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Bolivia Faces Ethnic Cleansing, Racism and South African-Style Apartheid?

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Post-coup Bolivia is at risk of Croatian-style ethnic cleansing and South African-like apartheid unless the protesters succeed in putting substantial international pressure on the new "authorities" and ensuring that genuinely free and fair elections are held as soon as possible as the most realistic attempt to reverse the recent regime change.

Far From Over

The Hybrid War on Bolivia succeeded in carrying out regime change and could potentially have far-reaching geostrategic consequences, but its most devastating impact might be domestic if the new "authorities" are allowed to carry out their socio-economic agenda. Post-coup Bolivia is at risk of Croatian-style ethnic cleansing and South African-like apartheid unless the protesters succeed in putting substantial international pressure on Jeanine Anez and her military backers in order to ensure that genuinely free and fair elections are held as soon as possible as the most realistic attempt to reverse the recent regime change. "Former" President Morales' Movement For Socialism (MAS) reached an agreement with the the self-professed "president" on Thursday night to work towards new elections, during which time lawmakers also voted to approve a member of MAS as the new Senate head. Although there are still protests and the death toll continues to rise, the latest political developments are somewhat encouraging, but that doesn't mean that the Hybrid War itself is over, or even close to it.

A Christian Supremacist As The "Head Of State"

Anez is a Christian supremacist who harbors extremely racist views towards her country's indigenous population. She wrote in a now-deleted tweet from 14, April, 2013 that "I dream of a Bolivia free of satanic indigenous rites. The city is not for the Indian: they should go to the highlands or the Chaco". She also dramatically declared herself president while brandishing a gigantic bible and stating that "the bible has returned to the palace", which was meant to imply that President Morales wasn't really a Christian like he claimed but a paganist because of his previous support of indigenous religions. It's also extremely symbolic that her so-called "cabinet" doesn't include a single indigenous person, and it shouldn't be forgotten that the capital was convulsed in an orgy of violence against Morales' many indigenous supporters the night that the coup succeeded. Taken together, it convincingly appears that one of the hyper-nationalist coup plotters' agendas is to ethnically cleanse the indigenous population out of the cities and back to the countryside where their racist supporters believe that they "belong" so that the "civilized" parts of the state can become "purely" Christian.

The Roots Of Racist Rage

President Morales' 13 years in office saw the massive influx of indigenous people to the cities as this demographic became empowered through his socio-economic policies and finally began to more actively play their rightful role in the country's affairs. This shift upset some of the mestizos who felt that their comparatively privileged positions were being challenged with the connivance of the state, which contributed to their rising anger against the long-serving leader and the racist-fascist views that some of them started to more openly embrace as a result of perceiving this to be a "civilizational struggle". Investigative journalists Max Blumenthal and Ben Norton exposed the dark social trends behind the Bolivian coup in their piece last week titled "Bolivia coup led by Christian fascist paramilitary leader and millionaire — with foreign support", which also drew attention to the shadowy role played by Bolivian-Croatian oligarch Branko Marinkovic, who they wrote "has long been dogged by rumors that his family members were involved in the country's powerful fascist Ustashe movement." It's a well-known fact that many former fascist fighters from all over Europe fled to South America after the war, so it wouldn't be surprising if those rumors about his family are true.

The Croatian Connection

Considering that those journalists' investigation revealed that Marinkovic shares Anez's Christian fundamentalist views which also not-coincidentally align with the Ustashe's, the case can be put forth that some of the former fascist fighters who fled to South America (of which Marinkovic's family might have been a part) fertilized the social soil over the past seven decades and made the revival of World War II-like fascism possible in present-day Bolivia. Modern-day Croatia, it should be reminded, is the partial geopolitical revival of a Nazi puppet state and carried out the largest ethnic cleansing in Europe since 1945 during 1995's US-backed "Operation Storm" against over 200,000 members of its indigenous Serbian minority. History has an odd way of repeating itself, and while that same scenario probably won't unfold the exact same way in post-coup Bolivia, its ethnic cleansing end game could potentially be pursued by pressuring the indigenous population to leave the cities en masse following a forthcoming campaign of state-supported intimidation against them.

"Clever" Ethnic Cleansing

This could be "cleverly" conducted away from the watchful eye of the international community through "plausibly deniable" means such as turning a blind eye towards fascist mob violence, the de-facto imposition of discriminatory hiring practices by coup-sympathizing mestizos, and the dismantlement of the plurinational state promulgated under President Morales on the basis of "removing societal divisions". The latter isn't just purely speculative either since Anez said that "We want to be a democratic tool of inclusion and unity…We leave behind those times in which ethnic and class resentments which divide Bolivians are used as an instrument of political control", which could be interpreted as a dog whistle to her supporters that the coup "authorities" intend to reverse the hard-earned socio-economic and political gains that the indigenous population received during President Morales' tenure. Affirmative action programs could therefore be rolled back on the basis that they were "polarizing the country along ethnic and class lines" in a way inimical to Anez's "inclusive and unifying" vision, potentially even making them restricted to specific territories instead of demographics so as to encourage indigenous migration back to the countryside as a first step towards apartheid.

"Bolivian Bantustans"

After all, to crudely paraphrase the feelings that many of the coup's mestizo supporters have towards their indigenous compatriots, they believe that they're "uncivilized heathens" who "deserve" to live in ethnic "reservations" that would de-facto function as a Bolivian form of South Africa's notorious "Bantustans". Putting pressure on this enormous segment of the population to "return to their rightful homes" for both physical safety and social security after being intimidated to leave the cities and having their affirmative action rights stripped from them unless they live in specific territorial zones could eventually accomplish the dual goals of Croatian-style ethnic cleansing and the imposition of South African-like apartheid. All the while, these people would also risk becoming slaves to the neoliberal-globalist system that the coup plotters are planning to impose upon the country, therefore becoming second-class citizens once again after almost a decade and half of finally experiencing freedom. It's therefore incumbent upon them to do everything within their power to put substantial international pressure on the new coup "authorities" and ensure that genuinely free and fair elections are held in order to avert this worst-case scenario before it's too late and the world stops caring.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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