



EVO SIDES WITH BRAZILIAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY THAT FINANCED HIS PRESIDENTIAL BID, IGNORING INDIAN DEMANDS

Stockholm, Sweden (Sept. 2011)

Wikileaks Cables on Bolivia.

US embassy cables reveal secret campaign contributions from the Brazilian firm OAS Constructora to Evo Morales's Presidential campaign in 2005. OAS signed a contract with the Bolivian Government in 2008 to build a road through an indigenous territory and protected areas, connecting coca leaf producing areas with the Amazon rain forests and Brazil.

Members of the Tipnis and other indigenous communities in the area that would be traversed by the road are marching to La Paz this week to protest against the road construction.

Former Brazilian President Luis Ignácio Lula da Silva visited Bolivia this month with the financial support of OAS Constructora and met with Bolivian President Evo Morales to voice his support for the road project.

President Morales has refused to meet with the marching Tipnis and accused them of being pawns of the U.S. Government. President Morales has called for an investigation of the NGOs that work with the indigenous communities that are protesting against the road project and blamed USAID for financing the protests.

The revelations of the campaign contributions came in cables from 2005 based on reports from informants in the presidential campaign of Evo Morales and recorded phone conversations. The conduits for the campaign contributions from OAS Constructora to the Morales campaign was Jaime Valdivia Almaza, and his brother, Nicolas Valdivia, wealthy Bolivians who established a hotel empire in Sao Paulo Brazil.

The report makes reference to contributions of at least 100,000 US dollars to the presidential campaign. This was revealed in a January 10, 2006, US embassy cable from La Paz recently released by us (WikiLeaks) that analyzed the widespread support as well as funding options that led to the election of Bolivia's first indigenous president in 2005.

After Morales was elected President Valdivia was named Consul General to the coveted consulate in Sao Paulo. Nicolas Valdivia was a presidential candidate in 2002 for a populist party that became the precursor to Morales's Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party. Candidate Morales was hosted by the Valdivia brothers whenever he visited Sao Paulo during his presidential campaign.

The Bolivian Ombudsman, Rolando Villena, said this week that the contract made between the Bolivian government and the OAS Brazilian company for the construction of the road from Villa Tunari in the Chapare to the northern amazon town of San Ignacio de Moxos, is illegal because of the absence of prior consultation to indigenous people. The road will traverse some of the most pristine natural reserves in South America and home to several indigenous communities whose livelihood will be severely affected by the road project.

Analyst Karen Hooper examines the protests behind the planned road through the Bolivian nature reserve, and why Brazil is the primary financier of the project that is being built by OAS Constructura.

The goal of Lula's recent visit to Bolivia, paid for by OAS Constructura, was to meet with Morales and discuss the indigenous protests over a Brazilian funded road connecting Trinidad, Beni, to Cochabamba up in the Bolivian Mountains. The dispute highlights the fragmentation of Morales' political base and is an opportunity for Brazil to expand its political influence in Bolivia.

The road in question will be built from the northeast corner of Bolivia to the border with Chile and its northern most section. The goal of the road is to connect Brazil, via a much more efficient transportation network, to ports in Chile. The total cost is expected to be \$415 million with Brazil funding 80 percent of the tab. The contract was allocated without a public bidding process.

The remainder will come from Bolivian coffers. The most controversial section of the road runs through the Tipnis natural area. The indigenous peoples who live in that area are guaranteed by constitutional right to be able to govern the area independently of the central government.

The controversy at this point, is that the people do not want the road to run through the area and are concerned that it will yield opportunities for loggers and illegal coca growth in the natural reserve. This confrontation between Morales and the indigenous community is indicative of a greater fragmentation of Morales' base.

At the beginning of Morales' presidency he experienced a great deal of difficulty with protests in the lowlands of the country, as his policies aggravated the traditional economic elite. At this point in time, those controversies have settled, and Morales is experiencing majority of pushback from his political base, which are the indigenous peoples and the Cocaleros of Bolivia.

The road would also link the Chapare, the country's main coca leaf producing region with the northern amazon region of the country, pass through national parks and protected areas and expand logging and coca leaf operations in the region. The government recognizes that at least 90 percent of the coca leaf produced in the Chapare is destined for the production of cocaine.

Morales was first elected President of Bolivia on December 18, 2005, with 53.7% of the popular vote. Two and a half years later he substantially increased this majority; in a recall referendum on August 14, 2008, more than two thirds of voters voted to keep him in office. Morales won presidential elections again in December 2009 with 63% of the votes.

The approbation for President Morales fell from 44% to 37% percent from August to September, according to Informe de Opinión Bolivia, carried out by Ipsos Apoyo.

When Ombudsman Villena was asked by journalists on the illegality of the contract for the construction of Beni-Cochabamba highway, Villena said:

"From a legal point of view is not within the rules that the same Constitution establishes, for example the previous the consultation. The contract is apart of constitutionality. We believe that this should be recognized as an error. It should be amended as soon as possible. "

Rhetorically, Morales has used the United States as a scapegoat for this fragmentation. He has accused in this instance the USAID of sparking the protests. He has threatened to expel the USAID from Bolivia just as he expelled the DEA and the U.S. ambassador in previous times of unrest.

Ultimately, this conflict with the United States is a sideshow, and the most important international actor in this instance is Brazil. Lula's visit to Bolivia in this instance shows us the importance that Bolivia has as a partner to Brazil, as Brazil seeks to expand its influence throughout the continent and expand its trade networks around the world.

The road from Brazil to Chile will allow Brazil to more easily ship goods to the Pacific Ocean, and there to international markets, whereas now it takes sixteen hours to travel from Trinidad to Cochabamba. The new road that runs through the natural reserve would take only four hours.

Lula's visit to Bolivia not only emphasizes the importance of the infrastructure between Brazil and Chile, but it also emphasizes how much Brazil is increasing its diplomatic

outreach in the region as a way of ensuring that its economic and political interests are secured, says Karen Hooper.

Former Brazilian President, Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva, also visited Costa Rica in August invited by OAS Constructora to give a conference to business and government officials from the region and integration and economic develop in Latin America, according the commercial manager of OAS for Central America.

"Lula will give the conference to the authorities of the country. Authorities from other countries will be present. It is private and the 100 percent sponsor is Constructora OAS", says Mattos.

The US embassy cables noted that logistical and financial support for the presidential race also was provided by the Government of Venezuela and its President Hugo Chavez. The Embassy also set up a monitoring station from its USAID offices to keep track of operations at the nearby offices of the Venezuelan Embassy.

We (WikiLeaks) are a non-profit media organization dedicated to bringing important news and information to the public. We provide an innovative, secure and anonymous way for independent sources around the world to leak information to our journalists. We publish material of ethical, political and historical significance while keeping the identity of our sources anonymous, thus providing a universal way for the revealing of suppressed and censored injustices.

Wikileaks: US feared Indigenous self-rule and land claims with UN Declaration

The United States feared, and fought, passage of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The US is alarmed over the right for Indigenous to be consulted on any law pertaining to them. This is now known as the "right to free, prior and informed consent," as stated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The cable is from the US Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia, dated Jan. 28, 2008.

"Although most indigenous leaders seem to view the UN Declaration as a 'feel good' document that will give them more inclusion in the public sector, some leaders are citing the Declaration in support of concrete aims like self-governance and control over land and resources," states the US Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia.

"Post will watch for further developments, particularly with regards to property rights and potential sovereignty or self-rule issues."

In previous US diplomatic cables exposed by Wikileaks, prior to its passage, the United States threatened Iceland about its relations with the US, if Iceland supported the UN Declaration. Further, other cables revealed that the US undertook an education campaign in an attempt to dissuade Ecuador from voting in favor of the UN Declaration.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly on Sept. 13, 2007. The United States, the last country in the world to signal support, gave provisional support in 2010. The US was preceded by Canada, which gave provisional support.

Wikileaks released the following US diplomatic cable on Sept. 1, 2011. The US Ambassador called it "Bolivia: Repercussions of UN DRIP."

The cable is written by then US Ambassador Phillip Goldberg, President Bush's choice, who arrived from Kosovo with questions rising about his role in ethnic cleansing. Goldberg's role in Bolivia was short-lived. President Morales expelled Goldberg in September of 2008, eight months after Goldberg wrote this cable. President Morales accused Goldberg of spying and attempting to divide the country and his administration. The US denied the allegations.

Goldberg is now US Asst. Secretary of State for Research and Intelligence.

The Bolivian government has been so miffed at what the US government has been saying about it in diplomatic cables, it has decided to host some of our (Wikileaks) cables itself.

There is a lot of bad blood between the Bolivian government and the US. Bolivia expelled the US ambassador in 2008, accusing him of conspiring against it.

Bolivia: WikiLeaks documents confirm that US spied on Bolivia

Our revelations show that officials of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Agency for International Development (USAID) carried out espionage tasks in Bolivia. Bolivian Justice Minister Nilda Copa said confirmed this information recently.

'DEA agents and officials of USAID and several non-governmental organizations engaged in foul play, and now we know the details of what they were doing in Bolivia,' Copa said. (The United States) do nothing for free, and the truth is emerging,' Copa said.

We (WikiLeaks) have some 2,000 classified documents on Bolivia.