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Ceremony Marking Implementation Of Nicaraguan Political Constitution Attended By Thousands

by Deborah Tyroler

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President Daniel Ortega signed Nicaragua's new political constitution into law Jan. 9 at a ceremony in Revolution Plaza before thousands of Nicaraguans and a large contingent of foreign guests. The constitution establishes the Nicaraguan state as "anti-imperialist, independent, sovereign, democratic and pluralist," guaranteeing mixed economy, elections and civil rights, such as freedom of expression. The commission in charge of preparing the constitutional draft consulted with Latin American, socialist bloc, European and North American experts. Peruvian President Alan Garcia, harsh critic of the Reagan administration's aid to the contras, participated in the ceremony. Legislators from eight nations and Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Elissev were among honored foreign guests. Hours before Ortega signed the four originals of the constitution, opposition groups staged a protest march, chanting slogans such as "Democracy yes, communism, no," "Here, there, the Sandinista Front will fall."

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