

Chávez Denounces Bolivian Commander's Inaction and Asks Bolivian Soldiers to Remain Loyal to Evo

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On Sunday, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, denounced the inaction of the Commander in Chief of the Bolivian Armed Forces, General Luis Trigo, in retaking the Department (Province) of Pando, whose state of siege was declared last Friday, after a massacre took place on Thursday in which until now, some 30 dead and 106 missing have been reported. Chávez supported Morales's decision to declare a state of siege. "There are foreign paramilitaries there killing peasants, burning houses and public buildings, attacking barracks, and so on. What more was there to do? (Declare) a state of siege!" Luis Trigo But he denounced Trigo for not rising to the call: "Last night General Trigo went to Pando (...) but instead of responding to the presidential decree for a State of Siege, last night I was directly informed by sources very close to the situation, that he (Trigo) arrived and ordered the troops to their barracks, abandoning the airport and citizens' protection. A strange thing, General Trigo." Similarities to the April 2002 Coup

Chávez recalled the parallels with what took place in Venezuela during the coup d'état of April, 2002. "General Trigo is like those who hid themselves when I called on the radio to tell them to put Plan Ávila in motion, which is a defense plan. And they hid. And later they kept the generals who wanted to fulfill their obligation from emerging." "The putschists of April! It's a very similar attitude.

Facilitate fascism and the destruction of the fatherland!" Directing himself to Trigo, he said, "Show me that you're wrong. Fulfill the obligation that the Bolivian constitution gives you! Do it! And to the Chief Military Commander of Bolivia, I say: we're not in Latin America of 1950, 1952, 1960, 1970." Chávez added later that "despite the indecisive attitudes of Trigo and his people, soldiers and officers took the (Cobija) airport, and are bringing Pando back to democracy." He also indicated that Trigo had discharged Bolivian soldiers who had traveled to Venezuela. "This general (Trigo) and others, you know what they did about a year, year and a half ago? Some Bolivian generals graduated here, who studied with me (...) were called up by the High Command about two years ago and told that their friendship with the President of Venezuela was inconvenient for the Bolivian army. And they let them go, man, they fired them! And today they're unemployed. This has been planned for quite some time, since the day that Evo won the elections in Bolivia." Message to Bolivia's Soldiers

President Chávez also dedicated part of his speech to the Bolivian soldiers. "We're not going to allow a dictatorship in Bolivia. You have security in your hands! Fulfill your obligation to the people. Be dignified inheritors of Bolívar's glory, the creator of (the Republic of) Bolivia!

Bolivian soldiers, don't lend yourselves to imperialism's game, don't betray your fatherland. Do the same as the Venezuelan soldiers, the Bolivarian soldiers. Defend your legitimate government! Put your hand on your heart, don't betray the fatherland! History will hold you accountable if it happens again, as has happened on other occasions with soldiers who put themselves at imperialism's disposition." He also said: "To the Bolivian soldiers, I say, fulfill your historic obligation. And to the people of Bolivia: we're with you. And to the real Bolivian soldiers, we're with you."

"General Trigo, how good it would be if you would say something about the daily interference over the years, of the North American empire in Bolivia!" he repeated. "What a strange thing for a Bolivian general! Silent before the empire's gross interference, and I come, a brother of Bolivia, to extend my hand and heart to Bolivia, and I am (attacked)." Without referring to him personally, he said that he hoped he would remain loyal to President Morales, and recalled that Augusto Pinochet had remained firmly loyal to Salvador Allende until the day before the coup d'état of September 11, 1973. "I'm not talking gorilla, Mr. Trigo. Only that I've known and we've known gorillas. Pinochet stood firmly with Allende until only one day before."

Chávez Confirms That He Will Not Stand By with Crossed Arms

"I'll confirm for General Trigo: I'm not going to stand by with my arms crossed. They go about saying that I'm going about saying that I'm going to invade Bolivia. No, those are other things. But if something happens to Evo, God protect him, if they manage to topple him...I'm not standing by with arms crossed. We're not the type to cross our arms; already in fact, we're moving to preserve peace in Bolivia, democracy in Bolivia. And not only in Bolivia, but in South America, because they're attacking South America as a whole. "I'm not suggesting invading Bolivia," he said. "But we will not accept it," he said, referring to the possibility of a coup d'état. "Bolivian oligarchy, just so you know. Gringo empire, just so you know. Bolivian soldiers who may be facilitating a coup, just so you know: we're not going to tolerate it, we're not going to accept it."

"The state of siege was declared Friday, and that same evening Bolivian troops took the airport, although one soldier was killed by local paramilitary gunfire. It was not more than 24 hours later, in the early morning hours on Sunday, when the military troops advanced on Cobija and took control of the city. At the moment of this report, there are still sections in the Pando province that remain under the control of Bolivian opposition assassins. I am told that Pando's prefect went to Brazil, because Brazil is allowing him to stay there. Tomorrow we'll talk about that, because he's a delinquent. There are a number of deaths there. I have all the information about who hired the assassins. Onward Evo, onward Bolivia, Bolivia must resist, strength to Bolivia!"

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