

U.S. Army veteran sends thousands of anti-Evo Morales tweets during Bolivia coup



Washington, January 25 (RHC)-- A new report has revealed that the right-wing coup in Bolivia received automated support from a U.S. Army veteran, who retweeted thousands of anti-Morales messages believed to have been written by fake Twitter accounts.

In the days preceding President Evo Morales' decision to step down amid pressure from the military, thousands of new accounts were created on Twitter — with many of them parroting identical messages reading, in English: “Friends from everywhere, in Bolivia there was no coup.”

According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an estimated 68,000 shady accounts were created as the Bolivia crisis unfolded, all of them sharing 14 hashtags which were either anti-Morales, or in support Luis Fernando Camacho, the right-wing politician who helped carry out the coup.

Follow-up analysis by Julian Macías Tovar, a social media coordinator for the Spanish left-wing party Podemos, found that 48,000 accounts were created in a four-day period, and appear to have been used solely to amplify these pro-coup hashtags. Tovar also stumbled upon a single account, operated by US Army veteran Luis Suarez, which had retweeted more than 13,000 messages containing the coup-friendly

hashtags. Using a custom-made program to automate his Twitter activity, Suarez allegedly pumped out as many as 69 posts in a single second.

As an investigation by Salon found, far from denying the accusations made against him, Suarez — who claims to be from Bolivia — joked about his activities being made public. In a series of public Facebook posts, he crowned himself “Cyber Rambo,” and boasted that he could publish more tweets with a single click than “all the effort of the left.”

In an interview with Bolivian media, Suarez insisted that he had done nothing wrong, and that he had simply “found 30 thousand posts from these people and had shared them.” He further claimed that he was not “manipulating any information,” arguing instead that “leftist media” were spreading propaganda by calling Morales’ ouster a coup.

A US Army spokesperson confirmed to Salon that Suarez served in the Army as a mechanic from 2010-2016, and that he was deployed to Afghanistan from September 2013 to June 2014. Suarez has denied that his Twitter activities have any connection to his past military service.

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