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More on Washington's Failed Ecuadorean Coup Attempt

By Stephen Lendman
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For nearly two centuries, America dismissively called Latin America its "backyard," the 1823 Monroe Doctrine asserting a declaration of regional dominance, stating:

"...as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers....we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.... (impossible to) behold....with indifference."

Thereafter, it was all downhill against Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Panama, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Grenada, Venezuela, and at one time or another, practically all other parts of the Americas, directly or indirectly.

In 1905, in fact, President Theodore Roosevelt declared Washington to be "the policeman" of the Caribbean and Central America, and by implication, the entire hemisphere. To date, nothing has changed, Ecuador just the latest targeted nation, an earlier article explaining the failed coup attempt, accessed through the following link:

<http://sjlendman.blogspot.com/2010/10/failed-washington-sponsored-ecuadorean.html>

On September 30, Ecuador's President Raphael Correa was targeted. First elected in November 2006 with a 58% majority, he was easily reelected in April 2009 with a 55% majority against seven challengers. His current term runs until August 10, 2013, and will extend until 2017 with another electoral victory.

Yet, Ecuador's volatile history is now in focus. The country's eighth president in 14 years, Correa's easily the most popular, though less so after earlier imposing austerity measures. Pro-business ones also, including policies favoring oil, mining, and agribusiness interests at the expense of local communities and environmental considerations.

They're practiced despite Ecuador's new 2008 Constitution, recognizing and guaranteeing indigenous peoples' rights, and a mandate to "preserve and promote their management of biodiversity and their natural environment," among other populist provisions, including the "rights of nature."

As a result, indigenous groups like the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality (ECUARUNARI) criticized him, including recently saying:

"While the government has dedicated itself exclusively to attacking and delegitimizing organized sectors like the indigenous movement, workers' unions, etc., it hasn't weakened in the least the structures of power of the right, or those within the state apparatus."

After the failed September 30 coup, Quito's Regional Advisory Group on Human Rights urged Correa to renew support for his base, saying:

"(W)e call upon the national government to set aside its arrogant attitude that is isolating it from the social bases. Together we can build a country with dignity, peace and sovereignty, in which dialogue with social sectors in a daily activity that guides our path toward a country distanced from extractive polices and dependence on a development model based on the destruction of nature."

Given his close call, it remains to be seen if he's listening, though Washington and internal hard liners will try again if he goes too far. James Petras explains that they don't oppose his domestic policies, mainly his "ties with US arch enemy Chavez and ALBA," the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas WTO/NAFTA alternative endorsing pro-South trade principles, ones Washington strongly opposes as well as Correa's decision to close the US Manta airbase.

As a result, Pentagon and CIA operatives, in league with Ecuadorean hard-liners, want Correa ousted, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and USAID financing opposition groups and political parties to topple him. Correa knows it, saying on September 30 that the:

"attempt at destabilization is the result of a strategy that has been brewing for quite some time. A barrage of messages and misinformation have been given to the National Police, which today has been realized through violent actions from a conspiracy attempt."

He accused former right wing president, Lucio Gutierrez, of inciting violence and supporting rogue police and military plotters. A former army colonel, Gutierrez co-led a 2000 coup, then was ousted by a 2005 popular uprising.

Himself victimized by an aborted two-day 2002 coup and fearing another attempt, Hugo Chavez condemned US imperialism, saying: "The Yankee extreme right is trying now, through arms and violence, to retake control of the continent," having ousted Manuel Zelaya in Honduras in June 2009 and Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004.

In addition, Washington tipped its hand earlier, the State Department calling Ecuador "difficult to do business in," a Investment Climate Statement stating:

"Ecuador can be a difficult place in which to do business...There are restrictions or limitations on private investment in many sectors that apply equally to domestic and foreign investors....A 2006 hydrocarbons law imposed new conditions in the petroleum sector that have been problematic for many companies, complicated by a 2007 decree that imposed additional restrictions. A 2008 mining mandate stalled mining activity, and a new Mining Law is expected in early 2009. Negotiations for a free trade agreement between the United States and Ecuador, which would have included investment decisions, stopped in 2006. The current Government of Ecuador has not expressed interest in restarting negotiations."

In December 2008, Correa (a University of Illinois economics PhD) also alienated international lending agencies and foreign bond holders by halting payments on billions of dollars of debt, calling them "illegal (and) illegitimate," at the time saying:

"I have given the order that interest payments not be made. The country is in default. I couldn't allow the continued payment of a debt that by all measures is immoral and illegitimate. It is now time to bring in justice and dignity."

He also angered Israel by sponsoring an Organization of American States (OAS) resolution last June, condemning the IDF's Gaza Flotilla attack, leaving some analysts to suspect Mossad wanted him ousted and may have been involved in the attempt.

In 2005, Voltairenet.org quoted Alexis Ponce, Ecuador's Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH) speaker, saying:

"The Mossad trained Ecuadorean police in torture techniques between 1986 and 1994. The Israeli secret services gave technical support to the tyranny that stained Ecuador with blood. The police corps received advanced training by Israeli agents to torture and to force those who opposed the tyranny to speak. The Israeli agents transmitted their knowledge about the numerous techniques used to torture people. They are criminals! Hundreds of people disappeared during those dark years."

Mossad agents have long operated in Ecuador, covertly through Israel's Quito embassy and perhaps throughout in the country, like in so many others.

In addition, Israel maintains business ties with Ecuador, having sold 26 Kfir combat planes and reportedly Python-3 air-to-air missiles in 1997. Afterward, its technicians and trainers provided support and perhaps continues to do so. Further, in 2009, Israel's On Track Innovations contracted with Ecuador's Central Registry Office to provide an electronic biometric-based electronic identification card system.

A Final Comment

America's major media largely downplayed the coup plot, broadcasters and

cable channels especially saying little on September 30, then practically nothing by way of follow-up.

On October 4, in her weekly Wall Street Journal America's column, Mary O'Grady headlined, "What Really Happened in Ecuador," saying:

"Eyewitnesses deny police kidnapped the president, and there's no evidence a coup was in the making."

O'Grady, of course, is a notorious liar, her columns a truth-free zone, her extremism and anti-populist vitriol unsurpassed in print media - precisely the "journalistic" attributes Rupert Murdoch values and features daily on Journal op-ed pages, his other publications, and Fox News, straight unabashed disinformation, devoid of truth.

According to O'Grady, Correa's presidential powers were never threatened, nor did tear gas fumes deter him from "walking across the street to the hospital, his notorious macho dignity obviously wounded."

In fact, he was overcome by exploding tear gas, AFP, among other news services, saying "he was taken out by stretcher to the nearby hospital," then "was unable to leave, surrounded by hostile police as clashes broke out in the streets while rebels stormed Congress and seized the main international airport for hours."

Clearly, it was a coup attempt. Outside America, Murdoch publications, and O'Grady's column, it's widely acknowledged. Even New York Times columnist Simon Romero reported the following in his October 3 article, titled, "Debate Over Meaning of Standoff in Ecuador:"

-- Correa "had been holed up on the third floor of the police hospital here for more than 10 hours after being assaulted by....rebellious police officers.... This Andean nation was on tenterhooks;"

-- hospital staff "put a helmet on Mr. Correa;" electricity in parts of the hospital went down;

-- "an intense exchange of bullets" took place;

-- "five men were shot dead," dozens more wounded;

-- "the president's armored Nissan sport utility vehicle showed bullet damage, including a shot to the windshield;"

-- police "prevented a helicopter from landing" and blocked escape routes;

-- Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino was wounded leaving the hospital, his head bleeding;

-- "Inside the hospital, doctors, nurses, patients and journalists lay on the floor, hoping to avoid getting shot;"

-- "As Mr. Correa's SUV drove away," it was attacked by a volley of gunfire, a "uniformed member of (his) security team" shot dead "as he trotted alongside the vehicle;" and

-- the bloodbath outside the hospital continued, police shouting "Kill the chuspangos," slang for military men before gunfire subsided.

Nonetheless, O'Grady continued, saying:

"Mr. Correa had little trouble managing the story. In the morning he closed down independent television reporting, limiting Ecuadoreans to his version of the day's events."

In fact, Ecuador's Constitution guarantees press freedom, short of criminally committing defamation, slander, or insurrection advocacy. Nonetheless, the corporate dominated media remains largely combative, Correa calling them "trash talking," "liars," unethical," and "political actors who are trying to oppose the revolutionary government."

The television Teleamazonas network has been especially harsh, regulators ordering it off air for three days last December for "incit(ing) public disorder." Earlier, it violated Article 58 of the Broadcasting Law that prohibits airing "news based on unfounded allegations that could produce social unrest." Several times it was fined nominal amounts, then suspended for repeat violations. After the attempted coup, it again incurred a three-day suspension for inflammatory reporting. However, Correa insists he's committed to press freedom, provided constitutional and broadcast laws are observed, what all democratic states require.

Nonetheless, O'Grady concluded, saying:

"One thing is certain: Mr. Correa is not going to let the crisis go to waste. Since Thursday he has been seizing the airwaves to broadcast his version of

the narrative, which implicates his political opponents in what increasingly looks like a coup that never happened."

In fact, it did. Independent reports and many others confirmed it. Ecuador's media are required to give the president (and other government officials) free air time, and he's entitled to denounce dark force attempts to oust him. This time, Washington's fingerprints are again visible, and though unsuccessful, Correa can no means rest, not with actors like O'Grady around, vilifying less than hard right leaders, stopping just short of endorsing their ouster.

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