

From Pristina to La Paz: Expelled US Ambassador to Bolivia had been in charge of Kosovo Secession

The Balkanisation of Bolivia

By [Wilson García Mérida](#)

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George Bush sent to Bolivia his Ambassador of Ethnic Cleansing [original title translated from the Spanish]

He presented his credentials before President Evo Morales on October 13, 2006; but three months before his arrival in Bolivia, when he was still in Pristina fulfilling his role as head of the US mission in Kosovo, it was already being said that the new US ambassador designated by George Bush for this Andean country, Philip Goldberg, would come to take part in the separatist process that was being cultivated in the background to pierce the Bolivian regime.

On July 13, 2006, the journalist for *El Deber* of Santa Cruz, Leopoldo Vegas, published a report indicating that “in the view of three political scientists interviewed after learning about the White House’s decision, the experience acquired by Goldberg in eastern Europe which produced ethnic conflict after the separation of the former Yugoslavia can be used in Bolivia, using as an opportunity the changes that the government itself is trying to introduce.”

One of those interviewed by Vegas was the academic Róger Tuero, former head of the Political Science department at Gabriel René Moreno Autonomous University (Uagrm) in Santa Cruz, who stated that characteristics of each ambassador are determined by US diplomacy. “It’s not by chance that this man was moved from Kosovo to Bolivia,” said Tuero.

Ambassador Goldberg today is one of the principal political and logistical supporters of still-Governor of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa, who created the worst ethnic, social, regional, and institutional crisis one can remember in the history of the Republic of Bolivia.

Who is Philip Goldberg?

According to the curriculum vitae officially distributed by the United States Embassy in La Paz, Philip Goldberg was involved from the beginnings of the civil war in Yugoslavia that erupted in the nineties, until the fall and prosecution of Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic.

Between 1994 and 1996 he was the State Department’s “Bosnia Desk Officer”, at the point when the conflict between Albanian separatists and Serbian and Yugoslav security forces erupted.

During the same period, he served as Special Assistant to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who was the author of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the fall of Milosevic. "In the latter capacity" - states the Embassy - "he was a member of the American negotiating team in the lead-up to the Dayton Peace Conference and Chief of Staff for the American Delegation at Dayton."

Ambassador Goldberg was also a political-economic officer in Pretoria, South Africa, and later a consular and political officer at the US Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, where he began to become interested in Latin American politics.

After exercising his charge as Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Santiago, Chile from 2001 to 2004, Goldberg returned to the Balkans to direct the US mission in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, where he supported the prosecution in The Hague of the former dictator Milosevic (who died March 11, 2006).

From Kosovo to Bolivia

Before his transfer to Bolivia, Goldberg worked from Kosovo for the separation of the states of Serbia and Montenegro, which occurred in June of last year, as the last remaining aftertaste of the disappearance of Yugoslavia.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia unfolded during a bloody decade of civil war created to divide up through processes of "decentralization" and "autonomy" that which was finally imposed with the US military intervention and the presence of NATO and UN troops who occupied the Balkans to pacify the region.

The Yugoslav civil war had as its principal feature what is called "ethnic cleansing," which consists of the expulsion or annihilation of the traditional ethnic groups that make up the territory of Yugoslavia. The cruelest of this racial extermination occurred between the Serbs and the Croats.

Bolivia, only three months since the arrival of Ambassador Goldberg, began to suffer an exacerbation of racism and separatist autonomous movements, as in the Balkans, which was initiated from the eastern city of Santa Cruz, where the governing elite made up of, among others, Croatian businessmen, created a federalist movement called "Camba Nation."

One of the main Santa Cruz leaders of this separatist movement is the agro-industrial businessman and partner of Chilean capitalists, Branco Marinkovic, who in February 2007 became head of the Civic Committee of Santa Cruz, the entity behind the mobilization of pressure against the government of Evo Morales.

The separatist autonomous movement

The "Camba Nation" lumps together with Santa Cruz the departments [states] of Beni, Pando and Tarija (where one finds the largest reserves of natural gas in Bolivia), whose populations voted in favor of departmental autonomy in a referendum held in July of 2006, comprising the so-called "half moon" that represents the eastern half of the country.

The western departments of La Paz, Chuquisaca, Potosí, Oruro and Cochabamba voted "no" on autonomy, maintaining their direct link to the central government of Evo Morales and in

effect separating the four autonomous departments of the “half moon.”

This autonomous separatism – which should be recognized by the new constitution by virtue of a Law of Incorporation in the Constituent Assembly [the body drafting a new constitution] – was made worse by a off-the-cuff decision taken by former president Carlos Mesa in 2004, when the “Camba Nation” was creating pressure through city governments and civic strikes for the direct election of prefects (department governors). Previously, prefects were chosen directly by the president, maintaining the unity of the Executive Branch, a power that new president Evo Morales was not able to exercise and who is now obligated to govern almost completely separated from the four autonomous prefects.

In Cochabamba, a department that falls exactly between the east and the west – and where an alternative to separatism, with the proposal of mega-regional autonomy instead of departmental autonomy, began to gestate – its prefect, Manfred Reyes Villa, abusing his elected position, attempted to reject the results of the July 2, 2006, referendum and illegally force another vote in order to annex Cochabamba to the “half moon,” breaking the fragile balance between autonomous and non-autonomous departments.

The attack in Cochabamba

Despite it being something decided by the ballot boxes, Reyes Villa tried to force a new autonomous referendum to unite Cochabamba with Santa Cruz, mobilizing the most conservative urban sectors of Cochabamban society.

The popular movement and above all the agrarian and indigenous organizations from the 16 provinces of this department, came to the city demanding an agrarian joint partnership in the prefect’s administration in the face of the exclusionary, nepotistic and corrupt manner with which Reyes Villa governed from the city of Cochabamba (capital of the department), they arrived here to demand from the prefect a change in his politics.

Instead of seeing to the just demands from the provinces, Reyes Villa encouraged the organization of a group of fascist youth, advised by the Santa Cruz Youth Union (UJC) which operates in Santa Cruz, with the objective of “expelling the Indians from the city.” In this manner erupted the tragic day of January 11, 2007, when a violent attack was provoked, culminating in two dead and 120 gravely injured; the majority being farmers. In pursuit of the truth, the September 14th Plaza (the prefect’s seat and symbol of departmental power) has been occupied by more than 50,000 indigenous from the 16 provinces, demanding the resignation of Reyes Villa.

The day that thousands of “daddy’s sons” carried out the attack armed with clubs, baseball bats, golf clubs, iron tubes and firearms, Reyes Villa abandoned the city and headed to La Paz to meet with the four autonomous prefects and individuals from the US Embassy.

Though the government could have opened many spaces for dialog, Reyes Villa systematically refused meet with the provincial representatives, “self-exiling” himself in Santa Cruz, where until now he tries to transform the problem into an explosive national conflict, threatening the stability and democracy of this country, presided over by an indigenous man.

The CIA and Reyes Villa

The influence of the CIA and of Ambassador Goldberg on the political actions of Reyes Villa

(a former captain of the army associated with the dictatorships of Banzer and Garcia Meza) is irrefutable.

The separatist prefect has systematically blocked a peaceful solution to the conflict and in its place has developed a raging campaign of misinformation that seeks to create the conditions for confrontation on a national scale.

The US Embassy is deploying an effort of collective indoctrination against the indigenous crisis, promoting racial hatred and separatism that was evident during the events of January 11, 2007, in unison with business organizations such as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Cainco) in Santa Cruz, which openly supports Reyes Villa and his “advisors.”

But the US meddling during this conflict is not only occurring on the ultra-right, but also through the infiltration of the government of MAS [Movement Towards Socialism - Morales' party].

In mid-January 2007, the morning paper *La Razón* in La Paz published a photo which revealed the diversion of provisions and supplies belonging to the state Civil Defense body (that are destined for victims of natural disasters) to the farmers in the September 14th Plaza in Cochabamba.

It's been established that a former NAS agent (a DEA-financed anti-drug program) identified as Juan Carlos Chávez, who strangely functioned as an advisor to the Ministry of Justice, involved himself with Civil Defense without having the authorization to order the diversion of state resources. The photograph of the irregular act, taken by outsiders, was curiously published by a paper in La Paz, 650 kilometers from Cochabamba. Chávez was fired for the act and will have to make clear he is a former DEA agent exercising powerful influence inside the Ministry of Justice.

The media campaign to tarnish the indigenous mobilization in Cochabamba is part of a psychological war, CIA-style, and is one point in the separatist strategy headed from Santa Cruz by the still-prefect of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa.

The Balkanization of Bolivia seems to have begun.

This text was translated from the Spanish by Scott Campbell, who is a member of Tlaxcala, the network of translators for linguistic diversity, and editor of the blog <http://angrywhitekid.blogs.com/weblog>.

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