

Rights Action

Day 147 of HONDURAS COUP RESISTANCE

(November 21, 2009, Honduras Coup Alert#93)

Rights Action commentary & various articles: The Fix Is In

"I am happy to report the Obama Administration has finally reversed its misguided Honduran policy and will fully recognize the November 29th elections... Secretary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Shannon have assured me that the U.S. will recognize the outcome of the Honduran elections regardless of whether Manuel Zelaya is reinstated." (Senator Jim DeMint)

In case it was not clear to anyone before, it is now.

By recognizing the fraudulent and repressive electoral process and the November 29 elections themselves, the fix is in (it always was). The U.S. government is trying, after the fact, to legitimize the illegal and repressive military coup. See the articles below

Moreover, the U.S. State Department is funding "election observer missions" from the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute that are linked to the Republican and Democratic parties and receive tax-payer funding.

On July 1, 2009, the General Assembly of the OAS (Organization of American States) called for the "immediate and unconditional return" of President Zelaya and his government. The U.S. government signed on to this resolution. Since that time, the U.S. has worked steadily to undermine that resolution and to legitimize the illegal, repressive military regime.

While this is, sadly, not surprising – the U.S. has long-term and beneficial economic and military relations with undemocratic elite economic and military regimes and sectors across the Americas, this is – again – a harsh blow to the democratic aspirations of peoples across the Americas.

The hard struggle just got harder. We have that much more work to do ...

BELOW

- Article by Tom Louden: "United States backs illegal elections in Honduras – betrays process to restore constitutional order"
- Threatening letter: From Honduran Army to Mayors across the country
 - As pro-democracy leader Juan Barahona describes, *"This letter is a way for them to draw up profiles of leaders of the resistance movement. That is the same work they did in the 80s when they*

drew up profiles of leaders and then followed up by capturing, murdering, putting them in jail or disappearing them. But it's the same .”

- Article by Mark Weisbrot: “Honduran dictatorship is a threat to democracy in the hemisphere”

HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION TO HONDURAS, November 24–December 1, 2009

Consider joining a Rights Action human rights observation delegation to Honduras. For information: Grahame Russell, info@rightsaction.org, 1-860-352-2448

FOR INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION

In Honduras, Karen Spring, 011-504-9507-3835, spring.kj@gmail.com
In USA, Grahame Russell, 860-352-2448, info@rightsaction.org & Annie Bird, 202-680-3002, annie@rightsaction.org

HOW TO SUPPORT & WHAT TO DO: see at bottom

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- To get on/off Rights Action's email list:
<http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3/>

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UNITED STATES BACKS ILLEGAL ELECTIONS IN HONDURAS – BETRAYS PROCESS TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER, By Tom Loudon, Quixote Center, <http://quixote.org/>, November 20, 2009

After five months of political chaos in Honduras, repeated attempts to reach a negotiated agreement for restoration of Constitutional order have failed due to the defiant recalcitrance of the Micheletti coup regime and the complicity of the State Department. Given this impasse and the deepening human rights crisis, it is widely recognized that conditions for holding free, fair and transparent elections on November 29th, just days from now, do not exist.

Recognizing this dilemma, in late October the United States rushed a high level State Department delegation to Honduras, bringing Micheletti back to the table and brokering the October 30th “National Reconciliation Agreement” requiring the reinstatement of President Zelaya by November 5th.

However, in a move paralleling the behavior of the Micheletti regime, a few days later, State Department officials reversed their position, stating that the elections would be recognized by the United States with or without restitution of President Zelaya, effectively breaking the accord.

In a press release on November 5th, South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint (http://demint.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=c6542515-c3af-d65a-085d-537015ff8a97), who had been using a procedural tactic to hold up the Obama Administration nominations of Arturo Valenzuela and Tom Shannon, suddenly announced that he was withdrawing the hold because he had reached an agreement with the Administration relative to the situation in Honduras: "I am happy to report the Obama Administration has finally reversed its misguided Honduran policy and will fully recognize the November 29th elections... Secretary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Shannon have assured me that the U.S. will recognize the outcome of the Honduran elections regardless of whether Manuel Zelaya is reinstated."

A subsequent announcement by Senator Lugar (<http://lugar.senate.gov/press/record.cfm?id=320060&&>) confirms that in fact the United States intends to recognize elections sponsored by the coup regime without prior restitution of Zelaya. Lugar also announced that the State Department is funding election observer missions from the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute. Lugar also used his statement to encourage Brazil in particular to consider that "recognition of the election will be the only way for Hondurans to look beyond the 5-month-old crisis".

Just a few days ago, the Brazilian foreign minister warned of a "deterioration" of U.S. relations with South America (<http://en.mercopress.com/2009/11/16/brazil-warns-of-deterioration-of-us-relations-with-south-america>). Brazil is one of 25 countries in the Rio Group which issued a declaration on the same day of DeMint's statement, declaring that this important group of countries will not recognize a government resulting from Honduran elections if Zelaya is not previously restored.

Late last week, President Zelaya announced that he will not accept restitution at this late date in order to not be used to legitimize elections. In a letter to President Obama renouncing the possibility of a return to office in the days prior to the election, Zelaya wrote, "...3500 people detained in one hundred days, over 600 people beaten and injured in hospitals, more than a hundred murders and countless numbers of people subjected to torture directed against citizens who dare to oppose the regime and express their ideas about freedom and justice in peaceful demonstrations. All this converts the November election into an anti-democratic exercise under an uncertain state of lawlessness with military intimidation for large sections of our people..."

Zelaya's assessment of the illegitimacy of elections under current condition is shared by large majorities in Honduras and the international community. The broad based national resistance movement has called for a total boycott of the elections. Participation in the elections has become a kind of ethical litmus test

for all candidates. Candidates who run are widely considered to be supporting the coup, placing tremendous pressure on candidates to withdraw.

The first candidate to withdraw was Carlos H. Reyes, a well know Independent Party candidate for President and leader of the resistance movement against the coup. His popularity has surged as revulsion to the violence perpetrated by the coup regime has impacted communities and homes throughout the country. Some strategists believe that had a reinstated President Zelaya endorsed Reyes, he could have won the vote, but would have lost due to fraud. After consulting with grassroots assemblies in different parts of the country, Reyes announced his decision to step down.

Last week, the popular Liberal Party mayor of San Pedro Sula announced that he was stepping down as a candidate (<http://www.elmundo.es/america/2009/11/13/noticias/1258147225.html>), in spite of his healthy lead in the polls. Another 110 mayoral and 55 candidates for Congress (<http://bolivarenmexico.blogspot.com/2009/11/renuncian-candidatos-en-honduras.html>) are reportedly pulling out of the election, and the number continues to grow.

Both the leftist UD and the PINU parties are split, with many Congressional candidates stepping down, but the party leadership wanting to stay in the race. These small parties have the most to lose, as they risk losing the position of their party on the ballot. The UD party has suffered severe criticism for not withdrawing. Their active involvement in the resistance movement morally obligates them to withdraw, but some party leaders see this moment as an opportunity to win more contests than they normally could. However, as the pressure mounts it seems that withdrawal from the elections by the party is imminent, although not yet certain.

With just days to go until the elections, tensions are mounting in Honduras. Micheletti has threatened those encouraging abstention with lengthy prison terms.

The resistance movement has called a civic strike for the entire week prior to elections, widespread protests beginning on Friday and a full boycott on Election Day.

This comes in a context of heightened levels of state terrorism.

Recently, the military issued a letter to every mayor in the country instructing mayor's offices to compile lists of inhabitants of the municipality who have been working against the coup. The letter asked for the list to be compiled immediately and stated that each mayor would receive a follow up visit. Mayors who do not comply with this order also risk consequences.

This systematic profiling of the population is a blatant violation of human rights and dangerous signal of the levels of repression to come.

In declaring that it will recognize the coup regime sponsored elections on November 29th without prior restitution of Constitutional order, the United States has embolden the coup regime, betrayed a lengthy negotiation process and endangered the lives of millions of Honduran citizens who are committed to democracy, human rights and the rule of law who will boycott elections they consider to be illegal.

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HONDURAN MILITARY ASKS FOR NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS OF COMMUNITY LEADERS, IN ALL MUNICIPALITIES OF HONDURAS

On October 22, mayors and community leaders, in all municipalities in Honduras, received a letter from the Head of Human Resources, Chief of Communications, of the Honduran Armed Forces, asking for the names and phone numbers of community leaders that support the coup resistance movement and those that support the coup regime.

This means that the Honduran Army is asking that mayors, hugely important community leaders, become informants, or 'orejas' as they are known as, to hand over profiles of leaders that are organizing, resisting and speaking out against the illegal coup regime.

According to Mery Agurcia of COFADEH (Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared) this information can be systemized by the military and "put in the hands of those that repress the population."

Using local informants is not a new tactic of repression. Used for generations by repressive regimes throughout Latin America, having local informants is a way for the military to maintain a presence on a local level without physically having to be present in the community, is a way of frightening the population without being there.

As pro-democracy leader Juan Barahona describes, "This letter is a way for them to draw up profiles of leaders of the resistance movement. That is the same work they did in the 80s when they drew up profiles of leaders and then followed up by capturing, murdering, putting them in jail or disappearing them. But it's the same ."

"The structure of repression is continuing intact and today we are returning to the past, history is repeating itself. The objective is to take out the resistance movement, physically."

LETTER FROM HONDURAN ARMY
(unofficial translation, by Rights Action)

ARMED FORCES OF HONDURAS
FIRST COMMUNICATIONS BATTALION
Las Mesas, F.M.

October 22, 2009

Issue: Request

To: Senior Mayor, Local Authority Of Your Office

By means of this request, I speak to a distinguished person, wishing that the Divine Creator of the Universe blesses you and your family and that you continue being successful as an authentic leader of your municipality.

The purpose of this letter is to request your support with the following:

Names and telephone numbers of the leaders of the community that support the Democratic Civil Unity and that work jointly with the municipality for the goodness of the people.

Leaders, names and telephone numbers that support the resistance movement and that cause unrest in community projects.

Mr. Mayor, we need this information as soon as possible so that we can be prepared each day in order to strengthen our democratic system.

We await your response and communication. With appreciation,

Carlos Roberto Rivera Cardona
Captain of Communications
Leader of the RR.HH. Section (S-1)
EHO-2782

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**HONDURAN DICTATORSHIP IS A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN THE
HEMISPHERE**

By Mark Weisbrot, CEPR, November 18, 2009)

A small group of rich people who own most of Honduras and its politicians enlist the military to kidnap the elected president at gunpoint and take him into exile. They then arrest thousands of people opposed to the coup, shut down and intimidate independent media, shoot and kill some demonstrators, torture and beat many others. This goes on for more than four months, including more than

two of the three months legally designated for electoral campaigning. Then the dictatorship holds an "election."

Should other countries recognize the results of such an election, to be held on November 29th? Latin America says absolutely not; the United States is saying, well, "yes we can"- if we can get away with it.

"There has been a sharp rise in police beatings, mass arrests of demonstrators and intimidation of human rights defenders," since President Zelaya slipped back into Honduras and took refuge in the Brazilian embassy, wrote Amnesty International. Human Rights Watch, the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and human rights groups worldwide have also condemned the violence and repression perpetrated by the Honduran dictatorship.

On November 5, the 25 nations of the Rio Group, which includes virtually all of Latin America, declared that they would not recognize the results of the November 29th elections in Honduras if the elected President Manuel Zelaya were not first restored.

Why is it that Latin American governments can recognize this threat to democracy but Washington cannot? One reason is that many of the governments are run by people who have lived under dictatorships. President Lula da Silva of Brazil was imprisoned by the Brazilian dictatorship in the 1980s. President Michele Bachelet of Chile was tortured in prison under the brutal Pinochet dictatorship that was installed with the help of the Nixon administration. The presidents of Bolivia, Argentina, Guatemala, and others have all lived through the repression of right-wing dictatorships.

Nor is this threat merely a thing of the past. Just two weeks ago the President of Paraguay, Fernando Lugo, had to fire most of the military leadership because of credible evidence that they were conspiring with the political opposition. This is one of the consequences of not reversing the Honduran military coup of June 28th.

Here in the United States we have been subjected to a relentless campaign of lies and distortions intended to justify the coup, which have been taken up by Republican supporters of the dictatorship, as well as by hired guns like Lanny Davis, a close associate of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Perhaps the biggest lie, repeated thousands of times in the news reporting and op-eds of the major media, was that Zelaya was overthrown because he was trying to extend his term of office. In fact, the non-binding referendum that Zelaya proposed had nothing to do with term limits. And even if this poll of the electorate had led eventually to a new constitution, any legal changes would have been far too late for Zelaya to stay in office beyond January 29.

Another surreal part of the whole political discussion has been the attempt to portray Zelaya, who was merely delivering on his campaign promises to the Honduran electorate, as a pawn of some foreign power - conveniently chosen to be the much-demonized Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. The anti-communist hysteria of 1950s McCarthyism is still the model for these uncreative political hacks.

What a disgrace it will be to our country if the Obama team follows through on its current strategy and recognizes these "elections!" It's hard to imagine a stronger statement than that human rights and democracy in this hemisphere count for zero in the political calculations of this administration.

CEPR: Center for Economic and Policy Research, 1611 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20009, Phone: (202) 293-5380

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ACTION NEEDED

TELL YOUR CONGRESSPERSON, SENATOR, THE WHITE HOUSE & THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE HONDURAN COUP REGIME & THE NOVEMBER 29TH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The U.S. government announced it will recognize the results of the November 29 presidential "elections" in Honduras with or without democratically-elected President Zelaya back in office and power. This position is abusive and shameful.

From the Honduran people's pro-democracy movement and the National Front Against the Coup, to governments across the Americas, to the Organization of American States, everyone and institution recognizes there are no conditions whatsoever in Honduras – under the control of an illegal and repressive military-oligarchic regime - to hold free and fair elections.

Since the June 28 coup, the regime has killed some 2 dozen Hondurans, illegally jailed over 3000 people, tortured (including rape) hundreds of people in illegal detention, and wounded hundreds in protests (due to rubber and live bullets, tear-gas and beatings). It is in the context of this on-going repression that the illegal regime aims to hold elections as their way of legitimizing and justifying the un-legitimizable and unjustifiable coup.

We urge U.S. citizens to contact your member of congress, senator, the white house and state department, to demand:

- **The unconditional return of President Zelaya and his government to full constitutional power and authority**

- No recognition of the November 29 elections
- Justice for the plotters and perpetrators of the military coup, and
- Reparations for the victims of the regime repression

YOUR OWN SENATORS, CONGRESSMEMBERS

STATE DEPARTMENT: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon: 202-647-4000

WHITE HOUSE: President Barack Obama and Dan Restrepo (Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs): 202-456-1111, 202-456-1414

TO DONATE FUNDS

Please continue to financially support the pro-democracy, anti-coup movement in Honduras. This extraordinary struggle, to defeat the oligarchic-military regime and to remake their constitution and country, will continue well into 2010. Make your tax-deductible check to “rights action” and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CANADA: 552-351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

For foundations and institutional donors, Rights Action can provide a report of which organizations and people we are channeling funds to and supporting.

VIEW The Real News:

“Nothing resolved in Honduras: Widely-celebrated, US-brokered agreement looks to have strengthened coup instead of reversing it”:

http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=4431

WATCH A 2-PART “FAULT LINES” NEWS REPORT ABOUT HONDURAS:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYY4vj9ROC0&feature=player_embedded

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upMu_oR2YUU&NR=1

FOR INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION

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