

# Washington's useful pawn

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By Roberto Morejón

Despite a private law firm's report concluding that Luis Almagro violated norms on what it called "common sense" and "good judgment," the questioned OAS secretary general will continue in office.

In a quick decision after analyzing the lawyers' report several times changed, the Permanent Council of the OAS barely brushed Almagro, after the scandal for having an affair with a young subordinate, in violation of the ethical norms of the entity, at the service of the United States.

Almagro, who is about to turn 60, was accused of providing preferential treatment and granting favors to the employee, hence the scandal and the demand for investigations.

Lawyers commissioned with the investigation say that the official did not violate regulations by refraining from increasing her salary, failing to supervise or intimidating his protégé.

However, his faults were recognized, although the Permanent Council decided to hear a proposal, not submitted to a vote, to authorize Almagro's continuity in his post, which he has held since 2015.

According to the independent law firm, the former Uruguayan foreign minister knew that his relationship with the collaborator was known in the corridors of the OAS headquarters and that comments were made about alleged favoritism, but he did not come forward.

Not by chance, Mexico's ambassador to the hemispheric organization, Luz Elena Baños, said that "a secretary general with high ethical standards is the minimum that a serious and solid OAS requires".

The OAS mission that under Almagro's mandate propitiated the coup d'état in Bolivia in 2019 lacked ethics.

By the way, this grouping of lackluster support to dictatorships and extreme right-wing regimes, never initiated an investigation into the role played in the coup against the then president Evo Morales.

Furthermore, it supported the complicit action of the OAS with the United States in the siege of Cuba and Venezuela.

It is true that now, based on the analysis of Almagro's conduct with his sponsored party, the OAS has decided to reform its code of ethics.

But the measure is lukewarm in the face of the seriousness of the violations, something that is not surprising, since this is a hierarch subjected to multiple criticisms for his unfortunate performance, although in Washington he is considered a useful pawn.

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