national interests; of those who abandon the caresses of the home

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\textsuperscript{175} La Gaceta, Diario Oficial del Gobierno de Nicaragua, Año VIII, No. 200, Segunda Época, 19 de Agosto de 1903.

\textsuperscript{176} Gratus Halftemayer. Historia de Managua (Managua: 1974) p. 89.

\textsuperscript{177} Sergio A. Zeledón B. Archivo de la familia Zeledón.
and accept the fatigues of campaigns; of those who die covered in the mantle of intrepidity, spilling satisfaction over the enemy trench; of those, finally, who can send their spirit to immortality wrapped in the smoke of gunpowder, and who can leave their body in pieces, entangled together with the undercarriage of cannons; that association base on free will, I repeat, cannot forget the days during which it ate its bread kneaded with tears, nor those days which saw waving triumphantly the blessed flag that symbolize our dearest institutions. Because of that, Gentlemen, it does not forget that great national day, great day for the Motherland, because on it the last link of that chain of opprobrium, with which the personality and civilization of a people was tied to the post of barbarity, was smelted and disappeared....

...the names of those saints of war, named, Milciades, Leonidas, Temistocles, Aristides, and Cimon, are registered in history on auriferous pages, and are still the most glorious example that humanity which rises up can imitate, the most tremendous slap in the face for the transgressors of the wise principles of International Law, and the last word said in favor of those who have defended national sovereignty with daring valor....

Nicaragua cannot be an exception within the civilized peoples of the world. She will not forget her days of mourning and pain, as she will not ever forget her days of satisfaction and glory, nor the holy names of the martyrs who have triumphantly forged ahead Law and Justice....

Oh redemptive principles! You have not come our way in vain; General Zelaya has maintained you pristine even amidst the continuous revolts instigated by the ambitious enemies of our party. That illustrious Chief, leader of the most justifiable of the revolutions that have had as their theater this piece of Central American land, has corresponded with the aspirations of the people who in good time elevated him to the first national magistracy. You must remember with religiosity and jubilation this date, July 25th, date of triumph, on which with his own herculean hand, General Zelaya raised in the capitol of Managua the red flag, as a sign that that mournful middle age of our history was expiring wringing with remorse, and that that gorgeous and resplendent age of the great renaissance of our principles was rising up.

We are on the path: we have come out onto it breaking even our soul on the bramble patch of intolerance and on the thirty years of mercantilism. Even Constantine XII of our political history has morally died, the last of our oppressors. Let us take advantage of our renaissance; let us protect our liberties, because only defending them do we maintain the air which we breathe and the light that illuminates us. Let us forget the old Democracy of fire. Let us trust modern democracy because “modern democracy is light.” Let us make disappear those egotistical ideas that still separate us. Let us completely erase those borders that for some still exist between our small republics because, Sirs, in a civilized world there should be no borders, much less in Central America in the Twentieth century; only for retrogrades, for tyrants, for those who know nothing of the advances in law, for those who still desire to live in the primitive times of ancient Rome, and for those who do not know that “to cross the oceans of life it is necessary to embark on the ship of faith.”....
The Liberal Party of Nicaragua “knew how to win and take advantage of the victory.” It has not forgotten that it is a fraction of that gigantic party that today governs in the world of Columbus, in this grand world, where the champions of liberty of the Eastern Hemisphere can find inspiration. That party has placed the great victory … and seen him confident in the future and satisfied with his work. Yes; satisfied with his work, because he has seen disappear those provincial nobilities and those ridiculous inequalities; because he has seen false merits make their way down to the bottom of the abyss, and true merits raised up; because he has seen the serpent that once bit consciences disappear, and has seen his children taking giant steps until reaching the altar of true democracy, without those remora and without those spines that the children of the Churches and of the Divine Right of kings used to place in the path towards its perfection…..

Let us allow our thoughts to fly and our word to resound in that same space in which the ravens of despotism, created and fed under the cassocks, gouged the eyes out of our political liberties.

With regards to party alliance and partisanship, Zeledón believed that politics should be based on political parties. If the Liberal Party was in power, he believed it should govern with no opposition from the losing party. He explains it in the following editorial:

PARTY GOVERNMENT
We are very much in agreement with the writer of the article in that it should not be the case that those who govern only come from this or that city, because that would leave the government open to the accusation that its view is too narrow, it would revive the spirit of localism that has done so much damage to our people, it would deprive the country of the contest between honest and able men from a militant party, and would only lead us down the path of circular and personal politics, already extremely discredited in all cultured countries on Earth, and for being anti-patriotic, is wholly unacceptable. But we do not think as he does, that when the Republic is at peace, the reds and greens should collaborate in government; nor with respect to the notion that administration should not be party-based but essentially national; and we are going to provide our reasons.

If Dr. Madriz’s government is liberal, as it effectively is, it has its principles fixed and its aspirations defined, principles and aspirations that should be put into practice during the course of his rule; and in this, if we are consistent, then we should confess that only the men of the Liberal Party are able, because the greens or conservatives, without participating in open warfare with cannons as their credo suggests, would be unable to walk in agreement with the reds, and we do not believe that this is a battle they wish to engage in; and furthermore, we should suppose that the ones and the others, in order to deserve and be worthy of the esteem and considerations they believe they deserve who, consciously and in

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178 Benjamín F. Zeledón, To the Liberals. Diario de Nicaragua (Managua: ed. 1902).
good faith, affiliate themselves with a party, should remain firm maintaining their political principles intact. In our understanding, politics should always be party-based; and, consequently, the government, which is the one in charge of bringing its own ideals down to the field of reality – if it is a Government that has a program – should also be party-based; because that conventionalism known as national politics it is used only when the government’s direction is not guided by a compass. A writer has said, “Peoples do not believe in middle terms or in fusions.” Consequently, we should not try to fool ourselves with tales of national administration, national politics, and national government. Let us speak clearly: today the Liberal Party is in power, and it should govern with the upright and able members of its party, whether they belong to this or that village of the Republic. And if someday the Conservative Party should come to power, then let it govern with its affiliated members, so that it can form a government that is molded with its ideals and with its principles. “The only two parties that are known in Central America are the Liberal and the Conservative, whose fight is our history, the chronicle of yesterday and of today” – the same writer has said. Well then, those two parties are now facing off in Nicaragua. The current war continues because of the conservatives, according to the Dr. Madriz’s manifesto, dated the 23rd of the present. In such a situation, our party should close ranks; borders between cities should be erased: petty circular and personal intrigues should be set aside; let our ideals and our principles act as a golden thread holding us together in the duel we must engage in against our political adversary. Let us do all of this without wasting time, which is precious, and let us not flatter our opponents with the notion that reds and greens will work together, that there will not be a party-run administration but a national one. A party-run administration is the only administration based on principles; and party politics is the form of politics suggested by history, it is the form of politics practiced by countries that stand in the vanguard of civilization in this age of great advances. The freedoms made available to us by the Constitutional government of today, are under serious threat. To save them – or what! in this present hour, is the same as conquering them, is our unavoidable duty. Let us unite, so that we are strong in battle, because “liberty is conquered by means of force; and it is preserved by means of unity.” Let no one say that the reds and the greens can collaborate with each other in Government, that there will be no party-based administration, that it will be national, since none of this will be possible, because large national interests prevent that from being possible: peace, order and a fixed course that should be determined by the entire machinery of the administration of the Republic, and furthermore, because the two parties are different in their origin, different in their means and different in their aims; and it is not with words nor with solely willing it so that we will be able to erase the substantial differences, or be able to get to a point where the men of those two parties will be able to work together. For those differences to disappear, perhaps even a long and drawn out common schooling would be insufficient. The names free and servile are by now very old. The legacy
left to our country by the Ordóñez’s, Selvas, Cortes’s, Jerez’s, Argüello’s, Castellon’s, Salazar’s, Juarez’s, etc., etc. on one side, and the Saravia’s, Garcia’s, Zavala’s, Pineda’s, Chamorro’s, Bolaño’s, etc., etc. on the other, is something we should respect and it is not something we can destroy only by thinking about it or willing it so.

We should see in every Nicaraguan and in every Central American – even if he is not of our party – a compatriot whom the law should abundantly shelter, the same with everyone else; but let us convince ourselves that they cannot work together, along one single course of direction, in the same Government, reds and greens, and that for the same reason a national administration, or a national government, it is a great inconvenience, and perhaps even a political impossibility, Government should always be partisan, because “a Government that does not rule with its own commits suicide.”  

After being appointed attorney general of Managua, Zeledón became an officer in the Nicaraguan army. Zeledón excelled quickly and on August 9, 1907, was promoted to lieutenant colonel for his outstanding performance as official auditor general of the Army during the war with Honduras and El Salvador. He received homage for his participation and excellence in the battle of Namasigüe on March 18, 1907.

On November 25, 1907, in the capacity of attorney general of Managua, Zeledón was given the task of organizing the welcoming ceremonies surrounding poet and writer Rubén Darío’s return to Nicaragua. Zeledón successfully organized the program, voted in favor of funding the event, and delivered the official welcoming speech as representative of the government of Nicaragua and the city of Managua.

Due to his strong achievements, on September 16, 1908, the Nicaraguan government sent him as diplomatic representative to Guatemala and was chosen as justice and magistrate of the Central American Court of Justice. Zeledón resided in Guatemala from 1908 to November 1909. In late 1909, he returned to Nicaragua during the first U.S. military intervention. From January 1910 to July 20, 1910, Zeledón was in command of the liberal forces as Nicaragua’s Defense Minister in the cabinet of President JoséMadríz Rodríguez. Zeledón was subsequently promoted to General shortly thereafter one day after he took command of the forces.

Zeledón gathered and created an opposition force consisting of members of the Liberal Party from Leon and Managua. As a vocal opponent, Zeledón published articles reflecting the political mood and outlining events during that period of time. On May 29, 1910, when U.S. Marine forces landed in the city of Bluefields, Zeledón published in El

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179 Zeledón, Benjamín F. and General. op cit. 29 de Enero 1910.
181 Revista Anales de La Corte Centroamericana de Justicia (Guatemala, 1908); Edelberto Torres, La Dramática Vida de Rubén Darío (España: Ed. Grijalbo,1966) pp. 351-356.
182 Portas, Bernardo SJ. Compendio de la Historia de Nicaragua (Managua: Tipografía Nacional, 1918) p. 170.
Diario De Nicaragua, an article titled “The Entitlement of a Race”, a strong condemnation to the disembarkation of troops in Nicaragua.

THE ENTITLEMENTS OF A RACE
The ignorance of the Minister sent by the filibusters and the treaty project of alliances and confederation, are clearly telling us that in other times when Nicaragua has been through situations such as that of the present, the conduct on the part of Latin Americans has been different than that that is seen today, despite The threats that have faced us since November of the year before last. A conflict that presently has intensified due to the disembark of American troops in Bluefields/
That disembarkation of U.S. troops, under the pretext of protecting their compatriots’ interests, and in this way preventing the legitimately constituted government of Nicaragua from putting an end to a disastrous war, a war that has since many months ago bled the country; that military occupation, of our most important port on the Atlantic, by foreign troops, is a true outrage, a flagrant attempt against our independence and against our sovereignty; it is shameful for the government that have ordered such a thing and an opprobrium for the people that has such a government.
It seems incredible that these outrage of force are still committed in the twentieth century. Those violations of the most basic principles of international law seem to belong not to the present times but to those times when the law governing relations between peoples and nations was the law of the strongest, and in no way, a law based on rights.
Ah! How ashamed the French, the Germans, or the Italians would be today if the government of any of those three countries ordered the military occupation of parts of Switzerland, Andorra, or St. Marino, or merely if an internecine war was being waged in one of these small countries, or if in one of these there should be a discussion taking place regarding family affairs, in the burning arena of arms. That inconceivable offense inflicted against Nicaragua, is not only an offense against this disgraced country; it is something more: it is an offense against Central America, it is an offense against Latin America, it is an offense against an entire race worthy of the esteem of centuries of history.
And in the face of such an indignant situation, and in the face of such an enormous embarrassment, where is the angry protest that such a dishonor merits? where has the soul of Latin America gone? what has happened to the soul of those direct descendants of Spanish pride and indigenous bravery of these sacred pampas? Why has it not risen up proud, and with an incontestable right to do so, asked the powerful invader to account for his dishonorable actions?
Is it that our race does not have the right to protest? or is it that we are losing a few inches on the terrain of dignity each day that passes?
Let us wait. Let Latin America speak let her respond to the entitlements due her by an entire race. 

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As President of the Liberal Party, Zeledón believed that his political party had the best interests of Nicaragua. As a staunch advocate for independence, Zeledón did not support the Conservative Party. He strongly believed that Conservatives should not rule Nicaragua. On September 9, 1910, Zeledón published the article below discussing his belief about the Conservative Party.

**WHAT THE CONSERVATIVES WANT**

To put priests with cloaks, and those without them who are their most fake among their followers, in our schools and colleges as teachers. Consequently, the conservatives cannot, should not govern Nicaragua, because men who want backwardness, who want superficiality, who want error, who want to keep peoples submerged in the purest ignorance in order to then rule them like a herd, do not have the right to have the management of public affairs entrusted to them by the people, they do not have the right to manage the collective’s most precious interests.

To eliminate from our liberal code the right to freely issue your own testament, thereby impeding man from making free use of what has cost him labor to acquire. Consequently, the conservatives try to keep the sons of this country in darkness their whole lives, and then in the hour of death, keep them from disposing of their belongings as they see fit.

To entitle the churches and other such institutions of friars to acquire, by means of practices that they engaged in for thirty years, enormous capitals wrenched away from the gullible with deceptions, threats, and promises for the after life.

To erase from our laws civil matrimony that today guarantees the rights and duties of married couples and offspring, because they desire through this to increase the influence of the clergy in the home, to dominate citizens in this way, and be able to make immediate use of their individual’s will at their whim.

To erase from our laws rights that guarantee equality to all citizens of the Nation and establish in the place of those principles, upper and lower chambers, being this a unitary Republic in order to introduce irritant class differences in the republican regime, very particularly for the people, which is the soul, which is the nerve of society.

To again unite the church with the State, establishing in this way an impossible dualism of which Montufar spoke, because with such a union religious tyranny would be established in our nation’s schools, in the home and in everything that Nicaraguans hold dearest; and, what is more, with said union, a portion of the national rent would be siphoned off in order to maintain those drones known as priests, who have caused so many social and economic prejudices throughout all of time and cause them at the present, because they have always preached lies and have stifled free thinking, because it is in their interest to enthrone faith, which is not able to resist scientific examination.

To remove from our laws the principles that sanctify the secular nature of cemeteries, so that the cadavers of those judged to be heretics and impious by priests and their hypocrite allies not be interred there. That is, the tyranny which they wish to establish, that they want to use even against the dead, because the conservatives are implacable: they flog citizens their entire lives, and when dead,
they declare them unworthy even of a Christian burial, if these citizens were free and did not collaborate with them in the work of mocking and humiliating the people in all manners of ways as that party is accustomed to doing; a party that lives in the eaves of churches like owls, because the shade is the only medium in which they can live.

Well then: to achieve all of this and everything else we will continue to review, the conservatives today want to take to the constituent assembly political representatives that wholly support their obscurantist and retrograde ends; and since the people, who are now civilized, will not allow themselves to be fooled and are not willing to naively return to the times of the thirty years, and for the same reason prepare themselves for the electoral battle, the Conservative authorities, using violent means, attempt to destroy societies and liberal clubs, directing mobs against, such as just happened in Masaya, and has happened in El Viejo, Chinandega, Posoltega, Leon, and other places.

No conservative gentlemen, understand this well: the majority of Nicaraguan citizens are liberal; they aspire to rehabilitate the 1893 constitution, which embodies the principles of Liberalism, and to rehabilitate as well the secondary laws represented there. And to accomplish this objective, it will take the name of honest, accomplished, energetic, and liberal citizens to the ballot boxes; and if the public authorities stand in the way and prevent free association, and consequently electoral freedoms, you and you alone will be responsible for the great ills, the incalculable ills that will befall this for us most dear and already sufficiently misfortunate Motherland.  

Zeledón strongly believed that the Conservative Party was selling Nicaragua piece by piece to American interests. He adamantly objected to the pact between the Conservative party and the Americans. On October 14, 1910, Zeledón using as pen name “Ricaurte,” published an article outlining his dissent towards the newly formed pact between The Conservatives and The Americans.

**ELECTORAL LAW**

The future Constituent Assembly
The renting of Nicaragua

Nicaraguan people listen: intervention is real. The contract for the rental of the country has been signed by those who would sell the Motherland, by shameful people who would sell their own mothers; and that contract not only contains clauses that have been mentioned by the press, but contain much more serious clauses.

That contract stipulates not only that the conservatives--with the permission of the U.S. of North America--be the only ones to rule in Nicaragua. If this was all, it would be worthless, even if it did constitute a flagrant injustice against the rest of the country, which is the majority.

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No, in the shameful contract it is further stipulated that the Government of the U.S. of the North will be granted the rights of usufruct of the country’s customs and duties operations.
That the contracts signed by the previous governments be rescinded, paying an indemnity for this that would result from the deliberations of a commission composed of two Americans and two Nicaraguans, leaving the calculation of the indemnity to be paid to the American State Department.
That all Nicaraguans who intervened in the case of Canon and Groce be tried or prosecuted and have the most severe penalties applied to them.
That a loan for 15 millions U.S. dollars be contracted from an American company or business, to be decided upon by the State Department, which would approve, beforehand, the terms under which the contract would be adjusted.
These and other compromises, that can only conceived by the mind of a free man and which would shame even the most shameless of mortals, are enshrined in the contract for rent that the sold-out conservatives and a foreigner without heart or conscience wrote.
Nicaraguan liberals have signed this ignominious contract; will there or not be foreign intervention in our internal affairs? Have we or have we not been tied hand and foot to a foreign yoke? Will the people of Nicaragua simply cross their arms in the face of such an ignominy?
Well then: the conservatives know that the current government is a de facto government: that the people of Nicaragua have yet to recognize that government as do the governments of other nations; and for the same reason, everything that is done has no value, until a Constitutional freely elected by popular will constitutional the country into a constitutional form.
For these reasons they have been forced to promulgate an electoral law and a have called for a Constitutional. But since it is not in their interest that the Constitutional be freely elected, because if that were to happen then the absolute majority of representatives would be liberal – and the liberals are not willing to sell or rent the Motherland – therefore instead of a good law that would guarantee electoral freedom, they have given the country a farce and called it a law; and in that farce they want to involve the more than three-quarters of the nation that is represented by the Liberal Party, that glorious party that through the strength of bloody sacrifices has held up high the flag of the Republic without dishonoring it.
For the same reason, while they (the conservatives) expulse our coreligionists, jail and threaten them in thousands of ways, they repatriate, give every form of freedom and flatter their own, by all the means at their disposal.
That law completely kills the sacred right to suffrage; and it is so bad and pernicious that not only the liberals – who were justifiably accused of being impassioned in this case – judge and describe it as such, but the same dictatorial and de facto government that emitted it describes it in identical terms, through the sub-secretary of war, General Moncada, who in an editorial in The Centinel, On the 6th of this month, expresses the astonishment, vacillation and true stupor that, the publication of the electoral law by the Supreme Court has caused among the Nicaraguan people. But let us not pay attention to the law......
The Constitution of 1858 was conservative, and nonetheless, Martinez, Guzman, Cuadra, Chamorro, Zavala, Cardenas, Carazo, provided us with freedoms and political rights that unfortunately we have not known again. By an act of misfortune the electoral law that has just been published is the work of its servants and it is clearly evident that the ashes of free men do not nourish the land for the children nor teach men laws.”

Is a more frank and impartial opinion with regards to this law possible? What can or should we expect from an *ad hoc* law placed in the hands of similarly *ad hoc* public servants?

Attention, then, Nicaraguan citizens. Liberals of Nicaragua, open your eyes.........

The Conservative Constitution that will assemble in the near future will draft a Constitution like the one of Panamá, which gives the Government of the United States of North America the right to decide the internal affairs of the Republic of the Isthmus.

Attention, fellow citizens and coreligionists, the Constitution of the patricidal conservatives, conservatives who would sell off the Motherland, conservatives who would sell their own mothers, will sanction and reinforce the rental contract over this piece of land that was left to us as a legacy by our elders.

Would you allow such an iniquity to be consummated?
Would you watch impassively as your mother is handed over as a vile merchandize to foreigners?
You would have to go and cry as women what you would not dare to defend as men. Benjamín F. Zeledón (Ricaurte.)

The political power struggle between the Liberal and Conservative Parties percolated and grew extremely sensitive. The persecution and harassment from the Conservatives was painful and intolerable. On November 2, 1910, Zeledón reflected on this turmoil by publishing an editorial discussing the events:

**NEITHER LIBERTY NOR PEACE**

The “El Comercio” newspaper reports that a prominent political figure of the present moment said the other day, to a distinguished diplomat: “See what precious freedom there is in Nicaragua, and the diplomat replied: “It is not freedom that is desired; what is wanted is peace, which is even more precious.”

We believe, that at the present time under this Conservative regime, there is neither freedom nor peace.

At present, we know that various persons are being detained in jails run by the police of the republic, without the authorities so much as informing the detained why they were being held. And since not knowing the reason for being detained, the prisoner has no means to orient himself and find a defense, and this results in the unavoidable consequence of having being deprived of one of his primordial rights, the right to a defense. Is this the precious freedom that the conservatives so publicly extol? Is stripping a citizen of his sacred right to a defense ‘freedom’ in the language of the redeemers?

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We know that a neighboring citizen from Niquinohomo, solely for being a liberal, spent one night in a military cell and he was not released from jail, despite having a son who was near death, only until the next day by which time his son had already passed away. Is the application of such torments the precious freedom that the conservatives refer to?

When General Roberto Gonzalez was living in exile was stripped naked on the island of Cardon, on the orders of the authority of the fortress, and the assassins conducted themselves in such a luxurious manner, that they even took the general’s socks, leaving him in his “birthday” suit. This sort of humiliation, of a superlative degree, without motive and in violation of all laws, committed against a person of such standing as Gonzalez is what the conservatives call precious freedom!

When general Gonzalez and Doctors Rodolfo Espinosa R., Sebastian Salinas, and Enrique Cerda and Mr. Clodomiro Urcuyo were departing, as they headed towards ostracism, they were not allowed to eat, neither in Cardon nor in Corinto, for an entire day, nor were they allowed to say their goodbyes to their family members who had made the trip for that purpose. The conservatives call this sort of behavior precious freedom?

Mr. Francisco Baca and Mr. Leopoldo Montenegro were tried for the imaginary crime of having stolen a mule and, once in jail, the authority in charge allowed his low-class subordinates to grossly insult the two unarmed citizens. Do the conservatives mean to call these outrageous abuses precious freedom?

Distinguished young ladies in Leon and Masaya have been put in jail together with criminals, for the grand offense of having made some red buttons. Are these scandalous incidents what the conservatives call precious freedom?

Adolescent youths have been made to suffer abuses and have been jalled for the unforgivable crime of wearing a red strip on their hats or a button of the same color on their lapels. In a country where one is not allowed to wear a button or strip of this or any color, can it be said that there is precious freedom?

The homes of Jose D. Gomez, Felix P. Zelaya R., Fernando M. Rivas, Benjamin Vidaure, Rodolfo Espinosa R. and those of other distinguished Nicaraguan citizens have been ransacked, without legal formality and without any reason whatsoever, forgetting that the individual’s home is a sacred asylum that the authorities have the duty to respect. In some of these cases, the ransacking has been carried out without regard and respect that is due to women and young ladies who were resting or sleeping in their homes. Conservative sirs, is this the precious freedom you speak of and that you so boast about? Is this what you called precious freedom when you undertook the revolution that you have taken to calling redemptive?

Soldiers are forced to attend mass every Sunday and on days of obligatory religious observance, exercising in that way a tyranny over the conscience of those hapless persons, whose lives have been placed in danger, during ten months, you, redeemers, for the obtainment of your redemptive objectives. Tyranny over thought is called by you precious freedom?

Respectable citizens have been taken to jail for having let slip some or another criticism of Emiliano Chamorro, killing in that way the free expression of thought
through spoken words. Is this what the barbarians of Nicaragua call precious freedom?
Lawful assembly is impeded, as just happened with the Liberal Club of Masaya, which has been attacked by delinquents under the name of the authorities, because it is not in the interests of the men of the government for the liberals to show their faces, preparing themselves for the electoral struggle, knowing full well that the majority of the country is liberal and does not belong to them. This preventing of lawful assembly is what the barbarians call precious freedom?
liberals are prohibited from carrying arms and they are search of wherever they go, even though they are peaceful and honest citizens, or due to their profession or other legal causes, are authorized to carry them; but well-known wicked persons are allowed to arm themselves as are young people who have barely graduated from pre school, in order that the may attack defenseless liberals as often as they wish, with impunity. Do conservatives call all these violations of the law precious freedom?
What has been said is enough to clearly show that the precious freedom of which the prominent political figure of the present moment spoke, does not exist except in an imaginary way. And since freedom does not exist in this country, there can not be peace here either, since in this case, one depends on the other, and no citizen can live in peace as long as the rights that are embedded in his personality are not recognized and guaranteed.
Nicaragua knows that life without freedoms is a life that degrades, and that death is preferable to carrying on life as a pariah.
Hopefully, then, those freedoms that the people so badly need will be granted, in order to avoid the immense evils, the evils only estimable that the non-existence of these freedoms unavoidably bring with it. Benjamín F. Zeledón (Ricaurte.)

The following day, on November 3, Zeledón published an editorial condemning the foreign forces in Nicaragua at the request of the Conservative Party.

THE NON-INTERVENTION
It is undeniable that up to very recently in modern times there have been multiple interventions on the part of some countries in the affairs of others. Rome attacks some times and at other times favored; but almost always it subdued and it was an: unquenchable thirst for power of that heroic people, for many respectable titles and reasons deserving of the world’s damnation.
Greece’s collective soul revolts amid the alternatives of power represented by Athens and Thebes; and from that come interventions, the forging of alliances, and the occasions of war.
Imperial power in medieval times pronounces itself above vassals, emperors, and feudal princes, and, consequently, makes itself the undisputable arbiter of their affairs.

The Holy Alliance upholds erroneous principles, which are then adhered to without scruples by the congressmen of Aix-la-Chappelle; and, consequently, come the interventions in Italy and Spain. This is the historical truth and it has been explained by eminent persons and by informed professors. All of that was accompanied by a rationale that was perhaps sufficient in those times. However, since those times, though they are not too distant, have passed, so have the principles that then reined. In the present, those flagrant violations of International Law, can no longer be satisfactorily explained.

The principle of non-intervention is by now widely accepted; it is universally regarded and respected; and it truly embodies recognition of the most sacred rights inherent in the prosperity of nations. That principle, honestly understood and applied, is a complete guarantee of the fundamental rights of weak countries. Without respect for it, without its application in concrete cases, the existence, the sovereignty, the independence, and especially the dignity of states cannot be conceived. It has, thus, been established as a general principle that a state has no right to involve itself in the affairs of another or others.

Having said this, it is only natural and logical for Mr. Roosevelt to have said: “No weak nation that demonstrates that it possesses courage and a love of justice, should fear anything from the great military powers, just as none of these the right to aggress anyone with impunity, simply by virtue of force”, or for Mr. Roosevelt possession of any of those countries. “We are decided against any other country doing so. Therefore, to prevent the necessity of the former and to avoid the possibility of the latter, we want to help the countries of Central America, so that they govern themselves in peace, order, and prosperity. “

The two great political figures mentioned, having thought and expressed themselves in such a way, are doing nothing more than being consistent with what the distinguished Monroe solemnly said before Congress in Washington in December of 1823, in his much-praised Message, that in its reference to foreign policy, synthesized what since then has been called the Monroe Doctrine. Great International Law treaty experts say that the declaration was well received in the English Parliament, because with it had been resolved, in a clear manner, the question of the Spanish colonies. And by a stroke of luck, the phrase America for Americans rather than establishing the tutelage of North over South America, places this part of the We have nothing to fear from that doctrine, that, in the opinion of meritorious professors, when correctly interpreted is nothing more than the clear expression of the very important principle of non-intervention, a principle that is today recognized by all true politicians and that is by now, in the modern era, a dominant international law: no more European interventions in America; no more European colonies in American territory: such is the integral base of the examined doctrine.
The dangers that some have seen in that doctrine, are imaginary, for no danger is coming if there are no more European interventions in America, and much less if there be no more European colonies in American territory. As to the danger that has been seen in the Central American Treaties, signed in 1907 in Washington, believing that these are the surest steps that have been taken towards the definitive loss of the sovereignty of the countries of the Isthmus. That danger did not come from the text of those same treaties that give the U.S. of the North and Mexico no rights; nor from the principles contained in the Monroe doctrine, such as we explained; nor from the ideas of Roosevelt and Root; to the contrary, Washington’s treaties, fulfilled with honesty, would assure peace in Central America; the doctrine ensures the fundamental rights of the countries of South America; and Roosevelt and Root, not only do not justify intervention but condemn it, affirming that our weak countries have nothing to fear from the colossus to the North. Well then: the dangers that threaten us with death do not depend on the Monroe doctrine nor on Washington’s treaties nor on any principle of abstract, or written, right; they depend on the existence of an arbitrary and imperialist government representing a strong people, which being guided by no other principles besides that of the force of its cannons and of its own convenience, tries to make of our people a market and for that purpose attempts to take our liberty, our sovereignty, and our independence: tries to enslave us. Nicaraguans, open your eyes. A death as free men is worth more than a life in slavery!  

Shortly after publishing the above editorials, Zeledón suffer persecution and harassment from of the conservatives and the foreign forces. Zeledón’s properties were looted and he began to receive threats of exile. Below are two telegrams from the American consul sent to the U.S. State Department from its diplomatic representative in Managua.

Telegram # 1
Division of Latin American Affairs, November 17, 1910, Department of State. Telegram Received Cipher. Managua, Nicaragua, November 16, 1910, Recd Secretary of State, Washington. November 16. The provisional Government today expelled Gamez, Barreto, Zeledón and Maldonado, Zelaya's liberals owning or editing newspapers that have violated public decency, provoked disorder, and been directly responsible for the Leon Anti-American riots. Estrada is determined to act as strongly as the conditions required in maintaining order and will not further permit the press to publish misrepresentations tending to incite the masses.

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188 Benjamín F. Zeledón. La No Intervencion. El Diario de Managua (Managua: Ed. Page., Nov. 3, 1910); Translation by Juan Ocampo.

Telegram # 2  
Division of Latin American Affairs, December 3, 1910. Department of State.  
American Consulate, Corinto, Nicaragua, November 17, 1910. Subject: Expulsion from country of Dr. Benjamin Zeledón and José Dolores Games. The Honorable, the Secretary of State, Washington. Sir: I have the honor to report to the Department that Dr. Benjamin Zeledón, and Jose Dolores Gamez have been expelled from the country. They were brought down last night and placed aboard a German steamer going north. I have been told that they will go to Mexico.  
I have the honor to be Sir Your obedient servant. Signed the American Consul

Zeledón was ultimately exiled to El Salvador in a German steamer by mid 1911. From El Salvador, Zeledón went to Costa Rica, a country where his extended family resided. He obtained Costa Rica’s license to practice law in September 1911.

General Benjamín F. Zeledón R. and the U.S. Military Intervention of 1912

The alliance between the U.S. and the conservative forces ensured that U.S. interest would remain a priority in Nicaragua. The political climate was ripe for such an alliance: Zelaya was no longer in power and Diaz was a docile leader and not a threat to the U.S. By the end of 1911 Zeledón returned to Nicaragua to confront both the conservative and American forces. He had heard talk of a possible treaty between the U.S. and the conservative forces that would secure a canal through Nicaragua. Zeledón was concerned about a military and economic intervention. The U.S. policies of intervention influenced by the Conservatives, focused upon, not just the protection of American interests, but also upon pro-American economic and political interests.

The U.S. believed that a potential civil unrest was eminent in Nicaragua. George Weitzel along with Adolfo Diaz and General Chamorro, requested an immediate U.S. military intervention to protect American and foreign interest. Below are orders from Admiral William Henry Hudson Southerland, the officer in command of the U.S. forces in Nicaragua, outlining U.S. approach to the military situation.

Sir, you are directed, in addition (to protecting the lives and property of Americans and other foreigners in Nicaragua, particularly at the ports of San Juan del Sur and Corinto, and maintaining a proper and efficient Legation Guard at the Capital Managua, to keep open by railroad and by telegraph if practicable, communication with the capital at Managua and also, if deemed desirable as far as Granada.  
Our own Government considers the situation now existing in Nicaragua as analogous to the Boxer troubles which lately occurred in China.

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190 U.S. National Archives, ibid. roll #8.  
191 Sergio A. Zeledón B., Archivo de la Familia Zeledón.  
192 Joseph H. Pendleton, op cit. folder 5.
The U.S. Navy’s official policy towards U.S. intervention is depicted in the following memorandum:

Memorandum, August 15, 1912,
The Major General Commandant to the Secretary of the Navy:
In conjunction with the State Department.
The Navy Department is of necessity entrusted with the duty of protecting American interests in those countries more or less under the influence of the U.S. of America and for whose conduct the U.S. has assumed certain responsibilities. By custom the Marine Corps has come to be considered a body of troops available for immediately dispatch to those countries where conditions acquire a display of force, either as a caution or for the actual election of American interests. Marines are part of the Naval Force, they are so considered by the countries concerned, and their employment in this manner (as an adjunct of the naval force) is accomplished without the strained relations that would follow in case troops of the Army were so employed, and at much less expense than would be involved in the use of the Army. The policy of the Navy Department on this subject, as expressed to Congress by the Secretary in 1911 (see Naval Institute Proceedings, No.147) is as follows: This corps is primarily an adjunct of the Navy, to be used as a mobile force, stationed on board ship, in home ports, and at advanced bases, always ready to act in altogether with the Navy in preserving order beyond the territorial limits and in occupying strategic points in advance of the army when to move the Army would occasion war. For the above reasons the several landings from Naval vessels and the expeditions to Nicaragua have not come within the international law definition of "war" but they were anything but "peaceful" from the viewpoint of those engaged. 193

On August 15th, 1912, Zeledón joined forces with Conservative General Luis Mena ("Mena") in an effort to stop the U.S. forces from entering Nicaragua. Both created an “Allied Army” and committed themselves to defend and protect Nicaragua’s independence. 194

The Allied Army was created to liberate Nicaragua from foreign control. It was a daunting task--U.S. forces and local allies were over 5000 thousand men and had superior firepower. The Allied Army consisted of a couple of thousand men with minimal firepower and training. Benjamin Zeledón, as leader of the Allied forces, was the spirit and courage behind the forces. He wrote a letter to his troops shortly before heading into battle. He stated that:

Without liberty there is no life; without equality there is no light; without national autonomy chaos reigns. We have fought, then, and will continue fighting so that liberty can give us life, so that equality will give us light, and so that effective

193 Edwin W. McClellan, op cit pg. 51-52.
national autonomy and reconquest will make the chaos in which we navigate disappear.\textsuperscript{195}

After months of fighting against U.S. forces, on September 18, 1912, Zeledón received an ultimatum from the Commander of the U.S. Marines forces in Nicaragua, Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton, demanding that the Allied Forces surrender.

Sir.
Your Letter of this date has been communicated to the Admiral.
Unless by day-light to-morrow morning you have completely evacuated all your positions threatening the railroad on this side of Masaya and unless white flags are conspicuously displayed, indicating this complete evacuation. I shall attack you with all my guns, and drive you out.
You will understand that you have brought this bloodshed on yourself.
Signed
J.H Pendleton
Colonel U.S. Marine Corps. Commanding\textsuperscript{196}

In response, Zeledón wrote a letter to Admiral Southerland outlining the Allied Forces position and intentions regarding the intervention and occupation.

Masaya, September 19, 1912
To The Admiral of the American Forces in Nicaraguan waters.
MANAGUA.

Sir:
In compliance with my promise to you in my note, which I had the honor to transmit to you under yesterday’s date, I present herein a statement which embodies a formal protest against the violating actions committed by the forces under your command against the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua:
I will not enter into a consideration of the axiom of International Law that nations, howsoever small they are may be, merit and have a right to the same respect and the same considerations as strong nations; nor will I recall to your mind the fervent longing expressed by the Father of American Independence, George Washington, that the greatness of his country should be based on respect for its laws and the nobleness or Its attitude toward the other nations of the earth; nor will I repeat the words of Elihu Root, the pre-eminent American Statesman, who eloquently pleaded that the relations between his count and the others of America should be founded on true international fraternity, a fraternity so much more necessary when treating with small nations, with whom the virtues of nobleness and loyalty are necessary. Sir,
What I will however consider at length, is the violation of our sovereignty accomplished as such by the disembarkation of your troops on our territory, by

\textsuperscript{195} Benjamin, F. Zeledón, \textit{op cit.} pp. 20-24
\textsuperscript{196} Joseph H. Pendleton, \textit{op cit.} folder #6
the overpowering of our ports, by threats, both written and verbally expressed by you and your subordinates.

This sort of behavior would be considered strange in any country of the civilized world, and even more so in the U.S. that so bitterly complained of the government presided over by General Zelaya, describing it as despotic, and setting a unique precedent in International Law, that of suppressing the internal despotisms of a country in order to establish foreign despotisms.

What I will consider, Mister, are the words expressed by Foreign Minister Mr. Knox, who while pretending to award loans in Central America, assures us that he only does so to promote the growth and liberty of our countries, something that does not square with the continuous affronts directed at us from some of the auxiliaries of the government of the U.S., affronts that envelop the negation of our personality as men and as citizens of a free nation, and against which exists no honorable man who would not rebel.

These general statements, Sir, find their corroboration in the two following facts, known to you and approved by you, although perhaps not of your initiative:

The American Chiefs have demanded from this command the free passage of a train carrying troops, arms and ammunition to Granada, through this town, which, as per decree of the 12. Is considered as in a state of siege. Such pretention, carried out despite the corresponding protests and prohibitions, is in violation of our military laws, drags in the dust the sovereignty of Nicaragua and violates the terms of the contracts which de government of Ex-President Diaz made with the New York Bankers, relative to the railroad and the steamships, under which contract, in time of war, the company was to suspend traffic on the national railways and steamships, the responsible party to settle in due course for damages and harm sustained.

The second fact to which I refer is the written threat of Colonel J.H. Pendleton, demanding the evacuation of my troops, from the positions which they were defending, with the alternative of remove them with men and artillery of the American Marines. Due to the concurrence to this demand, although I had expressed a contrary wish, after a conference between the principal partisans of ours here and the Generals under my command, the threat was not carried out, which would have been and eternal blot to the arms of the powerful American Nation, that I respect and admire for its greatness and powerful, but I do not wish it as a conqueror of my country, which I love with all the intensity of which a citizen born free, who has lived free and who will die free.

For these acts in violation of our national sovereignty, and for the other acts which the forces under your command continue to commit, I present you my most energetic protest in the name of my country, in the name of the army which I command and in the name of my race. Later, history will say that it is not by such acts as those related above that the doctrines of Pan-Americanism are carried into practice, doctrines which have filled many pages of the world’s press for many years.

Let me add, as a complement to my statement, that the American government is in friendly relationships with that presided by Adolfo Diaz, impeached by the Constituent National Assembly, whose acts it pretends not to recognize, which
relations greatly surprise me. Sir, the Government which you serve, to be logical, should recognize all the acts of the Assembly I referred to, one of which was the impeachment just mentioned, because I cannot explain to myself, how the Assembly could have been recognized then, when it approved the contracts celebrated with American citizens and today refuses to recognize, when it deposes the violator of the Constitution and one of the principal factors in the compromises that are killing the sovereignty of our country.

My compatriots, my subalterns and I, wish earnestly to preserve amicable and friendly relations with the powerful government and with the great people to which you belong, as much as, we wish it would respect our country as a free, sovereign, and independent people. I am sure that this will be the supreme aspiration of you and your people if unfortunately were facing the great problem I examined.

I am respectfully, the Admiral’s very attentive and obedient servant. 197

By mid September, George T. Weitzel’s bitterness towards the Allied Forces had increased. He recommended that U.S. troops take a more active role in the war and that the rebel’s leaders be capture, tried and hanged by the American forces. 198 On September 27, 1912, General Emiliano Chamorro drafted orders to capture and execute Zeledón and any commander in his army. The orders were circulated to all his officers. 199

Secretary of State Philander C. Knox received Weitzel’s request and reported it to U.S. President Taft, in turn, instructed Admiral Southerland to take action and orders. Rear Admiral William Henry Hudson Southerland, Commander in chief of the U.S. troops in Nicaragua was instructed to act. 200

Orders were given to the officer in command of the U.S. forces in Nicaragua outlining that:

You are directed, in addition (to protecting the lives and property of Americans and other foreigners in Nicaragua, particularly at the ports of San Juan del Sur and Corinto, and maintaining a proper and efficient Legation Guard at the Capital Managua, to keep open by railroad and by telegraph if practicable communication with the capital at Managua and also, if deemed desirable as far as Granada. 201 And:

The Navy Department is of necessity entrusted with the duty of protecting American interests in those countries more or less under the influence of the U.S.


201 Edwin N. McClellan. op cit.; William H.H. Southerland-P. 3.30 pm., August 3.1912
of America and for whose conduct the U.S. has assumed certain responsibilities… For the above reasons the several landings from Naval vessels and the expeditions to Nicaragua have not come within the international law definition of "war" but they were anything but "peaceful" from the viewpoint of those engaged.  

By mid September General Luis Mena, in Granada was in poor health and surrendered to the American troops. Mena, on September 23, 1912 was sent to prison in the Panamá Canal Zone by the U.S. military forces. The forces led by Zeledón were left alone to face the war of resistance, and he subsequently assumed the presidency of Nicaragua. By the end of September, the U.S. military forces were ready to assault on the strongholds of the nationalist forces in Masaya, León, and Chinandega. This was the last remaining stronghold of the Allied Forces.

**The Epic of Masaya**

Masaya and the strongholds occupied by the Allied Forces in León were under siege and constant fire. October 2, 1912, Admiral Southerland, sent a Memorandum to his Commander in the battlefield General Joseph Henry Pendleton:

Office of the Commander-In-Chief,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet  
American Legation Managua, Nicaragua.  
No. 46-A WHHS- SVD October 2, 1912.  
MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL PENDLETON  
Grant amnesty to soldiers in the name and by direction of the President of Nicaragua, and have them camp near until you are ready to send Long's force to him. Butler's people guarding them if necessary.  
No amnesty to officers. Bring them here to turn them over.  
I don't want these soldiers to get to León before we finish there.  
Unconditional surrender, with above modifications  
Signed- WHH Southerland Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet,  
Commanding U.S. Forces - Nicaragua.  

Colonel Pendleton, October 2, 1912, sent General Zeledón a last ultimatum.  
Headquarters First Prov. Regiment,  
U.S. Marines  
Campuzano, Nic. Oct. 2, 1912  
From: Colonel Commanding Expeditionary Forces.  
By Direction of the Commander-In-Chief.  
To: General Benjamin F. Zeledón,

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Commanding Revolutionary forces.
Masaya, Nicaragua.

Sir: The U.S. Government has ordered that no disturbers be permitted to occupy any position menacing the railroad between Corinto and Granada, in consequence of which, you are hereby directed to evacuate all you positions on the Barranca, Coyotepe, and in the town of Masaya. Should you accede to this demand you will signify the fact by hoisting in plain view for all sides, a white flag on the top of Coyotepe and one in the top of the Barranca, and will march your troops to my lines near Nindiri station on the railroad, where they will be required to lay down their arms. No delegation or commission from you, suggestion or requesting any other terms will be received, nor will such request or suggestion be considered. If my demands are not acceded to promptly at eight o’clock tomorrow morning, Thursday October third, I shall open fire with all my guns and drive your from your position.

Very Respectfully,
Signed. Joseph H. Pendleton

Zeledón rejected any agreement that did not include the immediate evacuation from the country, of all the foreign soldiers. Below is Zeledón’s last letter to Colonel Pendleton:

Zeledón response constitutes one of the most beautiful and patriotic document even written in Nicaragua's history:

Recived 10/3/1912 9 AM
Masaya, October 3, 1912. 5 of the morning.
To Colonel J.H. Pendleton.
In camp.
Sir:

I have received your note, dated yesterday, in which you inform me that the government of the U.S. has ordered that no disturbers be permitted to occupy positions which menace the railroad between Corinto and Granada, that in consequence, you give notice to evacuate all my positions on the Barranca, Coyotepe and in this city; that if I comply to this demand. I will make it known by flying in a position preferably visible from Coyotepe and the Barranca and other points, white flags, that after that, my troops should march towards your lines near the station of Nindiri on the railroad line where the arms should be deposited; that you will not receive any delegation or commission coming to ask other conditions of you than whose indicated, that if your order is not complied with, today exactly

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205 U.S. National Archives. op cit.1912.
that that eight o'clock in the morning, the fire from your artillery will drive me from my positions.

I confess to you that I have read your above mentioned note and I have been reluctant to believe that it is signed by one trained in military matters who served under the flag of the great American nation that prides itself on being the guiding spirit of the democratic republic of the American continent; and my surprise increases still more when I consider it impossible that the government of the U.S. of North America and above all the senate of the country of Washington and of Lincoln has authorized its servants to come and intervene with armed forces in the internal affairs that we Nicaraguans debate in this land which is ours and was bequeathed sovereign and independent to us by our fathers.

After serving protest in the matter by virtue of what was determined upon by the majority of the patriots of this city and by the majority of the Generals under my command, in spite of my opinion to the contrary, trains were permitted to pass through the middle of my positions upon the railroad line which leads to Granada, and from the date of the permission up to the present, trains have continued passing with all guarantees on the part of my forces.

Having obtained then, the passage of trains. I do not see even remotely the reason which you can give to your superiors for exacting the surrender of my positions and disarmament of my army; and consequently I dare think that you will withdraw your threats in view of the justice which assists me. But if unfortunately for the honor of the U.S. of North America you and your chiefs are deaf to the well founded reasons which I cite and carry forward your threatened attack, your trains by that act itself will be considered as hostile instead of enjoying the guarantees which up to now they have been enjoying. I will exert with my forces the resistance that the case requires, and that the dignity of Nicaragua which we represent demands, and afterwards there will fall upon you, your chiefs, and the mighty nation to which you belong, the tremendous responsibilities which history will set forth and the eternal reproach of having employed your arms against the weak who have been fighting to re-conquer the sacred privileges of the fatherland.

I hope that you will deign to send me your answer before proceeding to attack my position in order that I may know what direction to take.

Respectfully
Benjamín F. Zeledón.
Commanding

On October 3, 1912, Admiral William H. H. Southerland reported to the Secretary of the Navy the following:

Zeledón has refused the terms of surrender offered although he has only about eight hundred men against the Diaz and Chamorro surrounding force of over three thousand. The Barranca and Coyotepe are the two hills between which the railroad passes and they completely control and menace the railroad, both hills being fortified...I am demanding that Zeledón vacate his position by eight o'clock

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tomorrow morning. If he does not comply with this demand, it will be enforced by our Marines and Blue jackets of whom Pendleton has about five hundred in position on the Managua side of the Barranca and Buttler about four hundred in position on the Granada side.\textsuperscript{208}

\textbf{The Battle of Coyotepe and La Barranca}

On October 4, 1912, U.S. Marines, and local allies attacked Masaya and the hills of Coyotepe and La Barranca from all sides. The city was taken after fierce combat that lasted for many hours. Benjamín Zeledón, who was withdrawing towards the southern cities of Nicaragua, encountered enemy troops and was wounded in combat and captured.

As a result of the refusal of the national forces to surrender, the U.S. Naval force and its allies began attacks against the Allied Forces on October 3. Four battalions of Marines commanded by Major S. Butler, Colonel Pendleton, and Lieutenant George W. Steele, the Artillery Company under the Command of Captain H.O. Underwood all USMC, and 3 thousand of their allies attacked.\textsuperscript{209}

The following were the orders issued by Colonel J. Pendleton to Major S. Butler that propelled the attacks:

Get into position tonight as secretly as possible on the east slopes of Coyotepe near General Saenz forces and as near the summit as possible without discovery. Begin your advance to the attack of Coyotepe at 5:15 a.m. tomorrow morning October 4, 1912. The attack will be simultaneous on the eastern of the Federal forces and ours. My understanding of the attacking column is Colonel Garcia, from the North East Colonel Pendleton, from the east General Cruz, from east by South Major Butler, from East South East Saenz, and from East by South to South us. My guns will fire an occasional shot till about 3:00 a.m., on Barranca and well down on slopes of Coyotepe west side. After we have taken Coyotepe and cleared off Barranca, a force will advance -Federals- through railroad cut to attack Masaya. Admiral wishes all the best of luck. Hoping to see you on Coyotepe. Sincerely. Pendleton".

The U.S. Marine Regiment and four Battalions participating in the actions in Coyotepe and Masaya were led by the following officers:
Second Battalion: Captain R.C. Underwood and 2nd Lieutenant R.E. Messersmith

\textsuperscript{208} Edwin McClellan, \textit{op cit}. p. 170; Joseph H Pendleton, \textit{op cit}. folder # 7
\textsuperscript{209} Joseph H. Pendleton, \textit{ibid}.

Fourth Battalion: Lieutenant Commander G.W. Steel Jr, and Lieutenant J.M. Schelling, Chaplain Fleming assisting at the Field Hospital car. 210

On October 4, 1912, U.S. Marine Commander in-the-battle-field, Major Butler, reported to his immediate superiors, Admiral Soutberland and Pendleton, the capture of General Benjamín F. Zeledón. Butler left behind ample historical testimony of an abominable war crime in the form of telegrams urgently sent to and exchanged with his superiors requesting further instructions regarding the final fate of General Zeledón. Zeledón, already captured, assumed he would be hung. Butler in his latter days as a transformed pacifist recounted all his experiences through his writings and speeches against the war.

Butler sent a telegram to Admiral Soutberland and Colonel Pendleton regarding General Zeledón's capture and killing.

Butler’s telegram to Admiral Soutberland stated:
To: Admiral Soutberland. Government forces have captured Zeledón and have asked me if we want him. I am sending forces to Masaya at once to preserve order, so if you direct I can have Zeledón sent back here under guard or protected by my men in Masaya. Personally I would suggest that through some inaction on our part some one night hang him. Please direct me at once. Butler. Received 5:00 p.m. Oct.4, 1912 Hdqtrs Camp Weitzel, received, 10/4/12 #229. Copy for Colonel Pendleton. 211

Butler’s telegram to Pendleton stated:
To Colonel Pendleton, Granada, 3:30 p.m. 4/10/12. Received in Managua at 5:20 p.m. Receptor Zuniga. Telégrafos Nacionales de Nicaragua. Have Telegraphed Admiral direct relative disposition Zeledón. Took this action in case you are not yet in Managua and case is urgent. Butler. 212

Pendleton's sent a telegram to Major Butler on October 4, 1912 indicating:


Admiral Soutberland’s response to Butler's urgent telegram is not stated here, but the fact remains that Zeledón was later officially reported as “killed in action.” 214

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211 Joseph H. Pendleton, op cit.
212 ibid
213 ibid
Between 2500 hundred U.S. Marines and about 3000 Conservative officers and soldiers surrounded and attacked Coyotepe and Masaya on October 4, 1912. Zeledón’s forces were between 800 officers and soldiers.

The result was a brutal human slaughter never seen before in Nicaragua. More than one hundred men were killed and wounded in Coyotepe and Barranca hills and more than 1500, between liberal and conservative troops, died in Masaya. Furthermore, the city center was burned and looted. Zeledón’s soldiers and civilian sympathizers were massacred inside the churches and in their houses by the hundreds.

After his physical death, Benjamín Zeledón was declared an outlaw, bandit, and anarchist. His father was the victim of an attempt against his life and his properties and those of his family in La Concordia, Jinotega looted, burned and confiscated. The U.S.-imposed government in Nicaragua declared his civil death, his birth registration burned, and his wife and children outcast and banished.215

By the end of October 1912, after a bloody fight and destruction the whole country was occupied by the U.S. Marines. Zeledón’s death and the political situation that followed transformed Nicaragua into a protectorate of the U.S.

**Necrological Note: Dr. Benjamin F. Zeledón R.**

The Central American Court of Justice and the International Office devoted a column in its magazine for a heartfelt and respectful homage to the memory of its ex-member, Benjamin F. Zeledón. The excerpt of the column follows below:

In this Office, Dr. Zeledón left his indelible imprint of an always patriotic and upright attitude, placing all his youthful energies at the service and love of Central America. His talent and character were always devoted to those two supreme ideals that in his heart were a cult; in his spirit, an ideal; and in his hands, a flag.

Dr. Zeledón died too young of age, when he still had ahead of him a bright future that he very well deserved for his enviable qualities as a man of thought and action. He disappeared during the peak of his life, when before him were still open the best and most beautiful horizons. He left a place without support and one less hope in Central America, so in need of men of this temperament, who are falling in such a painful manner in our fratricidal disputes.

The Office deeply deplored the disappearance of one of its most conspicuous founders, who honored it with his presence, and motivated it with his example to continue doing what, by nature, it dedicates itself to doing; and while devoting

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this tribute of justice to his memory, pleaded with his esteemed family to accept its expressions of the most sincere condolences. 216

**Aftermath of the Intervention and Death of General Zeledón**

*Adolfo Díaz Recinos “Elected” President of Nicaragua by the U.S. Marines*

On November 2, 1912, Adolfo Díaz, former accountant of the U.S. and Nicaragua Company and its subsidiaries La Luz and Los Angeles Mining Company, was "elected" President of Nicaragua by the U.S. Marines and sworn in on January 1913.

Marine Major Butler, in letters sent to his wife from Granada, Nicaragua in November 1912, described how the elections he supervised in Nicaragua were carried out, and how Nicaragua elected its president. His letters home in 1912 reflected the same sarcasm:

Adolfo Díaz was the only candidate for the presidency, liberals did not participate. The opposition candidates were declared bandits when it became necessary to elect our man to office. Our candidates always win. Nobody liked the fellow, the district was canvassed and 400 were found who would vote for the proper candidate. Notice of the opening of the polls was given five minutes beforehand, the 400 voters were assembled in line and when they had voted, in about two hours, the polls were closed. 217

The effort and money used by North American financiers was crowned with success, and they were quite pleased with the outcomes. The following are quotations from Mr. Edward L. Andrews, counsel of the Nicaraguan Corporation of Bank holders of London, announcing the settlement of the Nicaraguan affair in the New York Times on November 2, 1912.

On the eve of the Nicaraguan elections, which take place today under the auspices of the U.S., the readjustment of the Public debt of Nicaragua, presents an interesting phase of Central America finances and is still more interesting in the bearings upon other American bond issues. Soon after the agreement was made with the Diaz government, the recent revolution there sought to establish a new authority. It is now familiar history that the U.S. promptly intervened with its military forces and succeeded after some loss of life in overcoming the revolutionary party. The bearing of this action by our government upon the financial and political future of Central America is most important. It furnishes assurance in principle that the U.S. will safeguard the performance on contracts with our own citizens as well as with foreigners. This is the necessary sequence of the Monroe Doctrine, which excludes European governments from affording due protection to their own nationals. We have at least carried out our international pledges to their fullest

extent by furnishing the sole leverage recognized in those countries. After these recent occurrences in Nicaragua it is not all likely that any other forcible intervention will be required in Central America. A diplomatic motion to settle their debts and perform their contracts will in all likely hood prove sufficient. Upon these lines the adjustment of Honduras and other public debts of Latin America will soon follow.

The history of the Nicaraguan debt may be sketched as follows: In 1909 Nicaragua arranged through the Ethelburga Syndicate for an issue of 6% bonds in the amount of L 1.200,000.00 (U.S. $6.250,000.00) payable in 35 years. According to the prospectus of the Loan 1, 500,000.00 (U.S. $2.500.000.00) were to be reserved for exchange with holders of antecedent issues, including bonds held in this country. The proceeds of the remainder of the issue were to be applied in large part to the construction of a railroad. The bonds for that purpose were sold in Europe at 92, 93.5, and the proceeds deposited by the Ethelburga Syndicate in English and French Banks. At this point the feature of the transaction appeared which may be deemed peculiar to Central America. When the engineers and surveyors arrived in Nicaragua and proceeded to initiate measures for the construction of the railroad they were driven away by main force and were obligated to desist from further efforts. A strange situation then arose. The railroad when built was to furnish a part of the security for the bonds. But the money proceeds of the bonds could not by reasons of “force major” be applied to construction purposes. It lay inactive in the depository banks. However the bonds were secured by a first lien on the custom revenues of Nicaragua both on the export and import duties. After several coupons had been paid the Nicaraguan government itself became involved in civil difficulties not to speak of military ones.

At this time there was some executive intervention by our Department of State, and this was followed by a convention on June 6, 1911 between the two governments (the so called Dawson pacts) for the placing of the Nicaraguan finances on a sound basis through some competent and reliable American banking group. This agreement was signed by Secretary Philander Knox. At this stage the Corporation of Foreign Bank holders was invited by the security owners to undertake the adjustment for the business. Meetings of the bondholders were also held in France under the auspices of L'association Nationale des Porteurs Francaise de Valeurs Extranegeres, and likewise in Spain and other countries in the continent. The secretary of the Corporation of Bankholders, James P. Cooper, came to New York and entered into negotiations with the Fiscal Agents of Nicaragua, Messrs J. & W. Seligman & Co. and Brown Bros. & Co. The situation presented some knotty questions. The Bank holders were advised that the prevention of the railroad construction by Nicaragua constituted a relinquishment of that portion of the financial enterprise—that the proceeds holders. The entire issues of the loan was outstanding. This course will involve the crediting on each bond of the applying this resource to bonds which had been issued in exchange for prior issues. On the other hand, Nicaragua claimed the entire proceeds of the sale of bonds deposited in the bank. As the republic is not suitable, the bondholders encountered practical difficulties, they were not receiving interests
and their principal was locked up uselessly. In effecting a compromise of these conflicting conditions by an agreement which was executed on the months of 1912 after approval by the Nicaraguan congress, the cash in bank, amounting to nearly U.S. $1,000,000 was taken into account in the following way. The bondholders received their fund sufficient to pay two defaulted coupons, and the coupons falling due on Jan 1, 1912 and Jan 1, 1913. Interests on defaulted coupons were also provided and the sinking funds were placed in full operation. The balance amounting to nearly U.S. $1,200,000 was turned over to Nicaragua for her financial development...

*The Conservatives from Granada in the Aftermath of U.S. Intervention in 1912*

With Benjamin Zeledón’s assassination, the defeat of the Allied Forces, the U.S. military occupation, the imposition of the protectorate, and the election of a U.S. “straw man” as the country’s President, Nicaraguans saw the rise of negative, cynical, anti-national and subservient political groups which contributed to the alienation of the country’s traditional elite and political parties.

The Nicaraguans that caused the war and later requested U.S. intervention were the ones who were first in line to “share the benefits”. Even when the fire of nationalist resistance in León and Chinandega was not yet extinguished, the same prominent and influential Granadino citizens were among those who first welcomed and celebrated the arrival of the interventionist foreign military forces. They were vocal in their interventionist intentions, in open and private declarations directed to U.S. officials. These actions were well documented by U.S. officials and such documents and in the U.S. National Archives and in the Marine Corps Historical Museum.

As we already debated when we examined Zelaya’s overthrow, U.S. officials received letters from conservative citizens, expressing the desires for U.S. intervention and annexation.

The following are excerpts of letters found in the U.S. National archives and in the U.S. Marine and Navy Yard Museum Center in Washington DC.:

**Letter #1**

Personal Copy for Colonel Pendleton: Granada, October 9, 1912.

To the Honorable Admiral Southerland, Corinto. Honorable Sir: Because of your short stay in this city and the unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves, it was impossible for us to present to your our respectful homage of understanding and appreciation in the name of this community for the inestimable services rendered by you to this population thus spared, by your coolness and quick decisions, from the continuation of the horrors and anarchy. Since we have known of your arrival on our shores we have seen the rainbow of peace appear in our

country's sky; and that it was not a vain illusion that we had formed, you have demonstrated it practically by pacifying the city and establishing quiet and peace in the country side by your wise dispositions and the courage of those under your command. Because of the highly marked benefits that we have received from the protection if the Americans, we send to you and those serving under you in the name of this community, an expression of our sincere gratitude asking that you present those sentiments to the government of your generous country, and hope and desire that the sacrifices made by you will give as a result an established and enduring peace in Nicaragua. With assurance of our highest consideration, we remain, you obedient servants.  

Letter #2:
Granada, October 9, 1912. Major S.D. Butler, Granada. Dear Sir: We the undersigned beg to address you and express the deep gratitude of the city of Granada for the efficient as well as the grave and opportune intervention of you and your valiant officers and soldiers who came to put an end to the desperate and painful situation in which this city was placed, victim to all horrors of an organized anarchy. Besides the systematic destruction of property, and the indignity, abuses and insults which were heaped upon us without distinction of age or sex, and the horror of famine, we were confronted with the sinister perspective of other outrages that still awaited us. From this terrible situation and from the anguish that the future held for us, we passed as if by magic to a state of complete guarantee for life, property and well-being for all, as soon as the American troops entered the city. The tact and discretion with which you fulfilled your humane mission so bristling with difficulties, was much that your name will be forever engraved in the hearts of the people here. The lamentable situation of these countries, perturbed by constant uprisings, is all sadder when we consider their proximity to the great American nation, which founded on wise institutions and inspired by the spirit of liberty and justice, marches at the head of the destiny of humanity. Thus the presence of the American troops among us marks an era of peace for this Republic because it has now spread over us the protecting influence of its altruistic policy. We beg of you to tender to Colonel J.H. Pendleton, and through him to Admiral W.H.H. Southerland and the American Minister George T. Weitzel, our most heartfelt appreciation for the inestimable services rendered this city and to the country in general, and at the same time the profound admiration of the people of this town for the GREAT AMERICAN NATION. With expressions of our distinguished consideration.

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The aftermath of the intervention showed the world the real intentions of the U.S. interventionist forces and its allies.

The following are quotations from U.S. President Taft’s fourth annual message to Congress on December 3, 1912, establishing the importance of intervention in Nicaragua for his administration foreign policy.

**TAFT BIDS BE WORLD POWER. Defends its Trade Seeking Policy as Demanded by our Middle Age.**

**DOLLARS VERSUS BULLETS.**

American Capital Must Be Employed if we are to get our share of Markets

In Central America the aim was to help such countries as Nicaragua. They are the immediate beneficiaries.

The National benefit to the U.S. was twofold. First it is obvious that the Monroe Doctrine was more vital in the neighborhood of the Panamá Canal and the zone of the Caribbean than anywhere else. There too, the maintenance of that doctrine fell most heavily upon the Unite States. It was therefore essential, according to President Taft, that the countries within that sphere be removed from the jeopardy involved by heavy foreign debt and chaotic national finances and from the ever present danger of international complications due to disorder at home. Hence the U.S. was glad to encourage and support American bankers who were willing to send a helping hand to the financial rehabilitation of such countries because this financial rehabilitation and the protection of their custom houses from being the prey of would-be dictators would remove at one stroke the menace of revolutionary disorder.

The second advantage to the U.S. affected all the Southern and Gulf ports and the business industry of the South. The republics of Central America and the Caribbean possessed great natural wealth. They needed only a measure of stability and the means of financial regeneration to enter upon an era of peace and prosperity, bringing profit and happiness for themselves and at the same time creating conditions sure to lead to a flourishing interchange of trade with this country.

I wish to call your especial attention to the recent occurrences in Nicaragua, for I believe the terrible events recorded there during the revolution of the past summer—the useless loss of life, the devastation of property, the bombardment of defenseless cities, the killing and wounding of women and children, the torturing of noncombatants to exact contributions, and the suffering of thousands of human beings—might have been averted had the Department of State, through approval of

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the loan convention by the Senate, been permitted to carry out its now well-developed policy of encouraging the extending of financial aid to weak Central American States with the primary objects of avoiding just such revolutions by assisting those Republics to rehabilitate their finances, to establish their currency on a stable basis, to remove the customhouses from the danger of revolutions by arranging for their secure administration, and to establish reliable banks.

During this last revolution in Nicaragua, the Government of that Republic having the ability to protect American life and property against acts of sheer lawlessness on the part of the malcontents, and having requested this Government to assume that office, it became necessary to land over 2,000 marines and blue jackets to devote its attention wholly to its internal troubles, and was thus enabled to stamp out the exhausted, 8,000 persons having been given food in one day upon the arrival of the American forces, our men supplied other unfortunate, needy Nicaraguans from their own haversacks. I wish to congratulate the officers and men of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps who took part in reestablishing order in Nicaragua upon their splendid conduct, and to record with sorrow the death of seven American marines and blue jackets. Since the reestablishment of peace and order, elections have been held amid conditions of quiet and tranquility. Nearly all the American marines have now been withdrawn. The country should soon be on the road to recovery. The only apparent danger now threatening Nicaragua arises from the shortage of funds. Although American bankers have already rendered assistance, they may naturally be loath to advance a loan adequate to set the country upon its feet without the support of some such convention as that of June, 1911, upon which the Senate has not yet acted.

In the general effort to contribute to the enjoyment of peace by those Republics which are near neighbors of the U.S., the administration has enforced the so-called neutrality statutes with a new vigor, and those statutes were greatly strengthened in restricting the exportation of arms and munitions by the joint resolution of last March. It is still a regrettable fact that certain American ports are made the rendezvous of professional revolutionists and others engaged in intrigue against the peace of those Republics. It must be admitted that occasionally a revolution in this region is justified as a real popular movement to throw off the shackles of a vicious and tyrannical government. Such was the Nicaraguan revolution against the Zelaya regime. A nation enjoying our liberal institutions cannot escape sympathy with a true popular movement, and one so well justified. In very many cases, however, revolutions in the Republics in question have no basis in principle, but are due merely to the machinations of conscienceless and ambitious men, and have no effect but to bring new suffering and fresh burdens to an already oppressed people. The question whether the use of American ports as foci of revolutionary intrigue can be best dealt with by a further amendment to the neutrality statutes or whether it would be safer to deal with special cases by special laws is one worthy of the careful consideration of the Congress.

Impressed with the particular importance of the relations between the U.S. and the Republics of Central America and the Caribbean region, which of necessity must become still more intimate by reason of the mutual advantages which will be presented by the opening of the Panamá Canal, I directed the Secretary of State
last February to visit these Republics for the purpose of giving evidence of the sincere friendship and good will which the Government and people of the U.S. bear toward them. Ten Republics were visited. Everywhere he was received with a cordiality of welcome and a generosity of hospitality such as to impress me deeply and to merit our warmest thanks. The appreciation of the Governments and people of the countries visited, which has been appropriately shown in various ways, leaves me no doubt that his visit will conduce to that closer union and better understanding between the U.S. and those Republics which I have had it much at heart to promote…

After the defeat of Allied Forces, prominent and influential conservatives from Granada attended the funeral services for the U.S. Marines killed in the fight.

The following is a quotation from a telegram sent from Admiral W.H.H. Southerland to the Secretary of the Navy on October 13, 1912.

Please transmit to Navy Department: Secretary of the Navy, Washington, Sunday, October 13, 1912, 10 a.m., Managua. The President of Nicaragua, his cabinet, many high officials and many of the most prominent men of the country attended the funeral services of the remains of our marines who died under the flag in the assault. Southerland.

Some weeks later, a dance reception honoring Colonel Pendleton and the U.S. officers under his command was organized in the exclusive "Club de Granada". The following is a transcription from the invitation telegram received by Pendleton on November 13, 1912, taken from the U.S. Marines Historical Archives.

The conservatives believed that the U.S. military officers had diplomatic, political, and economic authority. What they failed to realize and never assimilated was the U.S. method of civil control over the military; they attributed to the American military commanders and civilian officers of the occupying forces, an independence of authority that they did not possess. Nevertheless, this sometimes misleading conception was skillfully manipulated by more politically aware conservative political leaders, and years later by the dictator General Anastasio Somoza García, who bragged about the friendship and influence he had with the U.S. military, diplomats, and political envoys.

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221 U.S. National Archives. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the U.S., with the Annual Message of the President transmitted to Congress, (December 3, 1912); The New York Times, Wednesday, December 4, 1912, p. 6 col.1

222 Joseph H. Pendleton, op cit.

223 ibid.
Another element that is important to consider in this discussion is the fact that American foreign policy is primarily concerned, and it always has been, with domestic issues. The purpose of American diplomats, military persons, and envoys was to insure the survival and to increase the prosperity of the U.S.; hence, they are committed to the functioning of the system at home.

Consequently, the conservatives’ dreams were not fulfilled. They acted subserviently; they vilified, and degraded themselves by idolizing the foreigners for economic and political survival, without understanding that they were facing people from a nation driven at that particular moment, essentially by a policy of expansion. The conservatives did not realize that they were dealing with proud and arrogant men that considered themselves racially and morally superior, and were propelled by a non-written policy of Manifest Destiny to control the continent allotted by providence to the free development for the White Anglo Saxon Protestant men. A policy that in reality offered nothing to non White Anglo Saxon Protestant peoples ... but inevitable decline, expulsion or extinction. 224 “We have a destiny to perform a 'Manifest Destiny' over all Mexico, over South America, over the West Indies and Canada.” 225

The conservatives confronted people that viewed them with disdain and contempt and believed in the inferiority and incapacity of the world's mixed and colored races, and who had wanted since the founding fathers' policies to transform America into a homogeneous white society. 226

The conservatives were descendants of Spanish and Spanish-Indigenous “mestizos,” and they were dealing with the carriers of a then widespread belief that the blood of Spanish and Indigenous tropical colored people would taint the stream of Anglo Saxon American political and social life, thus further complicating the U.S. nation's already festering racial problems.

To their dismay the conservatives received a lesson about discrimination and racism in their own land. As in any occupied territory, the American military and civilian occupying forces kept their own settings, clubs, schools, exclusive stores and services where no "local contamination" was allowed.

"Peace" was established in Nicaragua under the U.S. Presidency of Taft. For Taft, it was an influential conservative ruling class that was instrumental in the application and enforcement of the policies of state transformation. Like in the Philippines, these policies helped to strengthen the wealth conservatives from Granada and control of the country's

resources and institutions. 227 U.S. President Taft expresses his driving motivations in a speech in 1912:

The day is not far distant when three Stars and Stripes at three equidistant points will mark our territory: one in the North Pole, another at the Panamá Canal, and the third at the South Pole. The whole hemisphere will be ours in fact as, by virtue of our superiority of race, it already is ours morally. 228

Adolfo Diaz and Emiliano Chamorro represented the best example of the amalgam of contradictory U.S-Granadino interests. President Diaz personified the protection and defense of U.S. business interests. General Emiliano Chamorro, first as military and political leader of the conservative faction; then as diplomatic envoy in Washington and later as President of Nicaragua, represented the local caudillo/strong man’s political and economic arm to control the conservatives from Granada and Nicaraguans at large. 229

Diaz took office for his second term on January 1, 1913, and immediately attempted to try the negotiating process over the canal rights in Nicaragua. The country’s financial position was pathetic; its outstanding debts were estimated at $11.5 million, including $6.2 million owed to the Ethelburga syndicate of London. Money that was originally contracted by Zelaya to build the railroad from Lake Nicaragua to the Atlantic. The money was used to pay war reparations and indemnities to prominent members of President Díaz’s and General Chamorro’s party and family. 230

Additionally, Nicaragua was in need of $1.5 million to meet its current expenses. The American-managed customs collectorship was able to raise enough money to resume some payments on the Ethelburga debt, but the current accounts continued to be in dreadful shape, and American interests in Nicaragua seemed vulnerable in the long-term.

The Bryan-Chamorro Interoceanic Canal Treaty for Nicaragua

U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan in 1913 took up the treaty that was left idle for two years since the Weitzel-Chamorro treaty was not approved in 1911.

To U.S. policymakers, the interests at stake over the Nicaraguan canal negotiations were clear. George T. Weitzel advocated succinctly early in the negotiations the benefit of such a canal.

The advantages to the U.S. are the preparation for further growth of our coast wide commerce, the elimination of foreign political influence (in Nicaragua), the

230 Rosendo Argüello, Salvador Lejarza, and Carlos L. Martinez, op cit.
service of a caveat against any more canal concessions or territorial privileges such as have been attempted with European and Asiatic powers...and the guaranty of peace and independence of the (Nicaraguan) Republic. 231

Moreover, Weitzel wrote that:

The Nicaraguan canal route and treaty would be an important element in the defense of the present Panamá Canal. 232

This conclusion was shared by the General Board of the U.S. Navy, which confirmed the military advantages of a fortified Nicaraguan canal, and restated the American desire to exclude non-American powers from control over the canal route. The General Board’s recommendations were endorsed without reservation by Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, and passed on to the Secretary of State. American policy-makers still did not rest easy over U.S. security concerns in Nicaragua or in Central America. 233

The Bryan-Chamorro Treaty (1914) was the product of an especially difficult process. In the negotiations President Adolfo Diaz called on the U.S. to include a Platt-type amendment for Nicaragua as it was proposed in the Weitzel-Chamorro treaty in 1911 and not accepted. The amendment would have made Nicaragua an American protectorate following the Cuban model. This idea was unpopular in both the U.S. Senate and amongst the Nicaraguan people, and it was quickly scrapped. However, the image of the Diaz recommendation damaged the negotiations and Diaz’s already shaky reputation.

The final version of the treaty signed on August 5, 1914 and ratified by the U.S. Senate on February 1916, gave the U.S. exclusive rights to build, operate, and fortify a Nicaraguan isthmian canal. For these rights Nicaragua was paid $3 million. The U.S. Senate, though, insisted that the U.S. guarantee the rights of El Salvador and Costa Rica, which feared for their sovereignty because of the potential canal route and the likely presence of U.S. naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca. Nicaragua’s neighbors took their grievances to the Central American Court of Justice (created at the 1907 Washington conference) which ruled in their favor. However, the court had no jurisdiction over the U.S., and additional negotiations never took place.

The incident over the Bryan-Chamorro treaty mortally wounded the Central American Court of Justice that the U.S. had helped to create but, once again, American interests in Central America, especially the Panamá Canal and the Nicaraguan route, were safe. 234 The Bryan Chamorro treaty granted to the U.S. exclusive right for "an

231 Weitzel to Secretary of State Philander C. Knox, 15 Dec. 1912, RG 59, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910-1929, 817.812/5; Hereafter cited as DS/NA (Department of State/National Archives); Daniels to Bryan, 18 November 1915, DS/NA 817.812/142 (with attachment).

232 Weitzel to Secretary of State Philander P. Knox. op cit. 15 Dec 1912. RG.59

233 ibid

Interoceanic canal by way of the San Juan River and the Great Lake of Nicaragua, or by way of any route over Nicaraguan territory."

The Treaty also provided for a lease of Great Corn Island and Little Corn Island and the rights for the U.S. to establish, operate, and maintain a naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca. For all the foregoing the U.S. agreed to pay the Nicaraguan Government three million dollars and settle the Ethelburga affair. The Treaty was the last step in closing the hopes of Nicaragua for the building of a canal in her territory, thus protecting the new U.S. Panamá Canal that was inaugurated in 1914.

This period in modern Nicaraguan history signified the end of the first attempt to have a national state, the end of the independent republic, the end of the possibility to build a society with a national political orientation and mission. It is evident that through the so-called Roosevelt “Big Stick” Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and Taft “Dollar Diplomacy” doctrine, the U.S. interventions in 1909 and 1912 in Nicaragua interrupted the process of creation of an independent nation–state.

…initiating a process of power structuring, class accommodation, political conflict negotiation-resolution, government organization and public policy formulation that turned the country and its national institutions into a long-term disaster…

On August 5, 1914, U.S. Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan and General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas, signed the treaty granting the U.S. in perpetuity and forever free of all taxation or other public charges, the exclusive property rights over a strip of land traversing Nicaragua from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, the Corn Islands in the Atlantic and the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca in the Pacific Oceans, the exclusive rights to build an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua and the right to establish naval bases to protect the canal. In exchange the U.S. would provide the Nicaraguan government U.S. $ 3,000,000 dollars.

This treaty assured the U.S. that no other canal in Nicaragua would be opened to compete with the Panamá canal in Nicaragua and the absolute control by the U.S. over the Caribbean and Central American seas, maintained by Spain and Great Britain for nearly 400 years. The convention and the money given under the military occupation of Nicaragua would end forever the historical illusions of Nicaragua to open an interoceanic canal under her sovereign control and ownership over her own territory.

As the U.S. had already built the Panamá Canal, (construction started on May 4, 1904 and formally opened on August 15, 1914) the terms of the Chamorro-Bryan Treaty served the primary purpose of securing U.S. interests against potential foreign countries - mainly Germany or Japan or even Nicaragua, to build another canal to compete with the Panamá canal. Finally, the treaty transformed Nicaragua into a U.S. political and economic protectorate.

Article 1 of the Bryan-Chamorro treaty established that:

The government of Nicaragua grants in perpetuity to the government of the U.S., forever free from all taxation or other public charges, the exclusive property rights necessary and convenient for the construction, operation and maintenance of an interoceanic canal by way of the San Juan River and the great Lake of Nicaragua or by way of any other route over Nicaraguan territory, the details of the terms upon such canal shall be constructed, operated and maintained to be agreed to by the two governments whenever the Government of the U.S. shall notify the Government of Nicaragua of its desire or intention to construct such canal. 236

Of the U.S. $3,000,000 given to the Nicaraguan government as compensation for the signing of the treaty, 13% was used to pay compensation for war claims made to the Public Credit Commission, 20% was used to pay overdue salaries and compensations for government functionaries and for overdue payments of “other” war claims and compensations and 66% was used to pay overdue interests and quotas of the Public Debt of Nicaragua, expenses, and overdue compensations to banks as well as commissions for especial services due to foreigners and nationals acting as agents of the governments of those years. 237

Adding Insult to Injury: The loss of the archipelago of San Andres and Providencia

The islands of San Andrés and Providencia, an archipelago in the Caribbean Ocean close to Nicaragua, were under the administrative and military jurisdiction of the General Captaincy of Guatemala (except for a period of time in the 1600 under British control) and were part of Nicaragua’s territory since they were discovered by the Spanish navigators in the early 1500.

In 1803 Thomas O’Neill, Governor of San Andrés, without giving notice to or informing the General Captain (Governor) of Guatemala, sent a letter to the King of Spain, asking that, San Andrés and Providencia islands and the “Mosquito” territories become dependent in all aspects to the Vice Royalty of New Granada (today’s Colombia.) The King on November 30, 1803 responded affirmatively.

The islands of San Andrés and part of the Mosquito Coast from Cape Gracias a Dios inclusive to the Chagres River are hereby segregated from the Captaincy General of Guatemala and dependent on the Viceroyalty of Santa Fe. 238


238 Augusto Zamora. Intereses Territoriales de Nicaragua, San Andrés y Providencia controversia con Honduras.
As soon as the General Captain/Governor of Guatemala became aware of the situation, he protested before the King of Spain, since neither was he notified nor given the opportunity to respond to O’Neill’s request, reminding the king that the islands and the “Mosquito” territories have always depended on the General Captaincy of Guatemala; and finally asking the King that things return to their previous status.

The King of Spain on November 13, 1806 responded in favor to the request from the General Captain of Guatemala and issued a New Royal Order repealing that of 1803. The correspondence between Guatemala, Madrid and Santa Fe throughout the independence years demonstrates that the “Mosquito” Coast and its adjacent islands remained under Guatemala’s jurisdiction and the Royal Order of 1803 was never again mentioned. Nevertheless, Colombia has used the 1803 Royal Order as an argument when it has been of its National interest.239

Panama was part of Colombia prior to its becoming a protectorate of the United States. In 1903 Panama dismembered from Colombia with the involvement of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and the American Banker-Financier J.P. Morgan. On April 6, 1914 a treaty was negotiated and signed between Special U.S. Envoy and Plenipotentiary Thaddeus A. Thompson and Colombia’s Special Envoy and Plenipotentiary Francisco José Urrutia. The U.S. administration expressed its “sincere regret” for the separatist Panamanian adventure and offered compensation for her loss.

The proclamation of the treaty was delayed by the U.S. and Colombia’s Congress for several years because of internal political disputes as the party in charge of the administration changed, until U.S. oil businessmen learned of the discovery of vast oil reserves in Colombia and began lobbying in favor, finally the treaty was ratified by U.S. Congress on April 20, 1921.

Colombia on March 1, 1922 received 25 million dollars in return for her recognition of Panama's independence and access to her oil fields to U.S. business firms, the signing of pending fishing and navigation agreements and the assistance of the U.S. to convince Nicaragua (under U.S. military occupation as a Protectorate) to renounce her rights over the “Miskito” territory and San Andrés and Providencia islands in Colombia’s favor. In 1925, Nicaragua “solicited the assistance of the United States” to submit its dispute with Colombia to arbitration. The US State Department's response was a proposal for an "equitable" solution, the Miskito/Atlantic Coast to Nicaragua and San Andrés Archipelago to Colombia. Nicaragua’s National Congress put it on hold as some of its articles violated the country’s Constitution and laws.

Finally, Nicaragua’s government on March 24, 1928 signed an agreement with Colombia covering the entire proposal and the concerns of the U.S. and Colombia, the so called Bárcenas-Meneses-Esguerra Treaty. The treaty stated that:

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239 Augusto Zamora, Dr. Op. Cit.
Colombia would recognize Nicaragua's sovereignty over the “Miskito” Coast and Nicaragua would recognize Colombia's sovereignty over San Andrés and Providencia and over the other islands, islets and keys of the San Andrés Archipelago”. 240

The plunder of Nicaragua under U.S. military occupation and protectorate and in the third presidency of Adolfo Díaz Recinos was total.

**General Smedley D. Butler’s Reflections on the Nicaraguan Interventions**

The events that took place between 1911 and 1913 weighed heavily on the conscience of General Butler. This was evident in the correspondence sent to his wife from disparate battlefields. These letters and other personal and official documents remain to this day the best testimony of these events. The documents can be found in the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Major General Butler in the final years of his military career and in the last years of his life as a civilian had by 1931 become an impassioned pacifist and spoke out against the political-military adventurism of the U.S. around the world. Since then, according to historian, professor, and writer Dr. Hans Schmidt, author of *Maverick Marine General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History*, he has been considered a renegade by the U.S. Marines.

Major General Butler in an article titled "American Armed Forces", published in the November 1935 issue of Common Sense Magazine, wrote the following:

I kept Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long.

I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown brothers in 1909-12. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras “right” for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.…. Looking back on it, I feel I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three city districts. We Marines operated on three continents..." 241

Due to writings such as these and due to his participation in pacifist activities, the U.S. Marines subjected the then U.S. Marine Major General Smedley D. Butler, on September 22, 1931, to a court martial. However, the popular reaction that arose in his

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defense, and against the wars the U.S. was enmeshed in, was such that he was not condemned. He was, though, passed over by his superiors and not promoted to Commander General of the U.S. Marines, a position he was next in line for in accordance with his seniority and merits. Major General Smedley D. Butler died as a pacifist committed to preventing U.S. military intervention abroad, which in his mind led to nothing but irreparable damage...as a consequence of an abdominal cancer in the City of Philadelphia on July 21, 1940.  

The last U.S. Feasibility Survey for the construction of an interoceanic canal in Nicaragua

The last U.S. feasibility survey study for the construction of an interoceanic canal through the San Juan River, the Great Lake of Nicaragua, and the Isthmus of Rivas was performed by a group of experts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Direction of Lieutenant Colonel Engineer Daniel I. Sultan. An expedition consisting of 25 officers and 285 soldiers and surveyors worked in the San Juan River of Nicaragua for two years from March 1929 to December 1931.

A final and detailed report with plans, maps and illustrations was presented to the president of the U.S. Hebert Hoover and he remitted it to U.S. Congress’s Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and ordered it to be printed on December 10, 1931.

The project engineer designers decided on a route departing from the lake port of San Carlos and by the mouth of the river to Conchuda Hills where a dam was planned, then in a straight line following the river course to San Juan del Norte. Locks were designed, two before Brito Port on the Pacific Ocean side and three on the Atlantic Ocean side, a hydroelectric plant was planned near San Carlos, and the grand total costs were estimated to be U.S. $722,000.000. Money for the project was not approved by the U.S. Congress and the project was neither approved nor constructed.  

Finally, on July 14, 1970, the U.S. and Nicaragua held a Convention that officially abolished the Bryan-Chamorro treaty and all its provisions. The Convention was approved by the U.S. resolutions 3 of July 27, 1970 and 282 of August 10, 1970 and ratified by decree 2 of February 17, 1971.

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Chapter 6

Conclusions

Spanish, British, and U.S. interventions in Nicaragua were motivated, not so much to change Nicaragua either for better or worse, but rather to enrich their societies, to support and protect their national security interests. Those interests included use of Nicaragua’s natural and human resources, strategic security for the navigation canal route through Nicaraguan territory to access local, regional and global markets, and to assure and maintain hegemony in the region as it had evolved in the last 500 years and where their most important foreign policy interests existed. With the banishing of Spain and England from Nicaragua and their interventions over, it was the status of U.S. interests that would be the referent, determining the success or failure of the interventions.

It should be restated that history has revealed that there were threats to U.S. national interests early on. Essentially, American leaders who served at the time considered the U.S. interests constantly to be at risk. Spain, Great Britain, and other European powers presented a real threat to U.S. positions and interests in Central America, and in Nicaragua in particular, during the 1800s, and together American, Central American and Nicaraguan leaders, diplomats and the press expressed concern over Britain’s actions.

Once the U.S. determined the existence of a threat to its national security interests, President James Monroe established his “America for the Americans” doctrine in 1823, informing the British and the rest of the countries of the world that the U.S. would not tolerate the interference of any European power in the American continent. Since Spain could not send its armed forces to recover her former colonies in America, Nicaragua and Great Britain opted for a negotiated solution to her issues with the U.S.

The resulting fear over the possibility of the renewal of that threat, or the rise of another, drove imperialistic U.S. policy from the mid 1800s in Nicaragua until the military interventions in 1909 - 1912. Nicaragua in this period cannot be said to have had an ample perspective or national agenda, except for preservation of independence, a national territorial unit, political and military power control, and the creation of a nation state. As a result, the Nicaraguan perspective is difficult to analyze.

The history of Nicaragua’s internecine political process demonstrates its internal fragility quite clear. For instance, the two major parties, Liberal and Conservative, rarely had coinciding interests; their single mutual goal was to gain power and to use it at the expense of the other party. This was the case until José Santos Zelaya ascended to power. Unfortunately, the U.S. interventions destroyed the successfully united creation of Zelaya and his groups.

It can also be said that, with few exceptions, no group in Nicaragua, except for the foreign entrepreneurs made up export-import merchants, miner and wood cutter
concessionaries, wanted the U.S. to bring U.S. troops into the country and to take control. This was only true when one party sought to maintain power by using the U.S. Military might, of course, but with the idea that the control would be temporary. Many were also eager to reap the additional economic and political benefits of stability, and relative security for the groups supporting U.S. policies that accompanied the presence of the military forces.

The interventions guaranteed the U.S. that the Nicaraguan canal route would be secure, it reinforced U.S. access to and control over Central American markets, Nicaragua’s U.S. debt payment and it fortified the already strong hegemonic position of the U.S. in the region.

If we want to measure success for the U.S. based upon whether its goals and interests were achieved, then the interventions of the U.S. in Nicaragua could be called a success. Though long-term success was made more costly because of short-term and narrow objective thinking, and also due to a failure at times to focus upon goals. In the end, success in the long-term was not achieved.

Nicaragua was forced to pay a high cost when the U.S. decided to achieve its policy goals through interventions. Thousands of Nicaraguans paid the ultimate cost by giving their lives for their country. National founding fathers and heroes such as Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón were slain battling the U.S. Marines in very bloody conflicts. Nicaragua’s national treasure was exhausted, infrastructure was destroyed, educational services broken and economic development nonexistent. Essentially, this was a heavier price than that paid by the U.S.

The U.S. paid a cost in treasure, and for a long time, prestige, to attain its goals. Neither Spain, nor England, nor the U.S. created, restored or enforced the establishment of democracy in Nicaragua through their interventions. A Nicaraguan democratic regime rather was created first under the binary government of Máximo Jerez and Tomás Martinez.

The U.S. had been involved in Nicaragua since the first half of the 1800s, and the U.S. State Department was not shy about attempting to mold the opinions of various Nicaraguan governments in what was a very dangerous and damaging political game for Nicaragua.

During the Zelaya era, the U.S. stood by and helped with Zelaya’s ascent to power and later also provoked political and military downfall. Nicaragua was once again thrown into chaos, and the political parties used every opportunity to persecute the opposition. The U.S., however, failed to recognize José Madriz as the constitutional successor to Zelaya and they failed again to recognize Luis Mena’s government, and Benjamín Zeledón’s. They used the threat of non-recognition or killing with the idea of forcing Zeledón and the liberal leadership to follow U.S. wishes and desires.
Overall the U.S., made many mistakes in Nicaragua, the most important being the policies enforced that disregarded Nicaragua’s national interests; policies that resulted in the creation of a toxic environment in Nicaragua that made the intervention necessary.

The U.S. interventionist policies served temporarily to strengthen the Liberal Party’s belief that the U.S. would consider favorably, or at least ambivalently, a revolutionary movement led by them. Mainly this was due to the fact that they believed in the “liberal tradition and values of the U.S.,” which was more in consonance with their liberal views than with the conservative ones. Clearly U.S. beliefs and values were expressed by liberal leaders Francisco De Castellón and Máximo Jerez’s visits to and correspondence with U.S. Presidents J. Polk, Z. Taylor, F. Pierce, J. Buchanan and J. Garfield from 1840 to 1880; President Dr José Madriz’s letters to U.S. Admiral W. Kimball, their personal conversations in Managua and Kimball’s farewell letter to Madriz in April 9, 1910; General Zeledón’s correspondence with U.S. Admiral William Henry Hudson Southerland and General Joseph H. Pendleton in 1912; and finally Mayor Smedley D. Butler’s reflections on his actions later in his life.

The national security or national sovereignty concerns of the conservatives was non-existing. This party’s principal concern was U.S. support and payment for the army and government bureaucracy under their party control, vision of government to maintain power structure used ever since Spanish colonial times. The Conservative-American alliance failed to create democratic political development, but instead deprived the liberals and other emerging progressive forces of access to power. This was achieved through a U.S. created and conservative controlled electoral machine, and the financial and military institutions of assistance, with the constabulary military force and financial assistance.

Specifically, U.S. policies towards Nicaragua were an absolute disaster for the development of democracy as Máximo Jerez and Benjamín F. Zeledón dreamed. Furthermore, the policies led to the U.S. military interventions of 1909 and 1912 and thereafter to decades of political and social instability and dictatorships affecting deeply the Nicaragua’s social, political, economic, cultural and institutional development. For example, the U.S. financed Zelaya’s political enemies, with the use of the U.S. military might, stage an overthrow of his government in 1909. In turn, these series of events provoked the war of resistance against the interventions that resulted in the killing of the liberal Supreme Chief of Government General Benjamín F. Zeledón R. on October 4, 1912.

Later the U.S. Marine Corps under the military occupation elected, in a very peculiar, shameful and undemocratic manner, Mr. Adolfo Díaz Recinos, as President of Nicaragua on November 2, 1912 which eventually led to General Emiliano Chamorro’s 1925 Coup D’état and the 1926 Juan B. Sacasa counter-revolution. Finally, as soon as the U.S. military forces left the country in 1930, these events resulted in Juan Bautista

Sacasa’s liberal revolution, General Augusto C. Sandino’s guerrilla war 1930-1933, the U.S. creation of the National Guard under the control of General Anastasio Somoza García in 1927, the assassination of General Sandino by Somoza in 1934, and the rise of his dynastic dictatorship that lasted from 1936 to 1979.  

U.S. interventions in Nicaragua laid the foundations for the political and economic climate over the 20th and 21st centuries. They created a denaturalized Nicaraguan state for the following reasons:

First, to fit its own interests, the U.S. eliminated all vestiges of government based on national interests and replaced it by a self tailored government of American financiers, U.S. Export/Import merchants, mine concessionaries, and local collaborators. Power was absolutely controlled by the U.S. military and civilian administrators; they dictated public policies and the U.S. resolved political conflict within the political party they put in power.

Second, the U.S. interventions created within the local legal system a set of contrasting and contradictory institutions, laws, and regulations copied from the U.S. legal system creating the Nicaraguan constabulary in the early 1910’s and the Nicaraguan National Guard in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Third, this institution building was aimed at legitimizing, strengthening, and refining its own political model of neo-colonial control, in order to resolve issues, as well as to support and enforce the U.S. created government policies and institutions. The system tried for decades to gain legitimacy, but it never fully succeeded, facing instead endless revolutionary movements during the Somoza dictatorship.

General Anastasio Somoza García was able to work a liberal conservative coalition with conservative leader General Emiliano Chamorro on April 3, 1950 by signing the so-called "Pacto de los Generales." Somoza give positions in his administration to conservatives and a Senate seat-for-life to Chamorro and won the presidential elections on May 21, 1951.

Somoza co-opted the Conservative Party and destroyed Chamorro’s credibility installing a dynastic dictatorship that lasted until July 19, 1979 when it was overthrown by a bloody revolution led by the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN).

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Epilogue

“And so they fought the war imposed upon them so that our Nation would not disappear from the face of the Earth”

As a Nicaraguan, from a family in which politics implied murder, persecution, condemnation to civil death and banishment from one's country for opposing foreign domination, it is possible that I cannot avoid reflecting those traumas in my own work.

However, in this dissertation I relate and publish, in the context of Nicaragua’s response to foreign intervention, the unknown and never written story of the Nicaraguans, the story of their intellectual and moral struggle to fight for independence. How and why Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón Rodriguez and others of their time were annihilated along with their dreams and visions for the future of Nicaragua.

I think it is time that we Nicaraguans learn of our own political and social tragedy and why we have to forgive but not forget, what happened.

The entire world witnessed our destruction; the destruction of our infrastructure, ecological environment and meager resources for a senseless conflict. The globe has seen how foreign misleading policies, combined with our neo-colonized ruling classes’ quest for power and for control, reduced Nicaragua and its people to misery.

I believe that if we understand the reasons for our difficulties, we likely will be able to concentrate on improving the material, intellectual, and political conditions of our people.

Finally, I would like to see my work as a contribution to this process.
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Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast map drawn by Spanish seaman Juan De la Cosa in 1500 with information from John Cabot’s travel to the region in 1497.

Lic. and General Fruto Chamorro Pérez. 10-20-1804 to 03-12-1855. Founder of the Conservative Party and President of Nicaragua 1853-1855. Picture courtesy of Mr. Flavio Rivera Montealegre.
Dr. and General Máximo Jerez Tellería 06-11-1818 – 08-11-1881
Founder of the Liberal Party and President of Nicaragua in 1857
Picture courtesy of Mr. Flavio Rivera Montealegre
Dr. and General Máximo Jerez Tellería and his wife Juana Casco Quiñónez Del Valle
Ambassador of Nicaragua in Washington D.C. in 1858
Photo courtesy of Mr. Flavio Rivera Montealegre
Map of the Nicaraguan Interoceanic Canal Route
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President of Nicaragua 07-25-1893 to 12-21-1909
Dr. José Madriz Rodríguez. 07-21-1867 – 05-14-1911
President of Nicaragua from 12-1909-11-1910
General Juan José Estrada Morales  01-01-1872 – 07-11-1967  
President of Nicaragua from 12-31-1910 to 05-11-1911  
Picture courtesy of Mr. Flavio Rivera Montealegre
General Luis Mena Abt 1878--05-20-1928
President of Nicaragua 1911
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Commander-in-Chief of the expeditionary force landing in Nicaragua in 1909.
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Leadership of the liberal party of Nicaragua banished from their homeland. First line left to right, General, Senator and ex-President of Nicaragua Ignacio Chávez López, Dr. Rodolfo Espinoza Ramírez, Mr. José Dolores Gámez Guzmán. Second line, Mr. Ignacio Chávez Jr., General Roberto González Dubón, Dr. Mariano Barreto, Dr. Santiago Argüello Barreto, Eng. Alejandro Bermúdez and Dr. Sebastián Salinas. Last line. Dr Felipe Neri Fernández, Supreme Chief of Government of Nicaragua Dr. General Benjamín F. Zeledón R., Dr. Enrique Cerda; Colonel Luciano Astorga; Dr. Antonio Medrano, Dr. Carlos Quiroz, Dr. Mariano Barreto Jr. Mr. Salvador Lacayo Portocarrero, Mr. Gilberto Saballos; Lic. José María Castellón. Aboard of the Steamship Newport. Corinto, Nicaragua November 16, 1910. Months later they were back to fight intervention. Picture from Sergio A. Zeledón’s family archives.
Benjamín F. Zeledón, receiving his High School Diploma. From left to right, Professor M. Montalvo and from Dr. and General Rafael Dávila Principal of the Spirit of the Century High School. Tegucigalpa, Honduras September 29, 1899.
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Dr. Benjamín F. Zeledón on his graduation as an Attorney.
Managua, September 17, 1903
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General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas September 27, 1912 letter to Colonel Camilo Barberena ordering him to capture and execute Zeledón and the liberal leaders.

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From: Colonel, Commanding Expeditionary Forces, By direction of the Commander-in-Chief.
To: General B. F. Zeledón, Commanding Revolutionary Forces, Masaya, Nicaragua.

Sir:

The United States Government has ordered that no disturbers be permitted to occupy any position menacing the railroad between Corinto and Granada, in consequence of which, you are hereby directed to evacuate all your positions on the Barranca, Coyotepe, and in the town of Masaya.

Should your accede to this demand you will signify the fact by hoisting in plain view from all sides, a white flag on the top of Coyotepe and one on the top of the Barranca, and will march your troops to my lines near Múndiri station on the railroad, where they will be required to lay down their arms.

No delegation or commission from you, suggesting or requesting any other terms will be received, nor will such request or suggestion be considered.

If my demands are not acceded to promptly at eight o'clock tomorrow morning, Thursday, October third, I shall open fire with all my guns and drive you from your position.

Very respectfully,

(Sgd.) J. H. Pendleton.

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October 2, 1912 ultimatum to Dr & General Benjamín F. Zeledón.
Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón’s. October 3, 1912 letter to U.S. Marines Commander, General Joseph Henry Pendleton in response to his ultimatum. U.S. Marines Historical Center. *op cit.* folders 4,5,6 & 7
Telegram from Butler to Admiral Southerland  
Received at the Headquarters at Camp Weitzel at 5:00 PM # 229.  
Mayor Smedley D. Butler, October 4, 1912, Telegram to U.S. Rear Admiral William Hebert Hudson Southerland, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Military forces occupying Nicaragua, announcing Benjamin’s Zeledón capture, asking for instructions on how to proceed with him and suggesting that someone should hang him.  
U.S., Marines Historical Center. *op cit.*
Mayor Smedley D. Butler October 4, 1912, 
Granada at 3:30 PM and received in Managua at 5:00 P.M.
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Response Telegram from Colonel Joseph Henry Pendleton Commander of the US Marines forces in Nicaragua to Major S. D. Butler in reference to Dr. and General Benjamin’s Zeledón’s disposition. Sent on October 4, 1912 at 6:50 PM
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Adolfo Díaz Recinos was elected as President of Nicaragua by the US military forces occupying the country on November 2, 1912. The picture is from his inauguration on January 1913 from left to right Mr. Laurence Dennis US Special Diplomatic Envoy to Nicaragua, Mr. Adolfo Díaz Recinos President and General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas his second. Picture source http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/nicaragua-intervention.htm
General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas. 05-11-1871–02-26-1966
President of Nicaragua 05-1917 to 01-1921- and for a short period of time in 1926.
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Grade given by the Municipal Council of Jinotega 
To General Benjamín F. Zeledón R., on October 15, 1992. 
Sergio A. Zeledon’s Family Archives
ZELEDÓN, HEROE NACIONAL
LA JUNTA DE GOBIERNO
DE RECONSTRUCCION NACIONAL
DE LA REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA

Considerando:

I

Que en la historia de lucha anti-imperialista de nuestro pueblo, se destaca la gesta heroica del General Benjamín Zeledón, que en la guerra de 1912 dio ejemplo de patriotismo, salvando nuestra dignidad nacional, al rechazar las propuestas de rendición del invasor yanqui.

II

Que el próximo 4 de octubre es el natalicio y el 63 aniversario de la heroica muerte del General Benjamín Zeledón, a manos de las fuerzas interventoras de los Estados Unidos.

III

Que al igual que los prósperos en la lucha contra el Imperio Español y en la lucha contra el imperialismo Yanqui, el General Benjamín Zeledón, tiene ganado su puesto de HEROE NACIONAL en nuestra Patria.

IV

Que la mayor honra para nuestra nacionalidad, es la de caracterizar como Héroe Nacional a un paladín de la lucha anti-imperialista en nuestro país, y que es nuestro deber honrar la memoria de quien supo ser guía y ejemplo para forjar al hombre nuevo de la Patria.

Por Tanto:

En uso de sus facultades:
Decreta:

Arto. 1o.— Otorgar oficialmente, el título de HEROÉ NACIONAL al General Benjamín Zeledón, por sus méritos de entrega y sacrificio a la causa anti-imperialista de nuestro pueblo.

Arto. 2.— Este Decreto entrará en vigencia, desde la fecha de su publicación por cualquier medio de comunicación colectiva, sin perjuicio de su publicación posterior en “La Gaceta”, Diario Oficial.

Dado en la ciudad de Managua, el día primero de octubre de mil novecientos ochenta. “Año de la Alfabetización”.

Picture of Decree of October 1, 1980 from the Nicaraguan Governing Junta of National Reconstruction given General Benjamín F. Zeledón the title of National Hero. Sergio A. Zeledon’s family archives.
Picture of Bank Note issued in 1985 by the Central Bank of Nicaragua honoring Dr. and General Benjamín F. Zeledón R. Sergio A. Zeledon family archives.
Coyotepe hill in the periphery of the city of Masaya Nicaragua
Source: http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/nicaragua-intervention.htm
Dr. and General Benjamin F. Zeledón parent’s home in the city of “La Concordia” in Jinotega, Nicaragua. Zeledón was born in that house that is located across the street from the Central Park of the city.

Picture by Sergio A. Zeledón
Dr. and General Benjamín F. Zeledón Rodríguez mausoleum in the cemetery of the city of Santa Catarina in Masaya, Nicaragua. In the picture: Benjamín and Dr. Esther Zeledón Molina Great-grand-childrfen of Benjamín F. Zeledón R. Picture by Sergio A. Zeledón
Appendix II

Genealogy

Descendants of Dr. General Benjamín F. Zeledón R.:

Genealogy Using Family Tree Maker Program. The Numbers Represent the Different Generations in Chronological Order:

1  Pres Nic. Dr Gral Benjamín F Zeledón Rodríguez
   ...
   +Esther María Ramírez Jerez  b: 12 Oct 1887 in León, Nicaragua  d: 30 Jul 1965 in Panamá, República de Panamá. Father: Dr M.D. Jerónimo Ramírez Ramírez; Mother: Esther Jerez Granizo

... 2  [1] Juez Dr Benjamin Francisco Zeledón Ramírez  b: 13 May 1905 in Managua, Nicaragua  d: 16 Jul 1968 in Jinotega, Nicaragua
       ....  +Guadalupe Suárez Sequeira Father: Alberto Suárez Toledo Mother: Venturina Sequeira

...  3  Profesora Auxiliadora Suárez Zeledón

... *1st Wife of [1] Juez Dr Benjamín Francisco Zeledón Ramírez:
     ....  +Profesora Angela Hernania Guzmán Valerio  b: in Managua, Nicaragua  d: in Managua, Nicaragua
     .......  3 Judge Dr. Gloria Zeledón Guzmán  b: 1930 in Managua, Nicaragua
     .........  +Dr Favio Sánchez Arana  b: Abt. 1931 in Jinotepe, Carazo, Nicaragua  Father: Gilberto Sánchez Bermúdez Mother: Margarita Arana Jiménez

     .......  4 Dr M.D. María Faviola Sánchez Zeledón
     .........  +Jesús de Armas

     .......  5 Faviola Margarita de Armas Sánchez
     .........  4 Dr M.D. Gloria Margarita Sánchez Zeledón
     .........  +Dr-Anthony Norris

     .......  3 Miriam Zeledón Guzmán  b: 1933 in Managua, Nicaragua

... *2nd Wife of [1] Juez Dr Benjamín Francisco Zeledón Ramírez:
     ....  +Ofelia Masís Martínez  b: Abt. 1914 in Rivas, Nicaragua  d: Abt. 1955 in New York, USA
     Father: General- José-Tomás Masís Mother: Ofelia Martínez
     .......  3 Agnes Zeledón Masis  b: 23 Aug 1938 in Rivas, Nicaragua  d: 1984 in Miami, Florida USA
     .........  +Robert F. Webb  b: 1984 in Miami, Florida USA

     .........  4 Robert Webb Zeledón

     .........  4 Dennis Webb Zeledón

     .........  3 Josefa-Ligia-Teresa Zeledón Masis  b: 02 Jul 1937 in Rivas, Nicaragua
     .........  +David Lloyd  b: 20 Oct 1933 in Kingsport, Tennessi  d: 11 May 1990 in Miami

     .........  4 Arleen Lloyd Zeledón  b: in New York, USA
     .........  +Leonardo Napoles  b: in Cuba

     .........  4 María-Ofelia Lloyd Zeledón  b: 14 Oct 1958 in New York, USA
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<td>Xarionsela Lloyd Zeledón</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>David Lloyd Zeledón</td>
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<td>b: 11 Jan 1962 in New York, USA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+Diana Zeno</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Joshua Lloyd Zeno</td>
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<td>*3rd Wife of [1] Juez Dr Benjamín Francisco Zeledón Ramírez:</td>
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<td>+Prof Aída Beatriz Blandón Zeledón-Zeledón</td>
<td></td>
<td>29 Jul 1913 in Jinotega, Nicaragua d: 09 Aug 1999 in Jinotega, Nicaragua Father: Juez Felipe Andrés Blandón</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Marcelino Zeledón Blandón</td>
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<td>Federico Augusto Zeledón Blandón</td>
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<td>Máximo César Zeledón Blandón</td>
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<td>[2] Dr. J.D. Sergio Alejandro Zeledón Blandón</td>
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<td>b: 14 Dec 1946 in Jinotega, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Lic Máximo César Zeledón Kuslawski</td>
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<td>b: 16 Sep 1969 in Managua, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>+Danja Spoja</td>
<td>b: in Rijeka, Croatia</td>
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<td>Vanja Zeledón Spoja</td>
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<td>+Lic Sonia M Molina Altamirano-Zeledón</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dr J.D. Sonia Alexandra Zeledón Molina</td>
<td>+Dr Ph.D. Joel Rodríguez Benítez</td>
<td>b: 30 Aug 1975 in Managua, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Dr Ph.D. Esther Beatriz Zeledón Molina</td>
<td>+Ing Guillermo José Cuevas Pasos</td>
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<td>Father: Dr. Guillermo Cuevas Mother: Katia Pasos Morales</td>
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<td>Benjamin Sergio Zeledón Molina</td>
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<td>Lic Aída Esther Zeledón Blandón</td>
<td>+Coronel Arnoldo Pablo Lacayo</td>
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<td>Dr J.D. Arnoldo Benjamín Lacayo Zeledón</td>
<td>+Mónica Blants</td>
<td>b: 14 Nov 1977 in Managua, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Aidan Lacayo Blants</td>
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<td>Arnold Lacayo Blants</td>
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Lic Aída Paola Lacayo Zeledón  b: 28 Jul 1979 in Managua, Nicaragua

+John Franklin

Lic Astrid Asunción Lacayo Zeledón  b: 23 Aug 1985 in Miami, Florida USA

Victoria Zeledón Ramírez b: 21 Apr 1907 in Managua, Nicaragua d: 1985 in Los Angeles, California USA

+Roger Pérez Stevens

Róger Pérez Zeledón

Marco Aurelio Zeledón Ramírez b: 15 Jun 1909 in Managua, Nicaragua d: 1935 in Managua, Nicaragua

+Luz Rosárez Father: Gral Bernabé Rosárez Jiménez  Mother: Mercedes Rosárez

Ing Armando José Zeledón Rosaléz b: 14 Dec 1930 in Managua, Nicaragua

+Mary-Ellen Keymar Hillger Father: Frank Keymar  Mother: Irma Hillger

Lic-Luz-Irene Zeledón Keymar

+Charles Joseph Sidner

Paige Elizabeth Sidner Zeledón

Scott Charles Sidner Zeledón

Lic-John-Arthur Zeledón Keymar

Arch-Michael-Frank Zeledón Keymar

Marco Aurelio Zeledón Rosárez b: 07 Sep 1932 in León Nicaragua d: 02 May 2009 in Managua, Nicaragua

+Indiana Martínez Riguero Father: Ernesto Martínez Solórzano  Mother: Carlota Riguero

Lic Indiana Leonor Zeledón Martínez

+Ing Duilio Baltodano Cabrera Father: Duilio Baltodano Pallais Mother: Olga Cabrera Lacayo

Duilio Ignacio Baltodano Zeledón

Ernesto Baltodano Zeledón

Eduardo Rafael Baltodano Zeledón

Indiana María Baltodano Zeledón

Lic Marco Aurelio Zeledón Martínez

+Ana-Lorena Morales Velázquez Father: Jaime René Morales Carazo Mother: Amparo Velázquez

Lic Jorge Enrique Zeledón Gutiérrez b: Abt. 1960 in Managua, Nicaragua

+Joan Biavaschi

Jorge-Benjamín Zeledón Biavaschi

Lic Cecilia María Zeledón Gutiérrez b: Abt. 1962

+Eduardo Rodríguez

Maria Rodríguez Zeledón b: Abt. 1986

Ana Rodríguez Zeledón b: Abt. 1990

Lucía Rodríguez Zeledón b: Abt. 1993

Francisco Rodríguez Zeledón b: Abt. 1993
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<td>Diego Cervantes Zeledón  b: Abt. 1998</td>
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... 2 Olga María Zeledón Ramírez b: 04 Jul 1912 in Managua, Nicaragua d: 24 May 1988 in Panamá, Panamá

....... +Ing Carlos Alberto Guardia Jaén  b: 29 Sep 1904 in Penonomé, Panamá d: 16 Dec 1992 in Panamá, Panamá Father: José Dolores Guardia Jaén  Mother: Juana de Dios Jaén Arosemena

....... 3 Lic Olga Esther Guardia Zeledón b: Abt. 1938 in Panamá, Panamá

....... +James Benjamin Smoak  b: Abt. 1937 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

....... 3 Lic Gloria de los Angeles Guardia Zeledón b: Abt. 1940 in Panamá, Panamá

....... +Lic Ricardo Alberto Alfaro Arosemena  b: Abt. 1935 in Panamá, Panamá Father: Ivan-José Alfaro Lyons Mother: Olga Arosemena Arosemena

....... 4 Cristina Eugenia Alfaro Guardia  b: Abt. 1970 in Panamá, Panamá

....... +Scott Carls b: Abt. 1969
Family Coat of Arms
Appendix III

Prominent Political Dynasties in Nicaragua

The Sacasa’s Political Dynasty in Nicaragua

The first Sacasa in Nicaragua was Captain José Francisco Sacasa Belasteguiogitea Salinas, a Spanish military man whose origin could be traced to the Basque Country in Spain. He was neither part, nor did he arrive to the Americas with the Spanish conquistadores. Rather, he arrived to Puerto Rico from the Italian Spanish garrisons in the first decades of the 1700’s. Shortly after, he was transferred to the garrisons of St. Augustine Castle in the Spanish Florida. When the British Armada attacked, he surrendered his position in St. Augustine Castle and was taken prisoner to Jamaica and was later liberated during an interchange of prisoners and sent to Havana in Cuba. From Cuba, the new Governor of Nicaragua Brigadier Alonso Fernández de Heredia on November 4, of 1746 sent him to the city of Granada (Nicaragua). He married María Lucía Marenco López Del Corral, a Spanish creole “criolla,” and they had three children, one male and three females. José Francisco Sacasa was later sent to reinforce the garrison of the Immaculate Conception fortress by the San Juan River; place where he remained until his death on October 19 of 1764. He is considered as the founder of the Sacasa family of Nicaragua.

His son José Roberto Sacasa Marenco a military man, married Paula Parodi and were the parents of José Crisanto Sacasa Parodi, a Nicaragua Spanish creole “criollo,” Medical Doctor and a military man. José Crisanto was the chief of the Spanish militias in Nicaragua and a business man, importing and exporting goods from Granada to
Cartagena and Panamá and vice versa through the San Juan River. José Crisanto Sacasa’s branch of the Sacasa family has given Nicaragua twelve (12) of her rulers, among them, Chiefs of State, Supreme Directors of the State, and Presidents, constituting the most numerous, but non consecutive political dynasty in Nicaragua’s modern history, the majority of them liberals, and they were as follows:

3- Lic. Silvestre De la Selva Sacasa (1844-1845) Liberal
4- Lic. Laureano Pineda Ugarte. Supreme Director of the State (1851-1853) Married to Dolores Sacasa Méndez. Liberal
5- Dr. Roberto Sacasa Sarria. President (1889-1893.) Conservative
6- Dr. Juan Bautista Sacasa Sacasa. President (1933-1936.) Liberal
7- Dr. Benjamín Lacayo Sacasa. President. (1947.) Liberal
8- General Anastasio Somoza García. President (1937-1947) and (1950-1956) Married to Salvadorá Debayle Sacasa. Liberal

In addition, there have been hundreds of cabinet members at high, middle and low level, for civil and military functionaries chosen among members of the family, perpetuating an obsolete administrative and political system of family cronyism existing since colonial times.

Sources:


The Chamorro’s Political Dynasty in Nicaragua

Captain Lic. Pedro José Chamorro Argüello was Nicaraguan-Spanish Creole “criollo,” military, Attorney graduated in Guatemala, military, farmer and a merchant from Granada, Nicaragua. He was the son of Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Chamorro Lacayo and his wife Barbara Nicolasa Argüello Del Castillo Ugarte, Spanish creoles “criollos” from Granada. Fernando Chamorro Lacayo was the son of Sergeant Major Diego Chamorro, the first Chamorro in Nicaragua and his wife was Gregoria Gertrudis Lacayo de Briones y Palacios.

Diego Chamorro Sotomayor, was neither part, nor did he arrive with the Spanish conquistadores. He arrived in Nicaragua on January 21, 1731 by the port el Realejo with his uncle, the Bishop of the bishopric of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Dionisio de Villavicencio y Murga. Diego Chamorro Sotomayor was a military and a merchant and is considered the founder of the Chamorro family in Nicaragua.

Pedro José Chamorro Argüello was Mayor of as well as civil and military royalist officer in the city of Granada, Nicaragua under the Spanish rule. He and other important Ultra Conservatives Royalists such as Colonel Crisanto Sacasa Parodi, the former military Chief of the Spanish militias in Granada, led the pro royalist opposition to pro independence republican liberals in Granada and in Nicaragua led by Colonel Cleto Ordóñez Yrigoyen.

After confrontations in Granada the pro republican had the upper hand and Chamorro and his followers escaped to Managua on June the 29th of 1824 and organized a Government Junta, independent from those in León, Granada and El Viejo. The members of that Junta were Captain and Lic. Pedro José Chamorro Argüello, Colonel
Manuel Arzú, the priest Policarpo Yrigoyen, Lic. Juan José Zavala, Captain Felix Alfaro and Colonel Crisanto Sacasa Parodi.

Pedro J. Chamorro died in 1824 and Crisanto Sacasa died from wounds received while attacking León by the end of the same year. Finally, Federal military forces from Guatemala intervened to pacify Nicaragua, disbanding the sectarian armies sending Cleto Ordóñez on a military commission to Guatemala. Pedro José Chamorro Argüello married Margarita Alfaro Monterroso, who was daughter of his friend and fellow Junta Member in Managua, Captain Felix Alfaro. Captain Felix Alfara was married to Antonia Monterroso; daughter of Captain Antonio Monterroso a Spanish military on service in Nicaragua and his wife Antonia, a beautiful free slave of afro-Nicaraguan origin.

Pedro José Chamorro Argüello and his wife Margarita Alfaro Monterroso are considered as the founders of the most prominent branch of the Chamorro family in Nicaragua. This branch from the Chamorro’s family has given Nicaragua, nine (9) of her rulers, among them, Chiefs of State, Supreme Directors of the State, and Presidents, constituting the second most numerous, but non consecutive dynasty of rulers in Nicaragua’s modern history; the majority of them conservatives. They are as follows:

1- Captain and Lic. Pedro José Chamorro Argüello. Spanish Banner holder, Deputy Delegate of Finances, Mayor of Granada, and member of the Government Junta of Managua (1824.) Conservative

3- President of Nicaragua, Fruto Chamorro Pérez. General of the army, Representative in the Federal Congress in Guatemala, and in the National congress of Nicaragua, Supreme Director of the State and First President of Nicaragua (1853-1855) He was the out of wedlock son of Pedro José Chamorro Argüello and María Pérez, an Indigenous from Guatemala. When Fruto’s father died, Margarita Alfaro Monterroso his widow called him to Granada to help her and her children to manage the family businesses allowing him to use the family name, later she arranged his marriage to her niece Mercedes Avilés Alfaro and supported his successful political career in Nicaragua and in Central America. Conservative. Fruto is considered as the founder of the Legitimist / Conservative party in Nicaragua and one of the “Caudillos or Strong Men” responsible for the so called “National War” (1854-1860) along with his rivals Democratic / Liberals.

4- General, Vice President, President of Nicaragua (1856 and Ad-Interim in1865) Fernando Chamorro Alfaro. Conservative

5- General, President of Nicaragua (1875-1879) Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Alfaro. Conservative

6- General, President de Nicaragua (1917-1921) Emiliano Chamorro Vargas. He was the out of wedlock son of Salvador Chamorro and Gregoria Vargas Báez. Salvador was also the out of wedlock son of Dionisio Chamorro Alfaro and an unknown lady from Granada, Dionisio was the son of Captain Lic Pedro José Chamorro Argüello and his wife Margarita Alfaro Monterroso. Emiliano Chamorro is considered the most important political and military conservative and
its uncontested leader. He was the last “War Lord” “caudillo / Strong Man” in Nicaragua in the XX century. Conservative

7- Dr. Diego Manuel Chamorro Bolaños. (1921-1923.) Conservative

8- Dr. Rosendo Chamorro Oreamuno. President.(1923 Ad-Interim.) Conservative


Besides that, there have been hundreds of cabinet members at high, middle and low level, civil and military functionaries chosen among members of the family, perpetuating an administrative and political system of family cronyism, existing since colonial times.
Sources:


