

## The Conspiracy of Nicaragua's Big Business Class

By Julio Lopez Campos (Confidencial)  
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**“Big business is only interested in containing the worsening economic crisis — it was never interested in the fall of Ortega”**



Members of the Supreme Council of Private Enterprise, COSEP. Photo: Carlos Herrera / Confidencial

HAVANA TIMES – In mid-February, Nicaragua's big bankers, along with the key representatives of capital, known as the “COSEP business council advisors”, met in private with Daniel Ortega, with all agreeing to restart the negotiations.

This was all announced publicly, with big business choosing representatives for the negotiating table who would strengthen their interests, and Daniel doing the same in naming his representatives. Once the guidelines were received, on February 27 the Dialogue Part II began – with everything happening by private agreement between the ‘owner’ of the Nicaraguan state and the owners of the country's capital. We should add to this the US government's green light and the lobbying of the Apostolic Nuncio. Prudently, the Bishops Conference stepped aside.

Let's not waste time and space with high-flying analysis. I invite you to consider, clearly and directly, exactly what was achieved by the negotiations between big business and the dictatorship. Let's see.

1. How many of our political prisoners have been released? That is, released without conditions (house arrest is not freedom), and the arbitrary accusations against them declared null? None.
2. On how many occasions have the member groups of the Civic Alliance kept their word to not sit down again with the dictatorship as long as the political prisoners are not released? None.
3. How many days have gone by without repression, kidnappings and threats? None.
4. How many demonstrations and expressions of citizens asserting their civic rights on the streets have been possible without repression? None.
5. How many journalists have been released? None.
6. How many independent media have been restored, or the necessary materials for their operation delivered? None.
7. How many of the thousands of forcibly exiled citizens have returned to the country with their full rights guaranteed? None.
8. What has happened to ensure a turnover in the Supreme Electoral Council's magistrates for life along with a complete electoral reform? Nothing.
9. What was agreed upon to make the truth known, to do justice and to bring to justice those guilty of crimes and repression? Nothing.
10. What measures or reforms have been agreed upon to compensate the victims, with guarantees that this unchecked repression against the population will never be repeated? None.
11. What is the agreed date for the return of the IACHR and the MESENI to Nicaragua? None.
12. How many police officials have been imprisoned or removed from their positions? None.
13. How many paramilitaries have been disarmed and imprisoned? None.
14. How many canceled legal entities and illegally confiscated property have been returned to non-governmental organizations? None.
15. How many recommendations and demands of the international community have been met by the Ortega-Murillo regime? None.

16. How many of the few agreements signed by the government have been complied with? None.

17. What is the date established for the departure of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo from power or at least for the advancement of the elections? None.

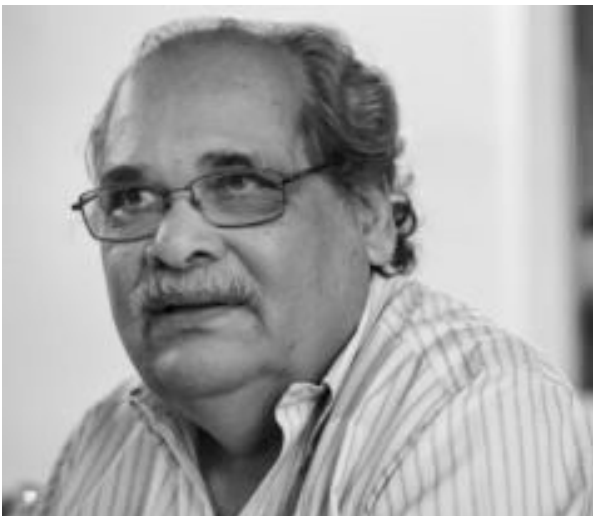
18. In this second phase of dialogue, how many times has the business sector called for strikes to support popular resistance and exert pressure on the government? None.

The conclusions are clear: the government, with the consent of the COSEP Directors, that is to say, big business, gained some vital time to strangle the popular resistance to the point where it is almost nonexistent.

But there is something else. Daniel has carried out a process of strengthening the National Police and its shock forces, rearming them, providing them with both financial and human resources and militarily training them to crush any new attempt at an uprising.

Ortega has achieved this thanks to the time and credibility granted by the negotiating table – yet he has granted nothing in return. Little by little, he has been co-opting the representatives of big capital, pulverizing any pretension of resistance from the business community, and undermining those business voices (from the small and mid sectors) that pushed for greater firmness. He has imprisoned their representatives in a web of dialogue, meetings and witnesses, and exploited the lack of consistency of the first byproducts of his nonexistent popular leadership.

In short, beyond outside and international pressure, which resists the regime and which acts independently of the dialogue, the correlation of internal forces looks for now to favor the dictatorship.



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Again, it must be understood that the big businessmen are only interested in containing the worsening economic crisis, and that they were never interested in the fall of the dictatorship. They care about their money, not democracy. They want a settlement, even if it is a bad agreement, but are not interested in justice. As Bishop Baez said, the people must “control the negotiation”.

We citizens are committed to honoring the enormous sacrifice of the people, with so many dead, with the suffering of the prisoners, with the thousands in forced exile, with the unemployed, with the persecuted youth, with the rights denied to the people. So much sacrifice cannot and should not be given as an offering to the dictator at the negotiating table.