

"Hondurasgate" exposes living legacy of Operation Condor across the Americas

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A leak of audio recordings from Signal, WhatsApp and Telegram—published by *Diario Red* and the investigative platform Hondurasgate—has exposed what amounts to a modern-day Operation Condor: a US-backed transnational conspiracy involving Washington, Tel Aviv, Buenos Aires and the Honduran state to destabilize governments across Latin America, erect police-state regimes, and prepare the violent suppression of social opposition throughout the hemisphere.

The recordings, reportedly authenticated using the forensic software Phonexia Voice Inspector, reveal discussions involving former Honduran president and convicted drug trafficker Juan Orlando Hernández (JOH), current Honduran President Nasry Asfura, Vice President María Antonieta Mejía and other right-wing operatives about building “information cells,” financing disinformation campaigns, imprisoning or assassinating opponents, and coordinating a continental offensive against the “cancer of the left.”

The significance of the leaks extends far beyond Honduras. They emerge amid the Trump administration’s open embrace of what it calls the “Shield of the Americas,” the “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, and the broader “Greater North America” strategy aimed at reasserting direct US hegemony over the Western Hemisphere through military force, economic coercion and political subversion.

These plans are not only directed outward. They are inseparable from the rapid development of authoritarian forms of rule inside the United States itself.

On Wednesday, the Trump administration announced a new “US Counterterrorism Strategy” that vastly expands the domestic powers of the executive branch, strengthens surveillance authorities, broadens the category of “extremism” and further integrates military and intelligence agencies into civilian governance.

The same methods developed in imperialist operations abroad—extrajudicial killings, censorship, psychological warfare, militarized policing and political repression—are increasingly being prepared for use against the working class within the United States.

The leaked recordings provide an extraordinary glimpse into how these plans are being operationalized. According to the material published, Hernández—pardoned by President Donald Trump after receiving a 45-year sentence in the United States for drug trafficking—discusses plans to establish a US-based digital propaganda and “journalism” unit designed to spread fake news and destabilize the governments of Mexico, Colombia and Honduras.

In one alleged conversation with Asfura, Hernández requests \$150,000 to rent an apartment in the United States where the operation would be based. “We’re going to set up a cell, Mr. President,” Hernández says. “From here, from the United States, an information cell, so they can’t track us there in Honduras. It’s going to be like a Latin American news site.”

He boasts that he had recently spoken with Argentine President Javier Milei: “I was on a call with President Javier Milei and it was successful.

Very, very, very good, and I think that at this point we can do great things for all of Latin America. There are some cases coming up against Mexico, some cases coming up against Colombia, and, most importantly, against Honduras, against the Zelaya family.”

Asfura responds by promising additional state funds siphoned from Honduras’s Secretariat of Infrastructure and Public Services. “We’re going to send another \$150,000,” he says.

Former Honduran president Manuel Zelaya was overthrown in the 2009 military coup backed by the State Department under then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, while his wife Xiomara Castro was president from 2022 until January 2026.

In another alleged conversation, Hernández tells Vice President María Antonieta Mejía that the operation has the backing of “some Republicans” and is intended to “attack and eradicate the cancer of the left” throughout Latin America. He claims Milei is contributing \$350,000 and references support from unnamed Mexican contacts.

The leaks placed a sinister spotlight on a meeting last Wednesday between Milei and Asfura in Los Ángeles in the context of the Milken Institute annual conference, which has become a strategy center against the specter of socialism.

The leaks also point to the direct involvement of Israeli political networks. Hernández allegedly states that the financing for his presidential pardon “came from a group of rabbis and people who supported Israel,” while in another recording he says Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “had everything to do” with securing his release.

The hypocrisy and criminality exposed here are staggering. Hernández was convicted in a Manhattan court for helping traffic more than 400 tons of cocaine into the United States and for receiving bribes from the Sinaloa Cartel, including \$1 million from Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán. His brother Juan Antonio Hernández received a life sentence on similar charges.

Yet this same figure has now allegedly been transformed into a key operative for Washington’s regional strategy.

This entirely exposes the fraudulent character of the “narco-terrorist” narrative used to justify the attack on Venezuela and escalating US military operations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The issue has never been combating drug trafficking. Washington is perfectly willing to employ convicted cartel-linked politicians when it serves broader strategic objectives: recolonizing the region, countering China, suppressing left-wing governments and preparing mass repression against the working class.

The recordings reportedly include discussions about imprisoning or assassinating political opponents. One voice identified as National Electoral Council official Cosette López-Osorio is heard stating about opposition figure Marlon Ochoa: “First: prison or death. That’s how I’m going to say it—prison or death.”

Another recording features pressure on Honduran congressional officials to use violence and repression against the opposition. “In Honduras, you

need force, you need logistics, you need blood,” a voice identified as Hernández says. “Counter violence with violence. That’s what President Trump says.”

The leaks further detail plans to transform Honduras into a client state for US corporations and the Pentagon. During his presidency, Hernández championed the notorious ZEDEs—Special Zones for Employment and Economic Development—which would effectively hand over parts of Honduras to private corporate governance outside the country’s labor laws, environmental regulations and democratic oversight.

One of these projects, Próspera, attracted investment from billionaire Trump allies Peter Thiel and Marc Andreessen. Located on the island of Roatán, it is envisioned as a tax haven and deregulated enclave for biotech, cryptocurrency and finance firms.

The Honduran Supreme Court ruled ZEDEs unconstitutional in 2024. But under the new National Party administration, plans are underway not only to revive and expand them, but also to hand over major infrastructure projects—including the Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway—to US corporations while rolling back Chinese involvement.

The same agenda includes expanded US military basing and deep austerity measures targeting the working class.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum responded publicly to the leaks this week. While denouncing the existence of an international right-wing network, she focused on the role of Argentina—not Washington—and dismissed any threat that these conspiracies will affect her own administration.

For his part, Colombian President Gustavo Petro merely denounced Netanyahu for freeing JOH “to destroy the Colombian and Mexican governments,” exempting Trump or the US government from any wrongdoing. Significantly, presidential elections will be held in Colombia on May 31. Petro-backed candidate Iván Cepeda leads the polls, but is expected to face a second round against the fascist Abelardo de la Espiella.

Amid the scandal, on Thursday Brazilian President Lula da Silva followed Petro’s footsteps earlier this year in kissing Trump’s ring in Washington. The consistent accommodation to Trump by the three nominally “left” governments in the most powerful countries in the region is the clearest demonstration that bourgeois nationalism offers no way to oppose imperialist oppression or fascism.

The historical legacy of Operation Condor

The exposure of the “Hondurasgate” conspiracy comes half a century after the launching of Operation Condor. Like today, the savage terror of Operation Condor did not emerge in a political vacuum.

The reformist governments that preceded the military dictatorships — Salvador Allende’s Popular Unity coalition in Chile, João Goulart’s nationalist administration in Brazil, and the Peronism in Argentina —defended the capitalist state and its repressive apparatus against pre-revolutionary movements of the working class, and systematically subordinated their governments to Wall Street and US imperialism. Meanwhile, their Stalinist and Pabloite allies insisted that workers must first support “progressive” nationalists and promoted popular front coalitions with them. Acting as a political brake on the independent mobilization of workers, these forces left the field open to US-backed military coups and dictatorships, with tens of thousands paying with their lives for these political betrayals.

With the full backing and encouragement of the US government, and with the CIA playing the leading role, right-wing military regimes were established in Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. These

dictatorships joined forces with regimes in Paraguay and elsewhere to launch Operation Condor, a joint enterprise between Latin American secret police agencies and the CIA to hunt down and murder leftists and revolutionary exiles across national borders.

Operation Condor was formally launched in October 1975, when Chilean intelligence chief Manuel Contreras convened representatives from Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil in Santiago to establish a joint “information bank” and multinational “task forces.” Political exiles could be kidnapped, tortured, disappeared and murdered anywhere on the continent without judicial authorization, turning Latin America into what the *World Socialist Web Site* has aptly described as a “labyrinth of horror.”

Secret police death squads crossed borders freely while exiles were hunted down and returned to torture centers and execution chambers. Contreras himself later testified that assassinations carried out by Chile’s DINA secret police had been jointly organized with CIA approval.

The Israeli government played a critical auxiliary role in sustaining these terror networks, as a conduit for US arms and covert operations where Washington sought plausible deniability. Israeli advisers trained the Guatemalan military under the dictatorship of José Efraín Ríos Montt. When Congress restricted arms sales to Chile after the 1976 assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington, Israel stepped in to arm the Pinochet dictatorship.

The “Hondurasgate” scandal demonstrates that this machinery of imperialist repression was never dismantled.

One crucial difference, however, is that the original Condor network operated largely in secret. Today, US imperialism no longer even attempts to maintain the façade of defending “democracy” or the “free world.”

The operation exposed in “Hondurasgate” unfolds amid escalating US threats throughout the region. Trump has repeatedly threatened military action in Mexico under the pretext of combating organized crime. He has intensified threats and provocations against Petro in Colombia, while simultaneously expanding naval operations and drone strikes across the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. Signaling US plans for military aggression amid the ongoing fuel embargo against the island, several reconnaissance drone flights have recently been reported near Cuba.

“Hondurasgate” exposes the far-advanced implementation of the methods of Operation Condor—the CIA’s continental machinery of terror—under conditions of deepening global crisis and class conflict.

Workers throughout the Americas must draw the necessary conclusions. The defense of democratic rights and opposition to dictatorship cannot be entrusted to any faction of the ruling class, whether in Washington or among the bourgeois nationalist governments of Latin America.



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