



Bolivian Coup an Opportunity for Multinational Mining Companies?

Lithium is the key ingredient for the batteries fueling the world's electric car and smartphone revolution.

Market analysts speculate that by the mid-2020s, lithium supply will be straining to keep up with demand from auto and mobile device manufacturers. It's being called the "gold of the 21st century." Bolivia's largely untapped Salar de Uyuni salt flats, located high in the Andes, are estimated to contain between 25 and 45% of the planet's known reserves. The government of Evo Morales has been working to create a publicly-owned lithium industry to help diversify his country's economy and raise more of its people out of poverty.

Efforts to get at the metal by multinational mining companies from the U.S., Canada, South Korea, and others have so far largely faltered. A joint venture with a German company was canceled in early November by the Bolivian government over concerns that not enough benefit would go to the indigenous people who live near Uyuni. Chinese and Russian firms have been among the few that have inked deals.

Given the fate of too many progressive governments in this part of the world over the last century, the next part of the story was unfortunately totally predictable. A week later, the government of Bolivian President Evo Morales was overthrown in a military coup.

While there are too few details emerging yet to draw any kind of direct line from the interests of the resource giants to the events of current crisis, the military overthrow of the Morales government—to cheers from the Trump administration, the Trudeau government in Canada, and the U.S.-dominated Organization of American States—shows the dangerous stakes for any small resource-rich country which tries to embark on an economic path that favors the poor and working class over the demands of the rich, corporations, and imperialist states.

After days of right-wing demonstrations following Morales' re-election in October, the military made its move on Sunday, 11/10, with General Williams Kaliman announcing army and air force operations were underway. He demanded the president leave office "to maintain stability." The violent effort to oust Morales is based regionally in the wealthier Santa Cruz province, where opposition leader Fernando Camacho and other extremist right-wing elements have organized against the gains made by the indigenous and mestizo majority under Morales.

With police going over to the coup and abandoning their posts outside government offices, Morales sought to avert further violence against the Bolivian people and stepped down. He announced his resignation on television from Chapare province where he first emerged years ago as a trade union leader, saying,

*"I return to my people who never left me.
The fight goes on."*

-Bolivian Coup Continues on Back

US Congressman Ro Khanna:

"California needs to be bold and take over PG&E,"

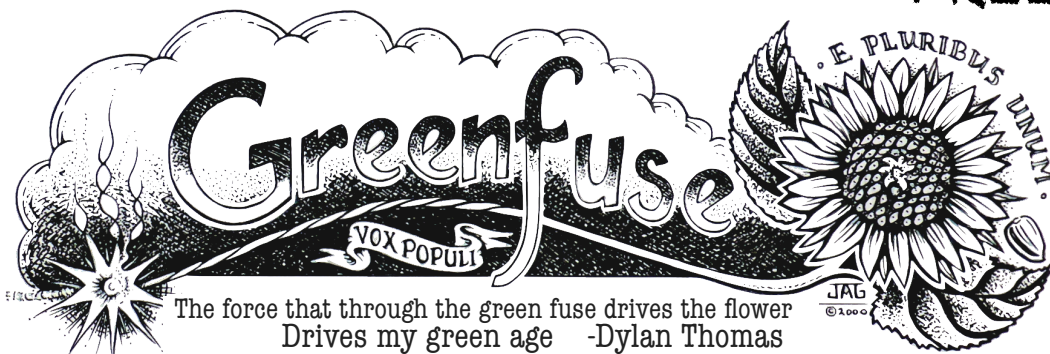
"PG&E has been a disaster. When you have a state that has Apple, Google, and Tesla in it, there's no excuse for not getting power to our people," he said. "I'm calling on Gov. Newsom to support turning PG&E into a customer owned utility. We need to have more municipal public utilities providing energy."

He called for state and federal investment into "smart micro grids with distributed power generation" and more federal resources to deal with the state's ongoing wildfires in Northern and Southern California.

"I would have them as a public utility," said Khanna, a Democrat whose district spans Silicon Valley. "They have failed to make the investments in the infrastructure. The regulators are too loose."

"It's time for the state to take ownership of PG&E, and make sure that they are doing what they need to do to keep the power on and keep people safe."

#196.1 DECEMBER 2019 Waiting for the Reign to Fall **FREE**



The Costs of Post 9/11 Wars : \$6.4 Trillion!!!

Since late 2001, the United States has appropriated and is obligated to spend an estimated \$6.4 Trillion through Fiscal Year 2020 in budgetary costs related to and caused by the post-9/11 wars—an estimated \$5.4 Trillion in appropriations in current dollars and an additional minimum of \$1 Trillion for US obligations to care for the veterans of these wars through the next several decades.

The mission of the post-9/11 wars, as originally defined, was to defend the United States against future terrorist threats from al Qaeda and affiliated organizations. Since 2001, the wars have expanded from the fighting in Afghanistan, to wars and smaller operations elsewhere, in more than 80 countries — becoming a truly "global war on terror." Further, the Department of Homeland Security was created in part to coordinate the defense of the homeland against terrorist attacks. These wars, and the domestic counter-terror mobilization, have entailed significant expenses, paid for by deficit spending. Thus, even if the United States withdraws completely from the major war zones by the end of FY2020 and halts its other Global War on Terror operations, in the Philippines and Africa for example, the total budgetary burden of the post- 9/11 wars will continue to rise as the US pays the on-going costs of veterans' care and for interest on borrowing to pay for the wars.

~ Neta C. Crawford Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Boston University

Full report: watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/

HUMBOLDT COUNTY: WE CAN'T PERMIT THIS

I joined many Humboldt farmers and concerned parties at the County Board of Supervisors meeting Nov.19, 2019. I was there to help raise awareness and speak on behalf of many folks who are completely wiped out by Humboldt County's cannabis policies, their abatements, and the nearly 500 warning letters that went out in November.

I was there because what is happening is wrong and so the fight must continue. If any other farmer were under such attack it would be global news. The only way to accept these circumstances is if you believe cannabis farmers are criminals. I refuse to accept that cannabis is inherently bad and those who cultivate it somehow deserve this abuse, because it couldn't be further from the truth. Working with the land to grow anything and taking care of your own needs without harming anyone or thing, is admirable.

One by one the commenter's explained how Humboldt County actions were a violation of their Rights, people held signs in the chamber, people were in tears over the letters and their impact on the most disenfranchised groups in our community, one even sang "get up, stand up, cannabis farming is our Right." Sean Devries who called for the action and is running to replace our District 2 Supervisor Fennell (Thank Gaia!) came with a brilliant and humane idea to ending this government made disaster (more below).

There is a culture and huge community of small farmers and workers in SoHum (and other areas in Humboldt) who once sustained themselves and families from processing and growing modest amounts of cannabis. People like to say- get a "real job"! Most of the people I meet who are impacted by these permit and abatement policies have "real jobs" and they are respected members of our community, but those "real jobs" do not pay enough to survive. The abatement program matters economically, socio-economically, psychologically, to everyone, not just farmers, and the way this plays out will change the face of our community for better or worse.

Mid November I took a reporter on an abatement tour. It was really easy. I simply sat outside a school and asked respectable community members one by one -how many folks they knew who got abatements. Every single person I asked either got an abatement, or knew handfuls of people who received them. On the abatement tour one explained a school in his community "went from 30-40 kids to closing their doors." Families are fleeing the area, the stress is too much and the future is one of hopelessness. Others shared their permit stories, not only how much it cost but also the details about the complexity of the process and their concerns about government corruption. The low estimate for a permit was 30K.

Of all of the people I've spoken with who got permits, there is not a single one that has anything good to say about their experience. This is one of the main

reasons people do not come into compliance and what makes the abatement program so offensive on top of inhumane. The abatement process is **only** necessary because the permit process is SO impossible and expensive. Almost every farmer I know would love to get permitted but most can't afford it.

I made a public records request and analyzed the size of farms who received a permit, only about 4% of farms were under 3000 sq. ft., at least 71% of permitted farms were about 10K sq. ft. and greater. There is nothing wrong with larger farms, in many ways it's unavoidable again because of the cost and complexity of permitting. The effect is however that we are losing thousands of valuable permaculturists, for a handful of larger growers under the guise of "protecting the environment."

One business owner and licensed contractor Thomas Molder spoke at the Board of Supervisors meeting on the irony of the county's inability to follow their own environmental regulations, that cannabis farmers are forced to follow. Molder states:

"Last week I obtained video evidence of the director of public works authorizing water to be used in a Humboldt County water truck that wasn't road worthy, that comes from an unmetered fire hydrant in Garberville. That water comes directly from Eel River. If I was taking water illegally diverted from the Eel River I would be in jail right now, so I want the county to be held to the same standards as they are holding everyone else to right now."

John Ford the Director of the Planning and Building Department that handles abatements, claimed we asked for these warning letters. No one asked for a threat of an actual abatement the following year, especially those growing 6 plants. We suggested to Ford and Supervisor Estelle Fennell that they look into the way Mendocino is handling this transition non-violently and working to create a path towards compliance for the majority.

Next door, Mendocino policy makers realized- hey if we're hearing numerous complaints about the cannabis permit process, if more than 90 percent of cultivators are not in compliance and have no ability to re-enter the program after it closes (just like Humboldt), here's a novel idea, let's make the permit process more accessible! "Mendocino Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to research and enact a Cannabis Cultivation Amnesty Transition Pathway for local growers who have not yet entered into the county cultivation program." Their goal is to transition all underground cannabis to the legal market and give years for legacy growers to transition into compliance.

We can't permit this injustice Humboldt. Get Up Stand Up, Don't Give Up the Fight!

- SHAKTI

