

## Tall Tales from Ortega about Mega-Projects in Nicaragua

Havana Times, August 21, 2019



Commander Daniel Ortega back in 2015. File photo: Carlos Herrera / Confidential

**The Tumarín hydroelectric plant, the Chinese satellite, the Venezuelan oil refinery, the rebirth of cotton crops and the inter-oceanic canal**

By Enrique Saenz ([Confidential](#))

HAVANA TIMES – For a number of years, one of the Ortega regime’s strong points was their propaganda. A large part of the population was hypnotized by the siren songs that government spokespeople, the media, their allies and servants repeated over and over: manipulations, flagrant lies, illusions for sale, falsifications of reality.

The April explosion demonstrated that the campaign based on fabrications had lost its effectiveness, and that the great majority of the population – after so many shattered illusions and crass tall tales – ended up convinced that Ortega and his band didn’t have anything to offer anymore. All of the delirious promises were left in the air.

From the dream of the Tumarín hydroelectric plant that would flood the country with energy, the only things left are the laws our congress approved to gratify the Brazilian investors and their local bribe takers. The investment had been estimated at US \$1.2 billion dollars, although several economists demonstrated that the costs were inflated in comparison with international standards.

That's where the fraud began. They rubbed their hands together with glee at the abusive rates for electricity, set into law beforehand, with which they thought they could squeeze the family and company pockets for decades. That was the juicy part of the fraud. Remember the *Queiroz Galvao* company? The famous franchisers continue rubbing their hand together, but now with less glee, from behind bars in Brazil where they've been locked up for acts of corruption.

On whose shoulders will the expenses of this project now fall?

Who ended up with the franchise, awaiting the right moment?

In the case of the satellite that was to come from China, it apparently continued its orbit around the moon, because on this side of the planet, we haven't seen a trace of it. Unless it was a radio signal from the famous meteorite that – according to the scientists who work for the regime – fell somewhere around the airport. Not even NASA registered the meteorite, but the regime's "scientists" described it right down to the fine hairs.

The *Produzcamos* {"Let's produce"} Bank was inaugurated with the most favorable portents and the applause of everyone capable of applauding. A project that was in the program of every candidate during the 2006 elections, it had the potential to become a lever to promote broad programs of productive expansion and technological modernization, especially considering the strong flow of the Venezuelan oil cooperation. But it never raised its head. First, it was used to distribute soft credits, and later it froze. It now maintains a suspicious silence. Incidentally, the *Produzcamos* Bank, a state property, shouldn't be confused with *BANCORP*, Ortega's private property.

The rebirth of the cotton crop was another bubble of joy. The golden years of the "white gold" won't be back, despite the plans and promises. Even though, according to the hallucinations of the spokespersons and servants of the regime, we wouldn't even be talking about white gold anymore, as cotton was known in other times, because new biotechnologies would allow the cotton balls to sprout in colors, in order to go directly to the spinning mills where the fiber would be transformed into cloth that wouldn't need dyes. The bolts of textiles would come out in bright color.

What can you tell me about the colossal engineering project that was to allow us to defeat the effects of climate change? We're talking about the project known as *Cota Cien*, through which a dam would be built across the *San Juan* River to raise the water level of Lake *Cocibolca* in order to have that water later decant into Lake *Xolotlan* via a marvelous set of canals. The waters spilled from lake to lake would clean up in a jiffy the polluted Lake *Xolotlan*, and later the precious liquid would spill over to fertilize the plains of the Pacific region, where they'd be able to produce up to three harvests a year. Ortega announced that this project would be the central pillar of his "presidential campaign" of 2016. But nothing happened.

The deep-water port in the Caribbean that was to generate so many economic benefits for exporters, importers and consumers, continues sleeping the sleep of the just.

And the train that would unite the Managua suburb of *Ciudad Sandino* with the free trade zones near the airport, with a branch line to Masaya and Granada? And the aluminum plant?

The refinery to be called “Bolívar’s Supreme Dream”, that would turn the country into an exporter of hydrocarbons without ever exploiting an oil well, ended up as some storage tanks. But yes, the infrastructure that was constructed with a part of the millions of dollars pocketed from the Venezuelan aid serves the governing gang to squeeze the wallets of families and companies with the inflated prices of gas.

Finally, the cherry on the cake: the inter-oceanic canal. The greatest engineering project in the history of humanity was reduced to a path full of puddles when it rains, and of dust-clouds when it doesn’t. Some cows wander by the path with their proverbial patience; we don’t know if they’re guarding the route, or perhaps waiting to watch the massive boats go by, as the loose tongue of spokesperson Telemaco Talavera once described.

While Paul Oquist was predicting around the world that milk and honey would cascade from the sky, the avid and gluttonous native business leaders “competed” in the first bidding processes and the unions in the Ortega camp got busy making lists of workers they said would be hired by the tens of thousands to work 24 hours a day on the majestic project. These were left – no doubt about it – addicted. The Chinese speculator, fortunate beneficiary of the concession, was never seen again. Only God knows what happened to him. The shady businesses and exchanges of capital that went on, or that go on, in the shadows of this national sell-out concession, are also a mystery, and it’s equally unknown what happened, or what will happen with the expenses that were incurred.

But, well and good, as someone out there once said: “you can fool all of the people some of the time; you can fool some of the people all of the time; but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.”