

External and internal actors in the Bolivian coup d'état



Havana, November 12 (RHC)-- Three Cuban journalists -- Bárbara Betancourt, Lázaro Barredo and Jorge Legañoa -- reported on the November 11th evening news television program La Mesa Redonda, explained the actors in the coup d'état in Bolivia. They identified two external actors, the United States and the Organization of American States; and four internal actors, Carlos Mesa, Luis Fernando Comacho, the police, and the military.

The United States, they noted, has been behind every coup d'état in Latin America, intervening in the internal affairs of nations when a government emerges that is not prepared to be subservient to U.S. economic interests. In the case of Bolivia, the U.S. government has supported the opposition since the Movement toward Socialism, a political formation of indigenous, peasant, and labor organizations, arrived to political power through democratic electoral means in 2005. From the beginning, the United States has been continually conspiring against the government of Evo Morales. Recent audios that have come to light reveal the participation of members of the U.S. government in support of the opposition.

The Organization of American States (OAS) was established in 1948, the culmination of Pan-Americanism, which the Cuban scholar Roberto Regalado has described as a long-term project "to convert the Latin American governments and peoples into co-participants in the domination exercised over them." The panelists recalled that the Raúl Roa, Cuban minister of foreign affairs in the 1960s, once described OAS as the colonial office of the United States. They noted that OAS has been playing a key

role in the slanderous campaign to discredit the Venezuelan government.

The panelists maintained that OAS played an important role in key moments in the unfolding coup d'état in Bolivia. When the opposition made false claims of electoral fraud in the October 20 elections, Evo invited the OAS and a few Latin America governments to send specialists to conduct an audit of the elections. Evo knew that the Bolivian electoral commission had nothing to hide, and he assumed that the OAS would conduct an objective audit that would reaffirm the validity of the electoral results. However, on the basis of the finding of a trivial percentage of invalid votes, which were not sufficient to reverse the ten percent margin of difference between Evo and his nearest rival, OAS declared that the electoral results are not valid and that the elections ought to be repeated. This OAS declaration played a critical role in stimulating the movement of events. Even though the OAS was reaching a political conclusion not warranted by its technical analysis, Evo agreed to the OAS proposal for new elections; but this conciliation was swept away by the unfolding of events.

An important internal actor in the coup is Luis Fernando Camacho, who is of an oligarchical family in Santa Cruz, a region in which the oligarchy has economic dominance and disproportionate political influence, in which pejorative views of indigenous peoples prevail, and which launched a separatist movement following the attainment of political power by the Movement toward Socialism. The Camacho family is among those whose economic interests were adversely affected by the Morales government's nationalization of natural gas. Not confining itself to civil political opposition, the family has been active in creating violent gangs and para-military groups, with financial support coming from the United States. The gangs have been attacking the followers of Evo and indigenous persons, including women and children. Following the resignation of Evo, he called for a continuation of the violent attacks for two more days.

Another actor in the coup is Carlos Mesa, who is a former president of Bolivia from its neoliberal era. He was the principal opposition candidate in the October 20 elections, receiving 36.51% of the vote, which was more than ten percentage points behind the votes for Evo. On October 20, he called for mass action in protest of a supposed electoral fraud, while at the same time declining participation in an audit of the voting. A half million dollars from the United States assisted the mass mobilization in protest of an electoral fraud declared without evidence. Mesa has been active in the social media, disseminating the politically motivated recommendations of the OAS report. He has been insisting on social media that the resignation of Evo does not constitute a coup d'état and that Evo resigned because of electoral fraud. These social media distortions, along with tweets by U.S. president Donald Trump, suggest that the opposition intends to form a new government under the umbrella of the 2009 Constitution and not make a blatant break with the Constitutional Order.

During the coup, the police joined the violence against MAS supporters initiated by the Camacho fascist gangs. Prior to the resignation of Evo, the military was less visible. It did not intervene to protect the people from fascist and police violence, nor to defend the constitutionally elected president. It ultimately played a key role, when the military command asked the president to resign. Since the resignation of Morales, the military has come to the support of police in the repression of popular demonstrations against the coup d'état. In recent days, there has occurred a militarization of the streets of Bolivia, including tanks in the streets of the city of Alto to repress the popular demonstration.

These, then, were the key actors in a violent coup d'état that been condemned by many in the world: the US government, the Organization of American States, Carlos Mesa, Luis Fernando Camacho, the Bolivian police, and the Bolivian military.

Granted political asylum in Mexico, Evo Morales arrived in Mexico City with Bolivian Vice-President Alan García on November 12. He declared that the neighbors who had protected him following his resignation and the government of Mexico had saved their lives. He declared that "we have been seeking justice for the poor. This has been our ideological sin. This coup will not stop our struggle to defend the poorest,

the peoples of Bolivia, and the peoples of the world.”

-- written by Charles McKelvey for Radio Havana Cuba

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