

June 28, 2016 – A Miserable Anniversary In Honduras “The Honduran Shipwreck: Hillary Clinton’s Coup Turns 7”

<http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=df76f89f9c>

Today marks seven years of U.S.- and Canadian-backed military coup-ism in Honduras ... and counting. There is no end in sight to Honduras’ utterly distressing situation of government repression, widespread societal violence and murder, economic exploitation and deep poverty, racism, gender-based violence, all made worse by the U.S. “war on drugs”, all glued together by corruption, impunity and a fundamental lack of democracy.

On-going ‘Coup-ism’

The killing, violence and destruction wrought by the June 28, 2009 coup are on-going. The pro-corporate economic reforms in the areas of mining, garment factories, tourism, “model cities”, African palm production, etc. – implemented and kept in place with Honduran military and police repression – are on-going. U.S. and Canadian government support for the coup and “economic reforms” continue, unabated.

Thus, our work is on-going, to document and denounce the role of the Canadian and U.S. governments in supporting and benefitting from the coup and “economic reforms”, and to support courageous Honduran people and organizations working to put an end to all this and build a truly democratic society and reform their country and State.

The Honduran Shipwreck: Hillary Clinton’s Coup Turns 7

By: Belén Fernández, 28 June 2016

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-Honduran-Shipwreck-Hillary-Clintons-Coup-Turns-7-20160627-0034.html>

U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton removed a key passage from the paperback edition of her autobiography "Hard Choices" about her role in the 2009 military coup in Honduras.



(Photo: Reuters)

In the aftermath of the coup, Honduras' homicide rate has soared along with other forms of violence. I recently contributed a chapter titled "Hillary Does Honduras" to a collection of essays edited by Liza Featherstone: "False Choices: The Faux Feminism of Hillary Rodham Clinton."

While preparing the essay last year, I discovered that a key passage from the hardcover edition of Clinton's autobiography had been struck from the paperback version. In the original, the current U.S. presidential hopeful outlines her contributions to Honduran politics in the aftermath of the June 28, 2009, coup against that country's president at the time, Manuel Zelaya.

In her capacity as secretary of state under Barack Obama, Clinton tells us, she and various colleagues in the region jointly "strategized on a plan to restore order in Honduras [following Zelaya's ouster] 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."

The problem with the ostensibly democratic pursuit of free and fair elections and Honduran choices is, of course, that it is categorically anti-democratic — not to mention illegal — to forcibly "render moot" a democratically-elected leader.

Zelaya's great offense, for which he had incurred the wrath of the Honduran right wing and its devoted support group in the United States, had been to allow the Central American country to drift slightly to the left — i.e. away from its established position as the "U.S.S. Honduras," as it was endearingly called during the Cold War.

Among his many treasonous acts, Zelaya raised the urban and rural monthly minimum wages to \$290 and \$213, respectively, and demonstrated an unprecedented willingness to ask communities affected by pernicious foreign corporate mining practices how they felt about the arrangement.

Obviously, the coup orchestrators couldn't come right out and argue that it was a bad thing for poor people to be a bit less poor, or for folks living in mining areas to suffer fewer persistent skin rashes and spontaneous abortions. So they concocted a whole existential scenario in which the diabolical Zelaya — in cahoots with Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez, and all other malevolent forces of the universe — was working to bring Honduras to Communist ruin by installing himself in power for eternity.

Lest anyone thought they were making things up, the coup-mongers offered tangible proof of Zelaya's nefarious designs: he had dared to suggest a non-binding public opinion survey, scheduled for June 28, 2009, in which Honduran citizens were to be asked to register their opinions regarding the possibility of installing an extra ballot box at upcoming elections. The purpose of this ballot box, in turn, would be to gauge public interest in convening a constituent assembly to tweak the national constitution, which had until then enshrined the oligarchic elite's stranglehold on the country.

As the pro-coup argument went, the singular purpose of the whole charade was to violate Honduran democracy and rewrite the constitution to eliminate the prohibition on presidents serving more than one term. Somehow, the fact that the extra ballot box would be installed at elections in which Zelaya was already ineligible to run was not deemed to be relevant information.

Instead of the proposed survey, June 28 thus played host to the expatriation to Costa Rica of a pajama-clad Zelaya, courtesy of the Honduran military. Clearly, public opinion surveys and ballot boxes are not the stuff of democracy — but militarized pajama-kidnappings are.

Following the coup, I spent four months in Honduras, primarily in the capital of Tegucigalpa. Day after day, masses of people marched peacefully in the streets demanding a return of the elected leader; Honduran security forces were decidedly less peaceful, and subjected crowds to tear gas, water cannons loaded with pepper spray, and more lethal projectiles.

Meanwhile, Clinton & Co. scurried around behind the scenes rendering the Zelaya question moot. Fresh elections were eventually held under the illegitimate and abusive coup regime, meaning that they were fundamentally neither "free" nor "fair."

And it's been a nonstop party ever since. In the aftermath of the coup, Honduras' homicide rate has soared along with other forms of violence. As the Guardian's Nina Lakhani recently noted in an article on the March assassination of Honduran human rights and environmental activist Berta Cáceres, whose name reportedly appeared on a hitlist belonging to U.S.-trained Honduran special forces:

"Human rights groups have condemned US support for Honduran security forces amid mounting evidence implicating police and military in systematic abuses. In April, activists warned Congress that death squads were targeting opposition activists, much like they did during the 'dirty war' in the 1980s."

In other words, the U.S.S. Honduras is going strong, despite what amounts to SOS signals emanating from a significant chunk of the population. Rest assured that the current obsessively rightwing regime won't be rendered moot anytime soon.

As I note in my "False Choices" chapter, legend has it that the name "Honduras" derives from Christopher Columbus' expression of relief, in 1502, at averting a nautical demise off the coast of Central America. "Gracias a Dios que hemos salido de estas honduras," Columbus is said to have exclaimed. "Thank god we've gotten out of these depths."

More than half a millennium later, Honduras has sunk to new depths, thanks in no small part to the post-coup machinations of another imperial emissary — this one by the name of Hillary Clinton.

On the coup's seventh anniversary, as Clinton does her best to expunge her role from the record, one would like nothing more than to see her own ship sink.

Funds for Berta Caceres' family and COPINH

To support Berta Caceres' family and COPINH's work for justice in this case and for fundamental transformation and change in Honduras, make tax-deductible donations (write "Berta & Copinh" in the memo line) to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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