

The Remilitarization of Nicaragua

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1. Introduction

This essay addresses the adjacent conditions of remilitarization in Nicaragua based on Daniel Ortega's return to power after 16 years. His first term, 2007ⁱ, is considered a watershed because the military's empowerment process was more evident than in previous governments.

This report is based on the concept of remilitarization as a process. According to some Latin American academics, remilitarization is regaining influence and power. In other words, it is a return to militarization, a process in which the military gains entry into the formal political arena or increases its influence in decision-making processes.ⁱⁱ

However, in practice, and more so in Latin America, the military seeks political influence and a vote in decision-making and economic power. It is well known that military business in this region is so strong that, in some countries, it becomes part of the political and social elite. In addition, members of the military rise to the top of the strongest economic groups in any country.

To understand the process in Nicaragua, we have redefined the concept of remilitarization. We will consider remilitarization as a process through which the military regains large shares of political and economic power and influence to the degree that the civilians cannot make autonomous decisions without consulting with the military.

2. A Comparative Look

During the liberal governments, from 1990 to 2006, the military in Nicaragua underwent a significant transformation. Before that, in the 80s, the country lived under a militarized society. The military and the citizens had to form a single group body against what was considered "aggression from the United States." The "defense of the motherland" was at the heart of every single activity in the country; the Political Constitution, the rules and laws, and mainly the economic activities.

In 1990, Nicaragua achieved peace and returned to democracy after the international community demanded democratic elections for the Sandinista government. However, the new administration, led by President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, saw a country economically devastated by the war and socialist financial policies that left it bankrupt. Therefore, the first mission of the new administration was economic recovery.

The former Sandinista Popular Army (predecessor of the current Nicaraguan Army) was reduced by almost 90 percent, going from about 120,000 to only 14,000 personnel. The military not only lost its muscle, but the new laws made it perform the traditional roles and responsibilities of the military. These roles were, in essence, the defense of national sovereignty.

3. In the Regulatory Field

But from 1994, the military began to regain strength. The approval that same year of the Code of Organization, Jurisdiction and Military Social Welfare, better known as the Military Code, was a significant event. The law changed the name "Sandinista Popular Army" to "Nicaraguan Army." It began to govern institutional life more professionally and in a way more fitting to a country that returned to democracy.

After the Cold War, and with the need to preserve and justify its existence, the military joined the hemispheric trend, led by the United States Army, to define as latent risks the so-called "asymmetric threats." These latent risks, such as drug trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime, were identified as dangerous to States and nations.

From the thesis of asymmetric threats, the military in Nicaragua began to make its way into the national security arena, specifically public security. The fight against organized crime and the fight against drug trafficking became areas of responsibility of the Nicaraguan Army, mainly in regions where the National Police had weak institutional capabilities and insufficient presence, like the Caribbean Sea and extensive rural areas such as the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua and the north of the country.

Table 1. Laws Delegating National Security Roles to the Nicaraguan Army

Year	Law	Military unit	Function
1999	Law 228 or Anti-Drug Law	Navy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maritime interdiction in the Pacific and Caribbean 2. Interdiction in river waters
2000	1. Law 337 or Law of Incorporation of the National System for the Prevention, Mitigation, and Attention of Disasters	All forces	The Executive branch can use all the military for relief against natural or man-made disasters
	2. Law on the Creation of the Inter-institutional Commission for the Conservation, Protection, and Surveillance of the Bosawás and Southeast Biosphere Reserves	Ecological Battalion	This battalion was created after the approval of this law and was responsible for protecting the jungles of Bosawás and the country's southeast.
2001	Water Transport Act	Navy	The law delegates this military unit to the maritime security of all vessels and gives it the role of port authority to authorize the departure of vessels.
2002	General Health Law	1. Land Forces	The Army can use medical resources, hospitals, and personnel to assist in the prevention tasks of the Ministry of Health
		2. Military Medical Corps	
2003	Law 462 or Law on Conservation, Promotion and Sustainable Development of the forestlands	General Command	The law assigns a representative of the Nicaraguan Army within the National Forestry Commission to approve the country's forestry policy.

	Executive Decree 80-2003	General Command	The decree created the National Commission for Arms Control and Limitation and appointed the chief of the Nicaraguan Army as a member.
2004	Law 489, or Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture	Navy	This law delegates the security of water resources declared as a national heritage to the Navy.

Source: Nicaraguan Legal Digest: <http://digesto.asamblea.gob.ni/>

Although the previous table is not comprehensive, it shows the areas taken over by the military in other institutions. However, many of the new roles delegated were not strategic and instead used the Army for specific matters, such as controlling the mosquito plague that transmits malaria and dengue.

4. Ortega's Rise to Power

There was a substantive change with the arrival of Daniel Ortega in 2007. The liberal governments of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (1990 – 1995), Arnoldo Alemán (1996 – 2000), and Enrique Bolaños (2001 – 2006) had assigned roles that justified the existence of a military unit such as the Nicaraguan Army. Their most important role during that time was the war against drug trafficking in the Nicaraguan seas. In addition, their relationship with the Southern Command of the U.S. made the Nicaraguan Army carry out joint operations in Central America and the Caribbean.

Under Ortega's administration, the changes were strategic. The Army began filling spaces of greater importance, and its roles became more strategic. Intelligence and Counterintelligence started playing an important role, and Ortega's regime put together a legal framework that put military espionage activities at the head of its security system. All this while, sociopolitical crises, and nationwide protests demanded Ortega's resignation¹.

Before and after the April crisis, Ortega had co-opted the military by letting them do their illegal businesses through the Military Social Security Institute (IPSM), from where they created dozens of companies in the branches of private security, construction, health, finance, higher education, etc., These unlawful actions made them the fourth most substantial economic group in the country, including some companies which has been in the market for decades. (We will elaborate on this point later.)

So while Ortega granted the military advantages to conduct their businesses, they offered Ortega security in return through their intelligence reports and espionage against political dissent. However, the President wanted to turn this tacit agreement into objective functions ruled by laws. This is why Ortega sent a series of legal norms that made up the Directorate of Information for Defense (DID) to the National Assembly. This Directorate would become the head of the national intelligence system.

¹ The general population rose up against the Ortega's regime to demand his resignation, but his response was extremely violent. Ortega made use of paramilitaries who supported the National Police to dismantle the protest. The toll was at least 350 dead in less than two months.

It should be emphasized that the DID is not part of the Military Intelligence or Counterintelligence Directorates but a military espionage network whose functions are vague at best. What is known is that this unit was formed in the Nicaraguan Army after the disappearance of the former General Directorate of State Security (DGSE). This secret police operated during the first Sandinista government in the 80s. Its members were trained in the countries of the Eastern Bloc and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The chief of the DGSE was the legendary Colonel Lenin Cerna Juárez.ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 2. Laws that Strengthen the National Security Roles of the Nicaraguan Army

Year	Law	Military unit	Function
2010	1. Law 748 or Law of National Defense	General Command	It gives the Army the exclusive right to develop national defense policies and plans.
	2. Law 749 or Law on the Legal Regime of Borders	Army, Navy, and Air Force	It establishes a security zone based on the borders, with surveillance and custody entrusted to the Nicaraguan Army.
2012	1. Law 793 or Law of the Financial Analysis Unit	---	A member of the military on active duty who is experienced and has qualifications in financial or legal matters can be a director. For example, in September 2012, Major General Denis Membreño served as chief of the General Staff.
	2. Law 800 or Law of Legal Regime of the Grand Interoceanic Canal of Nicaragua	Army and Navy	This law entrusts the Nicaraguan Army with the security, maritime protection, and surveillance of the interoceanic canal project.
	3. Law 810 or Special Law for the Development of the El Supremo Sueño de Bolívar Industrial Complex Project	Army	The law grants a budget item to the Nicaraguan Army to carry out security tasks during the construction of this project.
2013	Law 838 or General Law of Ports	Army and Navy	The military is responsible for security at Nicaraguan seaports.
2015	1. Law 913 or Law of Reforms to Law No. 690 or Law for the Development of Coastal Zones	---	A member of the Nicaraguan Army is part of the Inter-institutional Coordination Board for the Commission for the Development of Coastal Zones
	2. Law 919 or Sovereign Security Law	DID	This law defines national security policy and places the Nicaraguan Army as the primary institution of the Sovereign Security System.
2016	Law 939 or Law of Amendments to Decree N. 1292 o Law of	Army and DID	The Army is responsible for the security of international airports

International Airport Management
Company

2021	Law 1059 or Law Declaring and Defining Nicaraguan Caribbean Biosphere Reserve	Army and Navy	The Army is part of the Technical Secretariat
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Source: Nicaraguan Legal Digest and National Assembly

The laws in this new table offer a more holistic view of the roles of the Nicaraguan Army within the Ortega administration. Despite taking office in 2007, we must remember that Ortega has been re-elected for four consecutive terms.

In these laws, the Army has been granted functions of the highest importance, such as leading the country's defense and intelligence systems and surveillance of areas of economic exclusivities, such as biosphere reserves where there is gold and other minerals such as coltan. Furthermore, they were entrusted with the security of sea and airports. In addition, these laws state that the military is the leader of the National Defense System and the Sovereign Security System. Therefore, the military's primary task under these systems is to detect national risks and threats.

5. Rearmament with the Russians

The alliance with Russia has increased the Nicaraguan Army's military capabilities, based on the acquisition of new weapons like the 50 T-72B1, regarded by some as the best tanks currently in operation in Latin America.

Ortega was an old ally of the USSR and, now, Russia, heir to the Soviet Union, resumed diplomatic relations with Nicaragua since its return to power. The President of Nicaragua began his term with an aggressive and critical speech against the United States. But, being an old revolutionary guerrilla warrior, he pledged his anti-imperialist affiliation and turned to Russia after foreseeing the conflicts of having relations with the Americans.

In 2008, Ortega backed Moscow by recognizing the independence of Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He did so during an official ceremony celebrating the 29th anniversary of the Nicaraguan Army. The U.S. government minimized its development and military cooperation with Nicaragua in response.

In February 2014, Nicaragua and Russia signed the Agreement for Military and Technical-Military Cooperation, which lays the ground rules for the exchange and cooperation between the armed forces of both countries. Although since the first half of 2013, Nicaragua received Russian troops, Russia started to supply weapons and military equipment to the Nicaraguan Army after the signing of that agreement.

Nicaragua first received a batch of 7.62-millimeter caliber ammunition with a more powerful propellant. But unfortunately, the ammunition of the AK-47 rifles of the Nicaraguan troops was already expired, and Nicaragua had not replenished its inventory.

Table 3. Russian Weapons Received by Nicaragua and their Approximate Cost

Year	Type	Quantity	Military unit	Factory Cost	Cost in market	Total*
2009	Mi-17 helo	2	Air force	\$12,000,000	N/A	\$5,000,000
2012	Mobile hospitals	6	Military Hospital	N/A	N/A	N/A
2012	GAZ-2330 Armoured vehicles	N/A	BIM	N/A	\$100,000	N/A
2013	14310 Mirazh Patrol boats	4	Navy			\$20,000,000
2014	Molnia missile boats	2	Navy	\$45,000,000	N/A	\$90,000,000
2014	UZ-23-2 anti-aircraft system	14				
2016	T-72B Tanks	50	BIM	S/D	\$1,500,000	\$80,000,000
2019	AN-26 aircraft	2	Air force	\$12,000,000	\$3,500,000	\$7,000,000
2021	Mi-8MTV-1 helicopter	1	Air force		\$3,000,000	3,000,000
Total						\$205,000,000

Source: Self-research with information from the local news system and specialized websites

Note: * The final prices described in the Total column are the costs disclosed through unofficial sources.

The data in the table above are inconclusive. This is because Russian military cooperation information has been classified as a "state secret." Nicaragua's Access to Public Information Law, passed in 2007 during the first year of Ortega's first term, classified military information as "reserved information," meaning that no one outside the military can access it.

However, we can tell that Russia has given Nicaragua at least \$205 million in military cooperation. It is unknown if this cooperation was received through a donation or loans from Russia. Unfortunately, Daniel Ortega's administration has not disclosed information about this issue.

With Russian support, Nicaragua has increased its military capacity. In doing so, it has violated the Central American Democratic Security Treaty and initiated a rearmament process that could be dangerous for the region.

6. Former Military Officers in the Government

Since Ortega's return, the accumulation of political power and influence by the Nicaraguan military allowed the executive branch to hire high-ranking former military officers. Ortega trusts these retired military officers and uses them to exert indirect control over their fellow officers still on duty in the military.

Except for Major General Denis Membreño Rivas, who was appointed Director of the Financial Analysis Unit (UAF), no other military officer on duty has been appointed to civilian positions within the government.

However, numerous retired military personnel, who left active duty before and during the first two terms of Daniel Ortega's presidency, have held important positions in the different institutions of the State. Two prime examples are retired General Oscar Mojica, appointed in 2017 as Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, and retired Brigadier General Denis Moncada Colindres, current Foreign Minister of Nicaragua.

If you look back, in 2013, 47 former military officers held positions in the State and consortiums such as Alba de Nicaragua S.A. (Albanisa), created with funds from the Venezuelan oil cooperation.

Table 4. List of Former Military Personnel in State Roles in 2013

N/O	Military rank	Names and surnames	Specialty	Military readiness		Remarks
				ALEMI	.DEM	
FSLN Secretariat – ALBANISA						
01	Major General	Ramon Humberto Calderon Vindel	Army	X	X	Guerrilla
02	Colonel	Rodolfo Fernando Velasquez Gutierrez	War College		X	Guerrilla
03	Colonel	Leonardo Guatemala	OBJECT	X	X	Guerrilla
04	Colonel	Guillermo Gonzalez	Executive		X	
05	Lieutenant Colonel	Pablo Corea Fernandez	T and T		X	Guerrilla
06	Lieutenant Colonel	Vilchez	Army		X	Guerrilla
Vice-Presidency of the Republic						
07	Army General	Moises Omar Halleslevens Acevedo	War College		X	Guerrilla
08	Colonel	Rudy Savedra	War College	X	X	Guerrilla
09	Colonel	Ramon Seville	War College	X		
10	Colonel	Victor Guevara	War College	X		
Supreme Court of Justice						
11	Subcommander	Rafael Solis Cerda	Lawyer			Guerrilla
12	Lieutenant	Juana Mendez Perez	DGSE			Guerrilla
13	First Lieutenant	Julio Arias	Judge			
14	Lieutenant	Adela Cardoza	War College			
Supreme Electoral Council						
15	Colonel	Emmet Lang Salmerón	Directorate			Guerrilla
16	Lieutenant Colonel	Marisol Castillo Bellido	Pictures			
17	Elder	Johnny Torrez Aguilar	Politician			Guerrilla
Free Trade Zone						
18	Brigadier General	Alvaro Baltodano Cantarero	Directorate		X	Guerrilla
19	Major General	Glauco Cidar Robelo Choehihg	2nd J DCIM		X	Guerrilla

20	Brigadier General	Nestor Lopez Fernandez	Tropist	X		Guerrilla
Delegation to the Organization of American States (OAS)						
21	Brigadier General	Denis Moncada Colindres	Directorate		X	Guerrilla
Embassy of Nicaragua in Panama City						
22	Elder	Antenor Ferrey Pernudy	Directorate		X	Guerrilla
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry						
23	Colonel	Silvio Palacios	Army		X	Guerrilla
24	Colonel	Manuel Gutierrez	Political		X	Guerrilla
25	Lieutenant Colonel	Francisco Luna	OPONES		X	Guerrilla
Directorate-General of Customs						
26	Captain	Eddy Medrano	J Section			
27	Commissioner	Carlos Rodriguez	J Section			Guerrilla
28	Lieutenant Colonel	Nestor Moncada Law **	Intelligence / DGSE			Guerrilla
29	Mayor	Ernesto Torrez	Army		X	Guerrilla
ENITEL CLARO						
30	Brigadier General	Orlando Talavera Siles	Intelligence / DGSE	X	X	Guerrilla
Nicaraguan Electric Transmission Company						
31	Brigadier General	Ronaldo Velasquez	CIM	X	X	Guerrilla
Ministry of Mines						
32	Lieutenant Colonel	Carlos Zarruk Perez			X	
Civil Aeronautics						
33	Brigadier General	Jorge Miranda Jaime		X	X	Guerrilla
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources						
34	Rear admiral	Juan Estrada ***				
Nicaraguan Company of Aqueducts and Sewers						
35	Colonel	Erwin Barrera	War College		X	
36	Colonel	Javier Martinez	War College		X	
37	Colonel	Octavio Aragon	Political		X	
38	Colonel	Denis P. Paiz	Armament		X	
39	Lieutenant Colonel	Jorge Pasconde	CIM			
40	Lieutenant Colonel	Fernando Galeano				
Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports						
41	Brigadier General	Ricardo Martinez Bonilla	Army		X	EG – G.N.
Central Bank of Nicaragua						
42	Lieutenant Colonel	Alberto Guevara	Intelligence / DGSE			
Ministry of Health						
43	Colonel	Elias Antonio Guevara Ordonez	Doctor		X	Guerrilla
Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies						
44	Colonel	Jorge Castro				
National Supply Company						
45	Brigadier General	Jose Herminio Escoto	Army	X	X	Guerrilla
46	Lieutenant Colonel	Nelson Longsword	Army		X	Guerrilla
47	Captain	Julio Hernandez	Rearguard		X	Guerrilla

Source: Own research with information from open sources and collaborations with former military

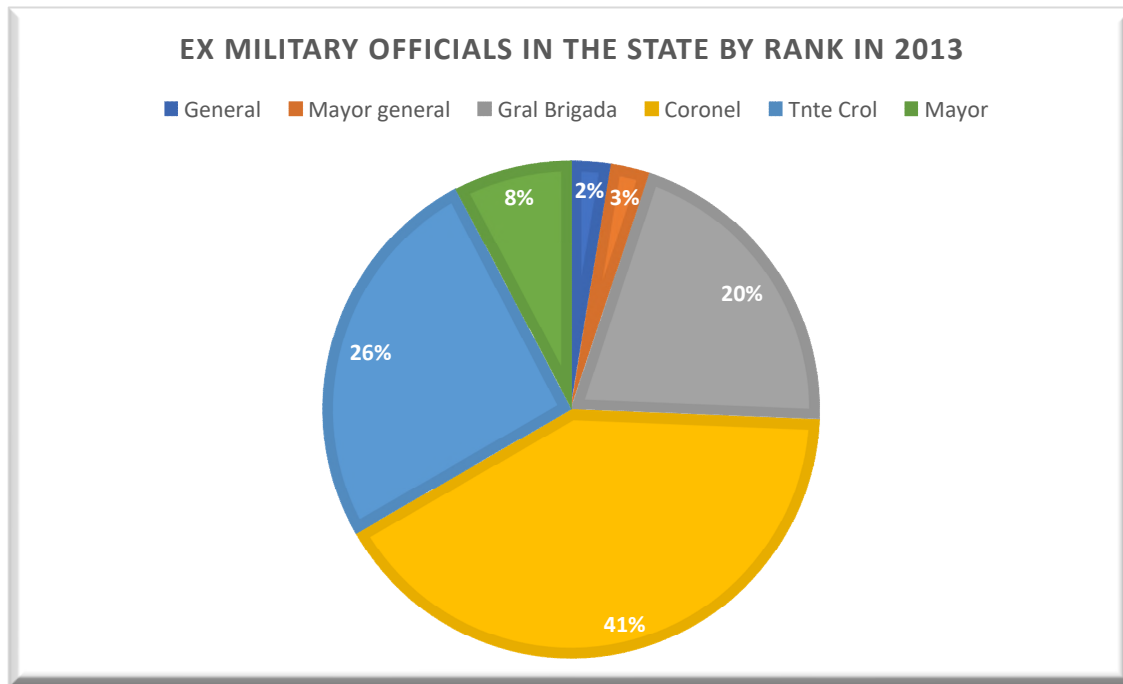
As shown above, 93 percent of these former military members who held State positions during 2013 came from the Nicaraguan Army and only 7 percent from structures of the former Ministry of the Interior, such as the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE) and the National Police.

Out of all the former military personnel who belonged to the Nicaraguan Army (93%), 82 percent were high-ranking officers who held strategic positions within the military: Chief of Staff, Operations, Inspector General, etc. On the other hand, only 18 percent were low-ranking military personnel, including two captains, a first lieutenant, and a lieutenant.

A key aspect is that 59 percent (26) were guerrilla warriors who fought in the armed struggle that overthrew Anastasio Somoza Debayle in 1979.

This information shows an unusual pattern in administrations over the past 20 years. No other government had hired a more significant number of retired military personnel because, according to the information collected, these people have been appointed to at least 19 public Ministries. This showcases an important empowerment of the military.

Figure 1. The Rank of Former Military Officers in Government Positions in 2013



Source: Authors.

Looking closely at the graph above, you can see that the most significant number of retired military personnel hired in 2013 by Ortega were colonels (41 percent), while 26 percent were generals and another 20 percent were brigadier generals. This means that 87 percent of those hired that year were high-ranking military. Also, they were part of the backbone of the Nicaraguan Army. By then, the highest-ranking retired military officer in Nicaragua's government was Army General Omar Halleseven.

As a preliminary conclusion, we can say that the military has taken over almost all areas of the government of Daniel Ortega. Its influence at the political level has grown enormously since the liberal governments.

7. Military Business

In Nicaragua, as in many other Latin American countries, the military's growing influence in politics goes hand in hand with its businesses. "Military businesses" are the companies created under the auspice of the Military Social Security Institute (IPSM) and the Code of Organization, Jurisdiction, and Military Social Welfare.

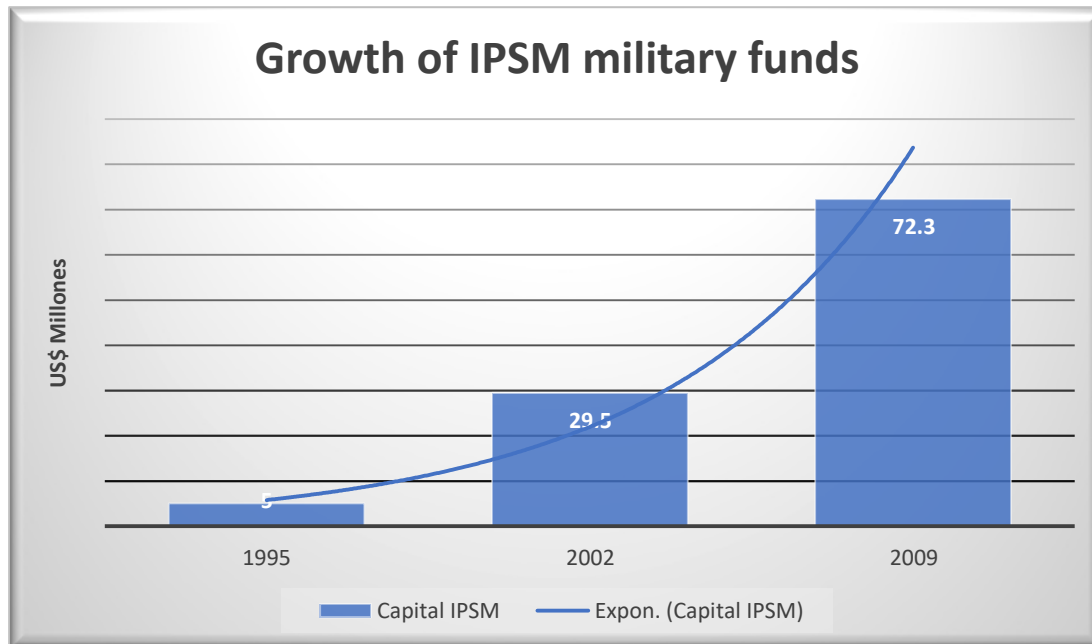
The IPSM is an instrument and business mechanic of the military to generate sufficient funds to pay for the pensions of its personnel. At first, it was argued that the budget allocated to the military was insufficient, so it was necessary to authorize the management of businesses to gather funds for pensions and medical care of the soldiers of the Nicaraguan Army.

However, the IPSM has been managed as a private investment fund under the pretext that affiliate contributions would not make it profitable enough to guarantee a dignified retirement of members of the Nicaraguan Army. Hence, by 2009 the military managed almost 60 businesses and an estimated capital of 72.3 million dollars, becoming one of the leading investment groups in the country.

The lack of transparency in the management of military businesses makes it difficult to know the actual capital of the IPSM. The Comptroller General of the Republic (CGR) could audit this Institute; however, the Nicaraguan Army only approves audits from external private firms as established in the Military Code. Therefore, the results of the audits need to be reported only to the CGR, where they are approved without any verification.^{iv} This is an excellent way to keep nosy civilians away from the military's finances.

Based on journalistic investigations of some media and reports of auditing firms, it was possible to establish the growth of the IPSM's capital until 2009. From that year, everything is a blur.

Figure 2. Growth of the IPSM Military Funds



Sources: IEEPP, Confidential, and audits by Deloitte & Touche and Price Waterhouse

Since 1995, the growth of IPSM's capital was 490 percent until 2002, an enviable financial return for any civilian corporation. Over the next seven years, its net worth increased by 169 percent. And this trend continues to grow.

However, journalist Juan Carlos Bow quotes in his report published in the Confidential magazine: "Sources from the military affirmed, at that time, that the funds of the IPSM could be between 90 and 100 million dollars, of these amounts, at least 35% were invested in bonds in the United States."

These funds are the "corporate treasury" of the Nicaraguan Army, and the military is looking for ways to keep its growth stable.

According to the Price Water House audit document, in 2009, the military held more than 70 businesses in finance, higher education, stock exchange, construction, housing development, real estate, tourism, hardware stores, commerce, importers, etc. The diversity is tremendous.

The list includes investments in Grupo ASSA Panama, Isthmus Holding Corporation Panama, Caprix International Business Panama, the acquisition of \$12.5 million in U.S. treasury bonds on Wall Street; Colony International Business Inc. Panama, Interim Investment Inc. Panama and Periples Corporation Inc. Panama.

All the profits, companies, and international business lines have made the Nicaraguan military one of the most powerful economic groups in Nicaragua, surpassing traditional ventures with decades of history.

8. The Impact of Remilitarization on Indigenous Communities

On the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, a region that makes up almost 50 percent of the country, six different ethnic groups coexist. These groups include mestizos, which is the largest ethnic group in the country. It is here, in this region, where the effects of this militarization have affected the most people.

The Nicaraguan Army's political and economic influence has had a country-wide impact. The military has taken advantage of the expansion of the agricultural frontier to invade a land that legally belongs to the Miskito and Mayagna communities. In doing so, they have strengthened the cattle businesses linked to the military.

For several years now, many human rights organizations, including the Center for Justice and Human Rights of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua^{vi} (Cejudhcan) and the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (Cenidh), have been pointing out that there is a low-intensity armed conflict between livestock raising sectors and the indigenous communities. This conflict has left at least more than 250 people dead since 2015.

The conflict resulted from the invasion of indigenous lands by people from the Pacific and the country's center towards the Caribbean. These invaders use threats and intimidation to displace the Miskito or Mayagna families. In some cases, tension escalates into armed conflicts.^{vii}

Constantino Rommel, a Miskito indigenous leader, said that the people who invade indigenous lands, also known as "*colonos*," arrive armed and kill people who refuse to leave their properties. Rommel has already documented 150 cases brought to justice, but without any results.

He explains that it has been challenging to bring to justice those responsible for the murders because they have protection from the authorities, mainly the National Police and the Nicaraguan Army.

Livestock is a thriving business. According to records from the Central Bank of Nicaragua, beef is one of the country's main exports, along with gold and coffee. The primary destination market for this product is the United States. In this country, Nicaraguan meat reaches consumers through Walmart stores.

Several publications^{viii} have mentioned that a large part of the meat business in Nicaragua is linked to the Nicaraguan Army. About 15 large cattle ranchers were high-ranking military officers and continue to have links with the military. These are direct operators of the Nicaraguan military's beef business. One of them is the former general and commander in chief of the Nicaraguan Army, Moisés Omar Hallesleven Acevedo, who was vice president of the country during the second consecutive presidential term of Daniel Ortega (2012 – 2017).

Current General Officer of the Army, Julio César Avilés, was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department for his loyalty to Daniel Ortega. As a result, General Avilés is known as the "cattleman."

For the human rights organizations cited above, the expansion of the agricultural frontier, together with the invasions of "*colonos*" on indigenous lands^{ix} and the involvement of generals of the Army in the cattle business, could explain the high rate of impunity in the murders of indigenous people.

9. Conclusions

Based on the information presented in this report and the analysis made throughout, we can conclude that:

1. Since 2007, under the protection of Daniel Ortega's administration, the military in Nicaragua started a process of remilitarization that led them to acquire a political and economic power only comparable to that of the 70s, during dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle's presidential term. Although in the 80s, the military was involved in all sorts of endeavors in the country, they did not enjoy economic power from the internal war against the Nicaraguan Resistance rebel army.
2. Daniel Ortega managed to get the military on board his political project: sitting in power indefinitely. The recipe to achieve the military's loyalty was: growing their businesses, the business alliance with the military leadership, hiring former military in State Departments, and protection and impunity for their crimes against the indigenous and peasant population in the northern Caribbean of Nicaragua.
3. The military has been assigned to monitor and address national threats that destabilize Daniel Ortega's regime. In addition, some laws, such as the Sovereign Security Law, had the military coordinating a counterintelligence system in charge of finding and addressing internal political dissent. In other words, the military now has social and political control, thereby closing gaps and undermining individual and collective freedoms. This represents a severe democratic setback in Nicaragua because these new military roles encourage political espionage.
4. The alliance between the military and Daniel Ortega has reshaped the country's political model, moving from liberal democracy, from 1990 to 2006, to authoritarianism since 2007. With the support of the military, Ortega consolidated a dictatorship in Nicaragua, and with it, the military aid in the annulment of any remains of democracy.

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ⁱ Ortega has already been in office for four consecutive five-year terms since 2007.

ⁱⁱ See: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=64024698009>

ⁱⁱⁱ Lenin Cerna Juárez directed the DGSE in the Ministry of the Interior under the direction of Tomás Borge Martínez

^{iv} Article 67, numeral 5; Articles 71 and 72 of Law 181 or Code of Military Organization, Jurisdiction and Social Welfare, better known as the Military Code.

^v See: <https://confidencial.com.ni/ipsm-el-grupo-de-negocios-del-ejercito/>

^{vi} See: <https://cejudhcan.wixsite.com/cejudhcan/sobre-nos>

^{vii} See: <https://www.articulo66.com/2019/10/04/paramilitares-y-grupos-armados-se-enfrentaron-a-balazos-por-tierras-indigenas-de-prinzapolka/> and <https://www.laprensani.com/2017/01/29/suplemento/la-prensa-domingo/2173303-indigenas-a-colonos-si-no-se-van-habra-guerra>

^{viii} See: <https://es.mongabay.com/2020/10/que-tiene-que-ver-la-carne-que-exporta-nicaragua-al-mundo-con-la-deforestacion/>

^{ix} See: https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/Nicaragua_280121_Briefing.pdf