

Bolivia independence day

The time has come for the Bolivian people

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF BOLIVIA

"The history of Bolivia is difficult to understand without Evo Morales. With his coming to power, it is possible to understand how this Andean country is today the democracy that it is and how it has fought for a worthier and less unjust life for all," said Bolivian journalist Mauricio Carrasco.



Bolivia is in the midst of a transcendental time in Latin American history. Located in the heart of South America, Bolivia on Aug. 6 will have seen 185 years of independent life as a plurinational state.

Developed from the revolution impelled by Simon Bolivar, Antonio Jose de Sucre and other great American heroes, this new state now controlled by President Evo Morales buries the old colonial system.

All the revolts that happened during the 19th century in Bolivia had a special character because in them the indigenous Creoles and mestizos were united in revolution.

With the reforms introduced by Morales that began when he took office Jan. 22, 2006, shortly after winning the presidential election with 53.7 percent of the votes of Bolivians, the government incorporated the rights of the indigenous majority, which had been marginalized from the republican life.

After more than 500 years in the Abya Yala, as South America was known before being re-named by the colonial conquerors, and after two centuries have elapsed since Latin American independence was proclaimed, the Bolivian natives are for the first time part of the decisions of the organized civil society.

The administration of Evo Morales, the first indigenous president in Bolivian history, is marked by the recovery of the state companies, the nationalization of hydrocarbons and the call to the Constituent Assembly that brought itself a new political state, an already effective constitution, and the yearned for re-representation of the country.

Nevertheless, the redistribution of the land and wealth obtained by the operation of hydrocarbons has been a source of political and social tension promoted by opposition sectors.

In spite of this, with the gains from the operation of natural resources in a sustainable way, pregnant women receive 1,800

Bolivianos whereas the elderly annually receive 2,400 Bolivianos live a more dignified life.

The country was declared free of illiteracy and the high rates of school desertion were reduced remarkably since the policy was applied to grant an economic subsidy to parents of children who attend elementary school from first grade to eighth grade.

A recent study indicated that between the 60 percent and 70 percent of the population has received additional money by way of these three grants.

The National Plan of Development is based on four fundamental pillars: creating a worthy Bolivia, a sovereign Bolivia, a productive and democratic Bolivia, and a Bolivia to live well. Social strategies to live well as the ones applied by Morales have been achieved in Latin America only through social revolutions.

To Live Well

"To Live Well" — "tamanah" in Aymara, in Quechua "sumaj kausay," in Guarani "fiande reko" (harmonious life) — is a concept contained in the constitution.

The reduction in the levels of poverty in just about five years of the Morales administration, economic experts of the Andean region think, is the result of the implementation of highly inclusive public policies.

Although 2008 was a year of great political and social tension due to the promoters of illegal autonomic consultations, Bolivians endorsed the government in the ballots with 67.4 percent of the votes in the recall referendum.

"The commitment of Bolivians to the process of change morally forces us politically to continue working for the democratic and cultural revolution, and for a mother country with equality and social justice," President Morales stated at that time.

Since the beginning of his administration, the social profits of the government are so evident that they have been responsible for Bolivians' historical decision to recognize in several private surveys that Evo, as Morales is affectionately called, has been the best Bolivian president in the history of the country.

Morales' government has taken important steps in the creation of the minimum conditions necessary to turn the great mineral wealth and power of the country to spur on agriculture, industries, science and the technologies.

There are indeed many ad-

vances in education and the health of the population, and the new, contemplated, normative body in the political constitution of the state, the indispensable components for the new Bolivia that designed the government next to the social movements, armed forces and enterprise sectors.

Such policies implied diverse directed strategies to distribute more suitably the wealth of Bolivia and to reduce its poverty, which constitutes the most impressive profit of the process initiated in January 2006, which also is supported in the profits reached in free public health — to that is added the free, special services to the thousands of handicapped that will be taken care of by a mission supported by countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Towns of Our America.

Democracy in Bolivia has experienced important changes in the last few years. It has gone from a democracy that could be legal, but not legitimate, to a participative democracy in which the citizens have the possibility of defining social and economic policies with their vote through referendums of recent constitutional use.

Bolivia initiated the process of autonomies recently thanks to the indigenous towns that fought for independence, the democracy and the defense of the natural resources.

Therefore, Morales always highlights the fight undertaken by indigenous heroes such as Tupac Katari and Bartolina Sisa before the foundation of Bolivia, and by other leaders and intellectuals who promoted the beginning of administrations that respected the social equality and the rights of all the citizens.

"Today we have come from a colonial state to autonomic plurinational state in which the rights of all citizens and social justice must be respected," affirmed Morales.

Morales said that the beginning of the autonomic administration constituted a "historical and singular event for the pre-

sent generation and for the new generations that will mark the social, economic and political developments."

"In this legal and political framework, the authorities of the central government and the regional governments are forced to work in the service of the people, especially of the underserved," he emphasized.

Morales added his conviction that "together, it is possible to take care of the people's demands that they have accumulated from the past."

Unique in the world

But Bolivia is not only a political entity. With its 36 nationalities, different cultures and languages, its valleys, forests and highlands, it is unique in the world.

Though much of the world believes Bolivia is a country of highlands, on the contrary, it is essentially Amazonian. Sixty-five percent of the national territory, from the north to the south, is influenced by the river basin of the Amazon and belong to the lowland zone.

This is a region where there is a vast biodiversity in the forest, rivers and lakes that turns it natural heritage of the world.

A great part of the carbon cycle that is crucial for the ecology of the planet and the climate takes place in the Amazon, which spans nine countries in South America, a reason why it is also known as "the Earth's lungs."

The Bolivian Amazon is well reputed for its decisive contributions to improving the precarious environmental balance of the planet, which, due to the meteorological disorder caused by global warming, may collapse.

In the last decade, the country has become a worldwide leader in the promotion of the sustainable handling of the forest, certifying the wood that has been obtained from affluent managed forests.

In the west of the country, the hills with their white caps, their mythical forms touching their peaks against the clean Andean

skies constitute a unique spectacle in the world.

The original communities, suspended in time in culture and tradition, are an endless source of history and legend.

Nevertheless, Bolivia, like other nations of the world, is a victim of climate change.

The effects of climate change are much talked about: global warming, melting of ice caps, floods and droughts. What is usually avoided is establishing the origin of such phenomena.

Evo Morales is convinced that all this is born from the "wrongly named" globalization — or selective globalization — that does not respect the plurality or the differences between the towns and capitalism.

For Morales, capitalism takes in itself an exaggerated and endless thirst for industrialization.

Deforestation, for example, is a consequence of industrialization and is a threat to the future of the Bolivian Amazon, where already there are a great amount of trees and plants in danger of extinction.

"And when we organized ourselves next to the social movements to protest, to condemn development policies that do not solve our problems of poverty and marginalization, they demonized us, they accused us,



Hot and cool: The Cascadas del Rio Cuevas, 120 km away from Santa Cruz, Bolivia's largest city, entices visitors to enjoy sunbathing on the rocks after a refreshing venture to its many waterfalls. EMBASSY OF BOLIVIA

they threatened us with armed interventions. . . . Our voice to protest, our necessary right, that are calling for, really, how to save life, how to save humanity," was the opinion of the chief executive.

Evo Morales has indicated in international public speeches that the presidents of the world have the responsibility to think about the value of life, humanity, how to save planet Earth.

In this tactical mission, for Morales, it is important to

change economic models that exploit man and destroy natural resources, and to eradicate capitalism.

"And it is that in many nations of the world a wind of change blows that goes and comes crying out for justice and new opportunities from survival and development," Morales said.

As in 1825, from north to south in that indigenous, brown, racially mixed and Creole Bolivia, today also, with those same protagonists,

times of change in the country blow.

A current of patriotism 185 years ago forge the independence from the Spanish crown, forced a change to the unjust, exclusive and oppressive colonial system.

Today, the turn of the people has arrived in Bolivia.

With information provided by the General Communication Bureau, Ministry of the Presidency of Bolivia.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the Occasion of
Their 185th Independence Day

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