
Ibero-America Briefs

Nicaragua Re-Establishes Ties to China, Set to Join BRI Next

Nicaragua has demonstrated that small nations can play a critical role in shifting global affairs towards the better. The “Cold War” UK-U.S. Summit for Democracy was underway, when from Managua on Dec. 9, Foreign Minister Denis Moncada announced that Nicaragua was breaking ties with Taiwan, and supporting the One China Principle. By the next day, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu and Nicaragua’s Investment, Trade and International Cooperation advisor, Laureano Ortega Murillo, had signed a Joint Communique re-establishing their diplomatic relations, broken since 1990.

In a letter to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Moncada wrote of the “singular importance” of Nicaragua making this decision “in the complex moments such as the world is going through.” Nicaragua is honored to inaugurate “a new era of growth” with China, and “stands ready to start talks with China on signing cooperation agreements under the Belt and Road Initiative,” he stated.

Wang spoke virtually with Moncada, and then with the Nicaraguan delegation in Tianjin, China. Both sides spoke of quickly initiating BRI talks. Wang “warmly congratulated” the Nicaraguan and Chinese teams for “record-breaking speed in resuming diplomatic ties,” when he spoke with Laureano Ortega and Finance Minister Ivan Acosta, the Chinese Foreign Ministry reported. “China is delighted to have a new friend in Latin America

and the Caribbean, and a good partner in advancing Belt and Road cooperation and building a community with a shared future for mankind.”

Nicaragua “stands ready to join the great initiative of Belt and Road cooperation and strengthen collaboration with China in various fields to enhance national development and well-being,” Ortega replied. Acosta called China “a reliable partner for development,” adding that Nicaragua “looks forward to learning from China’s experience of success and delivering more benefits to the people of Nicaragua.”

The U.S. State Department is furious that its drive to isolate and overthrow the Ortega government has been outflanked. It called Nicaragua’s November 2021 presidential elections illegitimate, and has been pressuring other nations to not recognize the Ortega government and to join in economic sanctions. State Department press spokesman Ned Price issued a petulant statement on Dec. 9 that “the Ortega-Murillo regime” had no “mandate to remove Nicaragua from the family of American democracies,” and insisted that “all countries that value democratic institutions, transparency, the rule of law, and promoting economic prosperity for their citizens ... [should] expand engagement with Taiwan.”

Will New Honduran Government Establish Diplomatic Ties with China?

Libre party candidate Xiomara Castro won an overwhelming majority in Honduras’s Nov. 28 presidential election. The first woman ever to be president, she identifies herself

and her movement as leftist. Her husband is former President Mel Zelaya, a *cause célèbre* since he was thrown out of office by the military in 2009 for various reasons. But without bringing economic progress, Castro will be unable to govern successfully.

Honduras is second only to Haiti as the poorest country in Ibero-America and the Caribbean. Fully 48% of Hondurans lived below the World Bank’s poverty line in 2019, even before COVID-19 and two back-to-back hurricanes hit. An estimated 70% of the labor force survives hand-to-mouth in “informal” jobs. Much of the country lacks paved roads, clean water, or basic health care. The drug trade controls significant territory, and drug gangs, many streets, thanks to George H. W. Bush, who used Honduras as the base for his “cocaine Contras” in the 1980s. Successive U.S. governments have maintained a military base in Honduras, enforced IMF austerity programs, and made zero investments in infrastructure. Between October 2020 and September 2021, almost 320,000 Hondurans—over 3% of the country’s 10 million people—left their homeland, risking their lives in hopes of entering the United States.

During her campaign, Castro promised to break relations with Taiwan and establish diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, to expand economic opportunities for Honduras.

Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian Nichols was deployed to Honduras on the eve of the election to deliver the message, including to Castro personally, that the Biden administration opposed any turn to China.

Now, the fight is on. Castro's running mate, Salvador Nasralla, slated to be her First Vice President, told Reuters on Dec. 4 that the incoming government would not establish relations with China. "Relations continue with Taiwan. Our trade ally, our close ally, our historical ally is the United States. We don't want to fight with the United States."

Wall Street's 'Lava Jato' Hitman Launches Presidential Bid in Brazil

Former judge Sergio Moro returned from a well-paid job in Washington, D.C., to throw his hat in the ring for Brazil's 2022 presidential election. Currently, the candidate leading in the polls against the widely-despised President Jair Bolsonaro is former President Lula da Silva, whom Moro had illegally jailed.

Moro headed the U.S. Department of Justice-directed "Lava Jato" (Car Wash) so-called anti-corruption operation which ousted Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, jailed Lula, and took down Brazil's industrial capabilities, both public and private, on behalf of Wall Street and the City of London. After the unconstitutional and illegal methods Moro and his team had used to tear down Brazil were revealed, Moro was protected with a job at the Wall Street global "advisory" firm Alvarez & Marsal (A&M), whose central role in Wall Street was displayed when the firm was put in charge of unwinding Lehman Bros. after its bankruptcy in 2008.

Moro has no organized political base in the country, so he joined the small Podemos party for his presidential bid. He made his announcement on Nov. 10, painting himself as the "centrist alternative" to Lula and Bolsonaro. There are other Brazilian "centrists" running, but the international

media have played up Moro's candidacy as "the big news." Nationalist circles noted with humor, that the vast majority of tweets and other social media promoting "#Moro Presidente 2022" originated in two foreign cities: Dallas, Texas, and London.

MOCILA Explains, 'What AMLO Should Learn from Dilma Rousseff'

A polemical statement with the above title issued by the LaRouche Citizens Movement of Mexico (MOCILA) on Nov. 28, is circulating widely in Ibero-America in both Spanish and Portuguese. The MOCILA explains: "Former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff has demonstrated a very superior understanding of the situation that currently exists in the world, particularly in the West. With her recent statements she has shown a courage that should be imitated by Presidents Alberto Fernández of Argentina and Andrés Manuel López Obrador, both of whom have fallen into the trap of promoting the wretched economic proposal dating back to the times of Bush, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), thus preventing China's impressive Belt and Road Initiative from changing the current asphyxiating direction that Wall Street banks have chosen for us."

On Nov. 23, Rousseff made waves in Brazil with her statements that "China today represents an admirable model... a light in this situation of absolute decadence, of darkness which Western societies are going through... You can't but admire a country which left behind feudalism, colonialism, the most brutal colonial control, to become the second economy in the world, and the first in terms of purchasing power parity."

MOCILA referenced its 2018 Open Letter to then President-elect López

Obrador, urging triangular cooperation between China, the U.S., and Mexico around the Belt and Road Initiative. "For this reason we propose an urgent summit among AMLO, Fernández and Rousseff and that together, representing the largest economies of the sub-continent, they make clear the steps that should be taken to confront the collapse of the world financial system, a terrifying threat of war among the nuclear powers, an uncontrolled global pandemic and the agenda to eliminate the poorest of the planet through the plans for a 'New Green Deal' and the 'Great Reset'."

Argentine Technology Transfer to China under Discussion

Talks are reportedly "well advanced" on an agreement by which Argentina's state-run INVAP company will sell to China two small nuclear reactors which produce isotopes for use in nuclear medicine, media reported on Dec. 3. China imports 85% of the isotopes it needs for medical uses, and Argentina could play an important role as a supplier, which could, in turn, lead to longer-term projects.

That exciting proposal is only one of the agreements which Argentina's ambassador in Beijing, Sabino Vaca Narvaja, and China's Vice Minister of Industry and Information Technology Zhang Kejian are negotiating on expanded cooperation on nuclear energy, aerospace, and the defense industry. Vice Minister Zhang also heads China's Atomic Energy Administration, as well as its National Space Agency. Discussion of China's construction of Argentina's fourth nuclear reactor, Atucha III, is on the table, as well as the Argentine-China 2021-2025 Space Cooperation Plan, involving space science, exploration of deep space, training of human resources, and more.