Beat: Politics

THE CRISIS IN BOLIVIA

An Analysis by Humberto Cavalho

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Wisuschil - Media & Law - After an era of progressive governments in Latin America (Lula in Brazil, Cristina Kirchner in Argentina, Jose Mujica in Uruguay, etc.), US imperialism understood the recolonization of South America as indispensable and put it under the imperialist heel. This recolonization was not done at once, it took place gradually, not using American troops, and also hardly using military personnel from countries in which coups occurred. They used the civil institutions for the coups, in a true lawfare which, as is well known, is the use of the laws of the coup countries as an instrument of war.

Then there was a coup d'état in Honduras, with the ousting of President Manuel Zelaya in 2009 for a lawfare that resulted in his impeachment.
President Fernando Lugo was ousted in Paraguay in 2012. His impeachment process lasted less than 36 hours.
Then it was Brazil's turn with President Dilma Russeff's impeachment process in 2016. Under Brazilian law, accounting irregularities whose practice was the basis of the prosecution against Dilma do not constitute a liability crime capable of giving rise to impeachment.

But lawfare has imposed itself. So it was a coup d´état and not a constitutional remedy as proclaimed by the Brazilian right wing.

There was no coup against President Cristina Kirchner in Argentina, because in the 2015 elections, her Justicialista (Peronist) Party split, allowing neoliberal Mauricio Macri to win. Immediately, Obama, then US President, appointed Macri as South America's leader.

In May 2018, was elected President of Chile, also neoliberal Sebastian Piñera.
In Brazil, on April 7, 2018, former President Lula was arrested on conviction in an unproven trial to remove him from the presidential candidacy in the October and November 2018 elections.

In these second round elections, fascist Jair Bolsonaro was victorious using the same techniques (such as fake news, etc.) that were used in the Trump elections. Bolsonaro also used Trump's same electoral advisor in the Brazilian elections. When he took office, Bolsonaro traveled to the United States, where his shameful submission to the Americans was characterized.

It is also worth mentioning the attempts made by Juan Guaidó to overthrow President Maduro of Venezuela, backed by imperialism and its agents, such as the Bolsonaro of Brazil, Ivan Duque Marquez of Colombia, SebastiÃ¡n Piñera of Chile governments, by Mario Abdo Benitez of Paraguay who, in early 2019, were resolved to militarily invade Venezuela and depose President Maduro. This did not happened due to Russia's assurance of military support in the event of an invasion of Venezuela and the support of the Venezuelan people to its President.

However, imperialism did not count on the election of a progressive, Andrés Lopes Obrador, in Mexico, who was temporarily isolated in the face of the electoral victories of the reactionary elites in various Latin American countries, supported by the yankees.

Recently, in Uruguay the Wide Front (Frente Amplia in spanish) was defeated in the presidential elections. By a margin of 35,000 votes the conservative Lacalle won the presidential elections. Lacalle has already promised a total change in Uruguay's relations with Venezuela.

In this way, the imperialist and rights wings siege in South America was closed, trapping the progressive forces on the continent.
But I need to go back to Argentina because, in my view, Argentina is one of the key pieces in understanding Bolivia's crisis.

The government of Mauricio Macri, with its neoliberal policies, has failed utterly. Argentina's foreign debt increased, affecting a large portion of its GDP; poverty and misery have reached unimaginable levels for an opulent country with large natural resources; the peso, Argentina's national currency, has been devalued as never before; Macri submitted to IMF dictates and drove the Argentine economy into chaos with deindustrialization and unemployment.

Under these circumstances, in the 2019 presidential election, the Justicialist Party came together, and won a resounding victory over

Macri in the first round of the presidential election, electing progressive Alberto Fernandez for the presidency and Cristina Kirchner for the vice presidency.
It is in this victory that lies one of the keys to understanding what happens in Bolivia. Imperialism must isolate Argentina (according to the imperialists, a bad example for South America).

The electoral victory of Evo Morales would not leave Argentina isolated, counting yet with the support of Venezuela, Mexico and Cuba. The new Argentine government will assume its functions on December 10 this year. And it will surely approach Russia and China to get out of the economic chaos left by Macri. So, the US needs to isolate Argentina and for that it needed to overthrow Evo Morales.

The other key to understanding the coup in Bolivia is lithium, one of the country's great mineral wealth.
Bolivia, since colonial times, is a country where mining has a significant presence in the Bolivian economy.

Evo Morales's policies clashed with multinational mining companies. The suspension of onerous contracts for the country and the effort to control this economic sector have led Bolivia to numerous international arbitration proceedings.

In 2008, following a failed coup attempt, Bolivia expelled US Ambassador Philip Goldberg, and in 2013 expelled USAID (American Agency for International Development).

Thus, American aid to Bolivia dropped sharply, except for 2015, coinciding with the months leading up to the February 2016 constitutional referendum.

Lithium, as is well known, is a strategic alkaline metal for technological development. And it is an energetic alternative to the means of transport. According to studies by US company SRK, lithium reserves in Bolivia are around 70% of world reserves. These reserves are concentrated in the Potosí Department (oblast) which has borders with Chile and Argentina. And on that threefold border would be 85 percent of the world's lithium reserves. Hence the economic interest of imperialism in controlling this region.

Although a Bolivian state-owned company was created to develop the lithium industry, major capital investments are needed. Then, under equal conditions, Bolivia made an agreement with ACI Systems Germany (ACISA) to develop the industry. Also, it made a deal with Chinese companies TBEA Group and YLB for lithium extraction. The agreement with China displeased yankee imperialism.

Given these key issues we can understand the political and economic motives of US interest in a coup d'état in Bolivia because Evo Morales' government was an obstacle to the voracity of imperialism.

The Bolivian right wing, the reactionary governments of South America and imperialism insist that Evo Morales has resigned, so what happened in Bolivia would not have been a coup d´état.

The definition of coup d'etat is the forced dismissal of a head of state. Evo Morales was forced by the army and police to resign, or would happen a bloody internal war and the risk of Evo losing his own life. So what happened was a coup d'état and not just a resignation.

What also proves the occurrence of a coup was the successive resignations of the Vice-President, the President of Chamber of Deputies and the President of the Senate who would be the successors foreseen in the Bolivian constitution in the event of the vacancy of the presidency of Evo Morales. All were forced to resign.

Bolivia has had economic growth of over 5% per year in recent times. The cycle, once called the "Bolivian economic miracle", began in 2006, when Evo Morales came to power.

One of Evo Morales' first and foremost measures was the nationalization of oil and natural gas. Part of the private companies was transferred to the hands of the state. The multinationals had to renegotiate contracts with state-owned Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (state enterprise for oil) to continue operating in the country and began to pay more to explore deposits.

Multinationals, private and state-owned companies live in Bolivia in a growth model anchored in the exploitation of oil and gas resources - which for some are showing signs of exhaustion.

The wave of the commodity boom that sustained growth in part of Latin America until the 2008 financial crisis has also passed through

Bolivia and brought an unprecedented improvement in the living conditions of millions of Bolivians.
This boom period of the Bolivian economy was used, through an expansionary fiscal policy, to finance income transfer policies and programs that reduced poverty in the country by almost half.

The percentage of the population below Bolivia's poverty line fell from 63% to 35% between 2005 and 2018, according to the World Bank.

Despite these social and economic advances that have benefited the country and the people, the coup has occurred.
Bolivia's current crisis occurred at two different times. The first was the opposition's contestation of the results in this year's presidential election, where Evo was victorious.

The opposition claimed fraud in the results and demanded the presence of the Organization of American States (OAS) to oversee the recount, the audit of the elections. Evo, confident in the absence of fraud, accepted the presence of the OAS for these purposes. The OAS, under US imperialism, has asserted the existence of electoral fraud, as might be expected. Conflicts then began between the forces of Evo's government and opposition militancy that were not violently repressed. Videos of this period saw the appeasing presence of the security forces, while the opposition forces sought violence and vandalism.

In this climate of extreme violence by the opposition, dominating the streets of Bolivia's main cities, General Williams Kaliman, commander of the Bolivian Armed Forces, demanded the resignation of Evo Morales and his constitutionally predicted successors. To prevent bloodshed and ensure his survival, Evo resigned and had to go into exile in Mexico.

Kaliman, in 2003, took the Command and General Staff course at the American Army School of the Americas / WHINSEC. Also, he was a military attaché at the Bolivian embassy in the United States. According to Wikipedia, Kaliman received a million dollars and a permanent residence visa in the US through the Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia's capital, Mr. Bruce Willianson.

72 hours after the coup, Kaliman moved to the US, leaving Bolivia.

Following the resignations of the Vice-President and the Presidents of parliament, contrary to the Bolivian constitution, the second secretary of the Bolivian Senate, Senator Jeanine Ã?ñez, proclaimed herself President of the Republic. He immediately introduced the bible into parliament, mixing politics and religion.

And it went after persecuting Evo's followers and controlling the influx of foreigners who could support the pro-Evo demonstrations.

The second moment in Bolivia's situation is the reaction, especially of the indigenous population, against the coup. As they marched along the highways, thousands of Indians stormed the streets of La Paz and clashed with security forces who suppressed the demonstrations with exquisite violence. Then there were dozens of deaths, murders, hundreds of people were injured, countless illegal arrests, torture, in short, a whole range of barbarism characteristic of fascism.

To consider also that acted in the coup of Bolivia the force of a racism cultivated as hatred against the indigenous population.

Alvaro García Linera, Vice President of Evo, denounced in an article published in an Argentine newspaper that the roots of the coup d'état in Bolivia, which forced Evo Morales to resign, have racist references, especially against the indigenous peoples of the country. Linera also pointed out that all 18 dead and 120 gunshot wounds so far are indigenous.

Morales' vice-president maintains that the police mutiny came just as popular forces mobilized to resist the coup, also regaining territorial control of the cities "with the presence of workers, miners, peasants, indigenous people and urban settlers."

Clashes between the security forces of the current government of Jeanine Añez with the masses who protested against the coup led Jeanine to announce, soon, elections in Bolivia. However, Evo's application is prohibited by law.

Morales is currently in Argentina. Bolivia's coup government ordered the arrest of Morales and requested his extradition. Agentina's new government denied the extradition request.

The announcement of future elections has softened the reaction of the Bolivian masses, which are still vigilant for free elections.

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