

## Pre and Post-Coup Honduras

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The Frente Nacional de Resistencia is leading the courageous struggle of the Honduran people. For 70 consecutive days the people of Honduras, from all walks of life, are confronting violent repression by the military and the police. They are peacefully, with a very coherent political and increasingly sophisticated organization, putting forward their demands. These include the restoration of the constitutional order in Honduras and the return of President Zelaya. As the situation is evolving the people are more and more pressing for a constituent assembly to re-found the constitution and the nation. They are saying that whether Zelaya returns or not, this has become the objective of the on-going resistance.

Now that the elections have been called by the coup perpetrators, the Frente Nacional de Resistencia has also called for the boycott of the elections. The non-recognition of the elections and the simultaneous continued mass movement in the streets for a new Honduras is a most important phase in the battle. Workers' and employees' unions, women activist groups, peasants, students, intellectuals and other sections of the society are all in the forefront. The Honduran putschists are hoping to legitimize the coup through the holding of the elections.

Political forces not connected with the military regime are also joining forces with the mass movement. The Resistance has gained so much prestige that it has succeeded in winning the adherence of a wide range of political forces. For example, on July 18 (over one and a half months ago), in an interview with Prensa Latina's Raimundo López, the presidential candidate (at that time) for the Partido de Unificación Democrática (UD) and current deputy César Ham stated that there is "a pre and post-coup Honduras." His statement, in very few words, crystallized the current situation in Honduras and provides the historical context. The UD has joined the Frente Nacional de Resistencia in the streets. In fact two of UD's leading members were assassinated by the military regime. On August 31, according to a Prensa Latina report, Ham and others UD members confirmed that they are boycotting the elections. Other non-traditional and even some sections of the traditional political forces are doing the same. "The grassroots movement," Zelaya said [as reported in *The Nation*, September 4, 2009], has only one purpose, the transformation of Honduras, including deep structural changes. "This movement is now very strong. It can never be destroyed," he said.[1] On September 5, when the people's resistance against the military coup was going on for 70 days, the Frente Nacional de Resistencia was analyzing its next actions.

Post-coup Honduras has now joined the movement that has been spreading like wild-fire across South America, even if its elected President Zelaya is not in the country at this time. This grass-roots South American movement represents a push in favour of people's power and against neo liberal policies and US domination. The goal is to use the ballot box in order

to bring about radical change in their respective countries. The election of constituent assemblies and the writing of new modern constitutions have already been accomplished in several countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. Others such as Nicaragua, El Salvador and Paraguay just to mention a few, have taken the path to re-found their nations. Cuba is the pioneer, even if change took place in entirely different historical conditions and with different means. The 1959 triumph of the Revolution and its resulting complete revolutionary transformation had its roots in the nineteenth century Cuban Mambisi tradition. Amongst other characteristics, it consisted of people writing their own constitutions as a Republic in Arms while Cuba was still a colony of Spain.

Honduras was known as an example of what the US deprecatingly and arrogantly described as a banana republic. Honduras is the third poorest nation in all of South America and the Caribbean. Honduras is highly illiterate as was the case in Bolivia before election of Evo Morales and the re-founding of the political system there. However, it is these people of Honduras who are now giving lessons to Washington as to what is needed, that is a new modern constitution.

The political and economic situation in the US is so bad that given its immense foreign debt even some American commentators refer, tongue-in-cheek of course, to the US as a banana republic. The US was the scene of two fraudulent elections victories under the Bush family. How is it that a program for health reform results in a strongly divided nation with citizens at odds with each other, while right-wing extremist opponents to the new health scheme are even threatening violence? While in theory slavery and official racial discrimination have been eliminated in favour of civil rights, racism is not only still rampant, but it is on the increase in the society. Americans of Latino origin are increasingly the victims of racist attacks from the major media, trickling down into the society. Racism is institutionalised. Even President Obama is the victim of right-wing racist threats and attempts at intimidation.

While there was a move to impeach former Vice-President Cheney (something which never was capable of being executed) for war crimes and lying to his fellow citizens in order to lead them into a war, there are now rumours that Cheney may be a candidate for the 2012 presidential elections! If Cheney turns out to be only a non-candidate, he is definitely leading the charge at this time for a return to Bush-era politics.

The Washington Post openly supports torture and coincides with the Cheney position.[2] The full story of September 11, 2001 is still to be revealed by the US government.

The US is the biggest arms and drugs dealer in the world. All of this and much more take place in the murky swamp in conformity with, and/or the violation of, the US Constitution.

The peoples in the south are advancing. Would not the most progressive and forward-thinking sections of United States society take this movement into account and thus reflect upon the need for a new constitution in the US itself which would assure the citizens control over their destiny and over foreign policy? (The same question applies to other countries in the north.)

The people of Honduras, for their part, are certainly for a constituent assembly and a new constitution: Poetic justice for the inhabitants of a "banana republic." During the period leading up to the coup, President Zelaya was leading his people towards a new situation. That is why he was ousted. However, post-coup Honduras has changed the country. The movement since June 28 is even more profound and going beyond pre-coup Honduras. This

country is now more than ever part of this vast movement in South America for new economic, anti neo-liberal policies and political institutions, while being against US domination, pillage of its natural resources, and installation and extension of military bases. Honduras may have its ups and downs in the near future, but in the long-run, the trend is irreversible - as it is throughout the south which is today rising up.

[1] Zelaya Speaks, by Tom Hayden

[http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090921/hayden\\_zelaya](http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090921/hayden_zelaya)

[2] How a Detainee Became An Asset:

Sept. 11 Plotter Cooperated After Waterboarding

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/28/AR2009082803874.html>

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