



## **US intel officer targeted by John Bolton reacts to coup-plot confession**

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**Aaron Maté (AM):** Welcome to Pushback, I'm Aaron Maté. In a recent interview with CNN, John Bolton bragged that he's been personally involved in planning coup d'etats abroad.

[Video sequence]

**CNN:** I don't know that I agree with you to be fair, with all due respect, one doesn't have to be brilliant to attempt a coup.

**John Bolton at CNN:** I disagree with that, as somebody who has helped plan coup d'etats. Not here, but, you know, other places. It takes a lot of work and that's not what he did...

**CNN:** I do want to ask a follow up. When we were talking about what is capable or what you need to do to be able to plan a coup and you say your expertise having planned coups, I'm not going to get into the specifics, but successful coups?

**John Bolton at CNN:** Well, I wrote about Venezuela in the book, and it turned out not to be successful, not that we had all that much to do with it, but I saw what it took.

[Video sequence ends]

**AM:** Well, joining me is someone with unique insight into John Bolton's conduct in government and the US role in the kinds of coups that John Bolton was bragging about. Fulton Armstrong is the former national intelligence officer for Latin America, the US intelligence community's most senior analyst. He's also a former senior staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and he's currently a lecturer at American University's School of International Service. And Fulton Armstrong has personal experience with John Bolton,

because in 2002 John Bolton tried unsuccessfully to have Fulton Armstrong dismissed from his position. Fulton Armstrong, thank you for joining me.

**Fulton Armstrong (FA):** Happy to be here. Thanks.

**AM:** What was your reaction when you saw John Bolton's comments on CNN?

**FA:** I wasn't surprised at all. I was in government for many years and I saw how a lot of times political appointees would be, as they like to say: Success has many fathers, and failures is an orphan. A lot of political appointee type people trying to make everybody think that all the very big, successful, sexy covert operations that we do or their brainchild or brainchildren- is that the right word?- and that failures are not their responsibility. I'm not surprised in a case watching from outside the US government as well, particularly on the Venezuela issue about which Bolton wrote a whole lot in his book- a surprising amount in his book- I'm not surprised that he would say that he was involved in covert operations and coups and coup d'etats and stuff like that.

**AM:** Can you take us back to your personal brush with him. In 2002, he tried to have you removed from your position, a senior intelligence position, because your analysis was conflicting with his particular political agenda. Can you tell us what happened?

**FA:** It wasn't my analysis. It was the analysis of the intelligence community. All 15 agencies presented these coordinated lines. And he wanted to push the envelope. It's normal political behaviour, particularly for people who don't have a whole lot of government experience and don't know how we have these various abilities to push back. And what he wanted to do was exaggerate the quality, quantity and range of information that we had on a Cuba related issue. Cuba's so-called biological weapons programme, which he wanted to allege publicly existed. And he pushed the envelope, but he pushed in a way, using staff and himself, his own name. That was inappropriate for US government behaviour. And then when he didn't have his way with us, he took some really truly inappropriate steps; forms of revenge. Essentially revenge against people who wouldn't conform to his agenda. We did say, just to clarify a little bit- I never had a conversation with him, exchanged emails with him, was never even in the same room as him during the so-called confrontation that he liked to allege that we were having with him- but we did tell his staff that he could say in his name whatever he wanted, or in the Secretary of State's name, or in the President's name, or in the name of the United States government if he wanted to, because in a democracy, you're elected to represent a particular government. We just said he couldn't say it in our name. And that wasn't enough. He really wanted to have his way with us. And we as a community, all 15 agencies agreed with the position that, no, we weren't going to move the analysis to accommodate his political agenda.

**AM:** And the agenda when it comes to the allegation against Cuba was that Cuba was developing biological weapons.

**FA:** Yes, I can't remember the exact phrasing. This was quite a while ago, but that Cuba had a programme that was much more aggressive, much more focussed, much more advanced than the intelligence community was prepared to say. Because his goal was to create a second axis of evil. Remember that great phrase, axis of evil, from the time from the early Bush-Cheney administration. And they wanted to do a second one that included Cuba.

**AM:** And so Bolden has personally taken aim at you. He has written that you have a pro-Castro bias. And reportedly The Wall Street Journal claimed that he even accused you of being a Cuban spy. Can you talk about the allegations he lodged against you and what specific actions he took to try to have you reassigned or removed?

**FA:** A lot of people of that ilk make all kinds of allegations without foundation. And you could say it's sort of gossipy. It's sort of, you know, junior high school-ish, sort of name calling and things like that. But that was a common thing that he said. And he wasn't the only one. There were other people in that administration that would say things like that. But there obviously was no evidence whatsoever. They did take certain actions against myself and against another individual that was in the intel community at the time, one that worked at the State Department, a really decent, super decent and bright, committed, balanced, neutral intelligence officer. And he did take personal actions in my case. He came out to headquarters, demanded a meeting with George Tenet, the director at the time. And he wound up getting the deputy director at the time and demanded that I be removed from my position. There was a little bit of a silly game, a semantics game, that that wasn't equivalent to being fired. Because when he was being investigated by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee upon his confirmation hearings to be the perm [permanent] wrap up with the United Nations, someone used the word fired. Fired would mean actually cut off and removed from the government. But in the US government, if you are a senior official and you are removed from your position, I don't think you have to worry too much about the semantics. Removing someone from their position is firing them from that position. And there were other things that they had done, some of which I can't go into detail because I have yet to get clearance from the United States government to divulge it. But let's say that in general lay non-specific, non-classified terms, it was a series of extremely harassing activities directed against me in order to force me to lose access and make it uncomfortable for me to remain in my position. I did finish my tour. Four years is a very decent time. My record as national intelligence officer was very good. Unfortunately, the intel community won't release papers that he was unhappy about- in fact, they don't release any paper that could be embarrassing to themselves, to the intel community or to particular administrations. So I can't show you the documents that he would claim would show some sort of bias; he and others. There was one other, there are two or three other really very aggressive activists, political operators type people in the Cheney-Bush administration that would routinely go after people who not just got in their way, but who didn't agree with their worldview. Frankly, even if everything that we did, every syllable that we would utter would have to be coordinated by all 15 agencies of

the intelligence community.

**AM:** What's fascinating about Bolton is, it doesn't just apply to targeting people inside the intelligence community. But I'm not sure if you're familiar with the story of José Bustani, the then head of the OPCW [Organisation for the Prohibition for Chemical Weapons], who was ousted during that same period, 2002/2003, because he was impeding the Bush administration's drive to Iraq. And it's public now; the story that Bustani tells is that Bolton came to his office in The Hague and said to him, You have to resign. Because Boustani was trying to bring Iraq into the Chemical Weapons Convention, which would have interfered with the drive to invade Iraq. So Bolton said to him, You have to resign. And he also said to him, We know where your kids live. Are you familiar with that story? Have you heard of that?

**FA:** No, no, I'm not. But certain things that the Cheney-Bush administration did to me showed that they did indeed know where I lived. So, yes.

**AM:** So there has been speculation in the media as to what other coups Bolton might have been referencing when he bragged about planning a coup d'etats. Venezuela is the one that he mentioned in his book. Are there any others that you think that you know of that Bolton was talking about when it comes to first hand experience?

**FA:** Coups, we have to be careful. Just a teeny bit of history here; that when the US government supports coups, it's done on different levels. There's the highly political level where the policy is to achieve regime change without actually getting into the mud with potential coup plotters. A second level would be one where we establish it as a policy and we, through various players in the US government, including covert players, but also overt players, go out and sort of look for people who say, think, sort of "help me rid me of this priest" sort of stuff. And then the third one is when you're hands on and you're actually recruiting people, arming people, and setting particular operations in motion. If you read the history of the coup against Allende in Chile, what you actually see is the third level of involvement. The policy level, of course, was established; the "rid me of this priest" stuff had already been done. But we were deeply involved in supporting people that had coup type ambitions. But in this case, the joke was sort of on us that the ones that we were supporting were not the ones that actually did the coup. But the ones who did the coup saw that we were seeking a coup, supporting a coup, and we would, of course, tolerate and live with a coup, even if the final result, General Pinochet, was not exactly to our liking; we would still go along with it. So with using that definition, what you see here is- and it's pretty clearly stated in Bolton's book- that he wasn't the great conspirator of some of the coup attempts. There were three or four attempted coups against Maduro, and there were even extensive operations against Chávez, most of which did not originate from the Oval Office or did not originate from the National Security Counsel's Office. But then when they were happening, they certainly threw their full weight. And you could probably say even logistical and maybe even

intelligence support- which means I don't know. But when you look at the circumstantial evidence, the big operation, for example, at the bridge [blocking of a border bridge] in February 2019, I think it was. Delivering "humanitarian assistance" to the opposition in Venezuela, that was a very well thought out operation that was supposed to lead to some sort of military confrontation. It didn't work. In part because the opposition turned out to be such sissies and overpromised and overstated their support, etc.. But I noticed that even in this book, Bolton clings to the myth that the torching of the trucks full of assistance was done by the Maduro people. It was not. It was done by the opposition people by accident, because their Molotov cocktails landed on their own vehicles. Or maybe they just said, Wait, the Venezuelans are behaving with such restraint that we have to destroy this stuff ourselves to get the photo op. There was then the coup, the attempted coup of April 30th or May 1st, I forget which it was, where the, our designated president of Venezuela announced, standing in front of a little military base in Caracas, that as commander in chief he was ordering the military to rise up and overthrow the government. I don't know, maybe half dozen officers supported him, maybe a dozen officers supported him, etc.. When that happened, it was really quite surprising. Bolton held a fascinating press conference as the operation was crumbling or had already begun to crumble quite seriously, where he knew these multi syllabic last names of all of the Venezuelan officers who he had been told were part of the plan. That means, in other words, there was a lot of prior coordination, even if the covert operation and coup had not been launched by the US government. And then there was another one where these goofballs, we called it back then the Bay of Piglets, when some goofball- and I shouldn't say goofballs, they're still in jail. So one shouldn't call somebody in jail a goofball. But they were the gang that couldn't shoot straight that was going to invade and do a snatch operation against Maduro. Which all of the circumstantial evidence shows the US government- I don't think that, I don't remember if Bolton was in the job at that time, but the US government was fully aware that they were going to do this stuff; provided all kinds of support, called the Colombians off the operation. Colombians were going to shut it down because they didn't know who the hell these people were. So there's a lot of these coups sorts of things out there, some of which originate with us, but many of which do not.

**AM:** How about Haiti in 2004. That's another area where John Bolton was critical of you. He accused you of being a supporter of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the president who was ousted. And Aristide certainly accused the US of playing a key role in his ouster. This was the second coup against him; that was successful. The first took place in the early 1990s under George W Bush's father. But recently, the French ambassador to Haiti at the time, named Thierry Burkard, told The New York Times that the US and France were instrumental in backing Aristide's overthrow in 2004. And he listed one of the reasons being that Aristide at the time was demanding French reparations, that France pay reparations for all the money that was looted from Haiti after Haiti became independent in 1804. Did the Bush administration play a role in Aristide's ouster in 2000?

**FA:** Yeah, the short answer is yes, of course. Because they withdrew the licensing for his

security detail and gave, I don't know with what level of US government involvement, but certainly gave every signal possible to the people that wound up removing him from office when they were regrouping and rearming over in the Dominican Republic. They were doing all that they could to facilitate those operations. It's ironic that somebody would accuse somebody like me of supporting Jean-Bertrand Aristide because it was actually a daddy-Bush, George H.W. Bush, policy to restore Aristide after the coup. Which Bill Clinton took on and very patiently and in a bloodless so-called invasion, wound up restoring the man and tried to establish a particular relationship. It became a very partisan issue here in Washington, where there were many Republicans who felt that this was an issue that they could use to undermine President Clinton. And I wouldn't defend every aspect of Haiti policy at that time. But one of the ways to do it was- and there's stuff that still needs to be written about all of this, stuff that I can't at this point divulge, about the agency's relationship with certain people whose primary purpose was to overthrow Aristide and lay the groundwork. Even if they weren't the ones that later pulled the trigger and force the men out of the country. But, yes, the US government was quite deeply involved in that second coup, which is hugely ironic because it was basically a daddy-Bush policy to restore the man.

**AM:** Is it fair to say, as has been alleged in public reporting, that the coup plotters against Aristide, in both cases, the early 90s and also in 2004, were linked to drug trafficking.

**FA:** I don't know. That's by process of elimination a pretty easy conclusion; a Pretty easy conclusion to be reaching. How do these guys support themselves? Because you can do a whole lot, as you can see with the current government and the previous government and the previous previous government, you can still do a whole lot with money from kidnapping and petty crime. You basically just shake people down and the money then comes forward and you do your operations. But there were large amounts of money involved. And by process of elimination, I wasn't amongst the people who made this conclusion, but there were reasonable people who said, there's got to be money from somewhere else in there. But I'm not in a position, because I don't know, to confirm or deny any of that.

**AM:** From your time in government, did you gain any insight into what drives the prevailing animus inside the US government towards leaders like Aristide? He was elected democratically twice. He was Haiti's first democratically elected president after years of dictatorship. He comes from the country's poor majority. Cables released by WikiLeaks show that even the US embassy acknowledged that he was Haiti's most popular political figure. So what drives the animus towards him in Washington?

**FA:** I mean Aristide was a little bit sui generis in that way, because he was a very controversial person. He was a complicated person, who did things that certainly in the American type logic, were not always easy to square. And he was in that way, quintessentially Haitian. The way he spoke, particularly when he was speaking in Creole, was not easy to track, you know. And we like things that are easy to track. Even if you don't do it,

we track it. And so, you know, Fidel Castro could say something totally stupid, but at least it would be clearly stupid. And we would then basically- or a friendly government could promise to do all kinds of goofy stuff and not do it. But at least it was clearly stated. Aristide was a really difficult person to- despite all the slanders. I mean, the US government, elements of the US government did everything they could to slander him with phoney allegations about his human rights behaviour, phoney allegations about medications that were in his medicine cabinet and all of that. The bigger question is, why do we have people in our government who, when they're not the party in power, can't let the sitting administration do a policy that would include some sort of dialogue or collaboration or cooperation or co-optation with people that they don't like. And I think you have to look at the different worldviews. And even going back to the John Bolton thing, just read what he writes about how horrible he thought it was that Obama and John Kerry, Barack Obama and John Kerry had announced the end of the policies in Latin America that gave us exclusive rights of influence in the region. And those sorts of things they disagree with. They think that that should basically be a place where we have our influence and we do what we want to do. Therefore, anybody who doesn't want to play with us on our terms- and the pattern is pretty clear. People that are more nationalistic people, I don't want to defend them because some of them are really pretty goofy and pretty ineffective leaders, but some of them are painfully honest and they say, No, we're going to stand up for our rights. And then that sort of makes them a target for this sort of people. Whereas if you look back at Venezuela policy under Clinton and even under Obama, parts of Obama, times with Obama, it was: Let's worry about what he does, not what he says. But the opponents of those policies would always focus on what he says, even if we knew that it was rhetoric for domestic consumption.

**AM:** Hmm. I only wonder there whether- well, yes, for example, Trump and Bolton come into office and their policies become much more extreme. An open coup in Venezuela, for example. But do Democrats not pursue policies that lay the groundwork for future coup attempts? So, for example, Haiti? Yes, Clinton brought Aristide back, but he kind of boxed him in. He forced Aristide to make a bunch of concessions that Aristide didn't want to make. Where Aristide essentially had to abandon a lot of the platform he was elected on, which included, you know, raising wages for the poor majority and other measures in the interest of the people who elected him. And Venezuela, Obama did declare Venezuela to be a national security threat, I don't know why. But that seemed to lay the groundwork for sanctions that helped set the stage at least somewhat, for the coup attempt.

**FA:** I mean, you could do an entire programme on the difference between the way Republicans and Democrats do foreign policy. In one case, I think one could say, defensible say, that Democrats have better analysis and better policies, but the Democrats don't fight for their policies. They don't fight even for their analysis. They allow the narrative to be co-opted by other people. They lose control of it, even on the so-called normalisation issue in Cuba. Look at the way Joe Biden has abandoned, had jettisoned almost entirely the narrative created during his vice presidency. And even frankly, I worked for Joe Biden for a little while on the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee, just as he was leaving to become vice presidential candidate and stuff. He abandoned his own record, his own rhetoric, his own positions as VP in order to do what?! Sometimes, either they think that if they can out trump Trump on policies like Cuba, which is a loser because no one's going to follow somebody who cowers in the corner and tries to imitate a predecessor whose level of audacity and dishonesty they could never, ever match up and all. And so on the case of Haiti, you could also see, even when there wasn't the high political stake combat here in Washington D.C., after the earthquake during Obama, January 2010; the earthquake was a historic opportunity for the United States government to help. Let me say words like progressive or pro-democracy Haitians redesign some of their system. Because it was a way of breaking the stranglehold of the elites over certain parts of the economy, certain property, certain city designs, in Port au Prince, this great slum that right now is the site of a huge siege. These things could have been changed in the wake of the earthquake. And it was the Clinton people, it was Hillary Clinton and Cheryl Mills on her staff who pushed back against moderate Democrats proposals for fixing the policy and therefore taking control of the narrative and the politics. So you got to ask the Democrats, how come you've got better ideas and better proposals and better this and better that- but how come you don't fight for them?!

**AM:** And I should have mentioned earlier the example of Honduras. Do you see that coup that occurred under Obama as an example of a US backed coup?

**FA:** A US backed coup. I don't think that history will show that it was a US backed coup, but it turned out to be a US tolerated coup. The initial impulse that came out of the White House when the coup happened- remembering what happened with the reversed coup against Chávez in 2002. Remember, Chávez went off for a weekend in exile at a military complex, then came back even stronger than before the coup. The White House wisely said, we can't be supporting this coup. We can't say he serves him right. In fact, his offences were very minor. The president at the time, Mel Zelaya, his offences were very minor compared to the offences of both of his successors, Pepe Lobo and Juan Orlando, who right now is still in prison awaiting trial. And so, yes, they started out as good, but the State Department flipped the policy over time. The State Department flipped it and referred to the golpe [coup], to the golpista [coup plotter] government, the Micheletti government, as our friends and officials stated as they said in Spanish: Pase lo que pase. No matter what happens, we're going to be accepting the elections. That was run by the coup regime; that led to the election of Pepe Lobo. I don't think- let me say this- I don't know of evidence that we were on the ground floor for that particular coup. We were a little bit lackadaisical and we lost control ourselves of the narrative in-country. But I'm not sure if that's necessarily the embassy's fault. I just don't know. But here in Washington, actually, if you want sort of a little bit of a laugh, chairman Kerry, when I was working for John Kerry at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, did a statement calling on Mel Zelaya to cut the silliness two days before the coup. But we didn't know that there was a coup. And we certainly didn't want our statement to be used as a rationale that Washington would support the coup. But it is just for a laugh, go



back and look at it. But that's part of the problem. When you are a coup supporting government, people will misunderstand your signals or people will invoke your signals falsely, artificially, for their own purposes. In the case of Cuba, we have officially under Section One or Nine of the Helms-Burton Act, we've been spending an average of \$20 to 25 million a year to do covert operations that are intended to identify, train, support, pay, etc. people who seek a regime change in that country as well. When that is one of the tools in your toolbox that you use as often as you do, it's sort of natural then for bad guys in the region to say, Look at this, this is what the gringos [the US-Americans] are all about.

**AM:** I know you have to go soon. Just a few more questions. What is your assessment of the state of the Venezuela coup attempt that John Bolton bragged about? Biden came into office and has continued the policy. He recognises Juan Guaidó as the president of Venezuela. But the crisis in Ukraine has raised some hurdles for that. And recently he sent some top officials to go meet with Maduro. Do you see signs that Biden is going to try to veer off the Trump policy of regime change in Venezuela. Especially given the recent elections in Colombia, where the US lost a reliable partner in that coup attempt and a new government, a leftist government, coming in.

**FA:** Yeah, good question. I think that they're so obsessed with the midterm elections that certainly on the rhetorical side, we're not going to see any change. But also, we're getting to see that Maduro was, who is a former bus driver and former percussionist and former labour organiser and former foreign minister, but not an extremely brilliant one, is a lot smarter than people thought he was and maybe even a lot smarter than we are. Because he meets, for example, with this fellow that's the so-called hostage negotiator for the White House- I think it's for the White House or the State Department, the administration's hostage negotiator- to talk about people that had been arrested for alleged corruption in Venezuela. They're not hostages at all. But he was smart enough to take the high road and say, Yeah, you want to talk, come and talk. I don't worry about your job title. And meanwhile, what he's doing is slowly eroding parts or elements of our sanctions policy. He's also quite smart. And that he knew since the day that we designated/ accepted the cellphone designation of Juan Guaidó as the president of Venezuela, that Guaidó was going to implode. And again, go back to the John Bolton book and read what the administration's great thoughts about—certainly [what] President Trump's evaluation of Juan Guaidó was. And he was right. Juan Guaidó, though, is pretty much an empty suit. And to rely on him with sensitive operations and things like that simply wasn't good. And when they did do their own operations, with or without our support, they were really goofy. Like what I referred to earlier as the Bay of Piglets thing, where people are still in jail and people got killed because of that. And it was an operation that no one should have allowed anybody to do. So is policy shifting? I think tiny bits. I think that the bigger shock, as you just said, is that that democracy in Colombia has taken a turn and away from the old elites, the people that did the false positives, human rights violations, the people who took \$10 billion in "US Plan Colombia" money and the flow of drugs today is as robust as ever, and we can't blame Venezuela for that. And that the Colombian people have

said, Well, you Americans might still like to stay with the status quo of Uribe and Duque and stuff, but we want change. And there's going to be change. But I'm not sure if it's going to be radical change. It's going to be cautious change, I think. But that is the primary driver now of any shift in policy. That Maduro has survived, the place is a total mess, in part because of his own incompetence. The human rights situation is not good. The behaviour of the military and the police is not good. But this is, this was our policy and we've had years and years and years to adjust the policy. But our foreign policy apparatus at the State Department loves this sort of stuff. They were loath to change the policy, just as they're loath to change Cuba policy. And therefore, we're stuck on this treadmill of always being seen as supporting illicit changes of government rather than just letting democracy happen. And sometimes dealing with the cons accepting the consequences and dealing with them in a more of a partnership sort of way. The way Bill Clinton had said, the way Barack Obama had said.

**AM:** These countries we're talking about Cuba, Venezuela, other targets of the US regime change or destabilisation have faced really heavy US sanctions. In the case of Venezuela there is an opposition economist named Francisco Rodríguez who's done studies pointing out just how decimated the Venezuelan economy has been by US sanctions. Based on your experience, are US policymakers aware of the consequences of their sanctions, that these consequences are felt by ordinary people, that the government never feels the brunt of these sanctions, but it's ordinary people who suffer.

**FA:** What you're indirectly asking me is if our government officials are liars because they deny it, flatly deny that the impact is that our sanctions are hurting common people. I don't like to call people liars, and I don't like to call them ignorant either. Who could look at a situation like Venezuela and see their oil, which we have completely sanctioned, their oil represents 90- 95% of all of their foreign earnings? And who could look at Cuba and say that the US embargo doesn't have a huge human cost for Cuba? Interestingly, during this period of time, the short period of time that Barack Obama's normalisation policies were moving forward in Cuba, we saw an incredible amount of a flourishing of the private sector. An increase of people's independence and the quality of life. Also, you could say, Oh, but that helps the regime survive. But the fact is that that makes those sorts of things engines for change, engines for change compatible with the Cuban people's needs and the Cuban people's aspirations. Will it necessarily produce results that we want in the short term in order to win elections in Florida? No, it's not going to. But you cannot deny you cannot deny that even our refusal to sell certain equipment, even though on the books it says that the Cubans can buy it, like syringes, for them to do their own COVID vaccination- which is quite successful COVID vaccination- that it doesn't have implications for the Cuban people. It doesn't have implications for the Venezuelan people. It doesn't have implications even for what we did in Bolivia by supporting the somewhat exaggerated, if not totally false allegations about the irregularities in their 2019 elections, which led to a coup. Which led to the military forcing Evo Morales out of the country and a woman [Jeanine Áñez] of highly dubious orientations, becoming acting president and now facing trial for her human rights violations and stuff.

How could we say that our role in these things doesn't have an impact on the people of these countries?

**AM:** And going back to John Bolton, I believe by the time the Bolivia coup happened, he was kicked out of the Trump administration. He was gone. But I have no doubt that he was very happy with that successful coup, at least until it was ultimately overturned by the Bolivian people.

**FA:** I'm not a big fan, frankly, of any of these guys, even on the right, the right wing in Latin America. They're just not very effective. They are really in it for very narrow constituencies. And also, if I say something that sounds a little bit defensive, Evo Morales- it's not intended to be such- Evo Morales was not the disastrous president that many people had expected him to be and, quote, wanted him to be. They really did want him to fail to discredit his sort of left-of-centre sorts of models. And yes, they would have celebrated, they did celebrate here in Washington when the OAS [Organization of American States], under Secretary General Almagro certified that there were some high irregularities in the vote. Which would turn out to be a completely false allegation and has been well researched and well documented. So yet another left leaning president bites the dust, accepts exile, comes back, re-legitimises, and hopefully will contribute to democratic progress rather than seeking revenge and behaving like the people who ousted him.

**AM:** Fulton Armstrong is the former national intelligence officer for Latin America, the US intelligence community's most senior analyst. Also a former senior staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Currently a lecturer at American University's School of International Service, Fulton Armstrong. Thank you so much.

**FA:** My pleasure.

**END**