

Imperial Designs? Current US Ambassador to Brazil Served in Paraguay Prior to 2012 Coup

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The U.S. ambassador to Brazil previously served in Paraguay in the lead-up to the 2012 coup against Lugo, who was ousted in a manner similar to Rousseff.

The possible role of the United States government in the ouster of the democratically elected President Dilma Rousseff is being scrutinized after it emerged that present U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Liliana Ayalde previously served as ambassador to Paraguay in the lead up to the 2012 coup against President Fernando Lugo.

In a case very similar to the current political crisis unfolding in Brazil, Lugo was ousted by the country's congress in June 2012 in what was widely labeled a parliamentary coup.

The left-leaning Lugo took office in August 2008 and his election marked the end of 61 years of rule by the Colorado Party.

His political opponents, like Rousseff's, began conspiring against him almost immediately and Lugo faced threats of impeachment barely a year into his term.

In a 2009 diplomatic cable released by whistleblower website WikiLeaks, then U.S. ambassador to Paraguay, Liliana Ayalde warned a colleague that rumors of an impeachment were growing.

"We have been careful to express public support for Paraguay's democratic institutions — not for Lugo personally — and to make sure Lugo understands the benefits of a close relationship with the United States," wrote Ayalde in a Dec. 7, 2009 cable.

Carlos Eduardo Martins, a sociology professor at the University of Sao Paulo, told teleSUR that Ayalde is using similar language to defend the parliamentary coup against Rousseff.

"That ambassador acted with great force during the coup that happened in Paraguay and she is in Brazil, using the same discourse, arguing that there is a situation that will be resolved by Brazilian institutions," Martins said.

Meanwhile, Argentine political analyst Atilo Boron called Ayalde an "expert in promoting 'soft coups.'"



U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Liliana Ayalde waves at the Brasilia International airport, upon her arrival, Sept. 16, 2013. | Photo: Agencia Brasil

U.S. Department of State spokesperson Elizabeth Trudeau also used similar phrasing when referring to the parliamentary coup in Brazil.

“We are confident Brazil will work through its political challenges democratically in accordance with its constitutional principles,” Trudeau told the press gallery on Thursday.

Ayalde left her position as ambassador to Paraguay in August 2011 and went on to serve as Senior Assistant Administrator for the Latin American and Caribbean Bureau for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) before being promoted to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the State Department.

Ayalde became ambassador to Brazil in 2013. She arrived to that post shortly after it was revealed that the U.S. government was spying on Brazil, going so far as to intercept personal communications of Rousseff.

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