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**Obama, Honduras and the 'Other' OAS  
The African World  
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Although the Obama administration condemned the coup against Honduran President Zelaya, its overall response has been quite anemic. The Honduran coup people have resisted all efforts at genuine mediation and seem to be playing a waiting game hoping to drag things out until the scheduled Honduran election or until everyone goes to sleep.

The failure of the Obama administration to take strong and decisive action against the coup and the willingness of many people in the mainstream USA to buy into the anti-Zelaya propaganda has been most disturbing. The lies that have been perpetrated against Zelaya, to the effect that he was seeking to unconstitutionally extend his term, were used by right-wingers in the USA in order to justify the coup. The facts have been distorted. There was no such effort. But, for the sake of argument, what if he were attempting to move an electoral initiative to extend his term in office? New York City Mayor Bloomberg pushed through a successful effort to permit him to run for an unprecedented third term. The last time that i checked, the tanks were not rolling through the streets of New York in order to unseat the ambitious Mayor.

What is more unsettling is that the US Right has made Honduras a cause celebre. A Republican delegation went to visit the coup leaders within the last few weeks, despite

or perhaps because of the Obama administration's stand against the coup. In fact, the Republicans are flaunting their opposition to the Obama administration's weak condemnation of the illegal ouster.

You can call me paranoid, however, there is a separate concern that I have been having. In the USA a segment of the extreme Right has been going out of its way to suggest that Obama is not the legitimate President of the USA. This is quite a bit different from what progressives faced in 2000 when, in fact, George W. Bush was selected as President by the US Supreme Court (and was NOT legitimate). Right-wing extremists are suggesting that because Obama is--according to them--not really a citizen of the USA and because he is allegedly threatening the US Constitution (through efforts such as healthcare reform and the economic stimulus), he should not be treated as the Commander in Chief. There are, in fact, right-wing groups that are organizing among the US military and police services in order to create a cadre of people who are supposedly loyal to the Constitution and will take action against alleged threats. President Obama is targeted as an alleged threat by them.

The failure of the Obama administration to take a strong stand against the illegal ouster of a legitimately elected President of Honduras says, in effect, that democracy is relative. That is, democracy is relative to what the USA says democracy should be. This is not a new notion, of course. This has been the consistent stand of the USA since its beginning. Yet in the current situation the message that it is permissible to take out a standing and legitimately elected president can give a green light to those who believe that this can and should be applied here at home.

In the early 1960s, France still occupied Algeria. Then President Charles De Gaulle, recognizing that France could not hold onto Algeria due to the massive support that the national liberation movement received from the Algerian people, began negotiations to grant independence. A segment of the French political Right, including elements of the French military, were infuriated and began to organize. In 1961 they carried out a failed mutiny in Algeria that they hoped would spread to France. They then began underground operations and created the Organisation de l'Armee Secrete (the **OAS**, or Secret Army Organization). The OAS began a campaign of terror in France and Algeria and, while ultimately destroyed, sought to overthrow De Gaulle who they deemed to be illegitimate and a traitor.

When the Obama administration tolerates a coup, as they are doing with Honduras - despite their fancy rhetoric - they, in fact, legitimize the notion that elections can be disregarded. Zelaya was chosen by the Honduran people. Those segments of the Honduran government that moved against him, chose not to await the next elections but instead to take steps that are not being recognized by any nation in the Western Hemisphere. Yet the Obama administration, the Administration of the one country that could bring the Honduran coup people to their knees, has refused to move firmly and with conviction.

The political Right in the USA smells blood. In fact, they are stirring up a situation in order to not only undermine the credibility of the Obama administration but to also make it impossible for them to reliably govern. If the USA is willing to permit one coup to take place due to alleged constitutional questions, then why would matters stop at the border of Honduras? Why should not the political Right create the same sort of

crisis here at home?

If for no other reason than the survival of his Administration, it is in the interests of President Obama to ensure that the Honduran coup people go packing.

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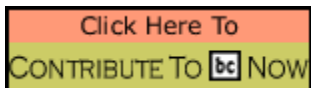


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