

U.S. Blocked Declaration of “Right to Health Care”, Says Bolivia’s President at OAS Summit

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Bolivia’s President Evo Morales has blamed U.S. President Barack Obama for the failure of the recent OAS (Organization of American States) Summit of the Americas to issue a final declaration, and he says that a major sticking point for Mr. Obama was Obama’s opposition to a provision in the proposed declaration that would have said that health care is “a human right.” Mr. Obama insisted that it’s instead a privilege, access to which must be based primarily upon an individual’s ability-to-pay, as is the case in the United States.

[Said Mr. Morales](#): “One point (in the drafted declaration) was important: health as a human right, and the U.S. government did not accept that health should be considered a human right ... President Obama did not accept” that concept.

The 8-point draft had resulted from four months of negotiations between the participating countries prior to the Summit in Panama, which was held on April 10-11. There was such strong sentiment for declaring health care to be a right, so that this provision was included in the draft despite Obama’s opposition to it.

A [report](#) from the Latin American television network Telesur (majority-owned by the Venezuelan government, which [Obama unsuccessfully tried to overthrow via an aborted February 2015 coup](#), announced at the start of the conference, that, “The Seventh Summit of the Americas begins Friday in Panama without a final declaration because the US Government has expressed its disagreement with some of the clauses, which blocked agreement.” Furthermore, this was personally done by U.S. President Obama: “This information was confirmed by Foreign Minister of Argentina, Hector Timerman, who described the event as ‘a debate among presidents.’” That’s how personal, and top-level, the ideological disagreement here was.

On April 15th, [German Economic News](#) reported that Morales said in his speech at the conference:

“The United States has regarded Latin America and the Caribbean as their backyard, and the peoples of this region as their slaves. That is the reason for the extreme poverty in the region. I ask the United States: what we have done, to justify treating us as U.S.’s slaves? I tell you, President Obama, Latin America has changed forever. We are no longer submissive. It is no longer possible to carry out in our countries coups. We are determined to shape our own futures. We are no longer in the shadow of US imperialism. For we say what we think. And we do what we say. We urge you to respect our democracy and our sovereignty. Latin America has been kidnapped by the United States. We do not want this to continue. We do not want any longer decrees by the US President, in which we are declared as a threat to your country. [He was condemning Obama’s having declared Venezuela to be a

threat to U.S. national security.] We do not want to be spied upon. We want to live in peace. We urge the United States to end the destruction of entire civilizations.”

Here’s the background to that: Latin America was originally colonized by European aristocracies, whose agents in the Americas treated the locals like dirt. According to the classic 1992 historical account, by David E. Stannard, [American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World](#), nearly eight million native Americans or ‘Indians’ were killed by the European invaders (employees of Europe’s aristocrats) within the first 21 years after Christopher Columbus’s landing in the Americas. And that was just the start. In 1898, the American aristocracy grabbed Cuba from the Spanish aristocracy; and, ever since, all countries to the south of the U.S. have been the U.S.’s “backyard.”

President Morales said that Cuba does not need “help” from the U.S.: “What you need to do is repair all the damages you have caused in that country!”

Regarding the disagreements with Morales and other populist leaders in Latin America, the criticisms of Mr. Obama would be no different if any of the Republican or Democratic candidates replace Obama (except, perhaps, for U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders). For example, Hillary Clinton was [the Democratic Party bulwark of the coup that overthrew the democratic populist President of Honduras in 2009, Manuel Zelaya and replaced him with a far-right junta run by that country’s fewer-than-twelve “oligarchs” or, actually, aristocratic families](#). And, she told *The New York Times* in [a 27 March 2008 interview](#), when asked about a single-payer health insurance system — which necessarily entails the concept of health care as being a right instead of merely a privilege — “I have thought about this, as you might guess, for 15 years and I never seriously considered a single payer system.” A follow-up question asked her about whether she might find a single-payer system acceptable, and she said, “I think that, you know, there’s too many bells and whistles that Americans want that would not be available in kind of a bare-bones Medicare-like system.”

That’s totally a rejection of the concept of health care being at all a basic human right. She wants greed to rule, even in the provisioning of healthcare. Then, in recent times, she has given \$200,000 private ‘speeches’ to healthcare-industry groups (such as [this](#)) where she has received repeated standing ovations as a champion of for-profit health care, and those industries have been [large financial backers](#) of her political career. Her private email is being hidden from the public, but her communications with health care CEOs (outside even those closed-to-the-press \$200,000-a-pop private ‘speeches’ with them) are among the chief concerns among Democrats who want to know what she is hiding.

In her 2008 campaign, [her top donor-group were the Wall Street megabanks and their law firms](#). However, they will also be the top donors to many Republican candidates. Ms. Clinton’s [broader 2008 donor-sources](#) listed in the first two categories “Lawyers” and “Retired,” but with no indication of the source of those people’s money. Her #3 was “Securities & Investment,” then, below that, in order: “Real Estate,” “Women’s issues,” “Education,” “Business Services”; and, then, in eighth place, “Health Professionals.”

So, the concept of health care being a right, is not going to become a part of American politics, even if that concept is basic to lowering the cost and [increasing the accessibility](#) to health services, and simultaneously to [increasing the quality](#) of that healthcare — all of which is the case: benefits to everyone but the aristocracy, who own those healthcare

services.

In healthcare, the evidence is clear that where capitalism (the profit-motive) predominates, waste and inferior health-care results — and costs a lot more to consumers. On things that should be a right instead of a privilege, capitalism produces waste, not efficiency. But if a country is extremely corrupt, capitalism will dominate even in those parts of the economy. So, Obama's, and virtually all other U.S. politicians', support of profit-making health care is understandable. However, for U.S. President Obama to insist that all other countries in the Americas be at least as corrupt as the U.S. is, won't be appreciated abroad. In any field — health care or any other — where other countries are less corrupt than America, the idea of their taking dictation from America won't be appreciated. In the present case, Obama has blocked an OAS declaration of a basic human right which even the aristocracies in other American nations believe to be a basic human right. The U.S. is now its own "banana republic," and won't likely win converts to this status. In the new Latin America, even much of the aristocracy has had more than enough of Milton Friedmanite thinking.

The best that can be said of Obama is that other successful U.S. politicians are no better than he is — in other words: that the U.S. is pervasively corrupt. This is not something that any American politician will admit (i.e.: that "You can't get where I am unless you're corrupt"). Nor will the aristocratically controlled U.S. 'news' media permit it to be published. The same aristocracy that controls the U.S. Government, controls the U.S. 'press.' Thus, 'freedom of the press' has degenerated to merely freedom of the aristocracy to control the government — and to control what the public sees, and does not see, of that government. Consequently, Americans buy 'the free market' in everything.

The profit in the press depends mainly on the influence it can peddle. For example, when Donald Graham sold the *Washington Post* to Jeff Bezos, holder of [a \\$600 million ten-year contract to sell cloud computing services to the CIA](#), the influence in Washington that Bezos was purchasing was, even alone, enough to make the investment a sure winner for him, even if it didn't let him also now receive the advertisements from Raytheon etc., to sell congressmen on weapons-systems — and to sell the benefits of expanding the CIA itself. So: just as corporations answer to the aristocracy, so does the government, now. And so does 'our free press.' It's not "ours"; and it's not "free."

And this is the reason why you probably didn't know, *until* now, that (and why) Obama blocked a final declaration at the OAS Summit, and got treated with contempt at that conference, which took place [on April 10th and 11th](#).

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#), and of [Feudalism, Fascism, Libertarianism and Economics](#).

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