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**The Honduran Coup, the Media and Obama
The African World
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Most knowledgeable commentators will suggest that the Honduran military coup against democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya probably should have lasted less than 48 hours; that is, had the US government made it perfectly clear that the coup was unacceptable.

While the response to the coup by the Obama administration was at first glance admirable, i.e., a condemnation of the coup and a failure to recognize the usurpers, there remain some very strange aspects to the events. First, the US government knew that the coup was being plotted. Various sources report that the US did not support the coup and would not give their blessing. So far so good, but the obvious question is this: then why did the Obama administration not notify Zelaya's forces so that they could arrest the coup people on grounds of treason?

No answer.

Next, the coup was carried out. The US condemned the coup and stated that they would not recognize anyone other than Zelaya. Ok, sounds good. But the devil lies in the detail. Although it sounded as if a "coup" was being condemned, there were some technicalities that I cannot even get my arms around such that the US was NOT quite calling it a coup. Had they ACTUALLY called it a coup, the US would have been obligated to cut all military aid.

Odd.

Next, President Zelaya had inordinate difficulty meeting with any ranking member of the Obama administration until quite recently when he met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. It would seem that an ousted democratically elected leader should have no trouble meeting with the Administration, particularly an Administration which claims to defend the rule of law.

Peculiar.

Then, there is the undercurrent. Evidenced in various mainstream media editorials, there has been a campaign of sugar-coated character assassination against President Zelaya. He is accused of planning a referendum to extend his term (false!). He is maligned as pro-authoritarian. In fact, the editorials in response to the coup sounded a lot like the editorials in 2002 following the unsuccessful coup against Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, specifically, that the coups were unfortunate but that the victims of the coups were the REAL anti-democratic forces.

Added to all of this is that most indications remain that Honduras is in serious turmoil with regular demonstrations and strikes. Yet, the mainstream media pays little attention to this, instead focusing on the negotiations that are being conducted between the coup people and President Zelaya, mediated by Costa Rican President Arias.

What are we to make of this? Within the Obama administration there is more than likely a struggle underway. It relates to something that I have raised in earlier commentaries. Specifically, is the Obama administration simply trying to change the appearance of the USA internationally or are they attempting to shift US policy. The response to the Honduran coup seems to indicate the former. They do not want the appearance of the demonic Bush administration, but they are not prepared to support a Honduran administration which is allied with the likes of Venezuelan President Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales. Instead this starts to appear to be a Clintonian solution, i.e., a repetition of President Bill Clinton's approach to the coup people in Haiti in 1994. He—Clinton—was prepared to restore democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide, however he would do so only under certain conditions (one being giving up on his populist economic program and the second being that he was only to serve out the remainder of his term despite the fact that years had been robbed from him). In the Honduran case, a "compromise" might be offered that simply restores President Zelaya but essentially neuters him.


So much for Honduran sovereignty; so much for a different US approach to foreign affairs??? Only if we remain silent.


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