

# *U.S. Congress Debates Sanctions on Nicaragua for Supporting Venezuela*

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Washington, July 27 (RHC)-- The U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee has passed a bill known as the Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act of 2017, or Nica Act. It seeks to add conditions to the provision of aid from international financial institutions to the Central American country.

According to reports from Capital Hill, the bill will now go to the full House of Representatives for a vote and then would be signed into law by President Donald Trump.

The U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua, Laura Dogu, said earlier this week in an interview with Channel 63 in Managua that the Trump administration has "noted which countries support Venezuela" and added that Managua "does not have many friends in Washington, for the support it gives to Venezuela." She went on to criticize Nicaragua's defense of Caracas at the Organization of American States, maintaining that Managua has been "speaking even stronger than Venezuela itself in favor of Venezuela. It is normal for a country to do it for itself, but not for another to do so".

And she also questioned the Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's relationship with Moscow, citing the installation of a Russian satellite in the country six months ago as a cause for concern in Washington.

Ortega is a firm ally of the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and used the anniversary of his nation's Sandinista Revolution as an opportunity to lambast U.S. interference and threats towards Caracas.

The Nica Act initially went out of circulation in the House of Representatives when the 2016 congressional session closed. But it was reintroduced in the U.S. House and Senate by Republican Senators Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, as well as Democrat Albio Sires in April.

Washington is ratcheting up the pressure ahead of Sunday's elections for the National Constituent Assembly, called by President Maduro.

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