



Pre-Decisional Only

~~SECRET~~

Pre-Decisional Only

Operational Implied Tasks

- (U) Obtain and review applicable EAP, F-77 report, NEOPACK, and other NEO related plans and reports.
- (U) Be prepared to conduct Personnel Recovery operations, as requested.
- (U) Be prepared to receive and support augmentation forces as directed.
- (U) For NEO execution, JTF will:
- (U) Ensure family integrity is maintained during movement in accordance with existing policy. Noncombatant evacuee escorts will be appointed for all unaccompanied DOD dependent children, from point of embarkation to their final safe haven location.
- (U) Provide evacuee data to the Joint Reception Coordination Center (JRCC) with an information copy to CDR USSOUTHCOM, USTRANSCOM, and COMFORSCOM, FCJ1 (e.g., total number of evacuees, numbers carried, departure points, etc.).
- (U) Provide processing information and documentation to the extent possible to enable COMFORSCOM and associated Services or commands to plan for the reception and expeditious movement of evacuees to their final destination.
- ~~(S)~~ [Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(a) SOUTHCOM
- (U) Make contact with Chief of Mission immediately upon arrival and brief assigned tasks. Keep the COM informed of Force/JTF activity while in country. Coordinate JTF efforts with DOS, DAOs and American Embassies in the region.
- (U) Be prepared to work in parallel with other countries conducting NEO operations.
- (U) On order, close operations, FSB(s), and ISB(s).
- (U) Deactivate command and control structures established for this operation.

~~SECRET~~



EXHIBIT N

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~



20 JUL 2009

(U) Crisis Monitoring

Watch Condition Levels

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

Active Warning Problems

Honduras

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

(S//NF) Micheletti and Zelaya's representatives will continue to participate in mediation facilitated by Costa Rican President Arias. Demonstrations and civil unrest in Honduras will continue and may increase if Zelaya follows through on his promise to return (possibly 20 or 24 JUL). If Zelaya attempts to return or returns without a previously arranged compromise, violent clashes will almost surely occur. (as of 090720)

Responsive

Haiti

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

(C//REL to USA, ACGU) Illegal migration remains above three year norms (350 -450 people per month), but no mass migration event is imminent. Social protests in Port Au Prince will continue to test security forces, but currently, no direct threat exists to US persons. A collateral threat will exist in protest areas. (as of 090720)

AOF:

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

(U//EQUO) US personnel in USSOUTHCOM's Area of Focus (AOF) could be at risk of contracting the H1N1 Virus. The full extent of the H1N1 outbreak in USSOUTHCOM's AOF is undetermined due to the lack of diagnostic capabilities in the region. The governments of Argentina and Chile report rises in deaths and persons affected. Paraguay declared a nationwide state of emergency; Argentina declared a state of emergency in Buenos Aires Province. USG issued a travel alert for Argentina. (as of 090720)

SOUTHCOM

(U) Terrorism Warning Levels

DoD Terrorism Threat Level Definitions

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

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SOUTHCOM0783

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

Active Warning Problems

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) Regional (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

(S) (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

Islamic Extremist Regional (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

(S//NF) (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

SOUTHCOM

(U//FOUO) USSOUTHCOM established a regional pandemic influenza warning problem defined as a disease outbreak that could overwhelm regional healthcare facilities and instigate regional instability. USSOUTHCOM assumed (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

(C//REL TO USA, ACGU) (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c)

(U) Force Protection Warning Issues

NSTR

(U) Hot Items

(U) HONDURAS: Situation Update

Internal:

- (U) Negotiations between representatives of ousted President Zelaya and the de facto government continue; Costa Rican President Arias offered seven points to return Zelaya to power; Zelaya reportedly agrees; Micheletti reportedly disagrees

Responsive

CIA, SOUTHCOM (S//NF) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

• (S//NF) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

– (S//REL USA FVEY) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

– (S//NF) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

• (C//REL TO USA, ACGU) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

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~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

Responsive

CIA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)

DIA, CIA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)


(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)

DIA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

(S//NF)

CIA, DIA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

UNCLASSIFIED



Reuters

(U) Security forces check IDs at a check point near Catacamas, 18 JUL

External:

- (U) Open sources state the de facto government threatened to expel Venezuela's mission to Honduras, citing interference and meddling in Honduran affairs

- (C//REL TO USA, ACGU) (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d) CIA, DIA

CIA, DIA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)

CIA, DIA, NGA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, NGA, SOUTHCOM (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, NGA, SOUTHCOM

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

CIA, DIA, SOUTHCOM

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

• ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, SOUTHCOM

Force Protection:

• ~~(C//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, DIA, SOUTHCOM

• ~~(U//FOUO)~~

(b)(3):50 USC 403g

CIA

- (U) Nation-wide curfew continues from 2330-0430L until further notice
- ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ USMILGRP Tegucigalpa states the FPCON level remains at BRAVO; US Embassy, USMILGP and JTF-B personnel are exercising precautions and curtailing travel and appearances at public activities
- ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ All US military, DoD civilians, and contractors in Honduras continue to avoid known demonstrations and assembly areas

Responsive

~~(C//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ **MOST LIKELY SCENARIO 24-48 HRS:** No compromise. Sporadic small protests continue. No direct threat to US persons.

~~(C//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ **MOST DANGEROUS SCENARIO:** Zelaya unexpectedly returns without an agreement; security forces capture or kill him, inciting violent protests. Military forces reinforce the police and employ lethal force. Anti-US sentiment spikes putting US personnel (especially in Tegucigalpa and Soto Cano) at risk.

USSOUTHCOM PIR: Objective 2.1
USSOUTHCOM CCIB: 3.0 and 7.0

DIA

(Sources:)

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i)

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

CIA

(b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c)

CNN.com/World19 July 09; Yahoo.com/LatinAmerica 19 July 09)

NGA

DIA

(U) Terrorism, Illicit Trafficking and Crime

CLASSIFICATION UPGRADED BY STATE DEPT

(U) Tri-Border Area of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil (TBA) –

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

STATE

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

• ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

• ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

- ~~(S//NF)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

• ~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, SOUTHCOM

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SOUTHCOM0786

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(S//NF)~~
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(S//NF) Comment:~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

CIA

(Source: (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(U//FOUO) Trinidad & Tobago~~

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)

STATE CLASSIFICATION UPGRADED BY STATE DEPT

• ~~(S//NF)~~
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

• ~~(S//NF)~~
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(S//NF)~~
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(S//NF)~~
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

CIA

~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY) Comment:~~

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

(Source: (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

(U) Political-Military Issues

~~(U) Bolivia~~ (b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i)

• ~~(U)~~
(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i)

DIA

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

- (U) [Redacted] (b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i)
- (U) [Redacted] (b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i)
- (U) [Redacted] (b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i)

DIA

(C//REL TO USA, ACGU) Comment: [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i),Sec. 1.4(c)

[Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USCA 403-1(i),Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

STATE, DIA

(Sources: LAP20090714054001, LAP20090715031001, AMEMBASSY CARACAS 162144Z JUL 09, LAP20090717062002, (b)(3):10 USC 424

DIA

(S//NF) Colombia – [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

- (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)
- (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)
- (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)
- (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

CIA, DIA

(S//NF) Comment: [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

(Source: [Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):10 USC 424,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)

[Redacted] (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)

DIA

CIA, DIA

DIA

(U) Cuba/Dominican Republic – NAM Summit

- (U) On 15 JUL, Cuba's President Raul Castro arrived in Egypt for the 15th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit for Heads of States and Government
 - (U) Cuba passed NAM's presidency to Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

- (U) Raul appealed to NAM to tackle the financial crisis, which he alleged stems from the actions of rich nations
- (U) From 15-17 JUL, Dominican Republic's President Fernandez also participated in NAM's Summit, establishing diplomatic ties with the Palestinian Authority
 - (U) President Fernandez joined Cuba in highlighting the inadequacies in the financial assistance given by the international community to poorer nations
 - (U) On 14 JUL, Fernandez visited Israel to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties

(U) Comment: Although the summit was intended to be a means for developing nations to solve common problems, [redacted (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)] Raul used the event to attempt to gain foreign investment, while Fernandez continued to leverage every possible opportunity to increase diplomatic and economic partnerships for his nation. Both Presidents will continue to court any country with investment potential.

STATE
CLASSIFICATION
UPGRADED BY
STATE DEPT

(Sources: The Star Online, "Developing world leaders want fair economic system", 15 JUL 09; China View, "Cuban President at NAM summit calls for renewal of Int'l financial system", 15 JUL 09; Dominican Today, "Fernandez flies to St. Kitts & Nevis for Petrocaribe Summit ", 12 JUN 09 Dominican Today, "In Israel, Fernandez nixes joining Chavez's alliance", 14 JUL 09; Dominican Today, "Chavez to visit Dominican Republic amid concerns of growing oil influence ", 15 JUN 09; Dominican Today, "Fernandez flies to St. Kitts & Nevis for Petrocaribe Summit ", 12 JUN 09; Dominican Today, "Dominican president: coup to last like "a cockroach in a chicken coop", 30 JUN 09; Dominican Today, "Dominican Republic strikes "diplomatic balance" between Israel and Palestine", 15 JUL 09;)

(S//NF) Haiti - [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)] CIA

- **(S//NF)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)] CIA
- **(C)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c),Sec. 1.4(d)] STATE, CIA
- **(S//NF)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)]
- **(S//NF)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)]
- **(S//NF)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)] CIA
- **(S//NF)** [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)]

(S//NF) Comment: [redacted (b)(1),Sec. 1.4(d)] STATE, CIA

(Sources: [redacted] AMEMBASSY Reporting, DTG: 291914Z MAY 09; AMEMBASSY Reporting, DTG: 202018Z MAR 09; [redacted (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403g,Sec. 1.4(c)] CIA

(U) Counterintelligence Issues

NSTR

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

(U) Cyber, C2, Information Operations Issues

NSTR

(U) Collection Requirements

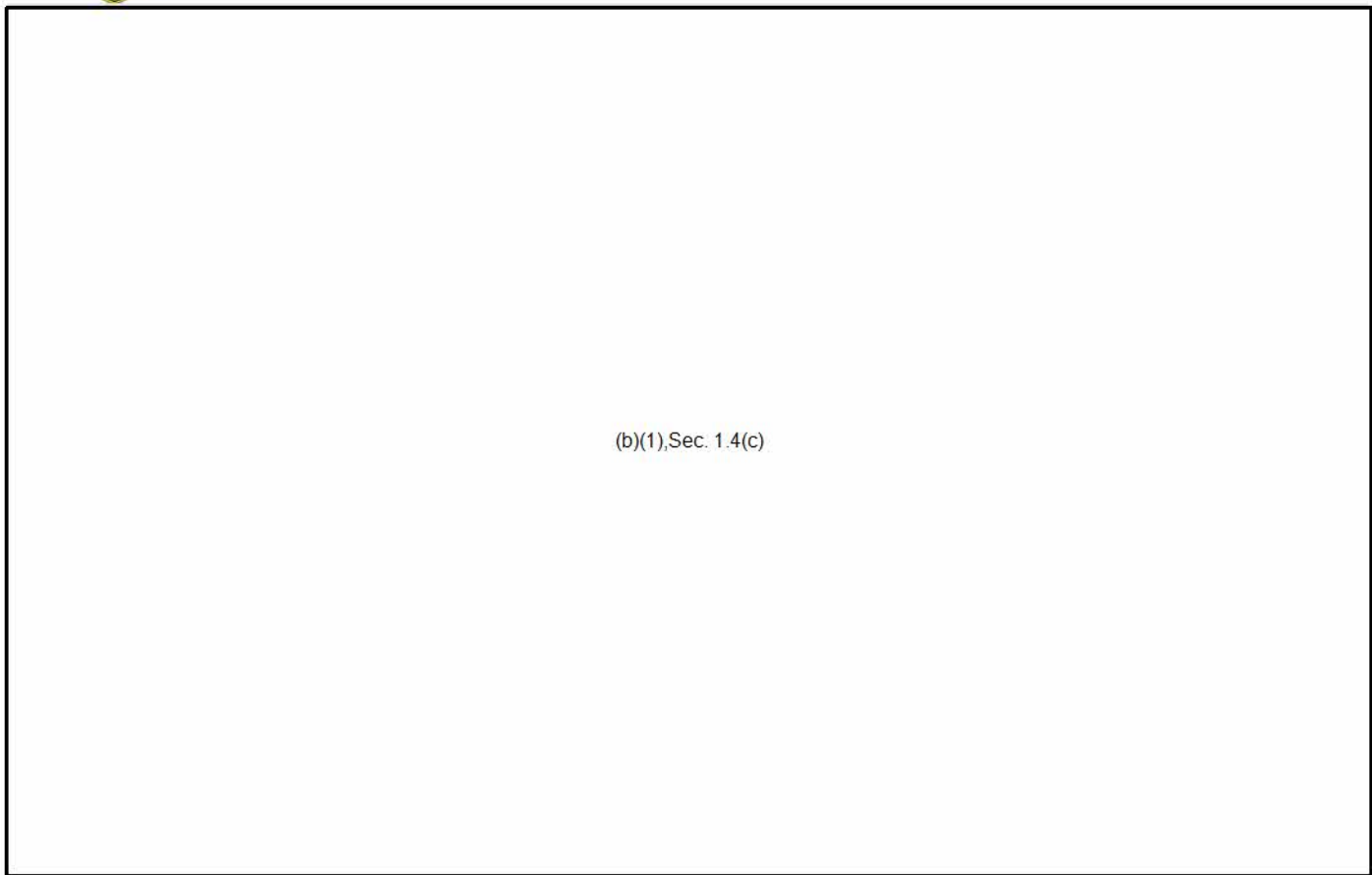
(Colombia Daily, GWOT Tuesdays, AOF Wednesdays)

CLASSIFICATION: ~~S//REL TO ACQU//20340719~~



SOUTHCOM Daily ISR-20JUL09

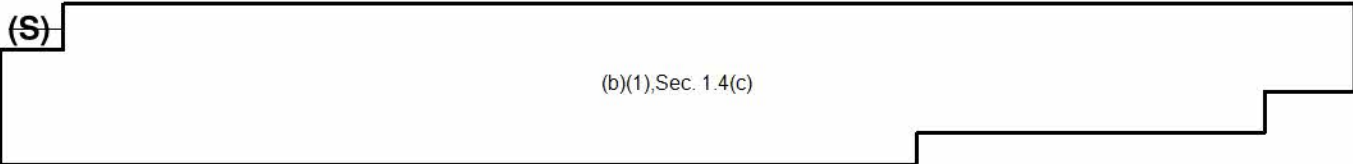
(Information current as of 191900ZJUL09)



(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

NGA

(U) Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance



(S)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~



(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c)

NGA

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~~SECRET//NOFORN~~~~(S)~~

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(a),Sec. 1.4(c)

09 Feb – 31 Jul
 01 Jun – 31 Jul
 20 – 25 Jul
 21 – 27 Jul
 23 Jul
 01 Aug – 30 Sep
 04 – 11 Aug
 05 – 15 Aug
 19 – 28 Aug

(b)(1),Sec. 1.4(c)

SOUTHCOM

(U) Theater Intel Engagement Activities (Next 30 Days):

27 – 30 Jul (U) Paraguay Vice Minister of Defense and Paraguayan J2 visit to USSOUTHCOM, JIATF-S, and Ft. Huachuca
 27 – 31 Jul (U) Maritime Intelligence Analysis Seminar Ph 1 to Guatemalan Armed Forces
 10 – 14 Aug (U) Central America Regional Intelligence Conference (CRIC) in Dom Rep

Significant Dates (60 Days)

20 Jul COL: Independence Day
 26 Jul CUB: Anniversary of the birth of the Revolution and JUL 26th Revolution
 28 Jul PER: Independence Day
 28 Jul VEN: Hugo Chavez' 55th birthday
 01 Aug TTO: Emancipation Day
 03 Aug GRN: Emancipation Day
 06 Aug BOL: Independence Day
 07 Aug COL: Battle of Boyaca Day
 10 Aug ECU: Independence Day
 10 Aug ECU: UNASUR meeting

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SOUTHCOM0792

EXHIBIT O

MILGROUP-Honduras Daily SITREP, 3 Aug 09

1) SITUATION

RESPONSIVE

Security:

- No reported demonstrations today. The leader of the pro-Zelaya “Frente Nacional” announced 7 consecutive days of marches to begin 5 Aug from various cities around HND.
- (b)(6) confirmed shooting death of HND citizen Pedro Pablo Hernandez by a HND soldier at a checkpoint in Ojo de Agua, El Paraiso, HND near the NIC border. Shooting reportedly took place approx 0100-0200L, 3 Aug when the vehicle carrying the victim failed to stop at a police/military check point. HND Natl Police Director reported to the HND press that Mr Hernandez was not thought to be connected to demonstrations and that the soldier who shot him was arrested and sent to the local court house.
- No curfew for most of HND. 1800-0600L curfew in effect for eastern border districts of El Paraiso and Choluteca – though portions of these areas are under a virtual 24-hour curfew.

SOUTHCOM

Political:

- Pres. Zelaya is reportedly in Mexico today and scheduled to meet with Mexican President Calderon 4 Aug.
- HND press reports de-facto president Michelleti intends to “break isolation” by inviting international community leaders to Honduras. He also announced that Pres Zelaya “will never return to power because he has declared mediation a failure.” (El Heraldo)
- HND press reports the OAS has discussed sending a delegation of Latin American leaders to Honduras in order to help reach a solution to the HND political situation. The OAS will reportedly debate the issue 5 Aug.

2) COMMANDERS COMMENTS

- Contingency Site Survey Team members (USARSO, NAVSO, AFSOUTH, JTF-Bravo and MilGp) conducted in-briefs and mission planning together with Embassy RSO personnel.
- MAJ (b)(6), Southcom STFHQ arrived today to replace Mr (b)(6) as TDY contingency planner. (b)(6) returns to Miami 5 Aug and has done a magnificent job in the week and a half he has been here.
- (b)(7)(E) for US military personnel in Honduras. Travel restrictions for the MILGP and US EMB remain in effect with no surface travel authorized outside of Tegucigalpa.

SOUTHCOM

3) ACCOUNTABILITY: All MilGp perm party, families and TDY psn are accounted for, safe and exercising appropriate security measures.

NON-RESPONSIVE

(b)(7)(F) SOUTHCOM

MILGP

(b)(7)(F) SOUTHCOM

(b)(7)(F)

NON-RESPONSIVE

CORPS OF ENGINEERS

(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

TAT

(b)(7)(F)

OEF-CCA

(b)(7)(F)

Other TDY = (b)(7)(F)

4) SCHEDULED MIL-TO-MIL EVENTS

2009

(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

NON-RESPONSIVE

(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

2010

(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

(b)(6) sends SOUTHCOM

EXHIBIT P

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~



~~(S)~~ Honduras: Who Authorized Zelaya's Removal from the Country?

16 October 2009

~~(S)~~ **Executive Summary:** (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) SOUTHCOM

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) SOUTHCOM

~~(S)~~ **Assessment:** (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.

By: (b)(6) SOUTHCOM

(U) Procedures to Remove a Honduran President

(U) In 2003, Congress repealed Constitutional Article 205 Section 15, which provided a mechanism for the National Congress to impeach a President. It did not, however, repeal Congress' right to summon the President and to investigate his/her actions. The constitutional change left a void as to what procedures were available for Congress following the completion of a Congressional investigation. This (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d) STATE DEPT. gave the judiciary, through Article 313 Section 2 and Article 304, the or legal means to remove a sitting president.¹

(U) For the judiciary to remove a President, the following sequence of events must occur:

1. The Public Ministry files a criminal case with the Honduran Supreme Court
2. The Supreme Court appoints a Magistrate to hear the case and if the Magistrate determines the case is valid, it is moved to trial
3. A trial commences with the President having full due legal process and the right to legal representation

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

4. A ruling by the Supreme Court against the President separates him/her from office²

(U) Timeline and Authority to Arrest Zelaya

(U) On 26 JUN, the Chief Prosecutor filed a criminal complaint before the Supreme Court of Justice, requesting the arrest of Zelaya under an accusation of the crimes of acting against the established form of government, treason against the country, abuse of authority, and usurpation of functions.³ This act fulfilled the first requirement in the process to remove Zelaya.

(U) On the same day, the Supreme Court heard the Chief Prosecutor's complaint against Zelaya and accepted the case, fulfilling the second requirement. The Supreme Court subsequently appointed one of its justices to monitor the process; he later issued the arrest and raid warrant. This completed the second requirement.⁴

(U) After completion of the first two requirements and in accordance with Article 304, the Supreme Court was authorized to arrest President Zelaya. To aid in this endeavor, the Supreme Court, under Article 306, requested assistance of the public forces (*fuera publica*) to execute the arrest. Authority was extended to CHOD Vasquez, to carry out the arrest of Zelaya on 28 JUN.⁵

~~(S)~~ [Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.

(U) Most importantly, upon the arrest of Zelaya, the public forces were constitutionally bound to deliver the President for judicial processing. Instead, HOAF transported Zelaya to San Jose, Costa Rica. This expatriation directly violated Article 102, which safeguards any Honduran citizen from removal to a foreign country.⁷

SOUTHCOM DIA STATE DEPT.

(U) Who to Blame and Why the Exile?

~~(S//REL TO USA, AGCU)~~ [Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)
[Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)
[Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)
[Redacted] (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d)

SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.

(U) Soon after the Zelaya exile operation, HOAF's senior legal advisor, Col. Herberth Bayardo Inestroza, acknowledged in a press interview that HOAF had broken the law by removing Zelaya from the country.¹⁰

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

(U) When pressed for reasons why Zelaya was exiled, de facto President Roberto Micheletti publicly affirmed the decision was based upon the need to protect Zelaya's life and prevent violence. Some legal analysts opine the decision was justified by a legal precept known as a "state of need."¹¹

~~(U//FOUO)~~ On 05 JUL, open sources reported the Public Ministry was investigating HOAF's actions in arresting and deporting Zelaya and that the Supreme Court had asked HOAF to explain the circumstances that motivated his forcible exile.¹²

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d) [STATE DEPT.]

~~(S//NF)~~ (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) [SOUTHCOM]
(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) [SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.]
(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) [SOUTHCOM]
(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

~~(S)~~ (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(c), Sec. 1.4(d) [SOUTHCOM STATE DEPT.]

Derived from: Multiple Sources
Declassify On: 25x1-Human (20341016)

¹ (U); Directorate of Legal Research for Foreign, Comparative, and International Law; Honduras: Constitutional Law Issues; Aug09; (UNCLASSIFIED); Report for Congress

² (U); AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa; 022012ZJUL09; Cable 00527; (U); Honduran Coup Timeline; (UNCLASSIFIED); Embassy Cable

³ (U); Expediente Judicial, Requirimiento Fiscal, www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/ejes/communicados; 5AUG09; (UNCLASSIFIED)

⁴ (U); Directorate of Legal Research for Foreign, Comparative, and International Law; Honduras: Constitutional Law Issues; Aug09; (UNCLASSIFIED); Report for Congress

⁵ (U); Directorate of Legal Research for Foreign, Comparative, and International Law; Honduras: Constitutional Law Issues; Aug09; (UNCLASSIFIED); Report for Congress

⁶ ~~(S)~~; AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa; 240023ZJUL09; Cable 00645; Open And Shut: The Case Of The Honduran Coup; (CONFIDENTIAL); Embassy Cable

⁷ (U); Directorate of Legal Research for Foreign, Comparative, and International Law; Honduras: Constitutional Law Issues; Aug09; (UNCLASSIFIED); Report for Congress

~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ (b)(1), Sec 1.4(c) [SOUTHCOM DIA]
(b)(3): 10 USC §424
~~(S//REL TO USA, ACGU)~~ (b)(1), Sec 1.4(c)
(b)(3): 10 USC §424

¹⁰ ~~(S)~~; AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa; 240023ZJUL09; Cable 00578; (C); Open and Shut: The Case of the Honduran Coup; (CONFIDENTIAL); Embassy Cable

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

¹¹ (U); OSC Reston; 082215Z OCT 09; LAP 20091007025001; (U); Honduran Armed Forces Chief Says Military Willing to Submit to Law; (UNCLASSIFIED); News Report

¹² ~~(C)~~; AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa; 240023Z JUL 09; Cable 00578; (C); Open and Shut: The Case of the Honduran Coup; (CONFIDENTIAL); Embassy Cable

¹³ ~~(C)~~; AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa; 042033Z SEP 09; Cable 00891; (C); Justice for my Enemies: De Facto Government Vigorously Pursues Prosecutors Against Zelaya Team; (CONFIDENTIAL); Embassy Cable

¹⁴ ~~(S)~~.

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

SOUTHCOM

¹⁵ (U); OSC Reston; 082215Z OCT 09; LAP 20091007025001; (U); Honduran Armed Forces Chief Says Military Willing to Submit to Law; (UNCLASSIFIED); News Report

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~

EXHIBIT Q

MILGROUP-Honduras Daily Sitrep, 29 Jun 2009

RESPONSIVE

1) Situation: Following Sunday (28 Jun) Coup directed by the HND Congress, the HND Armed Forces took President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya Rosales into custody and transported him by air to Costa Rica. In the past 24 hours, Zelaya moved to Nicaragua where he is now attending a meeting with Central American heads of state. President of Congress Roberto Micheletti was sworn in as President of the Republic of Honduras though has not been recognized by the UN, EU, OAS or the US as the legitimate head of state. Micheletti and his new administration are attempting to secure power and "restore order" to Honduras as well as make their "case" to Hondurans and the international community. There are some demonstrations on-going in Tegucigalpa, reportedly mostly peaceful.

2) Accountability: (b)(7)(F)

NON-RESPONSIVE

MILGP
(b)(7)(F)

Corps of Engineers
(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

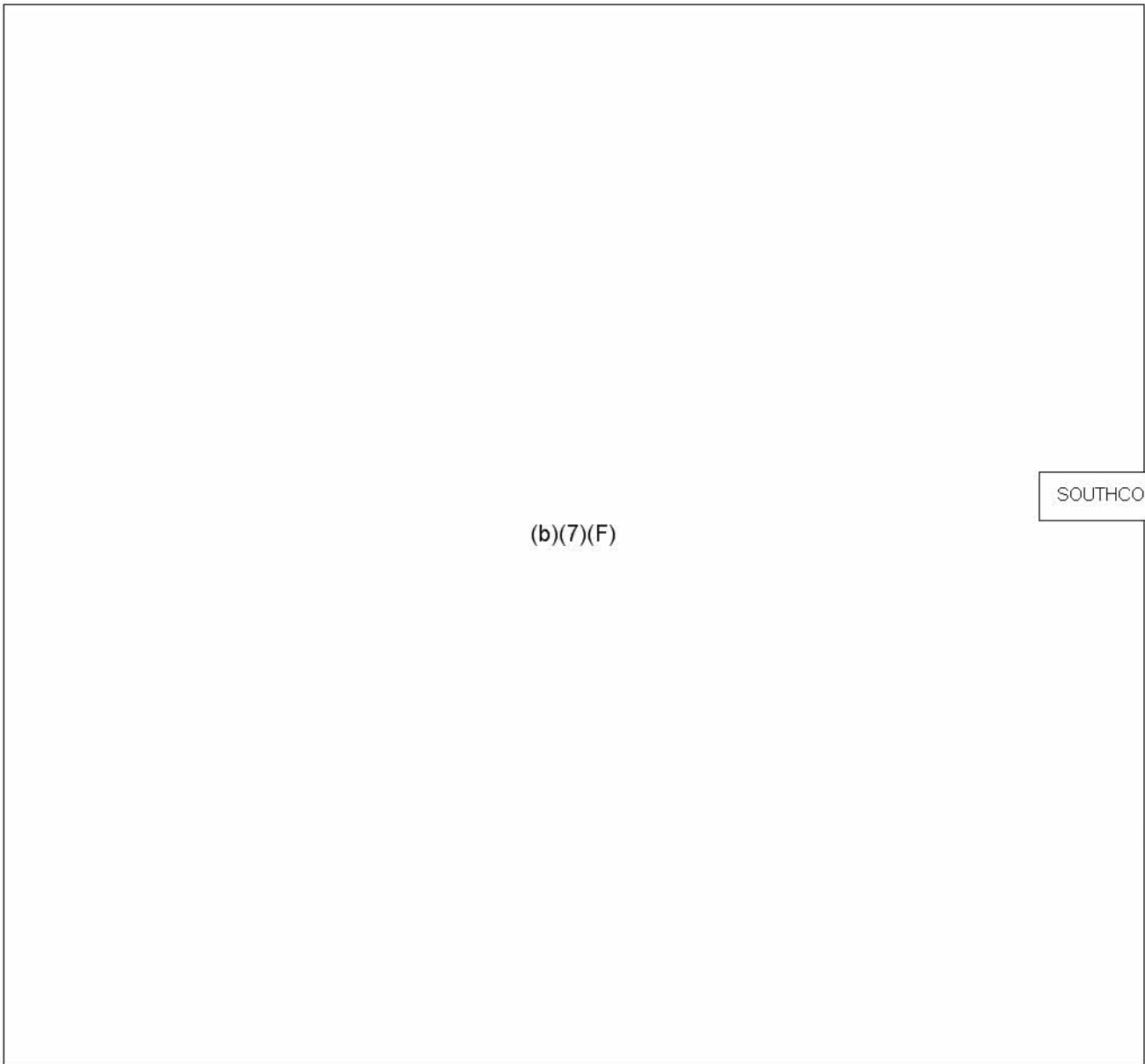
TAT
(b)(7)(F)

OEF-CCA
(b)(7)(F)

Other TDY
(b)(7)(F)

3) Planned Mil to Mil Events through Sep 09:
(b)(7)(F)

NON-RESPONSIVE



(b)(7)(F)

SOUTHCOM

4) Commanders Comments:

Situation in Tegucigalpa and the country is largely peaceful with some protests and demonstrations. All MILGP perm party (inc families) and TDY are accounted for and are exercising appropriate extra security measures. All Mil-to-Mil activities have been curtailed pending further guidance from Southcom and DoS. Meanwhile, we continue to plan all MIL-to-MIL activities pending SC and Ambassador guidance. We are currently evaluating planned SC CDR visit in July and discussing with Ambassador. We desire not to cancel at this time but will provide a recommendation beginning of next week with SC CDR concurrence. MILGP is participating in all Embassy Emergency Action Committee meetings.

RESPONSIVE

(b)(6)

Sends

SOUTHCOM

NON-RESPONSIVE

EXHIBIT R



UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

USSOUTHCOM HEADLINE NEWS

DOCUMENT #3

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

USSOUTHCOM *Headline News* publication is a daily (duty day) compilation of published articles and commentary concerning significant defense and defense-related national security issues as pertains to the AOF. These publications aim to represent how the public, Congress and the press see military and defense programs and issues. It is an internal management tool intended to serve the informational needs of senior SOUTHCOM officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. This product is prepared by the US Southern Command Public Affairs Office. The use of these articles does not reflect official endorsement. Story numbers indicate order of appearance only.

SOUTHCOM RELATED ARTICLES

SOUTHCOM – Continuing Promise 2009

1. U.S. Mission Receives Keys To The City

Source: La Prensa Grafica

06/29/2009

By Carlos Montes

[Note: This article was originally reported in Spanish. Translation provided by The Rendon Group].

The municipality of La Union, on occasion of the 144th anniversary of the city, honored the Captain of the hospital ship USNS Comfort, Thomas Negus. The mayor, Osmar Ovidio Cruz, presented Negus with the key to the city in acknowledgement of the support from the "Continuing Promise 2009" mission. This is the first time that the keys to the city have been presented to a United States representative.

Mayor Cruz thanked the crew for the medical assistance given to hundreds of Salvadoran patients. "On behalf of all Salvadorans, of the people of La Union, we want to thank you for including La Union in your humanitarian mission. Thank you friends and all medical personnel on board for restoring hope to all those who have entrusted their lives in your hands," he said.

Afterwards, Captain Negus thanked the people of La Union on behalf of the crew of the USNS Comfort. "Our presence here in La Union is a demonstration of our commitment to our neighbors in the region," he added.

After receiving the keys to the city, Captain Negus presented Mayor Cruz with a plaque in appreciation for all the assistance received from the local government in carrying out this humanitarian mission. Cruz added that the USNS Comfort's visit will be remembered as an historical event, of the same caliber as the visit of President Herbert Hoover in 1928, when he visited the region to offer international cooperation.

GUANTANAMO

2. White House Stands By Guantánamo Closure Date

Source: Miami Herald

07/01/2009

By Miami Herald Staff Report

The White House is still committed to emptying the prison camps at Guantánamo of war-on-terror detainees within President Barack Obama's first year in office.

"Absolutely," spokesman Robert Gibbs replied Monday to a reporter's question of whether a Jan. 20 detention center closure date "is within reach."

The Pentagon today houses some 229 detainees from about 20 nations, about a dozen of whom face military trial. More than 50 others have been cleared for release but cannot return to their nations of birth because they might be tortured there as devout Muslims or for the stigma of having been held at Guantánamo.

"We're making progress on what I think everybody understood and believes is a very complicated issue," Gibbs said at the White House press briefing, noting that European nations have been stepping forward and agreeing to resettle some Guantánamo captives.

Moreover, he noted Bermuda recently agreed to take four Muslims from China belonging to the Uighur ethnic group, breaking a deadlock there, and reports have indicated another 13 Uighurs might be sent to Palau.

Still unclear is whether a State Department envoy assigned to negotiate transfers has made any progress on a search for a safe, reliable detention site for up to 100 Yemeni detainees among the 229 men at the prison camps in remote southeast Cuba.

OTHER AOF RELATED ARTICLES

BELIZE

3. Belize Issues Support For Ousted Honduran President

Source: Channel 7 Daily News – Belize

06/30/2009

The Government of Belize has issued a statement saying it supports Honduran President Manuel Zelaya who was ousted in a coup on Sunday. The statement says, "Belize, in full solidarity with SICA member states, recognizes President Zelaya as the only constitutional president of Honduras and demands his immediate reinstatement."

Support for president Zelaya has come from throughout the Americas, most prominently, the Alba nations, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua, as well as the US and the Organization of the American States. Secretary General of the OAS, José Miguel Insulza, was very firm in his statement declaring, "we will not accept a return to the past in the continent," and "in our region, military taken part in coups are not accepted." The OAS has called a special emergency session of all member states tomorrow and Belize's Foreign Minister Wilfred Elrington is expected to attend.

Yesterday soldiers stormed into the president's palace in Honduras' capital and forced president Zelaya, into exile in Costa Rica. Zelaya was trying to amend the constitution to allow re-election and the military and judiciary opposed it. Their decision to oust him has sparked crisis and turmoil throughout the Americas as the coup is being strongly condemned. While regional leaders are all demanding the reinstatement of Zelaya, the Honduran Supreme Court and National Congress both support the military's actions, and claims they were defending democracy.

Amidst the chaos, a new interim president was sworn in, Roberto Micheletti. When we tried to contact the Honduran Ambassador here in Belize, he was unavailable for comment until Monday of next week.

The last census showed that persons born in Hondurans form the second largest bloc of Belize's foreign born population.

BRAZIL

4. Brazilian Ambassador Not To Return To Honduras

Source: Xinhua – China News Agency

06/30/2009

Editor: Zhang Xiang

RIO DE JANEIRO -- The Brazilian ambassador will not return to Honduras unless its ousted president retakes power, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

The ministry said the ambassador, Brian Michael Fraser Neele, who is in vacation, will remain in Brazil to show the Brazilian government's disapproval of the Honduran new government, which was set up on Sunday after President Manuel Zelaya was deposed.

Earlier on Monday, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva condemned the coup, saying his country will not recognize any Honduran government but that led by Zelaya.

In his weekly radio show "Breakfast with the President," Lula said that solving problems via coup is something unacceptable in Latin America.

"We cannot allow a military coup in Latin America in the 21st century," he said. "We must demand the return of the democratically elected government, or this will become a trend again."

Lula said Zelaya must return to his position as he won the elections, otherwise Brazil will not establish any sort of relations with Honduras.

The military coup in Honduras has triggered worldwide condemnation.

5. Air France Probe Complicated As Black Box Sound Emitters Fade

Source: Bloomberg News

06/30/2009

By Gregory Viscusi and Andrea Rothman

Investigators of the Air France crash in the Atlantic Ocean that killed 228 people may find it tougher to determine the cause of the accident as sound emitters from the plane's data recorders start running out of power.

The Brazilian military ended its sea and air search for wreckage from Flight AF447 on June 26, potentially leaving investigators with all the evidence they will ever get. A search for the recorders, dubbed black boxes and guaranteed to transmit signals for 30 days after the June 1 crash, will continue.

"If they don't find the black boxes, there's lot of sleuthing they can do that will give them a lot of indications on how the airplane broke up," said Hans Weber, chief executive officer of San Diego, California-based Tecop International Inc., who has advised the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration.

Experts said the Airbus SAS A330-200's final transmissions may be enough for officials to figure out why the plane went down while flying from Rio de Janeiro to Paris early June 1.

The plane, which was flying over a mid-ocean area not covered by flight-control radar, transmitted automatic messages shortly before crashing that indicated that its speed sensors were malfunctioning. The flight recorders could help determine possible links between flawed measurements and the crash.

"They will use all information provided by debris and corpses and I'm sure they'll run lots of simulator runs," Weber said in an interview.

Submarines Searching

A nuclear submarine and research mini-submarine from France and two Dutch tugboats equipped with U.S. Navy listening devices are trolling the Atlantic to detect beeps that the recorders emit every second once they're detached from data systems in a crash. The waters being searched range from 864 meters (0.5 mile) to 4,606 meters deep, according to the French Aviation Accidents Investigation Bureau, or BEA.

The bureau doesn't intend to call off its search this week, said Martine Del Bono, a spokeswoman. "The black boxes are guaranteed to transmit for 30 days but that doesn't mean they may not keep going beyond that," Del Bono said. "We will keep up the search as long as there is reasonable hope."

Flight data recorders can still be found long after they stop emitting sounds, Captain John Cox, a member of the flight operations group at the London-based Royal Aeronautical Society, said in an interview.

"The window is getting narrower, but I believe in the high level of expertise of the French navy," Cox said.

Embedded

The mini-submarine involved in the Flight 447 search recovered a flight recorder of an Aerolinee Itavia DC-9 from the floor of the Mediterranean Sea in 1991, 11 years after the single-aisle plane crashed.

The Flight 447 recorders, which register electronic data as well as the pilots' conversations, are probably still embedded in a chunk of the plane's fuselage, meaning the submarines can use their sonar to search for large metal pieces, Cox said.

"It's unlikely that black box is lying all alone on some ocean floor," Cox said.

Even without recorders, investigators will examine the plane's last automated messages, the state of the debris, where it was found and the condition of the recovered bodies, as well as previous incidents with A330s, Cox and Weber said.

"You look at pieces of debris and infer what forces acted on them by way they are ripped apart or distorted," Weber said. "You look at size of debris pieces, you look at the distribution of the debris."

Wreckage Spread

Wreckage being spread over several fields, and bodies being found with broken bones and without clothes, point to a mid-air breakup. Only once they've determined how the plane came apart can investigators work backwards to deduce the cause.

Other incidents on A330s could provide clues about failures of the plane's speed sensors, Cox said.

U.S. transportation safety investigators said on June 26 that they're looking into two incidents in the past five weeks when A330s lost speed and altitude information while in flight. A Miami-to-San Paulo flight on May 21 by TAM SA, Brazil's biggest airline, and flight on June 23 by Delta Air Lines Inc.'s Northwest Airlines between Hong Kong and Tokyo momentarily lost data, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

A Qantas Airways Ltd. plane flying from Singapore to Perth, Australia, plunged mid-flight Oct. 7, injuring more than 70 passengers and crew, because of an onboard computer fault, according to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

Brazilian Decision

Brazilian officials halted their search for Flight 447 after collecting 51 bodies and 600 airplane parts. The last body was found June 11, while the debris had drifted 150 kilometers north during the four days that most of the remains were plucked from the sea, the BEA said at its last press conference June 17. Investigators have yet to find conclusive evidence on what caused the crash, Paul-Louis Arslanian, the head of the BEA, said at the time.

"From the very beginning, the BEA always seemed to be working on the assumption that they would not be finding everything," said Pierre Sparaco, who has written a dozen aviation books, including histories of Airbus and the Concorde supersonic airliner.

The BEA is required to make a statement within a month of an accident, and is scheduled to issue a preliminary report July 2.

"I suspect that what the BEA will say won't advance our understanding of the accident even slightly," said David Learmount, a former Royal Air Force pilot and air-safety editor at Flight International magazine. "Since their last statement, they have found nothing that tells them anything that they didn't know already, and they have told us everything they know."

Terrorism is a very unlikely explanation for the Air France crash, the Royal Aeronautical Society's Cox said.

"Planes that explode in mid-air don't have time to send those sort of error messages for the next four minutes," he said.

COLOMBIA

6. No US Military Base In Colombia: Bermudez

Source: Colombia Reports

06/30/2009

By Adriaan Alsema

There will be no United States military base in Colombia, the country's Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez said Tuesday.

Ever since Ecuador expelled the U.S. from Manta, from where the U.S. Military conducts operations in its fight against drug trafficking, rumors were that the base could be moved to Colombia, a close ally of the U.S. in the war on drugs.

But according to Bermude, "nothing was said" about the subject in the meeting between Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama Monday "and to be perfectly clear, there will no new U.S. base in Colombia."

The United States did already earmark US\$46 million to expand its activities at Palanquero Air Base north of Colombia's capital Bogotá.

CUBA

7. What's In A Spy Suspect's Bedroom?

Source: **Miami Herald**

07/01/2009

By Lesley Clark

A peek inside the apartment of husband-and-wife spy suspects reveals a shortwave radio, a sailing guide to Cuban waters -- and now a copy of *The Spy's Bedside Book*, according to new court documents in the case.

The filings in the case of the Washington couple accused of spying for Cuba for almost three decades paint a Cold War-esque picture of their lives.

Investigators found a copy of the spy-lore book in the apartment of Walter Kendall Myers and his wife, Gwendolyn. The 1957 anthology was compiled by *Our Man In Havana* author Graham Greene -- a former British intelligence officer -- and brother Hugh.

"It's a good read," said Peter Earnest, a 35-year CIA operations officer and executive director of the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C. "I'm not sure what other significance we can attach to the book."

The latest documents -- which provide more details on how the federal government believes the husband and wife operated as a spy team -- were filed as federal prosecutors argue against releasing the Myerses from jail until trial.

"The Myers are clandestine Cuban agents who have contemplated escape from the United States in the past," Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon Michael Harvey wrote in a court filing, sections of which were redacted. "They continue to contemplate it. . . ."

A federal judge last month granted a request by prosecutors to keep some information in the case secret if it is deemed to be classified.

HOUSE ARREST

The Myerses, who pleaded not guilty last month to charges of conspiracy, wire fraud and acting as illegal agents of Cuba, filed documents arguing for house arrest with electronic surveillance. But Harvey suggests the duo -- who he says have used fake names and documents to travel to Cuba in the past -- have "significant means to finance their escape."

"Now, faced with an indictment that seeks their imprisonment for the rest of their lives . . . the defendants have a very strong motivation to flee to Cuba, the country that they call 'home,'" he wrote. He added that if the couple escapes to Cuba or its equivalent of an embassy in Washington, "they will be gone for good" because the United States has neither an extradition treaty nor diplomatic relations with Cuba.

As for their offer to post a bond as security against absconding, Harvey writes that for the Myerses, "it has never been about the money."

"The FBI's investigation has revealed that the Myers[es] were not motivated by money to serve as clandestine agents for Cuba but by communist ideology," he said, adding that the couple has more than \$600,000, not from Cuba, but through an inheritance.

Given a choice between prison or being greeted as heroes in Cuba, Harvey writes, "Leaving behind a money bond is highly unlikely to weigh heavily in their calculus."

He argues that during four hotel meetings with an undercover FBI source, the couple "admitted to essentially every material fact the government will need to prove them guilty of the charges they now face."

The documents also provide greater detail on how Kendall Myers, a former State Department employee with top secret clearance, allegedly disclosed U.S. information to Cuba.

According to the court record, Myers told the FBI that he typically memorized information or took notes on documents and put the notes in his office safe. On certain occasions, he took classified documents home. Gwendolyn Myers would then "process the documents page-by-page" and Kendall Myers would return them to the State Department the next day.

The government says federal guidelines suggest Gwendolyn Myers could face up to 17 years in prison, and Walter Myers could be sentenced to 19 years.

The court filing notes that Kendall Myers was convicted in December 1976 of negligent homicide in Washington, D.C., and that under federal sentencing guidelines, the conviction would be a factor since it happened within 10 years of the beginning of his spy career. The Washington Post reported last month that, in 1975, Myers crashed his car in Washington, killing a 16-year-old girl.

The couple last month appealed a federal magistrate's ruling that they be jailed until trial. U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton has said he will consider their request for house arrest and may grant a hearing to listen to arguments.

Harvey argued that when defendants have been charged with espionage, "courts have regularly found that there are no conditions that will assure the foreign agent's appearance." He cited the case of a Bulgarian trade official whom a court kept jailed, arguing that "any country that is an enemy of the United States is a possible haven."

'CURIOUS' REQUEST

The Myerses offered to serve house arrest at least 20 miles from the Cuban government's U.S. Interests Section, which is 2.6 miles from their Washington apartment. But Harvey called the request "curious."

"Any case wherein the defendants concede that they may need a buffer-zone between themselves and a safe harbor outside the jurisdiction of this court so as to give the FBI a 'fighting chance' to catch them if they decide to flee, is plainly not one wherein pre-trial release should be permitted," Harvey wrote.

EL SALVADOR

8. Salvador Closes Embassy In Coup-Stricken Honduras

Source: Xinhua — China News Agency

06/30/2009

Editor: Zhang Xiang

MANAGUA -- Salvadorian President Mauricio Funes said here Monday he had ordered the closure of Salvador's embassy in Honduras to show his solidarity with ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya.

The embassy won't be opened until Zelaya, who was forced into exile in Costa Rica by the military this weekend, is reinstated, Funes told reporters upon his arrival here for a series of meetings on Honduras.

Funes will attend the summits of the Group of Rio, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and the Central American Integration System (SICA) to discuss Sunday's Honduras military coup.

Hundreds of troops stormed the presidential residence in Honduras' capital of Tegucigalpa early Sunday. Zelaya was taken onto a plane and whisked to Costa Rica.

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias called for a demilitarization across Central America, saying that the coup has magnified this necessity.

"That is why my dream of 20 years ago, of building a Central America without armies, remains relevant," he said. "My dream was to make this the first demilitarized zone by getting rid of armies," he added.

Arias will take over SICA's six-month rotating presidency from his Nicaraguan counterpart, Daniel Ortega, later on Monday.

HAITI

9. Haiti Now Closer To Receiving Aid

Source: Miami Herald

07/01/2009

By Jacqueline Charles

Cash-strapped, storm-battered Haiti is finally getting relief.

After years of struggling to meet the requirements for cancellation of most of its \$1.7 billion in foreign debt, the country has finally achieved \$1.2 billion in debt forgiveness from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

"This is a very positive development for Haiti," said Haitian Finance Minister Daniel Dorsainvil. The debt forgiveness, announced Tuesday by the World Bank, is expected to help Haiti in its effort to get international donors to ante up \$353 million in pledges made at an April donors conference.

The country's prime minister said last month in Miami that Haiti had not received one penny yet from donors, some of whom were waiting on Haiti to achieve debt forgiveness status.

"This will significantly reduce Haiti's debt burden and effectively free resources for growth and poverty reduction," said Yvonne Tsikata, the World Bank's director for the Caribbean.

"Going forward, Haiti must take advantage of this opportunity by managing future borrowing prudently, and continuing its efforts and progress towards stronger public expenditure management and public procurement."

Haitian authorities have been working for years to achieve debt forgiveness despite being battered by back-to-back storms, food riots and a nearly five-month political crisis last year. Among their accomplishments: improved management of public expenditures, audited government accounts, an asset declaration law and a law on public procurement.

HONDURAS

10. Chronology Of A Coup: How Honduran Crisis Led To Ouster

Source: Miami Herald

07/01/2009

By Frances Robles

Deposed Honduran president Manuel Zelaya says all he wanted was to conduct a public opinion poll -- even though the supreme court had ruled it illegal, the attorney general threatened to arrest him, and he faced mutiny in the armed forces.

Zelaya's defiant insistence on asking voters whether they were interested in amending the country's constitution ended at dawn Sunday, when hooded soldiers roused the president out of bed, pointed rifles at his chest and flew him to Costa Rica.

The brazen overthrow of the leftist firebrand capped a political crisis that experts say began months ago and heated up every day last week amid a flurry of court orders, dismissals, resignations and protests. Experts say the breakdown in the rule of law here underscores Honduras' weak hold on democratic institutions and highlights a deep political divide that has only worsened.

"I feel bad about what happened," said Gen. Romeo Vásquez, the head of the armed forces who was fired by Zelaya and reinstated by the court the next day, told The Miami Herald in an exclusive interview. "I tried very hard to counsel the president to find a legal way out of this. There was no way. "Nobody is above the law."

Zelaya, a wealthy farmer known for his cowboy hats and thick mustache, took office four years ago just as more and more leftists started winning Latin American presidencies at the ballot box.

In 2008, he started getting closer to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, by joining both the organization of countries that get Venezuelan oil at deep discounts and the ALBA group of mostly leftist allies.

In February this year, Venezuelan voters lifted the ban on term limits. Experts say that's when Zelaya -- whose term ends in seven months -- started thinking about staying on longer. But Honduras' strict 1982 constitution, which was written as the nation emerged from military rule, prohibits changes to several of its articles, including the ban on reelection.

REFERENDUM

A month after Chávez's victory, Zelaya announced plans to conduct a referendum asking voters whether they supported adding a fourth ballot to the November presidential election that would approve a constituent assembly to change the constitution. That referendum was not binding and made no mention of term limits, but the country's political leaders were suspicious.

"There was a lot of opposition to this, so the political forces of the nation started coming up with legal measures saying this was illegal," said Eduardo Enrique Reina, Zelaya's minister of communications who is now in hiding. "So we tried doing it through another mechanism."

The attorney general ruled that the elections council could not legally conduct the poll, so Zelaya said the National Statistics office would do it instead. He came up with a plan for the military to distribute the ballots at stores and public places, but the court disagreed with that, too.

At issue was that the question would lead to changes to parts of the constitution, which are not supposed to be modified.

"He decided to continue with the poll," said Zelaya supporter Carlos Sosa, Honduras' ambassador to the Organization of American States. "He considered that the court had no jurisdiction in this matter, no more than if the president wanted to ask people if they liked one flavor of toothpaste over another."

The armed forces chief consulted military lawyers, the bar association, the Supreme Court and political leaders for legal opinions, Vásquez said.

"There was a clamor from the ranks," Vásquez said. "They did not want to do something illegal."

A MEETING

On Wednesday, Vásquez, the defense minister and the heads of the army, navy and air force met with the president.

"I did not tell him, 'I refuse to do this,'" Vásquez said. "The commanders and I went to him telling him that we were ready to comply, but that we had a problem in that it was illegal. We asked him if he had a lawyer with a different interpretation.

"He relieved me of duty."

The defense minister quit, and so did the generals.

The president published a decree in the official gazette announcing plans to continue with the referendum. The legislature voted that day to ban any referendum within 180 days of a presidential election.

That night, the president held a press conference, announcing Vásquez's ouster.

"No one is going to stop Sunday's referendum," Zelaya told a cheering crowd. "If an army rebels against a president . . . then we are back to the era of the cave men, back to the darkest chapters in Honduran history."

On Thursday, the Supreme Court reinstated Vásquez while Congress announced an investigative commission against the president. The attorney general seized the ballot materials, which were being held at an air force hangar.

But Zelaya was steadfast.

"Congress cannot investigate me, much less remove me or stage a technical coup against me because I am honest, I'm a free president and nobody scares me," he said.

HIS SUPPORTERS

On Friday, Zelaya called thousands of supporters to come with him to the air force base where the ballots were still being held, although they had officially been declared property of the attorney general's office.

"It was boxes and boxes and boxes of materials, so the attorney general could not just pick up and take them. Instead, he declared them evidence of a crime," said National Human Rights Commissioner Ramón Custodio López, the government ombudsman. "Zelaya and his hired mobs march on buses to the air force hangar, where they plow through the barricade.

"This is where he starts committing crimes."

The president took the ballots to the presidential palace, Zelaya said, for safe keeping. Custodio said U.S. Ambassador Hugo Llorens tried to mediate to no avail.

Meanwhile in Washington, D.C., the OAS held an emergency meeting and made plans for Secretary General José Miguel Insulza to visit Honduras the following Monday.

"You have the Supreme Court interfering in the president's right to hire and fire his military chief," said Sosa, the OAS ambassador. "This is where we begin to see the democratic institutions were at risk." Zelaya started distributing the ballots nationwide on Saturday.

"There were cars, buses and planes getting those ballots all over the country," Custodio said. "I don't know where he got the cash to do all that."

At 9 that night, Vásquez said he was called to another meeting with the members of the Supreme Court and the attorney general, where he was shown a court order to arrest Zelaya.

Vásquez said the president had published another decree, showing he planned to take the nonbinding referendum a step further by ordering the constitutional reform to begin right away.

That, Vásquez said, is considered an "act of treason."

THE OUSTER

Acting on the court order, Vásquez said he supervised an 18-point mission to seize the ballots around the nation -- and capture the president. Zelaya was spirited out of his bedroom and sent in his pajamas to Costa Rica in a quest to avoid violence, Vásquez said.

"He is an excellent boss. He is a good person. I tried to have a friendship with him, but the friendship ends with duty," Vásquez said. "We had to get him out of the area to avoid worse things. We felt that if he stayed here, worse things were going to happen and there would be bloodshed. "He had already been acting above the law."

Power was turned off in much of the capital and TV channels went blank.

By that afternoon, the president of congress -- Zelaya's nemesis Roberto Micheletti -- was sworn in as president.

And while the move was widely supported in Honduras, the political power structure here did not anticipate the international repudiation. President Barack Obama called the removal illegal. Neighboring nations closed borders, and Zelaya has vowed to return.

"Zelaya completely undermined the entire rule of law. He went right over three powers: the supreme court, the elections council and the legislature," said Manuel Orozco, a Central America expert at the InterAmerican Dialogue in Washington, D.C.

"Now everybody is attacking the army when the truth is the political elite really threw a bucket at the army so they could wash their hands of this. I would not say this was a coup -- but they created a big headache."

11. What's The Chance Of Stability?

Source: Miami Herald

07/01/2009

By Carlos Montaner

The United States, the OAS, the European Union, Hugo Chávez, Fidel Castro -- most of all, Chávez and Castro -- want Manuel Zelaya immediately restored to the presidency of Honduras. He was expelled from the country on the morning of June 28.

Almost by unanimity, the Honduran Congress, supported by the Supreme Court, had removed him for breaking the law and ignoring the rulings of the Electoral Tribunal. But that was a technical excuse. The deep truth is a lot more dramatic: Zelaya, obstinate and rash, intent on being reelected at any cost, heedless of all the warnings of the judiciary and the legislature, intended to drag the nation in the direction of Chávez, something that in Honduras would have been the beginning of a huge economic and social *Via Crucis*.

Immediately, the parliamentarians elected as his substitute Roberto Micheletti, a lawyer from Zelaya's own party who, until a few hours earlier, had been president of the legislative chamber. It seems that most Hondurans, including the Christian churches, support the action.

In reality, from a formal point of view, there is nothing surprising in the way Zelaya was removed. It was Congress -- in accord with the Armed Forces, after receiving a resignation letter signed under duress -- that replaced Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada in Bolivia (2003), Abdalá Bucaram (1997), Jamil Mahuad (2000) and Lucio Gutiérrez (2005) in Ecuador, and Jorge Serrano in Guatemala (1993).

In those cases, however, the international community barely paid any attention to the incident. Those were political squabbles that became clashes between the public powers and were resolved by means of a constitutional solution that saved the existing legality. Technically, they were not *coups d'état* but extreme forms of retaining a vestige of legality. In this case, however, despite the enormous domestic support behind Zelaya's removal, the international reaction has been different.

21st-century socialism

Why? Basically, because the ousted president in recent years had timidly joined (albeit in a rhetorical manner) the so-called "21st-century socialism," a warring ideological family with a large resonance box. The family is directed by Hugo Chávez, who in 1992 was the author of one of the bloodiest military coups in the history of Latin America, but who today, invoking democracy, wasted no time warning that he will overthrow any president who replaces his friend Zelaya.

What we're seeing in Honduras is not a clash between uniformed men and civilians, or between putschists and innocent functionaries. Nor is it a return to the lamentable past of military governments. We are witnessing a conflict between two ways of understanding the function of the state and the role of the political leaders. Chávez's way -- an incipient ruling concept that Zelaya irresponsibly assumed in Honduras -- is a variant of state-run collectivism, a political stream that does away with the separation of powers that is part and parcel of republics. It exalts the personalist style, eliminates replacement of the leader, and adopts anti-Western positions that are expressed in dangerous alliances with countries like Iran and North Korea.

Will Roberto Micheletti's new government be able to stabilize itself? It will all depend on the strength of the bond between the two major political parties, the army and the other institutions of state. It is also possible that Washington will try to forge a compromise between Zelaya and his adversaries whereby the ousted president returns to the country but renounces his intention to change the constitution and to engage in reprisals for the sole purpose of staying on until the November elections.

In any case, participants must walk a narrow line because any mistake could result in a blood bath or the start of a long period of instability and agony. And that's too high a price for one of the poorest countries in Latin America.

12. UN Tells Honduras To Reinstate President

Source: Associated Press

07/01/2009

By Will Weissert

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras - Honduras' ousted president won overwhelming international support Tuesday as he planned a high-profile return to his chaotic country. The politicians who sent soldiers to fly him into exile in his pajamas said he will be arrested for treason if he tries.

The interim leader named by Congress, Roberto Micheletti, warned only an armed invasion could restore toppled President Manuel Zelaya.

"He has already committed crimes against the constitution and the law. He can no longer return to the presidency of the republic unless a president from another Latin American country comes and imposes him using guns," Micheletti said in an interview with The Associated Press from the heavily fortified presidential palace.

The showdown was building to a climax as the presidents of Argentina and Ecuador signed on to accompany Zelaya and the heads of the Organization of American States and the U.N. General Assembly on a flight to Honduras on Thursday.

Attorney General Luis Alberto Rubi said Zelaya would be seized "as soon as he sets foot on Honduran soil" and face 20 years in prison on charges that also include abuse of authority.

"I'm going back to calm people down. I'm going to try to open a dialogue and put things in order," Zelaya said at the United Nations. "When I'm back, people are going to say ... 'commander, we're at your service' and the army will have to correct itself. There's no other possibility."

The U.N. General Assembly voted by acclamation to demand Zelaya's immediate restoration, and the Organization of American States was meeting to consider suspending Honduras for straying from democracy.

With no international support but a significant following at home, the new Honduran leadership called thousands of flag-waving people into a downtown plaza. Soldiers fenced off the area around the presidential palace, where security forces used tear gas and water cannons Monday against Zelaya supporters, injuring and arresting dozens.

Zelaya - whose elected term ends in January 2010 - had defied the Supreme Court and called a referendum on constitutional change that opponents worried would lead to Zelaya prolonging his presidency.

Zelaya backed down from the referendum on Tuesday, saying at the United Nations that he would no longer push for the constitutional changes he had wanted.

"I'm not going to hold a constitutional assembly," he said. "And if I'm offered the chance to stay in power, I won't. I'm going to serve my four years."

He said he would then go back to being a farmer - a humble description considering the wealth he has accumulated in ranching and agribusiness.

"I come from the countryside and I'm going to go back to the countryside," he said.

But Micheletti vowed he would not resign no matter how intense the international pressure became. He said it was too late for Zelaya to avoid arrest if he returns to Honduras.

"No. I was appointed by Congress, which represents the Honduran people. Nobody can make me resign unless I break the laws of the country," he told AP.

Micheletti said he was worried about the possibility of invasion from other Latin American countries but vowed Honduras was ready to fight.

He did not name any specific countries, but earlier Tuesday, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said any aggression toward Zelaya from Micheletti's government should prompt a military intervention by the United Nations.

"If there is any invasion against our country, 7.5 million Hondurans will be ready to defend our territory and our laws and our homeland and our government," he said.

Earlier Micheletti addressed a crowd of some 5,000 cheering supporters in white and blue, the colors of the Honduran flag.

"We thank God for not letting democracy be interrupted in our country," Micheletti said, flanked by troops in camouflage. "The heroes of this democratic day are the soldiers."

Meanwhile, a pro-Zelaya crowd of about equal size marched toward the presidential palace, now protected by a chain-link fence and more than 500 soldiers and police. They dispersed as rain began to fall in the late afternoon with no reports of violence - a contrast with Monday when Zelaya said more than 150 were injured and 50 arrested. Micheletti's government didn't release figures.

Micheletti's foreign minister, Enrique Ortez, threw a wild card onto the table, telling CNN en Espanol that Zelaya had been letting drug traffickers ship U.S.-bound cocaine from Venezuela through

Honduras. Ortez said the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration was aware of Zelaya's ties to organized crime.

Spokesman Rusty Payne could neither confirm nor deny a DEA investigation.

The United States stood firmly by Zelaya, however, with State Department spokesman Ian Kelly saying Washington sees no acceptable solution other than Zelaya's return to power. He said the United States is considering cutting off its aid to Honduras, which includes \$215 million over four years from the U.S.-funded Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Micheletti said he had no contact with any U.S. authorities since assuming the presidency.

The U.N. vote added to an avalanche of international denunciations of the military's removal of Zelaya on Sunday, which recalled the dark days of dictatorship for which Latin America was long notorious. The world body called on all 192 U.N. member states to recognize only Zelaya's government in Honduras.

The Organization of American States - whose Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza had agreed to accompany Zelaya back to Honduras - planned an emergency meeting in Washington hours later to reinforce the pressure to reinstate the Honduran leader.

Some members - such as Venezuela - want to suspend Honduras under an agreement meant to prevent military coups, while others - including Colombia - argue that while the OAS should condemn the coup, suspending Honduras would be interventionist.

Mexico and Colombia's conservative governments joined the region's leftist leaders in condemning Zelaya's removal. Blocked trucks began lining up along Honduras' borders as neighboring countries imposed a trade ban.

Some local television stations remained off the air and local media carried few reports of demonstrations in Zelaya's favor, apparently under government pressure. Ortez said freedom of expression was in full force but did not directly address the closure of stations or the temporary detention of journalists.

The U.S. military, which has close ties to Honduran commanders, tried to avoid getting caught up in the dispute. It ordered most of its 800 personnel to remain inside the Soto Cano air base, 60 miles (100 kilometers) north of Tegucigalpa, allowing only "mission-essential" tasks, Southern Command spokesman Jose Ruiz said in Miami.

Honduras receives about \$1 million a year from the United States to fight drug trafficking and Soto Cano is a key base in the fight against drugs. There's also a contingent of DEA agents in country. U.S. and Honduran officials estimate about 100 tons of Colombian cocaine pass through Honduras annually on their way to the United States.

13. Interim Honduran Leader Vows Zelaya Won't Return

Source: Associated Press

07/01/2009

By Will Weissert

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras - The interim president of Honduras vowed Tuesday not to resign the post he took over following a military coup and claimed that only an armed invasion would restore his ousted predecessor to power.

Roberto Micheletti said during an interview with The Associated Press that "no one can make me resign," even though the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Obama administration and governments around the world have condemned the military uprising and refused to recognize his government.

The world has almost universally called for the return of his democratically elected predecessor, Manuel Zelaya, but Micheletti said "he has already committed crimes against the constitution and the law. He can no longer return to the presidency of the republic unless a president from another Latin American country comes and imposes him using guns."

He did not name any specific nations, but earlier Tuesday, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said any aggression toward Zelaya from Micheletti's government should prompt a military intervention by

the United Nations. Chavez is a close ally of President Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, which neighbors Honduras.

Micheletti said his government had imposed a nightly curfew "until things get back to normal because they have warned us that some South American countries were going to attack us and the population has to be ready and prepared."

"If there's an invasion against our country," he said, "we will see 7 and a half million Hondurans ready to defend our territory, our laws and our fatherland and government."

Honduras' population is roughly that figure.

Micheletti now occupies the same office in the colonial-style presidential palace that Zelaya did until last weekend. He and his ministers were settling into new offices even as the military continued to control the building: a typical bureaucratic handover except that soldiers wandered the halls.

Micheletti said he had not spoken to a single member of U.S. President Barack Obama's government or any president in Latin America, but he maintained that 80 percent of Hondurans support him.

"I was named by Congress to represent the Honduran people. No one can make me resign if I do not violate the laws of the country," he said.

Zelaya - whose elected term ends in January 2010 - had defied the Supreme Court and called a referendum on constitutional change that opponents worried would lead to Zelaya prolonging his presidency.

Zelaya backed down from the referendum Tuesday, saying at the United Nations that he would no longer push for the constitutional changes he had wanted.

But Micheletti said giving up the constitutional referendum would not be enough for Zelaya to avoid arrest since the former president had "several" arrest warrants issued against him, including some dealing with drug smuggling charges.

Zelaya's approval rating had sagged at home in recent years and his fiery brand of populism is similar to the kind that often irks the international community. Still, the world has lined up to support him.

Asked if Zelaya could one day return to power stronger than ever, Micheletti said "it's not about sympathy, it's not about being a martyr, but simply that we are following the letter of the law which he did not respect."

Micheletti served as president of Congress before Sunday's ouster of Zelaya and both are members of the Liberal Party. He also said Tuesday that he will not "even seek to be a candidate again" for the presidency once his term ends in January.

14. Zelaya Accused Of Drug Ties

Source: Associated Press

07/01/2009

By Frank Bajak

BOGOTA - The regime that ousted Manuel Zelaya in Honduras claimed Tuesday that the deposed president allowed tons of cocaine to be flown into the Central American country on its way to the United States.

"Every night, three or four Venezuelan-registered planes land without the permission of appropriate authorities and bring thousands of pounds ... and packages of money that are the fruit of drug trafficking," its foreign minister, Enrique Ortez, told CNN en Espanol.

"We have proof of all of this. Neighboring governments have it. The DEA has it," he added.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman Rusty Payne in Washington said he could neither confirm nor deny a DEA investigation.

Zelaya was traveling from New York to Washington and could not immediately be reached to respond to the allegations.

Honduras and other Central American nations have become major transshipment points in recent years for Colombian cocaine, particularly as Mexico's government cracks down on cartels.

The drugs arrive in Honduras on non-commercial aircraft from Venezuela and increasingly in speedboats from Colombia, according to the Key West, Florida-based Joint Interagency Task Force-South, which coordinates drug interdiction in region.

In its most recent report on the illicit narcotics trade, the U.S. State Department said in February of Honduras that "official corruption continues to be an impediment to effective law enforcement and there are press reports of drug trafficking and associated criminal activity among current and former government and military officials."

The report did not name names.

Drug-related violence appears to be up in Honduras.

Homicides surged 25 percent from some 4,400 in 2007 to more than 7,000 in 2008 while more than 1,600 people were killed execution-style, suggesting drug gang involvement, according to the Central American Violence Observatory.

In October, Zelaya proposed legalizing drug use as a way of reducing the violence, and doubling the country's police force, which reached 13,500 last year, up from 7,000 in 2005, according to the State Department report.

15. Analysis: Obama's Swift Stand On Honduran Coup

Source: Associated Press

07/01/2009

By Ben Feller

WASHINGTON - Dealing with the first Latin American crisis of his presidency, Barack Obama sought a swift, clear response that would not be interpreted as U.S. interventionism in a region that loathes it.

So he condemned a coup in Honduras by turning to that most reliable standby: democracy.

"We stand on the side of democracy, sovereignty and self-determination," Obama said when asked Monday about the forced exile of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, a takeover that has drawn international criticism and unnerved a part of the world that has worked to shed itself of strong-arm tactics.

The point could not be lost. Obama mentioned some version of the word democracy eight times. He even wound up referring to George Washington.

The response put Obama with much of the world as Honduras and its newly appointed leader, Roberto Micheletti, quickly found themselves isolated. Obama left sticky underlying issues in Honduras for its people to decide, but pledged that the U.S. would work with international bodies on a peaceful solution.

All that was clear. What comes next is cloudy.

Micheletti and the Congress that put him in place stood by their move after soldiers stormed the national palace and forced Zelaya into exile. Police and soldiers clashed with pro-Zelaya protesters in the capital on Monday, and about 5,000 anti-Zelaya demonstrators gathered at a main plaza in Tegucigalpa on Tuesday to celebrate his ouster.

The U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday unanimously condemned the military coup and demanded Zelaya's immediate return to power. Zelaya, who was in the assembly chamber for the vote, thanked the diplomats, calling the vote "historic."

Obama, wielding clout within the Americas as a popular voice of a powerful country, has outlined his approach. He will work within existing groups, particularly the Organization of American States that links the countries of the Western Hemisphere, and not try to dictate a solo U.S. response.

This is what he promised during a summit in Latin America just two months ago: The United States is an equal partner, not a senior partner, in the region.

But politically, a hostile removal of a democratically elected president demands a response from a U.S. president. So Obama, who was criticized by Republican critics for being too slow to react to Iran's postelection upheaval, quickly expressed concern on the day that Zelaya was booted from his country.

Then, in plain terms, Obama elaborated Monday after a meeting with a U.S. ally in the region, Colombian President Alvaro Uribe.

"We believe that the coup was not legal and that President Zelaya remains the president of Honduras," Obama said.

"It would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition rather than democratic elections," Obama said. "The region has made enormous progress over the last 20 years in establishing democratic traditions in Central America and Latin America. We don't want to go back to a dark past."

Speaking of the past, Obama noted that the U.S. has "not always stood as it should" with democracies in the region. That, too, seemed to draw on the doctrine he promised to the region while in Trinidad in April, a view that the U.S. strengthens its hand by confessing when it has strayed from its own values.

Reinforcing the president's message, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Tuesday that the U.S. had spoken out on the Honduran situation to put to rest "any rumors that we were in any way involved in this."

"Despite whatever political disagreements you might have, there are democratic norms that have to and should be followed," Gibbs said.

Jose Raul Perales, a Latin American scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, said Obama's response to the crisis was prompt and in unison with leaders of the hemisphere and beyond. Obama can bring considerable leverage to the matter and add credibility to an emerging regional response, he said.

But there are still bigger problems in Honduras - the failed democratic institutions that led the nation to resort to a military coup. The conflict came about after a referendum Zelaya had called in defiance of Honduras' courts and Congress, one seen as a way for him to stay in power beyond his term limit.

That means even if Obama can help lead a brokered peace, deeper issues remain. "The tensions will persist regardless of the outcome," Perales said.

Those tensions are rising in a conflict still in its early hours. Leftist leaders pulled their ambassadors from Honduras. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez called for Hondurans to rise up against those who toppled his ally, Zelaya. The U.S. has not yet yanked aid or any envoys.

As Obama has with Iran - a deadly conflict of greater proportions - he has kept an emphasis on the rights of the people.

"I think what's ultimately most important is that the people feel a sense of legitimacy and ownership, and that this is not something imposed on them from the top," Obama said. He added there must not be "rigging of the electoral process or repression of opposition voices."

Obama's message seemed more blunt than that of his secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton, earlier in the day. But they both emphasized the broader point of returning constitutional order.

When Clinton was asked directly whether the U.S. was insisting on Zelaya's return to power, she said, "We haven't laid out any demands that we're insisting on."

Obama has not faced the same question. Yet.

16. Zelaya Meets With OAS To Discuss Response To Coup

Source: Associated Press

07/01/2009

By Barry Schweid

WASHINGTON - Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya met Tuesday night with envoys to the Organization of American States to discuss what Argentina's foreign minister called an urgent and dangerous situation in Honduras.

Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana and other Western Hemisphere ambassadors waited for 3 1/2 hours as Zelaya made his way from New York, where earlier in the day the U.N. General Assembly

denounced the military coup that drove him from power Sunday. They demanded his immediate return to office.

In a clear threat, Taiana, who was presiding over a special session of the 34-nation assembly, said if the diplomatic approach does not prevail, "we have to take the decision to suspend Honduras in its rights and duties in this organization."

When Zelaya arrived at the OAS building on Constitution Avenue, within blocks of the White House, he met first with Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza off the Americas Hall. The special session of the organization's General Assembly was scheduled to resume after the private meeting.

The OAS was expected to challenge the coup, which Zelaya has called brutal and the work of "a small group of usurpers" that carried out "an act of aggression attacking the democratic will of the people."

Among the options under discussion was having the presidents of Argentina and Ecuador accompany Zelaya on a return trip home on Thursday to challenge the coup. However, Roberto Micheletti, named by Honduras' Congress as the new president, said Zelaya could be met with an arrest warrant.

The U.N. adopted a resolution calling on all 192 U.N. member states not to recognize any government in Honduras other than Zelaya's.

Earlier, at the White House, press secretary Robert Gibbs said there are no plans to recall the U.S. ambassador to Honduras.

The United States said it saw no acceptable solution to Zelaya's ouster other than returning him to power. State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters that the U.S. was still reviewing whether to cut off aid to the Central American nation.

Thomas Shannon, the top U.S. diplomat for the Americas, planned to meet with Zelaya during his visit.

17. Ousted Honduran Leader Zelaya Likely To Meet US Officials

Source: Agence France-Presse

07/01/2009

WASHINGTON - Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya will likely meet US officials in Washington, though not with President Barack Obama or Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, officials said Tuesday.

Zelaya said Monday he would visit Washington on Wednesday before returning to his country, following the coup that ousted him, and the White House and State Department expected him to meet State Department officials.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said Zelaya was due in Washington to attend an emergency meeting of Organization of American States (OAS) foreign ministers scheduled for Tuesday.

"If he does come down to Washington, and we expect he will, the State Department officials plan to meet with him," Kelly told reporters.

The message that the Honduran leader will receive from US officials is that "we think that President Zelaya is the democratically elected constitutional president of Honduras and should be allowed to serve out the rest of his term."

But Kelly said Clinton was not scheduled to meet Zelaya -- either at the OAS meeting or privately -- even though Washington expressed strong public support for him to return to power.

Even though she has worked at the State Department in recent days, he said, Clinton needs to stay at home often in order to recover fully from a fractured elbow that she suffered June 17.

"I think you can imagine why she's working from home. She had a very serious break in her elbow, and she is recovering from that," he said.

"I mean, you saw her yesterday (Monday). She's energetic. She's fully engaged. But we need to make sure that she heals... and can get back to a full schedule where she can come in every day," he added.

"You shouldn't read anything into that at all," Kelly said when pressed whether some hidden message was being sent.

"Part of her schedule was determined before we knew President Zelaya was coming down," he added.

A State Department official who asked not to be named said Zelaya was expected to meet Thomas Shannon, the outgoing assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs who is set to become the new ambassador to Brazil.

The meeting was not due to take place at the State Department, another official added.

The ousted president was snatched from the presidential palace by Honduran troops early Sunday and sent into exile in the first Central American coup in years.

Obama said on Monday that the coup was "not legal" and that Zelaya remained the president of Honduras.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs confirmed that Zelaya was likely to meet State Department officials but not Obama.

Kelly added that the US government is currently reviewing US economic aid to Honduras, but has not yet taken a decision.

18. U.N. Calls For Restoration Of Ousted Honduran Leader

Source: McClatchy News

07/01/2009

By William Douglas and Stewart Stogel

WASHINGTON - Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya formally began his campaign to reclaim his office Tuesday, making appeals to diplomats and Obama administration officials in the capital and in New York.

The first stop on Zelaya's reclamation tour was the United Nations, where the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution, that denounced Sunday's coup and called for restoring Zelaya to power. General Assembly resolutions are largely symbolic and do not carry the weight of law.

Zelaya, in a rambling speech, recounted to U.N. diplomats the early morning coup in which the Honduran military roused him from the presidential palace in Tegucigalpa and whisked him onto a plane - still in his pajamas - to Costa Rica.

He said that he heard gunshots, and his 21-year-old daughter tried to hide from the invading troops. Zelaya said he tried to use his cell phone to find out what was going on, but soldiers warned him that was a bad idea.

"I had eight rifles pointed at my chest," Zelaya said. "I was told, 'If you do not put down that phone we will kill you. We have official orders.'"

Zelaya called his ouster and unforgivable "act of barbarism." The General Assembly delegates gave him a standing, but brief ovation.

Zelaya arrived at the U.N. delegate's entrance under a bright and blazing late-morning sun. Looking confident, polished and dressed in a navy blue suit, the president was greeted by General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto of Nicaragua.

Then, as D'Escoto proceeded to usher Zelaya into U.N. headquarters, Cuban Ambassador Abolardo Moreno pushed through the crowd and gave the exiled president a bear hug and kiss. Zelaya responded with a broad smile.

"This was an excellent move," Moreno told a McClatchy reporter. "We totally support him, which is why we are co-sponsor of the resolution, but have no doubt there are important nuances between our support and that of the U.S."

Moreno was referring to the move by the White House to co-sponsor the General Assembly resolution, a decision D'Escoto announced shortly after he convened the body.

However, some U.S. lawmakers weren't pleased with the U.N. resolution, noting that Zelaya is an ally of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and other leftist leaders in the region.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee said in a written statement: "I had hoped that the U.N. and our democratic allies would have taken a more measured responsible approach. I had hoped that they would not merely echo or rubber stamp the unconfirmed claims made by those who are proven enemies of freedom in the Hemisphere."

Following his U.N. appearance, Zelaya traveled to Washington, where President Barack Obama denounced the Honduran coup but took a cautious approach in dealing with it.

Zelaya was expected to address the 34-member Organization of American States and meet with Assistant Secretary of State Tom Shannon.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said the administration won't recall its ambassador in Honduras at this point and that Obama wasn't likely to meet Zelaya face-to-face during his Washington visit.

"No, I think the State Department is a pretty good extension of our reach on foreign policy," Gibbs said.

White House officials said they prefer to work closely with allies and groups such as the OAS in dealing with the Honduran coup.

"That's a very important meeting where they'll build on the consensus statement that was issued right after the coup," said Dennis McDonough, the White House deputy national security adviser, of the OAS meeting. "And coming out of that I think there's certain things we'd continue to ask for, including sending a mission to Honduras."

Asked about what actions the U.S. is considering on Honduras, McDonough said: "At the moment, I think we've made the decision that it's most effective to work in concert with our allies."

At the OAS, Zelaya was to ask the organization to "isolate" Honduras until he is restored to power, according to Carlos Sosa, Honduras' OAS ambassador.

"No commercial relations, no diplomatic relations, no cultural relations, no sports, no anything," Sosa said. "The rest, we can take care of the rest. We're Hondurans."

Sosa said Zelaya wants to finish his term and intends to travel to Honduras on Thursday despite warnings by forces loyal to newly installed interim Honduran President Roberto Micheletti that he would be arrested as soon as he set foot on Honduran soil.

Lacking international support but enjoying a strong following at home, the new Honduran leadership called thousands of people into the streets Tuesday in support of Micheletti.

Flanked by armed forces chief Romeo Vasquez, Micheletti insisted that he was simply defending democracy.

Soldiers fenced off the area around the presidential palace where unions and student groups have demonstrated, demanding Zelaya's return.

19. U.N. General Assembly Backs Ousted Honduran

On Visit to U.S., Zelaya Also Wins OAS Support but Doesn't Meet With Top Americans

Source: Washington Post

07/01/2009

By Mary Beth Sheridan and Colum Lynch

Scrambling to hold on to his presidency, deposed Honduran leader Manuel Zelaya pleaded his case in the United States yesterday, winning a rare unanimous vote of support from the U.N. General Assembly but failing to get an audience with top Obama administration officials.

Zelaya also gained crucial support at the Organization of American States, whose members debated into the night on launching a diplomatic initiative to resolve the crisis. They were also considering calling on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank to cut off all loans to the Honduran government.

In New York, Zelaya told the General Assembly that Honduras was "reverting to the age of dictatorship. Repression has now been established in the country."

After the meeting, he vowed to return to Honduras on Thursday with a delegation of dignitaries, including the presidents of Argentina and Ecuador, the secretary general of the OAS and the president of the General Assembly.

Diplomats last night tried to persuade Zelaya not to make the trip. Some analysts worried that the crisis could be escalating.

"If he [Zelaya] goes back with no one laying the groundwork . . . it's going to be a huge clash," said Jennifer McCoy, director of the Carter Center's Americas program, who attended an urgent OAS general assembly last night on the matter.

Zelaya was detained by soldiers Sunday morning and expelled from the country. A close ally of populist President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Zelaya had clashed with the Honduran Congress, the military and the Supreme Court over his plans for a referendum that many alleged was an effort to change the constitution in order to gain another term as president.

The U.S. government continues to recognize Zelaya as president, rather than a replacement sworn in by the Honduran Congress, Roberto Micheletti. But the Obama administration did not grant Zelaya a high-level meeting at the White House or State Department.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton could not meet with Zelaya because she was away from work recuperating from a fractured elbow. "This is just something that came up today," he said of the Honduran's decision to fly to Washington.

But the low-key treatment of Zelaya appeared to reflect an effort by the Obama administration to preserve some room for diplomatic maneuver. The U.S. government is working with regional leaders to resolve the crisis, but it has outsize influence with the Honduran elite because of its close military ties and its economic clout.

Zelaya was expected to meet with the assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, Thomas A. Shannon Jr., and the top Latin America official on the National Security Council, Dan Restrepo, during his stay in Washington.

If Zelaya felt slighted, he didn't show it. Asked about allegations from some leftist politicians that the United States favored the coup, he said: "I have listened to President Obama. It is not only that he condemns the event, but he has demanded the restoration of the president. I have also heard the ambassador of the U.S. in Tegucigalpa. He has taken the same position against the coup powers."

The U.N. General Assembly unanimously condemned the coup yesterday afternoon and demanded the "immediate and unconditional restoration of the legitimate and constitutional government" of Zelaya.

The action, while not legally binding, provided a show of unity at the United Nations in responding to an international crisis, bringing the United States together with stridently anti-American governments in Latin America such as Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Zelaya took to the General Assembly podium to condemn the coup as an act of "barbarity" by a "small group of usurpers."

In a lengthy address, he portrayed himself as a champion of the poor who had been brought down by a clique of conservative military and economic elites who resented his attempts to improve the living standards for impoverished Hondurans.

He denied allegations that he had prepared the referendum to pave the way for another run for president, saying he planned to step down after his mandate ends in January.

He added that the new government's allegation that he had engaged in wrongdoing was unfounded. "I have been accused of being a populist. I've been accused of being a communist," he said, but added that he had not had an opportunity to defend himself.

"Nobody has told me what my crime is, what my error is," he said.

Zelaya presented a detailed account of the army raid on his home, saying he had been roused from his sleep by gunfire and confronted by soldiers as he sought to alert a local reporter and others on his cellphone.

20. Two Hondurans Headed For Clash

Source: Washington Post

07/01/2009

By William Booth

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- The two presidents of Honduras were headed on a collision course Tuesday, as the president ousted by a coup vowed to return and his replacement threatened to arrest him the minute he lands.

Neither side seemed willing to bend in a looming confrontation that is the first test of the Obama administration's diplomacy and clout in the hemisphere.

Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, removed from office Sunday in a military-led coup, addressed the U.N. General Assembly in New York on Tuesday and said he would fly back to Honduras on Thursday, accompanied by the head of the Organization of American States.

But the newly appointed interim president of Honduras, Roberto Micheletti, warned that if Zelaya returns, he will be arrested, tried and sent to prison for years. Micheletti's claim on the presidency is seen as illegitimate by the international community.

"If he comes back to our country, he would have to face our tribunals and our trials and our laws," Micheletti said in an interview with The Washington Post at his residence in the hills overlooking the capital. "He would be sent to jail. For sure, he would go to prison."

Micheletti said he did not see any way to negotiate with the Obama administration and international diplomats seeking a return of Zelaya to power because, Micheletti insisted, Zelaya was guilty of crimes against the country.

"No, no compromise, because if he tries to come back or anyone tries to bring him back, he will be arrested," Micheletti said.

At the United Nations, Zelaya told the assembly, "I'm going back to calm people down. I'm going to try to open a dialogue and put things in order."

Zelaya, whose politics moved to the left during his three years in office, has become close to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who has been the most vocal and belligerent critic of the coup, threatening to "overthrow" the new government.

"When I'm back, people are going to say, 'Commander, we're at your service,' and the army will have to correct itself," Zelaya told the assembly. "There's no other possibility."

Yet other possibilities do exist. Thousands of Hondurans rallied Tuesday in the central plaza of the capital, Tegucigalpa, to support the forced removal of Zelaya and to shout their support for the armed forces.

"It would be a disgrace to have him back in the country," said Emilio Larach, owner of a large building materials company here, who attended the rally to denounce Zelaya. "He created hate among the Honduran people. Everyone in the government was against him."

As the rally was underway, a small, anxious but growing group of Honduran lawmakers sought to build a coalition to endorse a compromise measure to allow for Zelaya's return. According to one participant in the talks, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of derailing the negotiations, the compromise would include a general amnesty for everyone involved, including the coup leaders and members of the military, while Zelaya would have to abandon his plan to hold a referendum that could lead to a change in the Honduran constitution.

Critics have charged that Zelaya in his nonbinding referendum was seeking a change in the constitution that would allow him to serve for more than one term as president.

The lawmakers seeking a compromise, however, have not yet begun to work with U.S. diplomats here, according to U.S. Embassy press officer Chantal Dalton. "They haven't been in contact with us," Dalton said. "This is smoke and signals. Nobody here has heard anything."

At the United Nations, Zelaya said he would agree not to push his referendum. "I'm not going to hold a constitutional assembly," he said. "And if I'm offered the chance to stay in power, I won't. I'm going to serve my four years."

Zelaya, a wealthy rancher and timber baron, said he would go back to his farm after his term ends in January. "I come from the countryside, and I'm going to go back to the countryside," he said.

The streets of Tegucigalpa were calm Tuesday, though the city is awash in rumors that Venezuela is marshaling forces for a possible invasion.

Micheletti cautioned the world that his army was on alert and prepared to defend the country. Honduran reservists have been called to their barracks to donate blood.

"Our army also consists of 7.5 million people prepared to defend freedom and liberty," said Micheletti, who stressed that Hondurans are a peaceful people.

Media outlets friendly to Zelaya have been shut down, and some reporters are hiding -- as are a dozen members of Zelaya's former cabinet. Most Hondurans must rely on newspapers and television stations that support the coup. Cable news outlets such as CNN en Español have occasionally been blacked out, though it is still possible to get outside news via satellite.

Micheletti and his supporters insist that the world does not understand what happened here. They say that Zelaya was found guilty by a Supreme Court tribunal, that his arrest by the military was legal and that Zelaya was attempting to circumvent Honduras's Congress and courts by staging the referendum.

The interim president said he thought his country could hold out long enough for world opinion to turn its way. Venezuela has said it would suspend oil shipments, and Honduras's neighbors -- El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua -- announced that they would stop overland trade.

"That is why I want to make a call to our allies in the United States, that they should stick with us at this very important moment in the life of the country," Micheletti said. "The economy of our country is completely destroyed -- because of the acts of the former government. If aid [from the United States and Europe] keeps coming, we will show that every little penny that we borrowed will be spent for the people of this country."

Micheletti promised that Honduras would hold presidential elections in November and that a new president would take office in January. Micheletti, who is a leader of the Liberal Party, the same party that Zelaya belongs to, vowed that he would not run for president.

Micheletti also said that Zelaya is a master at bending world opinion his way. Another source in the government here said that Zelaya actually was wearing a crisply ironed dress shirt when he was sent into exile in Costa Rica, but that he changed to a white T-shirt to show how he was hustled out of his official residence at dawn while still in his pajamas.

Senior Obama officials said that an overthrow of the Zelaya government had been brewing for days and that they worked behind the scenes to stop the military and its conservative, wealthy backers from pushing Zelaya out. That the United States failed to stop the coup gives anti-U.S. leaders such as Chávez room to use events in Honduras to push their vision for the region.

Zelaya is an unlikely hero for the left, coming from Honduras's wealthy classes and joining a leftist bloc of Latin American countries several years after he had been elected president. But his ouster has changed the dynamics.

"Zelaya didn't have a strong constituency," said Larry Birns, director of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs, a policy group. "And this has become a recruiting mechanism for Zelaya. It's the best thing that could have happened to Zelaya because it's allowed him to generate support."

Carlos Sosa, Honduras's ambassador to the OAS, said in a telephone interview that on Thursday he would likely join Zelaya on a flight that would leave from a U.S. airport -- he wouldn't say which one -- and land in Tegucigalpa. "Everyone wants to go," he said, noting that the secretary general of the OAS, José Miguel Insulza, and other leaders would be on that flight.

21. Deposed Honduran President Finds A Platform At The UN

The US condemned the coup but finds itself defending a president allied with leftist critics such as UN General Assembly president d'Escoto and Venezuela's Chávez.

Source: Christian Science Monitor

07/01/2009

SOUTHC0M0353

By Howard LaFranchi

Washington — When ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya takes his case for reinstatement to the United Nations General Assembly today, he'll do so at the invitation of the assembly's president — a Marxist Nicaraguan priest who has used his international platform to berate the United States and other powers over the world's prevailing economic order.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, a one-time foreign minister for Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista regime, was quick to offer the New York podium he presides over to Mr. Zelaya, who was deposed Sunday in an early morning military coup in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital.

The US has condemned the coup, but now finds itself in the awkward position of defending a deposed president who has sought support from such American needlers as Mr. d'Escoto, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, and more significantly, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.

Mr. Chávez, who lost no time in airing his suspicions of CIA involvement in Sunday's military action in Honduras, met with Zelaya in Managua, Nicaragua, on Monday and appeared to revel in a new role as defender of Latin American democracy.

Zelaya, a landed baron from Honduras's oligarchy, would seem to be an unlikely Chávez protégé since the Venezuelan has built his power by exploiting the region's economic divides and America's association with the traditional elites.

But in recent months Zelaya appeared to steer Honduras into Chávez's orbit, accepting economic aid from him — and more importantly, emulating his trajectory by seeking an end to presidential term limits.

Sunday's coup has received near-universal condemnation, including from the US, as an antidemocratic throwback to an era of frequent military takeovers across Latin America. But it was also the result of a bubbling power struggle in Honduras between Zelaya, who was seeking to scuttle the country's ban on presidential reelection, and the country's other political institutions.

Zelaya had planned to hold a referendum Sunday to gauge public support for scuttling presidential term limits, though the Congress and Supreme Court deemed such a plebiscite unconstitutional.

General Assembly President d'Escoto, a product of Latin America's earlier left-right struggles and now a mouthpiece for global ideological differences with the US — earlier this year he used a visit to Tehran to condemn America's approach to Iran and the US presence in Iraq — appeared anxious to offer the Honduran crisis a platform.

Aside from turning over the UN platform to Zelaya this morning, he plans to hold a joint press conference with the deposed president this afternoon.

As for the US, it finds itself working to reinstate a president who has become the ally of Chávez, whom it has accused of taking an increasingly undemocratic road in Venezuela.

22. Ousted Honduran President Wins U.N. Backing

Source: Wall Street Journal

07/01/2009

By Paul Kiernan and David Luhnow

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- Thousands of Hondurans protested in support of Sunday's military coup against their president, even as he won United Nations backing for his reinstatement and planned a Thursday showdown in which he would return to Honduras in the company of other Latin American leaders.

Both sides in the dispute, which has roiled politics across Latin America, also aimed their arguments squarely at Washington, where deposed President Manuel Zelaya was headed Tuesday evening to seek support in person. Mr. Zelaya said after his appearance at the U.N. that he would promise to step down in January and not seek re-election -- attempting to blunt the issue that led opponents to force him into exile.

President Barack Obama has denounced the coup that roused the Honduran leader from his bed at gunpoint and forced his exile. But Mr. Zelaya's opponents, backed by the Honduran Supreme Court, have

said they were legally trying to protect their democracy from an unconstitutional grab for extended power by the president.

U.S. officials said Mr. Zelaya, a leftist and close ally of Venezuela's populist President Hugo Chavez, likely wouldn't get an audience with Mr. Obama or Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, but instead would meet diplomats including Thomas Shannon, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs.

The U.N. General Assembly passed a unanimous resolution calling for Mr. Zelaya to serve out his term after he delivered an emotional address. "If this is allowed to stand, no president anywhere in the world, man or woman, can feel comfortable knowing that their armed forces can just decide for one reason or another to oust the president," Mr. Zelaya said. He received a standing ovation at the end.

In the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula on Tuesday, protesters dressed in white shouted "We don't want Mel" -- the nickname for Mr. Zelaya. The protests were far larger than those outside the presidential palace calling for Mr. Zelaya's return, underscoring the tricky political situation in this banana and sugar-exporting country of seven million.

Juan Carlos Ramirez, a 29-year-old vegetable vendor, said the ousted president "was a clown of" Mr. Chavez. "It wasn't a coup," he said of the military's move. "It was the substitution of one president for another."

Most of the rest of the world saw things differently, however. The World Bank on Tuesday said it would suspend all loans to Honduras until the crisis was resolved. Spain called on European nations to recall their ambassadors, while neighboring countries in Central America imposed a trade ban.

The political crisis came to a head over Mr. Zelaya's plans to hold a referendum last Sunday on redrawing the constitution, which could include scrapping term limits. The Supreme Court had ruled the referendum was illegal, but he vowed to press on.

On Tuesday, however, he told reporters, "I am not going to convene a constitutional assembly and if offered another four years in power, I would not do it."

That could help Washington try to negotiate a compromise with Honduras's new provisional government to allow Mr. Zelaya's return on condition he cede power to the winner of a November election.

Hopes for compromise rose when the interim government said it would send a delegation of politicians, business leaders and lawyers to Washington on Wednesday for talks on the crisis, Reuters reported. The White House tried to ramp up the pressure on the provisional government, saying on Tuesday that the only acceptable outcome was the return of Mr. Zelaya to power. But so far the U.S. hasn't officially declared the move against Mr. Zelaya a coup, which would trigger aid withdrawal and other sanctions.

A negotiated solution might have to come quickly. Mr. Zelaya plans to return to Honduras on Thursday to take up his post. He said he would be accompanied by the head of the Organization of American States, Jose Miguel Insulza, as well as Argentine President Cristina Kirchner and Ecuadorean leader Rafael Correa.

Honduras's newly named foreign minister said Mr. Zelaya would be arrested upon return to face charges of violating the constitution, drug trafficking and diverting millions of dollars from the public treasury. There was no immediate response by Mr. Zelaya. Honduran prosecutors also sent Interpol an arrest warrant for the ousted leader.

A senior congressional leader in Honduras expressed disappointment in both Mr. Zelaya and the new government. The politician, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Zelaya broke the law but that Congress should have had him arrested and charged through the courts rather than using the army to remove him from power.

While the new government said it was protecting press freedom, soldiers temporarily detained several Associated Press reporters before letting them go. Government-run TV stations that previously backed Mr. Zelaya returned to the air, with broadcasts giving positive coverage to the new provisional government.

While Mr. Zelaya remains popular with some segments of society, especially the poor and some unions, many in the middle class, as well as the Catholic Church, the army, and many politicians, are firmly against him. "Tell Obama he's not in charge here," said Juan Pablo Pereira, a farmer protesting in favor of the new government. "We Hondurans are in charge. We have our laws, our constitution."

23. After Losing Honduras, Ousted Leader Wins International Support

Source: New York Times

07/01/2009

By Marc Lacey

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras - Manuel Zelaya was close to slipping into Honduran history books as a former president with ideas as large as his signature Stetson hat, but nowhere near enough political consensus to remake his troubled country.

Then came his forced removal from office, which has catapulted the lame duck leader to a level of international prominence he almost certainly would not have achieved otherwise and turned him into a symbol - an undeserved one, his many critics insist - of a president whose democratic mandate was denied him.

On Tuesday, Mr. Zelaya's newfound relevance took him to one of the world's biggest stages, at the lectern of the United Nations General Assembly, where he portrayed himself as the victim of a vicious, power-hungry elite that refused to share power with his country's many poor.

"A crime has been committed, a crime against humanity, a crime which we all reject," he said. "Whenever brute force prevails over reason, humankind returns to its primeval state, to the era of the garrote, where everything is reduced to force."

A one-page resolution - sponsored by countries often at loggerheads, including the United States and Venezuela - passed by acclamation after sustained applause in the 192-member body. It condemned Mr. Zelaya's removal as a coup and demanded his "immediate and unconditional restoration" as president.

Next, Mr. Zelaya was on to the Organization of American States in Washington and a meeting at the State Department with Thomas A. Shannon Jr., an assistant secretary of state. There were no plans for him to meet President Obama, who has called for his return to office, but one administration official did not rule out such a meeting.

Back at home, though, the country is sharply divided over his removal - and his record. Thousands of his opponents turned out on Tuesday to denounce him as a dictator who had been illegally scheming to subvert the Constitution by ending the one-term limit for presidents.

The day before, Mr. Zelaya's backers praised him as a president for the working class, intending to increase their wages as well as their political power. He had spoken of building a new Honduras, with crime and corruption in check and a better standard of living for the masses, though his administration fell well short of delivering that.

The bitter standoff over Mr. Zelaya is expected reach a head on Thursday, when he has vowed to return to Honduras to retake the presidency that was stripped from him after soldiers raided his home before dawn on Sunday and shuttled him on the presidential aircraft to Costa Rica.

During a news conference at the United Nations, Mr. Zelaya said that a number of other leaders had offered to escort him home, including Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, a Nicaraguan who is the president of the General Assembly; President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina; President Rafael Correa of Ecuador; and Jose Miguel Insulza, the secretary general of the Organization of American States.

The interim president named by the Honduran Congress, Roberto Micheletti, has threatened Mr. Zelaya with arrest if he returns, saying he had illegally defied the Supreme Court in pushing for a referendum on changing the Constitution. Alberto Rubi, the attorney general, said Tuesday that the charges included treason and abuse of authority, which could put Mr. Zelaya behind bars for at least 20 years.

The newly installed foreign minister, Enrique Ortez, went further in a television interview, accusing Mr. Zelaya of permitting drug traffickers to use Honduras as a base to smuggle cocaine from

South America to the United States, an accusation that aides to Mr. Zelaya called a tall tale intended to smear him.

Dismissing the notion that Mr. Zelaya's removal was a coup, Mr. Micheletti appeared before Tuesday's rally to say that elections would go ahead in November and that a new president would take office in January, when Mr. Zelaya would have been forced to step down. "We will hand over the presidential sash to whomever the people choose," he said.

One of Mr. Zelaya's top aides, Enrique Flores Lanza, said Mr. Zelaya's return would put the army on the spot, forcing soldiers either to allow the man recognized by the world's governments as the rightful president of Honduras to return or to arrest him. Whatever they decide, Mr. Flores said, there will be huge crowds of Mr. Zelaya's followers at the airport to greet him. Mr. Flores spoke from an abandoned house in the Honduran capital, where he agreed to meet after a series of clandestine telephone calls, measures he said were necessary because he was on the run to avoid arrest.

Another minister in Mr. Zelaya's government was similarly in hiding, although he said Mr. Micheletti himself had called him on his cellphone to say nobody was pursuing him. Until he received that in writing, the minister said he would lie low.

Much remains in dispute in Honduras. Mr. Zelaya, who took office in 2006, has moved steadily to the left during his presidency, railing with increased frequency against the country's elites, who he says have opposed his politics of inclusion.

Critics accuse Mr. Zelaya, who himself comes from a well-off family of landowners, of blatant populism and of doling out cash to try to solidify a shaky political base.

"I'm O.K. with increasing the minimum wage, but he did it by more than 50 percent from one day to the next, and businesses have had to cut the payroll because of that sudden jump," said Fernando Castillo, a real estate developer who attended the anti-Zelaya protest on Tuesday. "He ended up hurting the poor."

Mr. Zelaya has spent much of his presidency holding the sort of rural chat sessions with constituents that President Hugo Chavez has made popular in Venezuela. It is Mr. Zelaya's close relationship with Mr. Chavez that has caused alarm among wealthy and middle-class Hondurans.

"He mutated," said Juan Ferrera, who served in a previous government with Mr. Zelaya. "He became someone else."

Mr. Zelaya's public support was sagging, and there was debate over whether he would have won his planned referendum, even if Congress and the courts had allowed it. But his opponents chose to act first, a decision some experts saw as a miscalculation.

"Had they let it play out, it would have been easy to stop him," said John Carey, a specialist on Latin American politics at Dartmouth University. "He seems to have triggered the only thing that could have saved him."

24. U.N. Backs Ousted Honduran Leader

Source: New York Times

07/01/2009

By Neil MacFarquhar

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations marshaled an unusually broad effort on Tuesday to condemn the military seizure of power in Honduras, turning over the podium of the General Assembly to its ousted president and quickly passing a resolution sponsored by countries often at loggerheads, including the United States and Venezuela.

The deposed president, Manuel Zelaya, said the "brutal" coup, including what he called a threat by soldiers to shoot him dead if he did not stop talking on his cell phone, was a blow against democracy. He called it "an act of aggression attacking the democratic will of the people."

Mr. Zelaya, greeted by sustained applause when he entered the chamber and sat in the Honduran seat on the assembly floor, said the resolution supporting him "expresses the indignation of the people of Honduras and of people worldwide."

The one-page resolution, passed by acclamation in the 192-member body, condemned the removal of the president as a coup and demanded the “immediate and unconditional restoration” of Mr. Zelaya as president.

His ouster on Sunday was the culmination of a battle that had been simmering for weeks over a referendum, which was to have taken place that day, that Mr. Zelaya hoped would lead to a revision of the Constitution. Critics said it was part of an illegal attempt by Mr. Zelaya to defy the Constitution’s limit of a single four-year term for the president.

Soldiers stormed the presidential palace in the capital, Tegucigalpa, early in the morning on Sunday, disarming the presidential guard, waking Mr. Zelaya and putting him on a plane to Costa Rica. Later on Sunday, the Honduran Congress voted him out of office, replacing him with the president of Congress, Roberto Micheletti.

In a news conference after the resolution was passed at the United Nations, Mr. Zelaya insisted that he would fulfill his four-year term, but said he would step down after that. “I am going to return to civilian life, not to political life.”

With the president of the General Assembly, Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, sitting next to him, Mr. Zelaya vowed to return to his country on Thursday, despite warnings that he could face arrest. But he said that a number of other leaders had offered to escort him, including Mr. d’Escoto, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina, President Rafael Correa of Ecuador and the secretary general of the Organization of American States.

Mr. Zelaya also dispelled suspicions that Western nations like the United States may have instigated or tacitly approved of his ouster, an allegation that has been repeatedly put forward by his close ally, President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela.

“The United States has changed a great deal,” he said at the news conference, noting that President Obama had not only denounced his removal as an illegal coup, but then went further, calling for his return to power.

Mr. Zelaya was expected to appear later Tuesday at a special session of the Organization of American States convening in Washington. Enrique Ortez Colindres, the foreign minister of the new post-Zelaya government, was also headed to Washington with a delegation.

25. Zelaya Seeks UN Help To Regain Presidency In Honduras

Source: Bloomberg News

07/01/2009

By Joshua Goodman and Andres R. Martinez

Honduras’s deposed president, Manuel Zelaya, will appeal to the United Nations today to help him return to office after his supporters clashed with police last night in the capital, Tegucigalpa.

Zelaya will address the UN General Assembly as soldiers and civilians who overthrew him grow increasingly isolated following President Barack Obama’s assertion that their coup was illegal. World Bank President Robert Zoellick put on hold aid during the crisis, which he cautioned might be a setback for the region.

Latin American leaders from market-friendly Mexican President Felipe Calderon to self-declared socialist Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez stood united against the region’s first coup since 2002 at an emergency summit in Nicaragua yesterday. Their unanimous censure contrasted with backing for Zelaya’s ouster by Honduras’s Supreme Court and congress, which named a caretaker until scheduled elections take place in November.

“The marching of the military into the presidential residence, the removal at gunpoint onto a plane out of the country -- this conjures up images of what we thought was part of Latin America’s past,” said Christopher Sabatini, policy director for the Council of Americas in New York.

The capital remained tense after police yesterday fired on dozens of protesters who marched to the presidential palace.

Taken at Gunpoint

Zelaya, 56, was taken at gunpoint from his home before dawn on June 28, wearing pajamas, and put on a plane to Costa Rica. Congress then ratified his removal, naming Roberto Micheletti, the head of the legislature, as his replacement.

The people have the right to peacefully rebel against the transitional government, Zelaya said in comments broadcast today by the Venezuelan government-owned Telesur network.

"Nobody has to show obedience to a usurper government," Zelaya said in Nicaragua's capital, Managua. "The people have the right to a rebellion when that happens."

The deposed president said yesterday he plans to return to Honduras after the UN speech and wants Organization of American States Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza and other heads of state to accompany him. Insulza said in Managua he will travel with Zelaya to Tegucigalpa later this week.

Zelaya faces arrest if he returns to Honduras this week, Micheletti said on Colombia's Caracol Radio.

Armed Forces Chief

While Latin American leaders rushed to condemn the coup, the first in Central America since the end of the Cold War, they remained silent on what sparked the crisis: Zelaya's defiance of congress and the Supreme Court.

Zelaya last week fired the head of the armed forces for complying with a high court ruling that barred a non-binding vote on rewriting the constitution. With a group of supporters, he then marched into a military base and walked off with the impounded ballots. Opponents in congress were moving toward impeachment proceedings over the poll, whose aim, they say, was to make it possible for Zelaya to run again.

Sabatini said Latin America's response to Zelaya's actions before the coup was "toothless," reflecting a steady erosion of checks and balances throughout the region. Democratically elected leaders aligned with Chavez in Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, as well as U.S. ally Alvaro Uribe in Colombia, have sought constitutional changes to stay in power beyond their original mandates.

At the OAS this month in Honduras, representatives from 34 nations, including the U.S., voted to overturn a 1962 resolution suspending communist Cuba even though its status as the Western Hemisphere's sole dictatorship flouts the organization's 2001 Democratic Charter.

"By defending only against coups, Latin America is saying they want people to live under democracy but not enjoy the rights that come with it," Sabatini said.

Political Divide

Reaction to the coup yesterday reflected the broader political divide between allies of Chavez and more moderate governments. Chavez said he may cut off oil supplies to Honduras and placed his military on alert. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said he was closing his border with Honduras to trade.

"We can't allow, in the 21st century, a military coup in Latin America," Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva told reporters yesterday. "It's unacceptable. Otherwise, pretty soon it'll become fashionable again."

Zelaya, a cattle rancher elected in 2006, surprised many Hondurans and allies in the 118-year-old Liberal Party by last year joining the Chavez-led trade bloc, the Bolivarian Alternative for Our America, know as Alba. Approval of his government fell to a record 30 percent in February from a high of 57 percent in January 2007, according to a nationwide poll by CID-Gallup.

Return to Honduras

Business leaders supportive of Zelaya's removal sought to downplay its impact on Honduras's \$12 billion economy, Central America's third smallest.

Benjamin Bogran, the head of the country's largest business group, said companies were operating normally. So was Puerto Cortes, the biggest port.

Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington-based policy institute, said regional leaders other than Chavez and the nine Alba allies should lead in negotiating Zelaya's return with his political opponents.

"If he's still the legitimate president, then he certainly belongs back in power," Hakim said in a phone interview. "The question is how to do that when there is such strong resistance in Honduras to him. The real test is yet to come."

26. Zelaya: Argentina, Ecuador Leaders To Return With Him

Source: Reuters

07/01/2009

UNITED NATIONS - Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya said on Tuesday that the presidents of Argentina and Ecuador and the head of the Organization of American States would join him on a return trip to Honduras on Thursday.

Zelaya, flown to Costa Rica on Sunday by the Honduras military, told a news conference he intended to return as president, to finish his current mandate and not to run for office again. He made the remarks after addressing the U.N. General Assembly.

(Reporting by Walter Brandimarte; writing by Patrick Worsnip; Editing by Stacey Joyce)

27. Very Constitutional Coup

Source: Washington Times

06/30/2009

By Juan Diego Zelaya

During the past 3 1/2 years, my country has lived through a sad satire of governance.

Influenced by the No. 1 promoter of 21st-century socialism, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, our ex-president, Manuel Zelaya, took us down the road of social divide, abuse of media publicity, propaganda and the absolute void of checks and balances with one end in mind: to stay in power indefinitely.

During his last year, he embarked on a mission to carry out a total reform of our constitution, following the well-tested formula of Mr. Chavez and Ecuador's President Rafael Correa so he could remain in power "constitutionally."

Running a campaign disguised as promoting change for the people and true direct participation of the masses, he started to promote this project with all his executive might. The judicial branch deemed this project illegal, as did our electoral tribunal and the Attorney General's Office.

Nonetheless, these institutions started to be portrayed as part of the groups of power that were afraid of change, tyrants opposed to the people of our country, who did not want people to express themselves. Whatever person or institution went against his project was also an enemy of the people. Sound familiar, Mr. Chavez?

Last week, Mr. Zelaya issued executive orders to the armed forces to carry out the first phase of the constitutional reform project. The head of the armed forces, knowing that this order was illegal and unconstitutional, said "No." Mr. Zelaya went on national TV and fired Gen. Romeo Vasquez for refusing to carry out the order, but our nation's Supreme Court reinstated him. The firing was a clear signal Mr. Zelaya was putting his personal ambition and interests before any genuine interest to change things and improve the quality of life of Hondurans.

He was only thinking of improving his quality of life through illegal means and at the cost of the peace of a whole country. This was the beginning of the end of a crisis in our young democracy.

This morning, the armed forces restored peace and democracy to our country, backed by all institutions: legislative branch; judicial branch; political parties, including the former president's own party; business bureaus; and most other groups representing society. Their stance sends a clear message: No one, not even the president, is above the law.

We may not be a perfect country with perfect citizens, but we do know what we do not want. We do not want a system in which the only power resides in the hands of the president, who can be re-elected indefinitely and can change the constitution to his own purposes when he so desires. We do not want 21st-century communism.

This day, Congress accepted Mr. Zelaya's signed resignation and proceeded to vote him out, later installing a constitutionally legitimate government, whose sole purpose is to guarantee clean and free elections in November.

Sadly, we have seen biased reporting on some international networks. What happened today was a country's stand against populist regimes like that of Mr. Chavez, who even threatened to invade Honduras to back Mr. Zelaya's search for continued power. The whole institutional basis of a country stood strong and steadfast against those threats.

We have been called all kinds of names and even received threats from a democratic dictator from the south, and we have received no international support until now, but we still stand strong.

We know as a people that dividing a country and turning it against itself cannot solve things. This is not about rich versus poor; it's about progress versus poverty. The only way a country can progress is if it stands united.

As I drove to my grandmother's house with my sister and her boyfriend, I felt the tension in the streets had diminished and one could breathe an air of peace and tranquillity that was not there before. People are at peace because they know where we are going and we know that although we have problems - poverty, crime, unemployment and many others - we also have freedom and democracy. That is still ours. A new day is born.

Even if the world and networks frown at us, we smile.

Juan Diego Zelaya is general counsel to the mayor of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. He is an adviser to the National Party, the opposition party to former President Manuel Zelaya.

28. Obama Wants Honduran Leader Reinstated

Source: Washington Times

06/30/2009

By Stephen Dinan

President Obama on Monday called the coup that ousted Manuel Zelaya as president of Honduras "not legal" and joined with the voices of leaders across the Americas in demanding that democracy be respected.

Mr. Zelaya was arrested Sunday morning and flown into exile in Costa Rica, but Mr. Obama said he "remains the president of Honduras, the democratically elected president there."

"It would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition, rather than democratic elections," Mr. Obama said after meeting with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe at the White House.

Roberto Micheletti, whom the Honduran Congress appointed to fill out Mr. Zelaya's term, said the ousted president had been removed legally by the nation's legislature and courts for trying to stay in office beyond the nation's term limits and for pushing what the courts deemed an illegal referendum to aid his bid.

"We respect everybody, and we ask only that they respect us and leave us in peace, because the country is headed toward free and transparent general elections in November," Mr. Micheletti told HRN radio.

Protests outside the presidential palace grew from hundreds to thousands, and on Monday afternoon, soldiers and police advanced behind riot shields, using tear gas to scatter the protesters. The demonstrators, many of them choking on the gas, hurled rocks and bottles, the Associated Press reported.

Security forces fired rifles, but it was not clear whether they were using live ammunition. There were no immediate confirmations of injuries. Reporters saw at least five people detained.

In criticizing the coup, the U.S. joined with leaders of nations ranging from Venezuela to Cuba, according to news services. The Associated Press reported that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez threatened to "overthrow" the new government, though Mr. Micheletti shrugged off the threat, telling a radio station: "Nobody scares us."

Leftist leaders pulled their ambassadors from Honduras.

Mr. Obama, acknowledging a "dark past" in which the U.S. ignored democracy in favor of political stability or geopolitical interests, said America has moved beyond that.

"I think both Republicans and Democrats in the United States have recognized that we always want to stand with democracy, even if the results don't always mean that the leaders of those countries are favorable toward the United States," he said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the U.S. is worried that Mr. Zelaya was defying court orders.

She also said that although it appears to be a coup, the U.S. is stopping short of officially designating it as such because that would mean U.S. aid would be halted.

"We are withholding any formal legal determination," she said.

Mr. Zelaya is an ally of other leftist Latin American leaders such as Mr. Chavez.

Honduran soldiers stormed the president's residence Sunday morning, hours before a referendum Mr. Zelaya had called to alter the constitution's term limits. News services reported tanks in the streets and soldiers in riot gear in the capital, Tegucigalpa.

The Organization of American States will hold an extraordinary general assembly meeting Tuesday to discuss the coup.

Mr. Zelaya, meanwhile, will address the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, a U.N. official confirmed.

29. Call Off The Coup In Honduras

Source: Los Angeles Times

06/30/2009

Latin Americans suffered at least three dozen military coups d'etat from the 1960s through the end of the 20th century. They believed they had put that unsavory history behind them with a wave of democratically elected civilian governments, and for the most part they had, until Honduras returned to that bygone era this week with army tanks in the streets, the president ushered into exile at gunpoint -- in his pajamas -- and the Congress waving a phony resignation letter before naming a new president. This was a coup, and it must be reversed.

Before his ouster, President Manuel Zelaya was no democratic saint himself. He was doing battle with the other branches of government over his legally questionable efforts to eliminate presidential term limits. The Supreme Court and Congress declared a referendum on the subject unconstitutional, and the prosecutor's office and electoral tribunal had the ballots confiscated. When the army refused to organize the vote, Zelaya fired the commander of the armed forces.

The Organization of American States demonstrated extraordinary unity in condemning the coup. That's not surprising, as the OAS includes many countries such as Chile, Argentina and Brazil that have overcome military dictatorships. The U.S., however, was initially more cautious. Instead of calling it a coup, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton referred to "the underlying problems that led to [Sunday's] events." Only on Monday did President Obama finally call those events by their name.

Zelaya is a wealthy rancher who has become an ally of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, and his fight is, in part, with the Honduran elites. He was replaced by a member of his own party, Roberto Micheletti, who justified Zelaya's removal by saying, "We can't allow this government to take us to communism or socialism." Even though the Honduran Congress and military may believe they are defending the country against a would-be dictator, the ends don't justify the means. They miscalculated and must retreat. In fact, the best solution would be for both sides to climb down. Zelaya should be allowed to return to office for the last six months of his term. And if what he says is true, that he was not seeking a second term for himself, then he won't mind pursuing a referendum after he leaves office -- as a private citizen. For now, both sides need to return to the constitution.

30. Honduras And The Cuba Exception

Source: Los Angeles Times

06/30/2009

By Andrés Martínez

The images were decidedly retro and jarring in their distant familiarity, as if a grainy old family film long left in the attic had been brought out for a screening. In defense of *la patria la patria*, army troops overpowered *el palacio* at dawn and placed *el presidente* on an airplane to be flown into exile, still wearing his pajamas. Sunday's coup in Honduras followed a script once so familiar it acquired cliché status, material even for a Woody Allen sendup.

Military coups are supposed to be a thing of the past in Latin America, where the consolidation of political stability and electoral democracy has been a landmark achievement over the last two decades. But events in Tegucigalpa over the weekend reminded us that this achievement remains somewhat tenuous. There is nothing inevitable about democracy in Latin America, it turns out.

In this case, outside reaction to the political drama in Honduras (which has its nuances, to be sure, including an ousted president who had been acting in defiance of his nation's Supreme Court) has been swift and energetic. The Organization of American States, the Obama administration, leftist allies of ousted President Manuel Zelaya (a close friend of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez) and other world leaders have rightly condemned the army's intervention and called for the return of Zelaya, invoking among other things the Inter-American Democratic Charter signed in Lima, Peru, on Sept. 11, 2001.

That's the proper reaction. But the attempted coup also serves to unmask the hypocrisy surrounding Cuba's possible return to the Organization of American States and to full participation in the Inter-American community. Indeed, some of the very same regional players now urging a united front on behalf of democracy in Honduras are the same leaders who in recent months have been eager to embrace Cuba and give the tropical gulag nation a pass on its lack of democracy and basic civil liberties, citing explicit principles of nonintervention and implicit nostalgia for anti-gringo revolutionary lore. This despite the fact that the Inter-American Charter makes democracy a precondition to full-fledged membership in the OAS.

Fidel Castro himself, a man known for his mischievous sense of irony, penned a column in the newspaper *Granma* on Sunday calling events in Honduras a "test for the OAS." But the real test is whether Latin America's leading democratic leaders heed the cautionary tale. If leaders such as Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Mexico's Felipe Calderon and Chile's Michelle Bachelet don't become more forceful advocates of democracy and human rights in the region, they will be encouraging a continued rollback of democratic gains -- be it a corruption of the rule of law by populist demagoguery from the left or military coups from the right. You can't carve out a Cuba exception to hemispheric rules without expecting others to exempt themselves as well.

For the region's democratic gains to take root, Latin America's major democracies will have to start standing up to the Castro brothers. Cuba has been the canary in this coal mine for a while now, seeing as how the region had seemingly overcome right-wing military threats to democratic norms. A willingness to speak out against right-wing coups does appear to trump sovereignty concerns, as it should. It is no coincidence that the Inter-American Democratic Charter was passed on 9/11. That date, after all, already lived in infamy in Latin America as the date on which Chile's military deposed Salvador Allende in 1973.

But when it comes to Cuba, complacency about what has been gained takes hold, as Latin American leaders have been reluctant in that case to apply their values and shared commitment to democracy, partly out of fear of appearing to be a tool of American imperialism. This is one of several reasons the unilateral U.S. embargo on the island nation is so counterproductive (another being that it has failed over decades to accomplish anything).

The sooner the embargo is lifted, the sooner Washington can prod major Latin American democracies to press Cuba for democratic change. An end to the U.S. embargo is not the same as welcoming Cuba into the community of Latin American democracies, and critics in this country of

Washington's failed approach shouldn't fall into the trap of also giving Havana's communist tyrants a pass for their behavior.

Uncle Sam has a storied history of hypocrisy in the hemisphere -- decrying Cuba's lack of freedoms while cozying up to right-wing dictatorships. That's why it was artful of the Obama administration this month to have gone along with the OAS repeal of its Cold War-inspired 1962 anti-Cuban resolution, at a conference in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Repeal did not make Cuba free to join the Inter-American community; it still needs to embrace the hemisphere's democratic values and commitment to human rights.

The reluctance among Latin American leaders to hold Cuba accountable is disheartening. Although U.S. diplomats skillfully threaded the needle in San Pedro Sula early this month, ceding ground without going along with an unconditional readmission of that country to the OAS, leaders like Bachelet and Lula irresponsibly fly off to Havana to bask in the Cold War relic's romantic associations, treating the Castros like esteemed counterparts. The left now matches Washington's former selectivity in doling out moral judgments, invoking a transnational legal commitment to democracy in the case of Honduras (and briefly during the failed coup attempt against Chavez in 2002) but disregarding it in the case of Cuba.

Such selective championing of freedom could prove fatal to the cause in the region, by further emboldening autocratic forces on both left and right.

Andres Martinez is a senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

31. Honduras Coup Holds Few Risks For Latin Leftists

Source: Reuters

06/30/2009

By Stuart Grudgings – Analysis

RIO DE JANEIRO - Strong U.S. support for ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya has sharply reduced the chances that the military coup there could reignite ideological tensions in Latin America or encourage similar moves against other leftist governments.

But a failure to match the words with action to help restore the leftist to the presidency could hand a propaganda victory to his fellow socialist leaders in Latin America and damage U.S. efforts to rebuild its leadership in the region.

The apparently weak footing of the Honduras coup in the face of a broad regional consensus against it means it is unlikely to spark similar moves in the historically coup-prone region, analysts said.

"This coup is a failure ... because the world has changed and it was clear before they did it that they wouldn't get support from anyone in the hemisphere," said Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research think tank in Washington. "I don't think it will encourage anyone."

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a foe of U.S. trade and foreign policy in Latin America, has threatened military action in Honduras to restore Zelaya and rallied his leftist bloc since the weekend coup, casting the crisis as an attack on democracy by imperialist forces.

U.S. President Barack Obama joined Latin American leaders on Monday in condemning the coup as illegal, marking a contrast to 2002 when Washington went against the regional consensus by initially welcoming a coup attempt against Chavez himself.

'STEALING THE SHOW'

"Part of the reason why the U.S. will come out so strongly against it has to do with the intention of preventing Hugo Chavez from stealing the show," said Kevin Casas-Zamora of the Brookings Institution think tank in Washington.

He added, "If Zelaya is put back in power, Chavez won't be able to claim the victory for his Bolivarian revolution," a term inspired by 19th century independence hero Simon Bolivar that Chavez uses to describe his push to remake Venezuela as a socialist nation.

Chavez, who blamed former U.S. President George W. Bush for the 2002 coup in which he was briefly ousted, said he wants a probe into any role the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency may have played in Zelaya's ouster.

The CIA has been involved in toppling past leftist governments in Latin America. The White House has said there was no U.S. role in Zelaya's ouster.

A former soldier who himself once led a failed coup attempt in Venezuela, Chavez knows he has enemies who could be emboldened by a successful overthrow of Zelaya in Honduras.

Chavez has been harsh with new mayors and governors elected last year, stripping them of income and power. Some in Venezuela fear that by humiliating the opposition in that country, Chavez may be increasing the credibility of radical elements who believe in removing him by force.

Evo Morales, the fellow socialist president of Bolivia, has faced unrest and strong opposition from conservative business groups and politicians in his country, and police recently uncovered what Morales described as an assassination plot against him.

Zelaya was detained and sent into exile in a dispute over his push to allow a Honduran president to stay in power longer than that country's constitution allows -- a tactic that other leftist leaders such as Chavez and Morales have also used.

Rather than signaling a warning for leftist Latin American governments about pushing constitutional changes too far, the Honduran coup is an example of the risks of doing so without enough political and military support, analysts said.

The near unanimous diplomatic backing for Zelaya, whose push to change the constitution was seen as undemocratic by critics, could shield other leaders in the region from similar criticism in the future, said Chris Sabatini of the U.S.-based Americas Society-Council of the Americas think tank.

"The unconstitutional act being punished is the coup d'etat, not the death by a thousand cuts that comes before -- the erosion of democratic institutions," Sabatini said.

'SUBTLE SIGNALS'

Weisbrot and other analysts said the coup leaders would be looking for any signs of ambivalence in the U.S. stance that could signal that Washington is willing to allow a political outcome without Zelaya's return.

"This government has probably got a plan to hold out for (the) rest of the term," Weisbrot said, referring to Honduran interim President Roberto Micheletti's intention to retain control through a November 29 presidential election.

"They are going to be looking for subtle signals from this (Obama) administration about what they should do."

Obama, saying that Zelaya was the only legitimate Honduran president, said he would work with the Organization of American States and other international institutions to restore Zelaya to power and "see if we can resolve this in a peaceful way."

Both Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have explicitly referred to Zelaya's ouster as a "coup." But Clinton said the administration was not formally designating it as a military coup for now, a step that would force a cut-off of most U.S. aid to Honduras.

A senior U.S. official who spoke on condition he not be named said that by holding off on a legal determination that a coup has taken place, Washington was trying to provide space for a negotiated settlement.

"Hillary Clinton seems a little less out front than Obama on this ... it will make the U.S. look extremely weak if they cannot march this back," said Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington.

"The fact is the U.S. says Zelaya is the legitimate president and a lot of us are aware of the kind of influence that the U.S. should be projecting with the people who carried out the coup."

(Additional reporting by Frank-Jack Daniel in Caracas)

(Editing by Todd Benson and Will Dunham)

32. World Bank 'Pauses' Loans To Honduras - Zoellick

Source: Reuters

06/30/2009

WASHINGTON - The World Bank has "paused" all lending for development programs to Honduras following a military coup, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said on Tuesday.

"We're working closely with the OAS (Organization of American States) and looking to the OAS to deal with its handling of the crisis under its democratic charter," Zoellick told reporters, "In the process we have put a pause with our lending."

"We had some items which were going to go to our board and we have held those off for now," he told a conference call ahead of a scheduled meeting of Latin American finance ministers in Chile on July 2.

Honduran President Manuel Zelaya was overthrown and forced into exile in Costa Rica in the coup on Sunday, which has been condemned by the international community including leftist allies from the region.

Honduras borrows from the World Bank's fund that provides low-cost loans and grants to poor countries, and Zoellick said the country's allocation for the next fiscal year was around \$80 million.

Asked under what conditions would the World Bank consider resuming lending to Honduras, Zoellick said: "It is a situation that is in flux and fluid and in this case we are trying to play a supportive role with the region and its overall goals to restore democracy." (Reporting by Lesley Wroughton; Editing by W Simon)

33. UN Backs Ousted Honduran Leader

Source: Associated Press

06/30/2009

By Will Weissert and Freddy Cuevas

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — The U.N. General Assembly demanded the immediate restoration of Honduras' ousted president on Tuesday, but the man who replaced him said Manuel Zelaya could be arrested if he returns home.

The U.N. vote by acclamation added to an avalanche of international denunciations of the coup that removed Zelaya on Sunday, an action that raised fears of more of the military overthrows that have scarred Latin American history.

The world body called on all 192 U.N. member states to avoid recognizing any government in Honduras other than Zelaya's.

Zelaya then thanked the assembly for the "historic" resolution that expresses "the indignation" of people worldwide.

The Organization of American States planned an emergency meeting in Washington hours later to reinforce the pressure to reinstate Zelaya, whose foes claim he was plotting with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez to change the Honduran constitution in hopes of extending his rule.

The United States, which had privately expressed concerns to Zelaya about changing the constitution, has stood behind him since masked soldiers sent him, still wearing pajamas, into exile. President Barack Obama said Zelaya remains "the democratically elected president."

"It would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition rather than democratic elections," Obama said Monday.

Zelaya also got support from Latin American leaders in Nicaragua on Monday, and said OAS Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza had agreed to accompany him back to Honduras on Thursday.

But the man Honduras' Congress named as interim president, Roberto Micheletti, said Zelaya risks arrest if he returns because "the courts of my country have issued arrest orders."

Micheletti, speaking to Colombia's Caracol Radio on Tuesday, insisted it was Zelaya who had violated the constitution and that his court-ordered removal was legal.

"We have not committed a coup d'etat, but a constitutional succession," he said. About 5,000 anti-Zelaya demonstrators gathered at a main plaza in Tegucigalpa on Tuesday to celebrate his ouster.

"Freedom has won, peace has triumphed, Honduras has won," newly appointed deputy foreign minister Marta Lorena Casco told the crowd. She said Zelaya had planned to make the country a socialist

pawn. "Chavez consumed Venezuela, then Bolivia, after that Ecuador and Nicaragua, but in Honduras that didn't happen," she said.

Soldiers and police set up a chain link fence before dawn to seal off the area in front of the presidential palace in Tegucigalpa, preventing a repeat of Monday's clashes in which security forces used tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse pro-Zelaya protesters who were throwing rocks and bottles.

Some local television stations remained off the air and local media carried few reports of any demonstrations in Zelaya's favor.

At least 38 pro-Zelaya protesters were detained, said Sandra Ponce, a government human rights official.

Congresswoman Silvia Ayala said she counted 30 injured at a single Tegucigalpa hospital and an Associated Press photographer in another area close to the palace saw protesters carrying away five injured people.

"In the name of God, in the name of the people, stop repressing the people," Zelaya said in Nicaragua, urging soldiers to return to their barracks.

Zelaya said more than 150 people were injured and 50 were arrested but added that he didn't "have exact figures, because I'm not there."

Mexico and Colombia's conservative governments joined the region's leftist leaders in condemning Zelaya's removal, and the nation's Central American neighbors began a 48-hour ban trade ban.

Chavez urged a rebellion by the Honduran people, and vowed to halt shipments of subsidized oil, though Honduras gets most of its oil from other sources.

"I'll do everything possible to overthrow this gorilla government of Honduras. It must be overthrown," the socialist leader said Monday. "The rebellion in Honduras must be supported."

The OAS was considering suspending Honduras under an agreement meant to prevent the coups that for generations spawned military dictatorships in Latin America.

Micheletti vowed to ignore foreign pressure and began naming Cabinet members, including a new minister of defense. But he also told Caracol Radio that he would leave office after serving out the final seven months of Zelaya's term.

The U.S. military, which has close ties with the Honduran military leaders, tried to avoid getting caught up in the dispute.

The more than 800 U.S. military personnel at the Honduran Soto Cano air base were restricted to base except for "mission-essential" tasks such as flying helicopters to the hospital ship Comfort, which is on a humanitarian mission in Nicaragua, said Jose Ruiz, a spokesman for the U.S. military's Southern Command, based in Miami.

The base, 60 miles from the capital, is used for counternarcotics, disaster relief and medical and civil engineering missions.

Zelaya, a wealthy rancher, alienated the courts, Congress, the military and even his own party in his tumultuous three years in power but maintains the support of many of Honduras' poor.

Sunday's ouster was the first military power grab in Latin America since a brief, failed 2002 coup against Chavez.

Coups were common in Central America until the 1980s, but Honduras had not seen a coup since 1978, when one military government overthrew another.

34. US Warns Citizens To Avoid Travel To Honduras, Restricts Embassy Staff To Necessary Trips Only

Source: Los Angeles Time / Associated Press

06/30/2009

WASHINGTON — The State Department on Monday warned U.S. citizens to avoid all nonessential travel to Honduras due to the "current unstable political and security situation" there.

Noting the ouster on Sunday by the Honduran military of President Manuel Zelaya, the department in a statement late Monday also recommended that American citizens residing in and visiting Honduras remain close to their homes or hotels "unless their travel is of a life or death nature," or for a scheduled departure from Honduras. It urged U.S. citizens to restrict travel within the country to necessary trips.

It said the U.S. Embassy has restricted the travel of its staff within Honduras to necessary trips.

"There have been regular demonstrations at the presidential palace in central Tegucigalpa, and streets in the vicinity of many government offices are blocked by police or military," the statement said. "In general, the streets of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula are quiet. Reports from the rest of the country indicate that calm prevails, although there have been cases of occasional roadblocks."

35. Latin Leaders Unite Against Junta In Honduras

Leftists are urging Hondurans rise up against the coup leaders while conservatives denounce Sunday's ouster of President Zelaya.

Source: Christian Science Monitor

06/30/2009

By Tim Rogers

Managua, Nicaragua — Leaders of Latin America's left, right, and center met in the Nicaraguan capital Monday to speak in one voice of support for deposed Honduran President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya, who was ousted by military force Sunday.

The group of presidents and representatives of 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries roundly condemned Sunday's coup and announced a series of economic and political sanctions against Honduras as reprisal for what they're calling the illegitimate installation of a "usurper" government.

Brazil and the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), a regional leftist trade bloc, announced the removal of their ambassadors to Honduras, while neighboring Central American countries announced a 48-hour embargo on overland trade. All said they would never recognize the de-facto Honduran government, and called for the immediate and "unconditional" reinstatement of Mr. Zelaya.

Zelaya, a wealthy rancher who has championed the poor, said late Monday that he would accept an offer by Organization of American States Secretary-General Jose Miguel Insulza to accompany him back to Honduras. He said he wanted to go on Thursday, after attending a meeting of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday to seek support from its 192 member nations.

Leftist leaders call on Hondurans to rise up

The countries of ALBA called for "insurrection" in Honduras, urging civilians and lower ranks within the military to rise up against the coup leaders.

"We will do everything to overthrow this government," Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez thundered. "We have to support the rebellion in Honduras."

Mr. Chávez, who himself led a failed 1992 coup attempt in Venezuela — seven years before being elected democratically — called the Honduran coup leaders "puppets" and "gorillas." Following the brief detention and alleged beating of the Venezuelan Ambassador to Honduras on Sunday, Chávez warned the coup leaders that if they touch his envoy again it would be "cause for war."

Regional leaders find unity

On the other end of the spectrum, Costa Rica's more conservative and unflashy President Oscar Arias, said his 20-year-old "dream of a demilitarized Central America still makes sense."

"I wanted to make Central America the first demilitarized zone in the world," said Arias, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership role in helping to end the Central American wars in the 1980s.

But beyond Latin America's complex divisions based on political ideology and cult of personality, regional leaders have shown a rare spirit of cooperation and unity in their common condemnation of the coup in Honduras. If the coup is successful, several leaders warned, it could have devastating consequences for regional stability and unravel more than a decade of plodding yet timid progress toward institutional democracy in Latin America.

More to come?

"This would cause a domino effect in the whole region," said Guatemalan President Álvaro Colom, whose own government almost fell amid civil unrest last May.

Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernández warned that if the coup is consolidated in the coming days or weeks, it could become "contagious" and spread to other countries facing similar political polarization. He said the countries of the hemisphere need to stop the coup in its tracks to "prevent what could happen in another one of our countries."

Both Chávez and Cuban President Raúl Castro, the other star of Monday's political theater in Managua, spoke of other alleged plots to kill or depose of Latin America's leftist leaders in recent years. Chávez said he had to skip the June 1 inauguration of El Salvador's new left-leaning president, Mauricio Funes, because Venezuelan intelligence uncovered an alleged plot to shoot down his plane with a rocket. Mr. Castro, for his part, warned Ecuador's leftist president, Rafael Correa, who earlier this month joined ALBA, that he could be the next target for a coup.

Castro also called on President Barack Obama to do more to help the situation and to show his support with "actions, not words."

Zelaya, meanwhile, thanked all of his regional counterparts for their support and said he will travel Tuesday morning to Washington to speak before the Organization of American States (OAS), which has already called for action to be taken "as quickly as possible."

VENEZUELA**36. The Wages Of Chavismo**

The Honduran coup is a reaction to Chávez's rule by the mob.

Source: Wall Street Journal

07/01/2009

As military "coups" go, the one this weekend in Honduras was strangely, well, democratic. The military didn't oust President Manuel Zelaya on its own but instead followed an order of the Supreme Court. It also quickly turned power over to the president of the Honduran Congress, a man from the same party as Mr. Zelaya. The legislature and legal authorities all remain intact.

We mention these not so small details because they are being overlooked as the world, including the U.S. President, denounces tiny Honduras in a way that it never has, say, Iran. President Obama is joining the U.N., Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez and other model democrats in demanding that Mr. Zelaya be allowed to return from exile and restored to power. Maybe it's time to sort the real from the phony Latin American democrats.

The situation is messy, and we think the Hondurans would have been smarter -- and better off -- not sending Mr. Zelaya into exile at dawn. Mr. Zelaya was pressing ahead with a nonbinding referendum to demand a constitutional rewrite to let him seek a second four-year term. The attorney general and Honduran courts declared the vote illegal and warned he'd be prosecuted if he followed through. Mr. Zelaya persisted, even leading a violent mob last week to seize and distribute ballots imported from Venezuela. However, the proper constitutional route was to impeach Mr. Zelaya and then arrest him for violating the law.

Yet the events in Honduras also need to be understood in the context of Latin America's decade of *chavismo*. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez was democratically elected in 1998, but he has since used every lever of power, legal and extralegal, to subvert democracy. He first ordered a rewrite of the constitution that allowed his simple majority in the national assembly grant him the power to rule by decree for one year and to control the judiciary.

In 2004 he packed the Supreme Court with 32 justices from 20. Any judge who rules against his interests can be fired. He made the electoral tribunal that oversees elections his own political tool, denying opposition requests to inspect voter rolls and oversee vote counts. The once politically

independent oil company now hires only Chávez allies, and independent television stations have had their licenses revoked.

Mr. Chávez has also exported this brand of one-man-one-vote-once democracy throughout the region. He's succeeded to varying degrees in Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and Nicaragua, where his allies have stretched the law and tried to dominate the media and the courts. Mexico escaped in 2006 when Felipe Calderón linked his leftwing opponent to *chavismo* and barely won the presidency.

In Honduras Mr. Chávez funneled Venezuelan oil money to help Mr. Zelaya win in 2005, and Mr. Zelaya has veered increasingly left in his four-year term. The Honduran constitution limits presidents to a single term, which is scheduled to end in January. Mr. Zelaya was using the extralegal referendum as an act of political intimidation to force the Congress to allow a rewrite of the constitution so he could retain power. The opposition had pledged to boycott the vote, which meant that Mr. Zelaya would have won by a landslide.

Such populist intimidation has worked elsewhere in the region, and Hondurans are understandably afraid that, backed by Chávez agents and money, it could lead to similar antidemocratic subversion there. In Tegucigalpa yesterday, thousands demonstrated against Mr. Zelaya, and new deputy foreign minister Marta Lorena Casco told the crowd that "Chávez consumed Venezuela, then Bolivia, after that Ecuador and Nicaragua, but in Honduras that didn't happen."

It's no accident that Mr. Chávez is now leading the charge to have Mr. Zelaya reinstated, and on Monday the Honduran traveled to a leftwing summit in Managua in one of Mr. Chávez's planes. The U.N. and Organization of American States are also threatening the tiny nation with ostracism and other punishment if it doesn't readmit him. Meanwhile, the new Honduran government is saying it will arrest Mr. Zelaya if he returns. This may be the best legal outcome, but it also runs the risk of destabilizing the country. We recall when the Clinton Administration restored Bertrand Aristide to Haiti, only to have the country descend into anarchy.

As for the Obama Administration, it seems eager to "meddle" in Honduras in a way Mr. Obama claimed was counterproductive in Iran. Yet the stolen election in Iran was a far clearer subversion of democracy than the coup in Honduras. As a candidate, Mr. Obama often scored George W. Bush's foreign policy by saying democracy requires more than an election -- a free press, for example, civil society and the rule of law rather than rule by the mob. It's a point worth recalling before Mr. Obama hands a political victory to the forces of *chavismo* in Latin America.

37. Obama's Stance Deflects Chávez's Finger-Pointing

Source: New York Times

07/01/2009

By Simon Romero

CARACAS, Venezuela - From the moment the coup in Honduras unfolded over the weekend, President Hugo Chavez had his playbook ready. He said Washington's hands may have been all over the ouster, claiming that it financed President Manuel Zelaya's opponents and insinuating that the C.I.A. may have led a campaign to bolster the putschists.

But President Obama firmly condemned the coup, defusing Mr. Chavez's charges. Instead of engaging in tit-for-tat accusations, Mr. Obama calmly described the coup as "illegal" and called for Mr. Zelaya's return to office. While Mr. Chavez continued to portray Washington as the coup's possible orchestrator, others in Latin America failed to see it that way.

"Obama Leads the Reaction to the Coup in Honduras," read the front-page headline on Tuesday in Estado de Sao Paulo, one of the most influential newspapers in Brazil, whose ties to Washington are warm.

In recent years, Mr. Chavez has often seemed to outmaneuver Washington on such issues. He exploited the Bush administration's low standing after the Iraq war and its tacit approval for the brief coup that toppled him in 2002, and blamed the United States for ills in Venezuela and across the region.

Now such tactics may get less traction, as the Obama administration presses for a multilateral solution to the crisis in Honduras by turning to the Organization of American States. In doing so, Mr. Obama is moving away from policies that had isolated the United States in parts of the hemisphere.

"With Honduras, the Obama administration has taken the mainstream road that is more in sync with other countries in the region," said Peter DeShazo, director of the Americas program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Honduras, which has long had close ties to Washington, has more recently emerged as a proxy for the interests of both Venezuela and the United States. With subsidized oil, Mr. Chavez lured Honduras into his leftist alliance, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. Meanwhile, the United States did not cut off development and military aid to Honduras, in an attempt to maintain influence there.

But while Mr. Chavez has allies in Bolivia and Ecuador who succeeded in changing constitutions to stay in office longer - following his example in Venezuela - his intervention in Honduras heightened tension in that country. Reports that Venezuela sent a plane to Honduras last week with election material for a referendum at the heart of Mr. Zelaya's clash with the Supreme Court stirred considerable unease there.

Mr. Chavez portrays his support for Mr. Zelaya as another example of championing his brand of democracy, which often centers on strong presidencies at the expense of other branches of government. But some countries in Latin America are resisting the trend of allowing leaders to extend their stay in office.

In Colombia, for instance, President Alvaro Uribe, a conservative populist and an American ally, is facing difficulties in a push to allow him to run for a third term. And in Argentina, the once popular former president, Nestor Kirchner, admitted defeat this week in congressional elections, throwing into doubt hopes for him and his wife, President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, to extend their dynasty in the next presidential election.

Meanwhile, Mr. Obama is seeking to engage Brazil more deeply, reportedly floating the appointment of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's leftist president, as head of the World Bank. The move, if it materializes, would break the tradition of nominating an American to the post and could bolster support for Washington-based multilateral institutions while blunting Mr. Chavez's attempts to create his own rival institutions.

Doing this while largely ignoring Mr. Chavez's taunts holds risks for Mr. Obama, particularly if information comes to light showing that there is some truth in Mr. Chavez's claims.

The Venezuelan president will not forget that the C.I.A. had knowledge of the coup that ousted him in 2002 yet did nothing to prevent it, and that Washington has a recent history of providing aid to groups that are critical of his government, opening the United States to charges of destabilization.

Moreover, Mr. Chavez's antiestablishment rhetoric, aimed at elites in Washington and elsewhere, still resounds among many people here in Latin America.

But for now, at least, Mr. Obama's nonconfrontational diplomacy seems to have caught Mr. Chavez off balance. "Chavez is beginning to understand that he's dealing with someone with a very different approach than his predecessor," said Michael Shifter, vice president of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington policy research group.

Mr. Chavez's outsize role in the Honduras crisis, which involved threats of war if Venezuela's Embassy in Honduras were searched, belies the limits of Venezuela's influence in the hemisphere as the United States recalibrates its policies in a way that evokes the pragmatic diplomacy of the region's other power, Brazil.

After the dust settles in Honduras, Mr. Chavez's alliance will still include some of the region's poorest and most conflict-ridden nations, like Bolivia and Nicaragua, with larger countries choosing other development paths.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chavez's threats of belligerence in Central America led one opposition party here, Accion Democratica, to issue a statement on Monday that was full of irony: "Hugo Chavez has become the George Bush of Latin America."

38. Venezuela & Allies Pull Envoys From Honduras To Protest Coup

The member-states of the Venezuelan-led ALBA bloc – Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela – on Monday ordered their ambassadors to leave Honduras until President Mel Zelaya, who was forced out by the military over the weekend, is reinstated.

Source: EFE News Agency

06/30/2009

MANAGUA – The member-states of the Venezuelan-led ALBA bloc on Monday ordered their ambassadors to leave Honduras until President Mel Zelaya, who was forced out by the military over the weekend, is reinstated.

“In view of the categorical rejection that the international community has shown in the face of the dictatorial government that is trying to impose itself (in Honduras), we member countries of ALBA have decided to withdraw our ambassadors” from Tegucigalpa, they agreed in the Managua declaration, read by Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Fander Falconi.

ALBA comprises Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela.

In the declaration, signed by Presidents Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, the ALBA nations demanded that “President Zelaya be unconditionally (restored) to his legitimate duties.”

“We recognize as the only diplomatic representatives of Honduras in our countries the personnel designated by President Zelaya,” they said.

The ALBA governments said that under no circumstance will they accredit persons appointed “by the usurpers,” an allusion to the government of Honduran congressional speaker Roberto Micheletti, who was chosen by his colleagues to serve as provisional president.

In addition, the declared themselves to be on “permanent alert to accompany the courageous Honduran people in the activities of struggle they have convened” and they invoked Articles 2 and 3 of the Honduran Constitution, which refer to the crime of treason against the homeland and the right to join an insurrection in defense of the constitutional order.

“Those who are leading the coup d’etat must know that it will be impossible for them to impose themselves and mock international justice, before which they will be brought sooner or later,” they warned.

The ALBA nations issued a call to Honduran military officers and soldiers to correct their stance and “place their weapons at the service of the Honduran people and its commanding general, Manuel Zelaya.”

The countries making up ALBA also decided to maintain all the cooperative programs with Honduras which they had agreed to with Zelaya.

Honduras’ 128-member Congress elected Micheletti to serve the six months remaining in Zelaya’s four-year term, which was set to end on Jan. 27, 2010.

Congress justified Zelaya’s removal from office on the grounds that he threatened the constitutional order by trying to hold a non-binding referendum on his proposal for a national assembly next year to overhaul the Central American country’s constitution and, among other things, allow himself to run for the presidency again, something the current charter forbids.

Soldiers arrested Zelaya a few hours before the referendum was set to begin on Sunday and he was flown to Costa Rica.

Congress and the Supreme Court had both declared the referendum illegal.