US Intervention in Nicaragua
Augusto Sandino, from Manifesto to Nicaraguan Compatriots (14 July 1927) and A Letter to the Rulers of Latin America (4 August 1928)

I am going to make a statement about the causes that led to the measure I took in the name of my country and my fellow citizens:

….Charles Butters, American, who for a number of years has called himself the owner of the San Albino mine, who cheats my fellow countrymen out of their salaries, forcing them to work twelve hours a day, paying them with vouchers worth from one cent to five pesos, which are acceptable only in his commissary in exchange for merchandise at twice the normal price, thinks himself authorized by his nationality to commit such abuses, and thinks that they should not be stopped by those who have a duty to do so....

Moncada, the people know what justice is, and when it is denied to them they seize it! And since I am of the people and know what law and justice are, I have seized it myself in Butters's name, taking those assets that belong to my country in order to convert that longstanding debt into real value, paying it with that same gold which the enterprise produces....

The world would be an unbalanced place if it allowed the United States of America to rule alone over our canal, because this would mean placing us at the mercy of the Colossus of the North, forcing us into a dependent and tributary role to persons of bad faith who would be our masters without justifying such pretensions in any way.

Civilization requires that a Nicaraguan canal be built, but that it be done with capital from the whole world, and not exclusively from the United States. At least half of the cost of the construction should be financed with capital from Latin America, and the other half from other countries of the world that may want to hold stock in this enterprise, but the share of the United States should be limited to the three million dollars that they paid to the traitors Chamorro, Diaz, and Cuadra Pasos. And Nicaragua, my Fatherland, will then receive the taxes that by right and be law belong to it, and we will then have income enough to crisscross our whole territory with railroads and to educate our people in a true environment of effective democracy. Thus we will be respected and not looked upon with the bloody scorn we suffer today.

Do the Latin American governments think perhaps the Yankees would be content with the conquest of Nicaragua alone? Have these governments perhaps forgotten that among twenty-one American republics six have already lost their sovereignty? Panama, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Nicaragua are the six unfortunate republics that have lost their independence and become colonies of Yankee imperialism. The governments of those six nations do not defend the collective interests of their compatriots, because they came to power, not as a result of the popular will, but imposed instead by imperialism, and so it happens that those who rise to the presidency backed by Wall Street magnates defend the interests of U.S. bankers. In those six unfortunate Spanish-American nations, all that remains to the people is the memory of their independence and the distant hope of reconquering their freedom through the formidable efforts of a few native sons, who fight tirelessly to rescue their country from the infamy into which the renegades have sunk them. The Yankee colonization advances swiftly over our
nations without encountering a wall of bayonets in its path, and therefore when its turn comes each of our countries is overwhelmed by the conqueror with little effort on its part, because, until now, each has defended itself alone. If the governments of the principal nations of Latin America were led by a Simón Bolívar, a Benito Juárez, or a San Martín, our fate would be other than it is, because they would know that once Central America had been dominated by the blond pirates, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, etc., would follow.

What would become of Mexico if the Yankees succeeded in their dastardly designs to colonize Central America? The heroic people of Mexico could do nothing, despite their manly qualities, because they would be crushed beforehand in Uncle Sam's grip, and the help they might hope to receive from sister nations could not reach them because the Nicaraguan canal and the naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca would stand in the way. And so Mexico would be destined to struggle against Yankee imperialism isolated from the other nations of Latin America, using its own resources, which is exactly what is happening to us now.

Calvin Coolidge to Congress (10 January 1927)

On Recent Events in Nicaragua

It is well known that in 1912 the United States intervened in Nicaragua with a large force and put down a revolution, and that from that time to 1925 a legation guard of American Marines was, with the consent of the Nicaragua government, kept in Managua to protect American lives and property. In 1923 representatives of the five Central American countries, namely, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Salvador, at the invitation of the United States, met in Washington and entered into a series of treaties.

These treaties dealt with limitation of armament, a Central American tribunal for arbitration, and the general subject of peace and amity. The treaty last referred to specifically provides in Article II that the governments of the contracting parties will not recognize any other government which may come into power in any of the five republics through a coup d'etat, or revolution, and disqualifies the leaders of such coup d'etat, or revolution, from assuming the presidency or vice-presidency.

In October 1924 an election was held in Nicaragua for president, vice-president, and members of the Congress. This resulted in the election of a coalition ticket embracing Conservatives and Liberals. Carlos Solorzano, a Conservative Republican, was elected president, and Juan B. Sacasa, a Liberal, was elected vice-president. This government was recognized by the other Central American countries and by the United States. It had been the intention of the United States to withdraw the Marines immediately after this election, and notice was given of the intention to withdraw them in January 1925. At the request of the president of Nicaragua, this time was extended to Sept. 1, 1925. Pursuant to this determination and notice, the Marines were withdrawn in August 1925.

…. In the meantime a revolution broke out in May on the east coast in the neighborhood of Bluefields and was speedily suppressed by the troops of General Chamorro. However, it again broke out with considerable more violence. The second attempt was attended with some success, and practically all of the east coast of Nicaragua fell into the hands of the revolutionists. Throughout these events, Sacasa was
at no time in the country, having remained in Mexico and Guatemala during this period. . . .

Immediately following the inauguration of President Diaz, and frequently since that date, he has appealed to the United States for support, has informed this government of the aid which Mexico is giving to the revolutionists, and has stated that he is unable solely because of the aid given by Mexico to the revolutionists to protect the lives and property of American citizens and other foreigners.

When negotiations leading up to the Corinto conference\textsuperscript{1} began, I immediately placed an embargo on the shipment of arms and ammunition to Nicaragua. . . .

As a matter of fact, I have the most conclusive evidence that arms and munitions in large quantities have been, on several occasions since August 1926, shipped to the revolutionists in Nicaragua. Boats carrying these munitions have been fitted out in Mexican ports, and some of the munitions bear evidence of having belonged to the Mexican government. It also appears that the ships were fitted out with the full knowledge of and, in some cases, with the encouragement of Mexican officials and were in one instance, at least, commanded by a Mexican naval reserve officer.

.... As arms and munitions in large quantities were reaching the revolutionists, I deemed it unfair to prevent the recognized government from purchasing arms abroad, and, accordingly, the secretary of state notified the Diaz government that licenses would be issued for the export of arms and munitions purchased in this country. It would be thoroughly inconsistent for this country not to support the government recognized by it while the revolutionists were receiving arms and munitions from abroad.

\textit{Economic and strategic interests of the US in Nicaragua}

For many years numerous Americans have been living in Nicaragua, developing its industries and carrying on business. At the present time there are large investments in lumbering, mining, coffee growing, banana culture, shipping, and also in general mercantile and other collateral business. All these people and these industries have been encouraged by the Nicaraguan government. That government has at all times owed them protection, but the United States has occasionally been obliged to send naval forces for their proper protection. In the present crisis such forces are requested by the Nicaraguan government, which protests to the United States its inability to protect these interests and states that any measures which the United States deems appropriate for their protection will be satisfactory to the Nicaraguan government.

In addition to these industries now in existence, the government of Nicaragua, by a treaty entered into on the 5th of August 1914, granted in perpetuity to the United States the exclusive proprietary rights necessary and convenient for the construction, operation, and maintenance of an oceanic canal. . . .

There is no question that if the revolution continues, American investments and business interests in Nicaragua will be very seriously affected, if not destroyed. The currency, which is now at par, will be inflated. American as well as foreign bondholders will undoubtedly look to the United States for the protection of their interests.

\textsuperscript{1} The Corinto conference was held in October 1926 at Corinto, Nicaragua’s largest Pacific port, aboard the \textit{USS Denver}, in an unsuccessful American attempt to broker a peace between Chamorro, who had seized power in a legal coup, and his Liberal opponents.