

USAID Document Exposes New US Plot to Overthrow Nicaragua's Elected Socialist Government

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A disturbing new document outlines plans for a US regime-change scheme against Nicaragua's elected leftist government, overseen by USAID, to bring about a "market economy" and a purge of Sandinistas.

A newly released document exposes a US government operation to overthrow the [democratically elected socialist government in Nicaragua](#).

The plot is administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a [regime-change vehicle that uses the pretense of "humanitarian aid"](#) to advance Washington's aggressive foreign-policy interests.

The document ([PDF](#)) details the creation of a new "task order" called Responsive Assistance in Nicaragua (RAIN) and its plan for "Nicaragua's transition to democracy" - a euphemism for removing the leftist Sandinista Front for National Liberation (known commonly by the Spanish acronym FSLN) from power.

In the pages, the US government agency uses hardline neoconservative rhetoric, referring to Nicaragua's elected government as the "Ortega regime," and making it clear that Washington wants to install a neoliberal administration that will privatize the economy, impose neoliberal reforms, and purge all institutions of any trace of the leftist Sandinista movement.

The USAID regime-change scheme states openly that one of its top "mission goals" is for [Nicaragua](#) to "transition to a rules-based market economy" based on the "protection of private property rights."

The document concludes by calling for the future US-installed regime in Nicaragua to "rebuild institutions" and "reestablish" the military and police; to "dismantle parallel institutions" that support the Sandinista Front; and to persecute FSLN leaders through "transitional justice measures" - in other words, a thorough purge of the Sandinista movement to prevent it from ever returning to power.

In case it was not explicit enough that Washington's goal was regime change, the 14-page USAID document employed the word "transition" 102 times, including nine times on the first page alone.

[USAID](#) declared its intention to assist in what could be an "orderly transition" or a "sudden

transition without elections,” which is clear code for a coup. At the same time, it acknowledged that Nicaragua’s right-wing opposition is divided and has little chance of winning the upcoming 2021 national election.

SECTION C – STATEMENT OF WORK

Purpose and Scope

This task order will contribute to the Mission’s strategic framework objective of enabling the environment for Nicaragua’s transition to democracy. The purpose of this task order is to provide rapid, responsive, and relevant analytical and technical assistance that bridge USAID/Nicaragua’s efforts to create the conditions for, and support, a peaceful transition to democracy in Nicaragua. It will operate through two primary work streams: 1) state-of-the-art, gender-informed analytical work, assessments, research and special studies; results management support; and training that contribute to sector learning in the country and builds an evidence base for broader Mission programming, and 2) targeted short-term technical and analytical activities during Nicaragua’s transition that require rapid response programming support until other funds, mechanisms, and actors can be mobilized. The scope of these two work streams is across multiple democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) sub-sectors relevant to a successful and peaceful transition to democracy in Nicaragua.

RAIN will pursue these activities against a variety of scenarios generally falling under three categories:

1. Free, fair and transparent elections lead to an orderly transition
2. A sudden political transition occurs following a crisis
3. Transition does not happen in an orderly and timely manner

RAIN is intended to serve as a short term bridge activity to help the Mission manage assistance to Nicaragua through a potential democratic transition. It is USAID’s intent to follow RAIN with longer-term programs, which will be determined as the crisis evolves. Such programs will be guided by RAIN’s assessments and analysis and initial technical assistance support.

Highlight All Match Case Match Diacritics Whole Words 1 of 102 matches

USAID oversees another far-right coup attempt in Latin America

Ever since the Sandinista Front returned to power in Nicaragua through democratic elections in 2006, Washington has been hellbent on trying to topple it.

In 2018, the Donald Trump administration supported a [violent coup attempt in Nicaragua](#), in which far-right gangs took over neighborhoods and paralyzed the country with bloody barricades known as tranques. The [US-backed insurgents unleashed a reign of terror](#), killing and injuring hundreds of Sandinista activists and state security forces; marking the homes of leftist activists, ransacking and burning some down; and torturing and threatening supporters of the elected government.

When the 2018 putsch attempt failed, the US government resorted to a raft of aggressive tactics to bring down Nicaragua’s leadership. In the past two years, the Trump administration has imposed several rounds of [suffocating sanctions on the small Central American nation](#), often with [bipartisan support in Congress](#), not a word of opposition from the Democratic Party, and cheers from the [billionaire-funded human rights industry](#).

The US Agency for International Development was instrumental in the Donald [Trump administration’s violent US coup attempts](#) against Venezuela’s elected government in 2019, [working directly with the Department of Defense](#). USAID has poured hundreds of millions of dollars [funding the US regime-change efforts](#) against the leftist Chavista government, and

has bankrolled the [Trump-backed coup regime of Juan Guaidó](#).

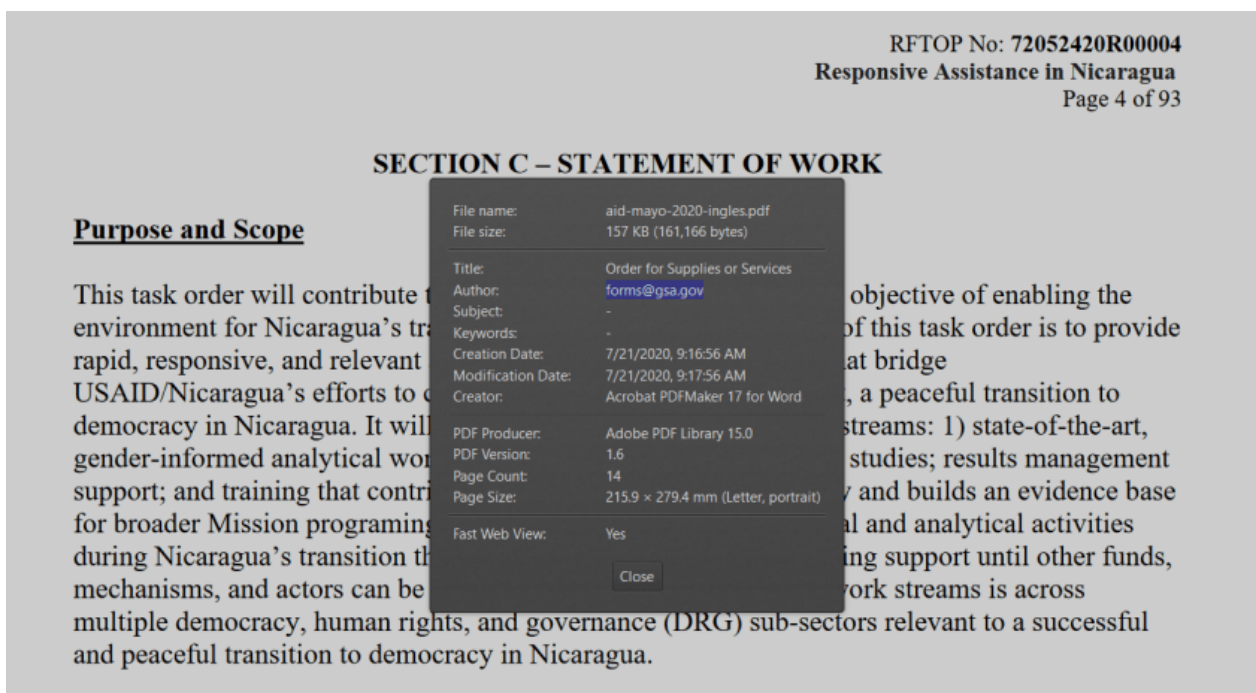
USAID has always functioned as a CIA cutout and soft-power arm for Washington. But under the Trump administration, it has kicked its coup efforts in Latin America into hyper drive.

In April 2020, USAID was taken over by de facto director John Barsa, a hardline Republican businessman, Trump ally, and son of anti-communist Cuban immigrants. In coordination with Secretary of State and former CIA Director Mike Pompeo, Barsa has turned USAID into a blunt weapon of regime change, openly financing putsch efforts against the socialist governments of Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

US govt's Democracy International posts job listing for USAID coup liaison in Nicaragua

The Grayzone contacted USAID to ask confirmation that the document detailing its plans for a political "transition" in Nicaragua was authentic. The agency did not respond.

We were able, however, to gather evidence demonstrating the document's legitimacy. For starters, metadata on the [PDF file](#) show that the original author was the forms division of the US government's General Services Administration (GSA), which oversees logistics for USAID and other agencies.



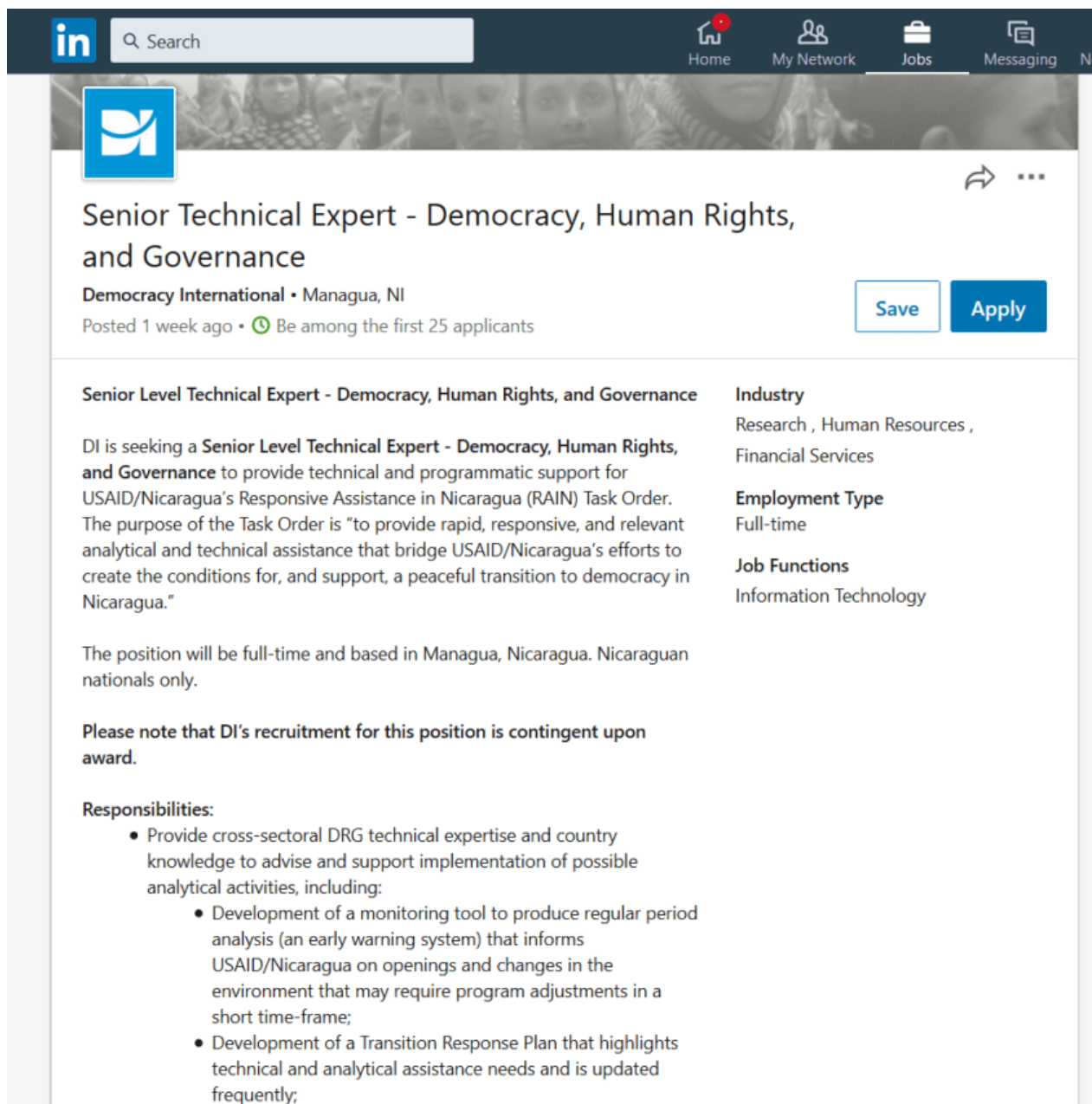
Metadata on the USAID PDF document shows it was drafted by the US government

Even more compellingly, the pages spelling out the regime-change plot employ precisely the same language and phrases as a job listing that was posted in late July by another US government-funded organization, Democracy International. In fact, the USAID document appears to be a more detailed job description for this post.

Democracy International stated in its [listing](#) on [LinkedIn](#) that it was seeking a Nicaraguan national in the capital of Managua to work as a "Senior Level Technical Expert - Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance to provide technical and programmatic support for USAID/Nicaragua's Responsive Assistance in Nicaragua (RAIN) Task Order."

Directly echoing the USAID document, the Democracy International job listing said that the “purpose of the Task Order is ‘to provide rapid, responsive, and relevant analytical and technical assistance that bridge USAID/Nicaragua’s efforts to create the conditions for, and support, a peaceful transition to democracy in Nicaragua.’”

This employee would help develop a “Transition Response Plan” – a regime-change scheme. (The brief job listing [uses the term “transition” 10 times.](#))



The image is a screenshot of a LinkedIn job posting. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the LinkedIn logo, a search bar, and icons for Home, My Network, Jobs, and Messaging. Below the navigation bar is a banner image showing a group of people. The job title is "Senior Technical Expert - Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance" by Democracy International in Managua, NI. It was posted 1 week ago and encourages users to be among the first 25 applicants. There are "Save" and "Apply" buttons. The job description includes the following text: "Senior Level Technical Expert - Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance", "DI is seeking a Senior Level Technical Expert - Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance to provide technical and programmatic support for USAID/Nicaragua’s Responsive Assistance in Nicaragua (RAIN) Task Order. The purpose of the Task Order is “to provide rapid, responsive, and relevant analytical and technical assistance that bridge USAID/Nicaragua’s efforts to create the conditions for, and support, a peaceful transition to democracy in Nicaragua.”", "The position will be full-time and based in Managua, Nicaragua. Nicaraguan nationals only.", "Please note that DI’s recruitment for this position is contingent upon award.", and "Responsibilities: Provide cross-sectoral DRG technical expertise and country knowledge to advise and support implementation of possible analytical activities, including: Development of a monitoring tool to produce regular period analysis (an early warning system) that informs USAID/Nicaragua on openings and changes in the environment that may require program adjustments in a short time-frame; Development of a Transition Response Plan that highlights technical and analytical assistance needs and is updated frequently;". On the right side, there are sections for "Industry" (Research, Human Resources, Financial Services), "Employment Type" (Full-time), and "Job Functions" (Information Technology).

During the Cold War, coup coordination jobs like these would have been covert positions [arranged with the CIA](#). In the freewheeling 21st century, however, [this dirty regime-change work is carried out in the open](#), and advertised publicly on LinkedIn.

In case it wasn’t clear what this organization’s relationship was to USAID, it stated clearly on the post: “Democracy International, Inc. (DI) provides technical assistance, analytical services and project implementation for democracy, human rights, governance and conflict mitigation programs worldwide for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. State Department and other development partners.”

The job listing explicitly noted that the employee would work with the US government to provide “technical advice and country knowledge to GON (government of Nicaragua) ministries, USG (US government), and other stakeholders.”

Clearly, Democracy International is searching for a local point person to help carry out Washington’s regime-change efforts on the ground. The USAID document spelled out in detail the specific destabilization strategy that this liaison would follow.

The Grayzone called the Democracy International office with a request for comment on the LinkedIn job listing, the RAIN program, and the USAID document. A secretary would not let us speak with a specific member of the international team, simply saying, “We will inform the relevant people that we have received a call and I can give them their name and number and they will call you.”

The secretary asked if The Grayzone had a specific question to respond to. We said, “Local Nicaraguan media outlets have criticized USAID’s RAIN program, which is described in the Democracy International job posting, and characterized it as what appears to be an attempt at orchestrating a coup in the country. Can you respond to that characterization and do you think it is fair or unfair?” The Democracy International secretary replied, “Wow that’s so interesting. I will definitely let them know that you called.”

Democracy International never called back.

USAID’s regime-change plot to “transition” Nicaragua to a “market economy”

USAID’s Responsive Assistance in Nicaragua (RAIN) plan makes it clear that it is just a “short term bridge” to bring about regime change in the country, adding, “It is USAID’s intent to follow RAIN with longer-term programs, which will be determined as the crisis evolves.”

The regime-change plot outlined a “Mission Goal 2” in which “Nicaragua provides basis for future economic growth and increased trade through transition to a rules-based market economy based on transparent and accountable regulatory institutions, fiscal and monetary stability, respect for the rule-of-law and protection of private property rights.”

A supplementary “mission objective” emphasized USAID’s desire for a new neoliberal regime in Nicaragua that “works with the private sector to rebuild institutionality and an efficient and fair administrative bureaucracy” – in other words, mass privatization.

(Among the supposed crimes committed by the Nicaraguan “regime,” USAID lists “confiscation of properties.”)

Mission Goal 2, Nicaragua provides basis for future economic growth and increased trade through transition to a rules-based market economy based on transparent and accountable regulatory institutions, fiscal and monetary stability, respect for the rule-of-law and protection of private property rights.

Mission Objective 2.3: The Government of Nicaragua works with the private sector to rebuild institutionality and an efficient and fair administrative bureaucracy.

Mission Goal 3: Security reform and rebuilding institutions.

Mission Objective 3.1: Nicaragua reestablishes independent and professional security forces that maintain rule of law, protect vulnerable populations, and provide citizen security while adhering to international standards of transparency and human rights.

Under Result 2, the rule of law and freedoms will be restored, mechanisms of transitional justice created, and the first steps toward an effective, professional government are taken. The GON dissolves all paramilitary units and other parallel government structures, and the justice sector protects human rights and democratic freedoms.

The USAID document outlined further US priorities for Nicaragua following a successful regime-change operation.

USAID's "Mission Goal 3" would be "Security reform and rebuilding institutions" to "reestablish independent and professional security forces." This is clearly a call for purging the police and military of Sandinista loyalists and bring in US trainers to establish a neocolonial-style security force, much like [General Keith Dayton](#) did in the occupied West Bank after Palestinian resistance was extinguished following the Second Intifada.

The "new government must act quickly to dismantle parallel institutions," USAID adds. This is an indirect hint that Washington seeks to destroy the Sandinista Front, the Sandinista Youth, and other grassroots institutions that work with but are independent of the current socialist government. At its most severe, such a proposal could amount to an Augusto Pinochet-style purge of the left in Nicaragua.

"Additionally, it will need to implement transitional justice measures," the USAID document added. This language, which has also been [used in the proxy war on Syria](#), suggests the new neoliberal Nicaraguan government would be compelled to prosecute Sandinista Front officials, echoing the strategy the [US-backed right-wing regimes in Bolivia and Ecuador have used](#) to criminalize the left-wing parties that previously ruled those countries, hunt down former leftist leaders, and [throw opposition officials in prison](#) on dubious charges.

Another important part of the RAIN job would include recruiting native coup coordinators to help carry out the regime-change plot. USAID described this responsibility as follows: "Identification of potential Nicaraguan partners for rapid impact Grants Under Task Order to promote transition-related activities."

The initiative allotted \$540,000 in grants to entice Nicaraguan opposition groups into assisting the regime-change effort. (In the second-poorest country in the Western hemisphere, where the minimum wage is between \$200 and \$300 per month, half a million dollars is no petty sum.)

These funds would compliment the [millions of dollars that USAID and the NED provide to right-wing Nicaraguan organizations](#) every year.

The USAID document insisted that "Nicaragua's immediate future remains highly uncertain." Yet it acknowledged that the right-wing opposition is divided and unpopular, admitting that

its leadership has not “coalesced around a party or candidate.”

Taking into account the weakness of the opposition heading into the 2021 national elections, the USAID plan outlines three scenarios for the overthrow of the socialist government and a “transition” to a US-friendly neoliberal regime.

The first is an “Orderly Transition scenario,” a far-fetched situation in which an unpopular US-backed opposition group somehow manages to win the election.

The second potential regime-change scenario is described as a “Sudden, Unanticipated Transition,” in “which one or more political crises, such as a snap or failed election, a presidential resignation, a major health crisis, a major natural disaster, or internal conflicts, lead to sudden regime crisis and transition either to an interim government or a new government.” This is the coup option, and USAID makes it clear that it would be more than happy with such a situation, and wants its RAIN liaison to prepare for it.

The third is a “Delayed Transition scenario,” in which the Sandinista government remains in power. In this case, USAID says that RAIN would help it destabilize the government in other ways and lead to future regime change.

For Objective 1, USAID will be funding activities to deploy a team that further state-of-the-art, gender-informed analytical work, assessments, research and special studies and contribute to an evidence base for effective programing in Nicaragua.

Performance Objective 1: Increase USAID/Nicaragua learning and up-to-date insight on the fast-changing political environment of Nicaragua, for evidence-based democratic transition programming.

In the first Scenario, (in which the GON agrees to electoral reforms and carries elections out in November 2021), RAIN will assess the needs and priorities: just as an example, priority actions if the election results are favorable to the opposition but the incumbent refuses to cede power-- what should donor coordination, opposition, civil society, and media focus on? What can USAID do in the short, medium and long term?

In the event of a *sudden transition with elections*, the Strengthening Conditions for Democratic Reform (SCDR) activity is USAID’s principal election related assistance program, but given a number of contextual and operational challenges it will likely face, RAIN will offer USAID additional options to complement the SCDR’s political economy analysis with adaptable analytical tools and rapid assessments to identify evolving immediate needs and possible responses. In the case of a *sudden transition without elections*, SCDR will have to undergo significant adjustments, potentially shifting to elections down the road, while RAIN’s analysis on the transition will be even more critical.

In the event of a *delayed transition* scenario 3, RAIN analytical services will focus on research and documentation that will help prepare civil society to strengthen its leadership as Nicaraguans press for a transition to a more open and democratic government. This analysis will serve USAID/Nicaragua’s adjustments to its strategy.

But USAID didn’t want readers to get the wrong impression. It stressed in the document that its coup would be “gender sensitive in compliance” and based on “gender-informed analytical work.” (Although the [women who make up the bulk of the Sandinista base](#) would have to be excluded from Washington’s woke political “transition”).

The USAID document balanced its liberal language on gender with neoconservative rhetoric claiming, “Malign foreign influences, principally Cuba, Venezuela, and Russia, will continue to attempt to strengthen the corrupt autocratic Ortega regime.”

“What if Nicaragua did that in the United States?”

The existence of the USAID regime-change document was first reported on July 31 on the

popular Nicaraguan radio and video show [Sin Fronteras](#), hosted by William Grigsby Vado.

Grigsby, a prominent leftist media personality with a large following at the base of the Sandinista Front, condemned the US plot. "It is nauseating, the document; bearing to read it is difficult," he said in outrage. "You have to have a strong liver to bear it. It pained me a lot."

"What right does the US government have to contract a firm to subvert public order in any country?" Grigsby fumed. "It is a shameless intervention. Before they did it with the military; in this case they are doing it by subverting public order and funding political opposition activities. That is unacceptable!"

"What if Nicaragua did that in the United States, if for example Daniel Ortega said, 'Hey, we're going to help the protesters in Portland?'" he added. "But they reserve to themselves the right to act against the democratic institutionality of a country."

Grigsby concluded by condemning "yankee imperialism" and slamming Nicaraguan opposition figures who are participating in this regime-change scheme.

"You all can do one of two things," he thundered at the opposition. "Follow the rules of democracy, accept your defeat, and participate in the political game. Or you can simply remain as treasonists, hitmen, and traitors."

The USAID document shows Washington pushing the latter option, and driving the country into a deepened conflict.

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