

Bolivia, the Most Blatant Coup in the History of Coups

By Ted Snider, from CheckPointAsia, 16 November 2019

Empire and its local lackeys override the Bolivian constitution and the will of the people
Our Benevolent Empire

The U.S. says it wasn't a coup.

Trump's [official statement](#) "applauds" the Bolivian regime change for preserving democracy. Trump identifies the event as "a significant moment in democracy" because it stymied Bolivian President Evo Morales' attempt "to override the Bolivian constitution and the will of the people. . ."

But all three White House claims are false: Morales didn't go against the constitution, he didn't override the will of the people and it was a coup.

If it wasn't a coup, why was Morales forced from office by the military? Why was he driven out of office in Bolivia and into asylum in Mexico for the sake of his safety, **while a coup leader announced that the police and military were [hunting Morales down](#) and putting Bolivia into lockdown?**

Why as he fled and sought asylum was his house ransacked, [his sister's house set on fire](#), and the families of his cabinet ministers kidnapped and held hostage until the ministers resigned?

Though reported in the mainstream media as abandoning Morales, **Victor Borda resigned as president of the Bolivian congress and resigned his position as MP because his brother was kidnapped to force him to do so.**

If it wasn't a coup, why did the opposition assume power before the legislature voted on approving Morales' resignation as the constitution demands? Why did Jeanine Añez declare herself interim president [in the absence of the quorum](#) that is legally required to make that decision after meeting with the military high command for over an hour?

And why did the opposition force Morales out and assume power before Morales' term in office would end in January?

If it wasn't a coup, why did Morales' opponent, Carlos Mesa, begin his claims of fraud [before the voting began](#), before he could know there had been any fraud? Why did Mesa insist, according to Mark Weisbrot, that he would not accept the election results if Morales wins long before the votes were even counted?

And why, perhaps most damningly, did a cabal of coup plotters discuss between October 8th and 10th – days ahead of the October 20th election – a plan for social disturbance that would prevent Morales from staying in power, as revealed by [leaked audio of their conversations](#)? The leaked conversations include confirmation of a coup plan and the discussion of the creation of a political-military power. They discuss an armed uprising, the invalidation the election results and the brewing of a military-civilian uprising. One conversation has a former Bolivian colonel saying that there is a large group of former and active military members ready to wage war and that everything is ready.

The often repeated claim that Morales went against the constitution is also a manipulation of the truth. The claim is based on a 2016 Bolivian referendum that decided in favor of term limits. That referendum, which passed by a count of 51%-49%, would have prevented Morales from running in the current election. But **what the charge omits is that a year later, Bolivia's highest court – whose decisions stand as the law of the land – ruled**

against the term limits that the referendum had so narrowly favored. So, Morales did not attempt, as Trump claimed, “to override the Bolivian constitution.”

And the third strike against Trump’s claim is that **Morales did not override the will of the people. The people overwhelmingly re-elected him.** Morales won 47.1% of the vote, while the next closest candidate, Carlos Mesa, managed to attract only 36.5% of the voters. **The Bolivian constitution allows a president to be elected in the first round without a runoff if he or she wins at least 40% of the vote and defeats the person who came in second place by at least 10%.** So, Morales clearly got reelected to the presidency in the first round. But the opposition and the hostile 60% US funded Organization of American States (OAS) dismissed the results as fraudulent, though they offered no evidence to justify their challenging of the results. **They claimed irregularities based on a pattern of reporting that showed a “drastic and hard-to-explain change” in the voting trend in Morales’ favor.**

But the change in the trend was entirely expected and not hard to explain at all. As the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) has [demonstrated](#), and as Mark Weisbrot has [clearly explained](#), **the change was the result of geography and demographics, not cheating. Voting in Bolivia is all manual. So, rural districts take longer to report, and their results are included later. Morales dominates in the poorer and more indigenous rural areas. So, while Mesa’s votes came in early, Morales’ votes came in later.** Hence, the not-so-hard-to-explain change. And as for the change being “drastic,” it wasn’t so drastic. Weisbrot reports that the “official data show a gradual change in the margin between the candidates as the mix of returns changed over time.”

Despite the legitimacy of the election, Morales cooperated with the OAS and agreed to replace the board of the electoral body and to hold new elections. The offer was rejected, the secretly planned coup was triggered and Morales was driven from office.

The long planned coup was triggered now for three reasons. The first was opportunity. The new generation of silent American coups don’t use tanks or guns. They are silent; they are disguised. They are so disguised that they are never recognized to be coups. They are coups disguised as democracy. Coups that allow Donald Trump to call the Bolivian coup “a significant moment for democracy in the Western Hemisphere,” an act that “preserves democracy” and brings us “one step closer to a completely democratic, prosperous, and free Western Hemisphere.”

These silent coups disguised as democracy have visited Latin America before. They appeared first in Venezuela, Honduras and Paraguay before re-emerging most recently in Brazil. The Bolivian election presented opportunity for coup plotters in waiting: they could disguise a coup as a democratic defense of the constitution.

The second reason was economically motivated. If Venezuela has oil, Bolivia has lithium: lots of lithium. In fact, Bolivia may have 70% of the world’s lithium reserves. And lithium is the new oil. As oil is essential for gas powered cars, so lithium is essential for electric cars. Morales, like Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, is a nationalist who sought a new relationship between his land’s people and his land’s resources: he didn’t want all the wealth from Bolivia’s natural resources slipping through the fingers of the Bolivian people and into the hands of the huge international corporations. And as that approach to oil put Chavez in the sights of the American coup planners, so [Morales’ approach to lithium put him in their sights.](#) Morales was willing to allow foreign companies into Bolivia, but he stipulated that any lithium mining had to be carried out in equal partnership with Bolivia’s national mining company and Bolivia’s national lithium company. That made Morales a problem to the big transnational mining companies. A problem that had to go.

In 2018, Germany's ACI Systems had come to an agreement with Bolivia. Listening to the protest of the people of the region, Morales canceled that deal on November 4, 2019. A few days later, Morales was gone.

The third reason was politically motivated. After Chavez pushed the Latin American political pendulum to the left, a series of coups, elections and American meddling have pushed that pendulum back to the right. But the pendulum has a domestic mind of its own, and it has begun swinging back to the left, including in large, important countries like Mexico and Argentina. The Bolivian election may have offered America an opportunity to put its hand back on the pendulum.

The leaked coup conversations clearly identify American senators Marco Rubio, Bob Menéndez and Ted Cruz as being committed to aiding the coup. [Marco Rubio's tweets](#) before the vote count was even finished set the stage early for the coup.

And that may not be the only supporting role America played. It was the Bolivian military that provided the push that triggered the coup. **The chief commander of the Bolivian armed forces, Williams Kaliman, put the final and decisive pressure on Morales to resign. On November 10, Kaliman announced that the military "suggests the President of the State renounce his presidential mandate."**

But Kaliman has deep ties to the US military. Though not mentioned in the mainstream media, it was reported early on in the Latin American media that Kaliman had served for several years as Bolivia's military attaché to Washington. In fact, according to the Venezuela's "La Tabla," [he was military attaché to the US for three years from 2013 to 2016. During those years he would have developed deep ties to the US military-intelligence community.](#) When I asked Vijay Prashad for confirmation of this report, he sent me an article that not only confirmed Kaliman's ties to America as military attaché, but also revealed that [he studied at the infamous School of the Americas in 2004.](#) Now named the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (Whinsec), the School of the Americas is **notorious in Latin America as the military educational machine that has churned out so many coup leaders and dictators.** He also took a course at Whinsec in 2013.

Since then, reporting by Jeb Sprague at The Grayzone has revealed that [several of the key coup players were educated and molded at the School of the Americas.](#)

America's involvement in abetting coups against Morales is not new. WikiLeaks cables reveal that America had approved one hundred and one grants worth over \$4 million to help regional governments "operate more strategically" to push a shift in power from the national government of Evo Morales to regional governments. The idea was to rebalance power and weaken the Morales government.

A decade ago, in 2008, violent opposition broke out against Morales' democratically elected government. At the time, Morales called it an attempted "civic coup d'état." But, the US never said a word of condemnation of the opposition's extreme violence.

They never said anything, but they knew the violence was coming. A September 18, 2008 cable made public by WikiLeaks warns that the opposition expects "that the dialogue will break down," and that it "predicts more violence after the dialogue fails." The cable goes on to say that "Once dialogue breaks down . . . the opposition . . . is generally in agreement that the next stage is to blow up gas lines."

The Americans not only knew that the opposition was going to intensify the violence, they also were well aware of the possibility of a coup or assassination. A September 24, 2008

cable reveals the opposition willingness to prepare “a trap for the government forces which could lead to a bloodbath” and readiness to “develop, with [US Southern Command Situational Assessment Team], a plan for immediate response in the event of a sudden emergency, i.e., a coup attempt or President Morales’ death.”

So, Trump’s official statement is a lie. Morales neither overrode the constitution nor the will of the people. And, not only was it a coup, but the US knew it was a coup. It was a coup that brought to a close the long American attempt to topple Evo Morales from power.

Source: Antiwar.com