

'Total Independence' from World Bank and IMF

Bolivia's President Evo Morales has declared his government's independence from international money lending organizations and their detrimental impact on the nation.

"A day like today in 1944 ended Bretton Woods Economic Conference (USA), in which the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank were established," Morales tweeted. "These organizations dictated the economic fate of Bolivia and the world. Today we can say that we have total independence of them."

Morales has said Bolivia's past dependence on the agencies was so great that the **International Monetary Fund** had an office in government headquarters and even participated in their meetings.

Bolivia is now in the process of becoming a member of the **Southern Common Market, Mercosur** and Morales attended the group's summit in Argentina last week.

Bolivia's popular uprising known as the The Cochabamba Water War in 2000 against United States-based **Bechtel** Corporation over water privatization and the associated World Bank policies shed light on some of the debt issues facing the region.

The Bank and the IMF have been requiring these countries (in the Global South) to accept **"structural adjustment,"** which includes opening markets to foreign firms and privatizing state enterprises, including utilities.

Most of the poorest neighborhoods were not hooked up to the network, so state subsidies to the water utility went mainly to industries and middle-class neighborhoods; the poor paid far more for water of dubious purity from trucks and handcarts. In the World Bank's view, it was a city that was crying out for water privatization.

Some of Bolivia's largest resistance struggles in the last 60 years have targeted the economic policies carried out by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Most of the protests focused on opposing privatization policies and austerity measures, including cuts to public services, privatization



decrees, wage reductions, as well the weakening of labor rights. Since 2006, a year after Morales came to power, social spending on health, education, and poverty programs has increased by over 45 percent. In Support of **Venezuela** Evo Morales condemned threats by U.S. President Donald Trump to impose economic sanctions against Venezuela if the country goes ahead with its National Constituent Assembly on July 30.

Morales said that Trump's plan to sanction Venezuela is part of an **"economic conspiracy,"** explaining that the ultimate goal of the U.S. government is **"intervention and domination of Venezuela"** in order to **"appropriate its oil."** and that economic sanctions imposed on a democratically- elected government comprised a **"political conspiracy"** aimed at toppling Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela's OAS Exit:

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez announced in April that the socialist-run country will begin the process of exiting the **Organization of American States, (OAS).**

The decision was announced after the OAS Permanent Council approved a convening of

foreign ministers to discuss Venezuela, without the country's consent.

Slamming the OAS for calling the meeting, Rodriguez said the U.S.-based regional organization seeks to criminalize the government and destabilize constitutional democracy. These actions, she said, are intended to facilitate regime change and foreign intervention.

Venezuelan OAS representative Samuel Moncada echoed Rodriguez's concerns, adding that right-wing member states are pressuring Venezuela to accept intervention in their internal affairs.

For these reasons, Venezuela has decided to pull out of the 35-member organization. Mainstream media, however, paint a radically different picture of the situation.

Corporate news outlets not only portray the country's OAS exit as an example of the government attempting to **"maintain its grip on power"** amid opposition protests. They also leave out the organization's double standard toward leftist countries like Venezuela and disregard for human rights abuses occurring in countries run by right-wing governments.

On April 3, the OAS held an extraordinary meeting on Venezuela, despite objections from Bolivia, the *pro tempore* president country of the organization. Bolivian OAS representative Diego Pary Rodriguez claimed the meeting violated Venezuela's sovereignty, given that the regional body was intervening in the country's internal affairs.

But the OAS went ahead with the meeting without Bolivia's approval, appointing right-wing Honduras as the "interim president." Pary and his counterparts from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Dominica and Haiti slammed the move as an **"institutional coup."**

Washington continues to push for regime change in Venezuela. This has been a U.S. government policy since the failed coup against Chavez in 2002. Foreign intervention is not the path to peace in Venezuela. Venezuelans alone must resolve their differences. **The world does not need another war with a major oil producing nation.**

THE TRUTH IS OUT: NEWSOM LIED ABOUT SINGLE PAYER

Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom is running for Governor of California in 2018, and has long suggested that he supported a single payer healthcare system. He won the endorsement of the California Nurses Association with that promise. He was asked specifically by single-payer supporters if he supported SB 562, the single-payer healthcare bill authored by California Nurses Association and introduced by Senators Richard Lara and Tony Atkins, he unequivocally said that he did. His campaign page still says "Universal Healthcare."

His support did not last long. In a recent public appearance, Newsom has backed away from single payer and now supports a mix of public and private coverage similar Healthy San Francisco – basically, a public option. But Healthy San Francisco is not health insurance and has considerable limitations. For one, it only covers San Francisco residents that utilize designated San Francisco doctors, clinics and hospitals. Someone covered by Healthy San Francisco that falls ill or gets into an accident elsewhere, is on the hook for all of their medical bills – which can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Indeed, Healthy San Francisco does not qualify as

"insurance" for Obamacare purposes, and most of the people that were covered by it moved to private insurance once that became an option. Just as significantly, Healthy San Francisco does nothing to control private insurance premiums as it does not provide bonafide competition to insurance companies. This means that many San Franciscans are still painfully under-insured and subject to high premiums and deductibles.

Newsom may feel comfortable disavowing single payer, because his main opponent for the governorship, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, also opposes it. State Treasurer John Chiang, who is also running for governor but polling in the single-digits, is cagey about most of his policy views, including single-payer. Indeed, the only strong advocate of single payer among the declared candidates for Governor is former Superintendent of Schools Delaine Eastin, a woman who, non-coincidentally, has garnered the support of the progressives in the party. In all, now that Gavin Newsom has shown his true colors, the conditions are set for Delaine Eastin to capture the energy of Berniecrats and the progressive vote in the race for Governor.

~Voxpublica.org

PIPELINE POOPING OUT?

It will be close to three years, at least, before oil could possibly be moving through the controversial Keystone XL pipeline – if the pipeline is completed at all. Company officials now concede that after battling protests and regulatory hurdles for nearly a decade, market forces could scuttle the project. The company has spent **\$3 billion** on the project, mostly for pipe but also for land rights and other costs of lobbying for its proposal. During the prolonged dispute, the price of oil fell from more than \$130 a barrel to roughly \$45 a barrel today, undercutting the prospects for production growth in the Canadian tar sands, which were used to justify the Keystone XL project at its outset.

The low price of oil has stymied the development of additional tar sands oil production. In the past year, some of the world's biggest oil companies have retreated from Alberta's tar sands, selling off **\$24 billion in development rights** in one five-month period. The only tar sands projects

currently under construction were approved and started before the 2014 oil price crash. Financing for future projects is expected to drop to zero by 2020 due to low oil prices, has been predicted by insiders.

As Keystone XL stalled, two other pipeline projects advanced. An expansion of an existing Enbridge pipeline that runs from Alberta to Wisconsin will likely be completed by 2019. Kinder Morgan's expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia is slated for **completion in late 2019.** These developments leave Keystone XL in third place in a race to add pipeline capacity where none may be needed.

Pipeline opponents say the company's difficulty in finding new subscribers may spell the end of Keystone XL. **"We're not surprised that TransCanada is having these issues, and we think they are a legitimate threat to the project ever being built,"** said Josh Axelrod, a policy analyst with Natural Resources Defense Council. **"There is a strong suggestion that we are reaching peak**

production, and they haven't even run out of capacity yet on pipelines that exist."

TransCanada Executive Vice President Paul Miller, said the company would only be seeking commitments from third parties to ship oil through the pipeline – not trying to fill it up with their own oil. **"In the event that we do decide to proceed with the project, we still need probably six months to nine months to start doing some of the staging of the construction crews, et cetera, and that would be followed by about a two-year construction period."**

The combined staging and construction time means that it would be close to three years before the project could possibly be completed. Miller's statements suggest far more uncertainty than when President Trump came into office and **decree that the pipeline could be built.** Indeed Trump as an American Mussolini would get the trains running on time by getting rid of the trains. **Too socialistic. Terrible. Awful. Just not for us. Walk more.**

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