

Rights Action
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“The foreign policy of Hillary Clinton amounts to application of an enlarged Monroe Doctrine to the entire world” ...

... and the people of Honduras have suffered directly and brutally because of U.S. [and Canadian] support for the 2009 military coup and ensuing repressive regimes.

- What to do: See below

(CounterPunch publishes an abridged excerpt of “Queen of Chaos: The Misadventures of Hillary Clinton”, by Diana Johnstone).

Hillary Clinton’s Foreign Policy: Hypocrisy in Honduras

By Diana Johnstone

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Hillary-Clintons-Foreign-Policy-Hypocrisy-in-Honduras-20151012-0016.html>

Barack Obama promised change.

Then, upon election, he chose Hillary Rodham Clinton as his Secretary of State. That was an early sign that when it came to foreign policy, there would be no real change – at least, no change for the better.

The first real test of “change” in U.S. foreign policy came six months later, on June 28, 2009, when armed forces overthrew the elected President of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya.

It is easy to see what real change would have meant. The United States would vigorously condemn the coup and demand that the legitimate President be reinstated in office. Considering U.S. influence in Honduras, including its military presence there, U.S. “resolve” would have put teeth in the anti-coup protests being voiced by citizens of Honduras as well as throughout the Hemisphere.

That is not the way it happened.

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Instead, we got a first sample of the way Hillary Rodham Clinton treats the world. She calls it “smart power.” We can translate that as hypocrisy and manipulation.

In early June 2009 Hillary flew to Honduras for the annual meeting of the Organization of American States with one thing in mind: how to prevent the majority from lifting the 47-year-old

ban excluding Cuba. A large majority considered the ban “an outdated artifact of the Cold War.” [...] So Hillary and staff solved the problem by pouring the old wine into a new bottle. No more Cold War, no more “communist threat.”

“ [...] it would be hypocritical of us to continue insisting that Cuba be kept out of the OAS for the reasons it was first suspended in 1962, ostensibly its adherence to ‘Marxism-Leninism’ and alignment ‘with the communist bloc.’ It would be more credible and accurate to focus on Cuba’s present-day human rights violations, which were incompatible with the OAS charter.” ...

And thus Hillary began her diplomatic career in Latin America, marked by rebranding hostility to any independent socio-economic policy from “anti-communism” to defense of “human rights,” by transparent hypocrisy enforced by arm-twisting, and by enforcing the Monroe Doctrine in domestic as well as international affairs.

During her visit to Honduras, she was annoyed by her host, President Manuel Zelaya. She didn’t like his white cowboy hat, she didn’t like his dark black mustache, and above all, she didn’t like his fondness for Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro. But she was hypocritical about that, too. [...]

Shortly thereafter, President Zelaya was overthrown. The context of that coup d’état makes the motivation clear. Manuel Zelaya was a traitor to his class. As a landowner from a wealthy family in the lumber industry, Zelaya developed populist ambitions to liberate his country from its longstanding status as the ultimate banana republic. [...]

Elected in 2005, Zelaya wanted to make a difference. With an apparent breeze of change blowing in the region, Zelaya decreed a 60% minimum wage increase, to howls of protest from private business associations. Criticizing the “war on drugs” as a pretext for foreign intervention, Zelaya proposed a fresh approach to the drug problem, centered on educating addicts and curbing demand. He thought [the U.S. military base] Soto Cano should be transformed into an international civilian airport. In 2007, Zelaya made the first official trip by a Honduran President to Cuba in 46 years, discussing policy matters with Raul Castro. Worst of all, he joined ALBA [...]

In 2008, Washington sent as its Ambassador to Tegucigalpa the man who had been director of Andean Affairs at the National Security Council during the failed U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Hugo Chavez in 2002, Hugo Llorens. [...]

In May 2009, a “Democratic Civil Union of Honduras” was formed by “civil society” organizations, many of them receiving “democracy promotion” grants from the U.S.-financed National Endowment for Democracy (NED), with the objective of getting rid of Zelaya. Their campaign focused on Zelaya’s proposal for a referendum to ask voters during the upcoming November elections whether or not to convene a convention in 2010 to revise the Constitution, [...]

In short, the constitutional proposal was portrayed as a way to set the stage for Zelaya to become a “dictator” by being elected, like the elected “dictator” of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez. On June 23, the Civil Union issued a statement saying that they “trust the armed forces “ to “defend the Constitution, the law, peace and democracy.” [...] In the early morning of June 28, a hundred

Honduran soldiers invaded Zelaya's bedroom and whisked him off to Costa Rica without allowing him to get dressed. [...]

The officer in charge of the military coup, General Romeo Vasquez, was a graduate of the notorious School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, which has trained a long line of Latin American putschists and torturers. The Honduran military let it be known that they were "obligated" to remove President Zelaya from power because of the "threat" he posed with his leftist ideology and alignment with Venezuela and Cuba. [...]

Now it was Hillary's turn to employ "smart" power by never calling a coup d'état a coup d'état. Instead, what had happened was a "crisis" or the "forced exile" of the President which inspired the United States to call on "all parties" to resolve their differences "without violence."

[...] "In a public statement I called on all parties in Honduras to respect the constitutional order and the rule of law and to commit themselves to resolve political disputes peacefully and through dialogue," she recalled in (her book) *Hard Choices*. The State Department went on to praise the Honduran military for having acted as "the securer of public order during this process" [...]

Stalling for time, Hillary "strategized on a plan to restore order in Honduras and ensure that free and fair elections could be held quickly and legitimately, which would render the question of Zelaya moot and give the Honduran people a chance to choose their own future."

Zelaya was never reinstated, and from then on, Hondurans have had the chance to choose their future – so long as it looks very much like their past. [...]

With Zelaya gone, Honduras rapidly withdrew from ALBA.

Our "bottom line," as Hillary put it, "is free, fair, and democratic elections with a peaceful transfer of power." Elections to "render the question of Zelaya moot" were held on November 29. [...] The campaign was marked by intimidation, beatings, at least one death and an occasional disappearance. Employees were told to vote or lose their jobs. Despite all the pressure, just under half the voters turned out, at 49%.

All's well that ends well, and the winner was Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo Sosa, the National Party candidate who had been defeated by Zelaya in the previous election. The governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela refused to recognize the result, but Washington was content.[...]

Meanwhile, the ruling National Party changed its mind about articles "written in stone." At the party's request, the Honduras Supreme Court itself violated the Constitution by simply scrapping the articles banning a presidential second term. [...]

Ever since the fledgling populist Manuel Zelaya, who dared to try to improve the lot of his people, was carted off in his pajamas, the situation in Honduras has gotten steadily worse. More poverty, more crime, more murders – so many murders and so few arrests and prosecutions that it is impossible to distinguish drug related killings from political assassinations carried out by police and the military. [...]

When a white hat appears on the horizon of a wretched place like Honduras, proclaiming his intention to try to improve conditions, couldn't the rich and powerful United States react otherwise than stigmatizing him as a potential "dictator?" Instead of giving an advocate of change an opportunity to give it a try, Hillary's State Department connived to help bundle him out of power. All is back to normal, however below normal that particular normal happens to be.

On the face of it, the overthrow of Manuel Zelaya was a relatively mild "regime change" as U.S. operations go. [...] But like other U.S.- backed interventions in the political life of weaker countries, the result was chaos, the chaos of poverty, crime and hopelessness. On the pretext of preventing the elected President from becoming a "dictator," Hillary and her colleagues contributed to shoring up a longstanding United States dictatorship over the Southern Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine, proclaimed to protect the continent from outside powers, in practice has come to mean a license for the United States to protect the inhabitants from themselves and their "errors."

As we can see throughout this book, the foreign policy of Hillary Clinton amounts to application of an enlarged Monroe Doctrine to the entire world.

(Diana Johnstone is the author of Queen of Chaos: the Misadventures of Hillary Clinton and Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO, and Western Delusions.)

The Corruption and Impunity, Repression and Exploitation of Honduras and Guatemala Are American and Canadian Issues

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