

Cocaine Front-Man Set To Take Over Bolivia

by Gretchen Small

Presidential and Congressional elections were held in Bolivia on June 30, but 15 days later, the only result yet known with certainty, is that no candidate or party won a mandate to govern. No Presidential candidate received even 25% of the vote. Worse, Evo Morales, the head of the coca-growers, an ally of Colombia's narco-terrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and pawn of megaspeculator George Soros's international dope support apparatus, won second place, with 21% of the vote.

The *New York Times* and other Anglo-American mouthpieces, portray Morales as an authentic "copper-skinned Indian" leader, whose election victory, combined with some 6% of the vote for the other coca-grower candidate, Felipe Quispe, signals an "Indian" resurgence across the region. Quispe is a lunatic, who cheered the Sept. 11 destruction of the World Trade Center and called for more such actions. He horrifies most Bolivians; but not the London *Financial Times*, which expounded in its Feb. 2-3, 2002 issue that Quispe "cannot be brushed aside as an extremist," but should be understood as a leader who intends "to turn Bolivia into an indigenous nation, and build an Indian brotherhood across the Andes."

Their skin may be darker than that of the financiers backing them, but this operation is anything but "indigenous" to Bolivia. In *EIR* of June 5, 1998, we exposed the existence of an international project, of Soros and foreign drug-legalization activists, to reduce Bolivia to a narco-terrorist war zone. The instrument of this foreign-run project against Bolivia, we reported at the time, was Evo Morales. It was this operation which helped fund Morales' various international travels, turning this two-bit local coca-grower thug into an international poster boy.

Among his international travels was a 1996 visit to southern Colombia, where he met with the FARC, the most sophisticated and well-trained narco-terrorist force—and its number-one cocaine cartel—in the Americas. That same year, he announced his intention to turn the Chapare, then the main coca-cultivation region in Bolivia, into a separate narco-state. "The Chapare will be a new version of the Mexican state of Chiapas, in the heart of South America," he said.

In 2000, he threatened he would turn all of Bolivia into a "mini-Colombia." It was around that time that reports began to surface that members of the FARC were in Bolivia, to train what Morales refers to as "a *cocalero* army."

Emboldened by the June election results, Morales now threatens to unleash a "popular insurrection," should his demands not be met. Those demands include the legalization of all cultivation of coca, and the right to trade it internationally.

U.S. Policy Must Change

Bolivia is located at the center of the South American continent. With Morales' election victory, the Soros project to seize the heartland of South America has entered its definitive phase. Without a change in U.S. policy toward the region as a whole, Bolivia is heading toward civil war and disintegration.

Not coincidentally, the same week as Morales' stunning election gains, the Alejandro Toledo government in Peru cut a deal with striking Peruvian coca-growers, to suspend the coca-eradication programs in that country. The announcement was made by Hugo Cabieses Cubas, an official of the government's anti-narcotics agency, Devida, who claimed that the programs were "too bureaucratic."

Cabieses is part of same Soros operation which runs Morales. In fact, Cabieses was arrested by Bolivian authorities, along with a dozen other Peruvian and Bolivian leaders caught planning actions against the Bolivian government, at an April 1995 meeting of the Andean Council of Coca Leaf Producers (CAPHC). Arrested also at the meeting, was CAPHC president Evo Morales.

Betrayal by the United States

Peru and Bolivia were once the two top producers of coca—from which cocaine is made—in the world. Both are extremely poor nations, but in the 1990s their leaders made the decision to drive the drug trade out. Had the United States not betrayed them, those nations could have done so.

After breaking the back of the narco-terrorist apparatus in the country, the Alberto Fujimori government in Peru had gone after coca cultivation. They reduced it, in a few years, by 70%—until Madeleine Albright's U.S. State Department teamed up with Soros to overthrow Fujimori in 2000.

After President Hugo Bánzer took office in 1997, the Bolivian government launched Operation Dignity, a systematic effort to drive out the drug trade by the end of his term, in 2002. At the time, Bolivia's role in the drug trade was no longer limited to coca-growing, but had penetrated every aspect of national life. Cocaine laboratories were proliferating, and drug use was rising. The government plan warned: "Either [drug trafficking in Bolivia] is destroyed immediately, and once and for all, or Bolivian society will have to live with it forever. . . . Efforts that go halfway will not lead to positive outcomes," but, rather, "will divide Bolivian society, and such a rupture could lead to fatal consequences for Bolivia of the 21st Century."

The government estimated that at least 80,000 people were directly involved in the drug trade. To free the country, the government knew it had to create economic development in the areas where the coca growing was to be wiped out: projects to provide energy, water, sanitation, health care, edu-

cation, roads, irrigation systems, and technical aid for agro-industry were needed. Bolivia would need international economic aid, and an active role by the government in fostering industry, protecting production, and regulating the economy.

President Bánzer died of lung cancer before the end of his term, in 2001, and was succeeded by his Vice President, Jorge Quiroga. The government, nonetheless, largely succeeded in wiping out illegal coca cultivation, as they had set out to do. But, they received no economic aid, and the World Bank, instead of allowing a protectionist policy, moved in a team of “free trade” fanatics, which produced great macroeconomic statistics, and less than nothing for the population. The drug trade was shut down, but no new production was fostered to replace it, at the same time that the global economic depression hit full force. Very few, if any, of the economic projects outlined in Operation Dignity ever saw the light of day. Thousands of families were left without food for their children—and became cannon fodder for the politics of rage of Soros’ man, Morales.

The Continent Is Shattering

Now, a new mass-based narco-terrorist force looms in the heart of South America, in a situation where there is not one government in the continent which can claim to have a secure hold on power.

Yet, Bolivia’s crisis is not unique, but rather proto-typical of the ungovernability which has been created across the continent by 20 years in which governments were not allowed to rule, except as they followed International Monetary Fund (IMF) dictates. The looting of national resources through privatization, free trade, and manipulation of currencies; the generalized drastic lowering of wages and salaries, in the name of “improving competitiveness”; the shutting down of health care, sanitation, education, and other public services, declared necessary to “reduce the bloated state”; and all the other scams imposed in the name of “neo-liberalism,” have driven *every* country to the point of disintegration.

The scope of the crisis is stunning. National protests which began on July 15 threaten to bring down the government of Paraguay. Uruguay is running headlong into national bankruptcy, of the same scale as that which felled Argentina in December 2001. Six months later, the Argentine crisis has reached the threshold of territorial disintegration; some Argentine governors now talk of setting up separate nations, with delusions they could thus cut “a better deal” with the international powers. Rational people in Chile and Brazil know they are not far from similar explosions.

Conditions in the Andean region are out of control. A million people joined protest marches in Venezuela, again, on July 11, demanding President Hugo Chávez get out, now. Chávez’s Jacobin forces have no intention of giving up power, but are preparing for civil war. Popular protests have once again begun to shut down Ecuador’s oil industry, and leaders of the radical indigenist movement in that nation promise that they will elect an “Ecuadoran Morales” in the next elections.

To extend his stay in office a bit longer after mass protests against privatization swept the country on July 12, Peru’s President Toledo sacrificed the two figures Wall Street demanded be in his government: Economics Minister Pedro Pablo Kuczynski and Prime Minister Roberto Dañino. Toledo admitted that he was “relaunching” his government, hoping that putting new faces on the same policies will do the trick.

Colombia’s President-elect Alvaro Uribe Vélez, the only President to receive an election mandate to govern—when he won over 50% of the vote in the May elections—may not have many municipal and local governments left to work with, by the time he assumes office on Aug. 7. Mayors, judges, prosecutors, and other officials are resigning en masse, after the FARC issued an ultimatum that all local officials nationwide quit, or be killed.

This is the situation in which Bolivia’s new President will assume office on Aug. 6. Who that shall be, is yet to be decided. Because no candidate won 50% of the vote, it falls to Bolivia’s Congress to elect the President from between the two front-runners. The candidate who came in first, with less than 22.5% of the vote, is former President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993-97), a millionaire mining baron, a leader of the Anglo-American bankers’ Inter-American Dialogue, and a strict IMF neo-liberal. If he be elected President again, and does not radically reorient economic policy to rebuilding the country, the popular rage will rally behind Morales, unless other, nationalist leadership steps forward.

The arrogant U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia, Manuel Rocha, recently demonstrated once again that arrogant “tough guy” policies can only backfire. Five days before the election, when Morales was getting 10% in the polls, at most, Rocha gave a speech, stating, “I want to remind the Bolivian electorate that, if they elect those who want Bolivia to become an exporter of cocaine again, that they will endanger U.S. aid.” Instead of intimidating voters, as he purportedly hoped, Rocha’s threat is widely credited with sending Morales’ vote soaring, especially among anti-American university students. Morales had sought to paint himself as a “nationalist” leader during the campaign, claiming that *he* was the candidate who would “drive the gringos [Americans] out,” including from all the formerly state-owned mines sold off to foreigners in the 1980s. After Rocha’s speech, a grinning Morales quipped that Rocha was serving as his campaign manager.

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