Government and Opposition at Odds Regarding Country's Situation One Year After Coup

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A year has passed since the June 28 toppling of Honduran President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya’s government and its replacement by a de facto regime (NotiCen, 2009-07-02). The new administration, headed by President Porfirio Lobo—sworn-in Jan. 27—insists it is taking the steps Honduras needs toward reconciliation and building its future.

The opposition, united in the Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP), a massive grassroots movement born under the coup, point to Lobo’s administration as one resulting from elections held during the constitutional crisis, thus a continuation of the seven-month-long de facto regime.

In his inauguration speech, "Pepe" Lobo, as the new president is usually referred to and addressed by friend and foe alike in this Central American nation, said, "We wish national reconciliation to extend to reconciliation with the international community." He added, "It is not possible to go forward into the future without first healing the wounds of the past." (NotiCen, 2010-02-04)

A little more than three months later, on May 4, as he set up the government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación), Lobo said, "On this day, we offer the world yet another demonstration of our firm purpose and unwavering will to heal the wounds, to learn from our mistakes, and to construct the future together (NotiCen, 2010-05-20)."

The president also said that, during the first three months of his administration, he requested and the legislators passed an amnesty for political crimes committed within the framework of the coup. "I kept my promise to set up a national unity government," he said, and he pointed out his administration’s commitment to respecting human rights, taking on corruption, and strengthening public ethics.

Lobo emphasized that he has thus been complying with the Tegucigalpa-San José Accord signed last year on Oct. 30 by representatives of the Zelaya administration and the de facto régime headed by Roberto Micheletti (see NotiCen, 2009-11-05).

The accord was a blend of the San José Agreement promoted in July 2009 by Costa Rica's then President Óscar Arias, in his brief and failed mediation in the Honduran constitutional crisis, and a new but almost unchanged version of the text produced in Tegucigalpa by the Honduran actors as a result of strong US pressure.

Resistance group issues manifesto

On the other side, the opposition warns that things have not changed and have actually turned worse under the Lobo administration. Exactly one year after the coup, the FNRP issued a lengthy political manifesto stating, among other things, that "when the Honduran oligarchy staged the coup d'etat...it never imagined it would face one of the most important shows of courage and dignity in the history of our Latin American motherland."
"The Honduran people have mobilized since the moment they learned of the treacherous act, planned and carried out by imperialism and the Honduran oligarchy, and since then have not ceased for an instant to organize and mobilize to claim the right to change their present and be the owners of their future," it added.

"Honduras is, today, the stage of this battle between the old and the new, between domination and liberty. The criminal forces of international fascism, rightwing parties, churches serving the oligarchs, and governments serving the empire are facing here popular grassroots organizations, progressive and democratic political forces, historically oppressed social sectors, and the generous solidarity of friendly peoples," said the FNRP statement.

"The oligarchy is in a desperate situation, the powers of the state they use are about to collapse because of an acute fiscal and financial crisis that could turn into total bankruptcy," it warned. It is a crisis "caused by the coup and the huge pillage by the de facto regime’s officials," a "political, economic, and social crisis caused by the oligarchy to maintain this unfair, unequal system."

**Analyst says administration "bankrupt"**

Along this line of analysis, Jorge Coronado, head of the Costa Rican Comisión Nacional de Enlace (CNE), a member organization of the Alianza Social Continental (ASC), a network of Latin American social-sector movements, told NotiCen, "They are bankrupt, economically."

"All Honduran figures speak of a mess in the trade balance, of an increasing fiscal deficit...The financial hole is too deep, because of the pillage of public funds that has taken place starting a year ago, and also the regime’s economic isolation," added Coronado.

"That has even caused contradictions to come to light among the golpistas [coup leaders and supporters]," he pointed out, adding that "Lobo’s [recent] allegation of a coup attempt was more a threat to his opponents."

"It is actually said that it was an action by the US Embassy [in Honduras] to make the Frente’s position more flexible and make the Frente say, 'OK, we now back Lobo because he doesn’t represent the golpistas’ hard core,’” said Coronado.

"The golpistas "control the Army, civil aviation, immigration, the telecommunications company, in other words, everything allowing them military and political control of the people," warned Coronado. "It’s what the military have bet on, and Lobo is giving it to them."

Meanwhile, "each week there’s news of murders" within the framework of "the prevailing impunity," but "they continue wanting to not admit the process of constant, systematic, permanent deterioration of human rights," he warned. "All through this year, repression has not ceased, selective murders have not ceased, arbitrary arrests have not ceased, there’s word that close to 200 mid-level Frente leaders have gone into exile in Central America, Mexico, South America."

Also, a year after the coup, "what the golpistas thought was going to be—that the Frente was going to become weak...that with the election process it was going to suffer a tactical defeat, on the contrary, the Frente keeps getting stronger as an emerging, important force on the political stage," he said.
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