
New Investigation Exposes US Support for 2009 Honduras Coup

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U.S. officials were more concerned with maintaining military power in Honduras than overturning the coup, the investigation reveals.

A new investigation conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, CEPR, reveals key details involving U.S. officials and their support for the [2009 coup in Honduras](#) that ousted former President [Manuel Zelaya](#).

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The investigation, published by The Intercept, was based on military intelligence documents and interviews with Honduran and U.S. officials. It focuses on the Pentagon and the [United States Southern Command](#), SOUTHCOM, and their interests in ensuring the success of the coup against Zelaya by the country's military.

Here's what CEPR found:

- A top U.S. military official met with Honduran coup plotters a day prior to the coup, demonstrating that they knew about the forthcoming ouster.
- A Honduran military official's warning to the U.S. ambassador was met with "indifference."
- A retired U.S. general provided assistance to Honduran military leaders advocating for the coup, according to interviewed sources, confirming previous allegations.

- U.S. military officials were guided by an “obsessive concern” with former Venezuelan President [Hugo Chavez](#)’s growing influence in the region as opposed to domestic Honduran issues.

Overall, what the investigation demonstrates is that the Pentagon's main interest was to maintain close relations with close Honduran military allies, rather than overturning the coup.

“This is a story that reveals much about how foreign policy works in general, not just in Honduras,” CEPR Research Associate Jake Johnston said in a statement.

“The investigation shows the often hidden roles that various actors within the U.S. foreign policy establishment play in determining and carrying out policy. What’s clear is that personal relationships matter just as much as any official policy position announced in Washington.”

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Prior to his removal, Zelaya sought to hold a non-binding, nationwide poll on whether to include a fourth ballot box in the forthcoming elections to usher in a [National Constituent Assembly](#) for the rewriting of the country’s constitution. The effort was intended to democratize the country’s laws, which have traditionally favored the Honduran elite.

Zelaya had also begun forging ties with progressive Latin American governments — like Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba and Bolivia — while joining the [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America](#), ALBA.

On June 28, 2009, high ranking army officials received orders issued by the Supreme Court to detain Zelaya and transferred him, by force, to Costa Rica.

In 2010, Zelaya was allowed to return to Honduras, a country that plunged into [rampant violence](#) following the coup. Since then, hundreds of social activists and dozens of journalists have been killed by suspected right-wing death squads.
