

# *Ecuador's Correa Refutes AFP on CIA-Opposition Protest Link*

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Quito, March 23 (teleSUR-RHC) The government of Ecuador released an official statement on Sunday refuting a story by Agence France-Presse, which published a series of statements by President Rafael Correa about an alleged U.S. infiltration in a series of opposition protests staged last week.

During his weekly presidential address, Correa mentioned the CIA while talking about marches carried out Thursday in several Ecuadorean cities, including Quito.

According to the news agency, the president said that the CIA had infiltrated the opposition-led protests against measures to protect the local economy by placing tariffs on imports. However, Ecuador's government said the president was addressing the documented role of the U.S. intelligence service in the country's affairs, as well as connections to opposition groups.

On his Twitter account, Correa challenged the news agency's account. "If the opposition marches had been organized by the CIA, they wouldn't have been such colossal failures," Ecuador's president said.

The release from the Ecuadorean government charges AFP with taking Correa's remarks out of context. "It is clear that AFP lies and has distorted the truth consciously, making a light, out of context and controversial interpretation; misrepresenting the president's statements," the document reads.

Despite continued efforts by the Ecuadorian opposition to incite dissatisfaction, a recent international survey conducted by the Association of Political Communication found that Correa enjoys a 79 percent approval rating, making him the world's second most popular leader.

In 1963, the U.S. intelligence led a military coup in Ecuador, against the left-wing President Carlos Julio Arosemena Monroy after the leader criticized the U.S. government and showed support to Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba.

In 2013, the Ecuadoran news agency ANDES, reported that the CIA was planning to murder Correa and destabilize the country in retaliation for the removal of a U.S. military base from the country in 2009, as well as his decision to grant asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

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