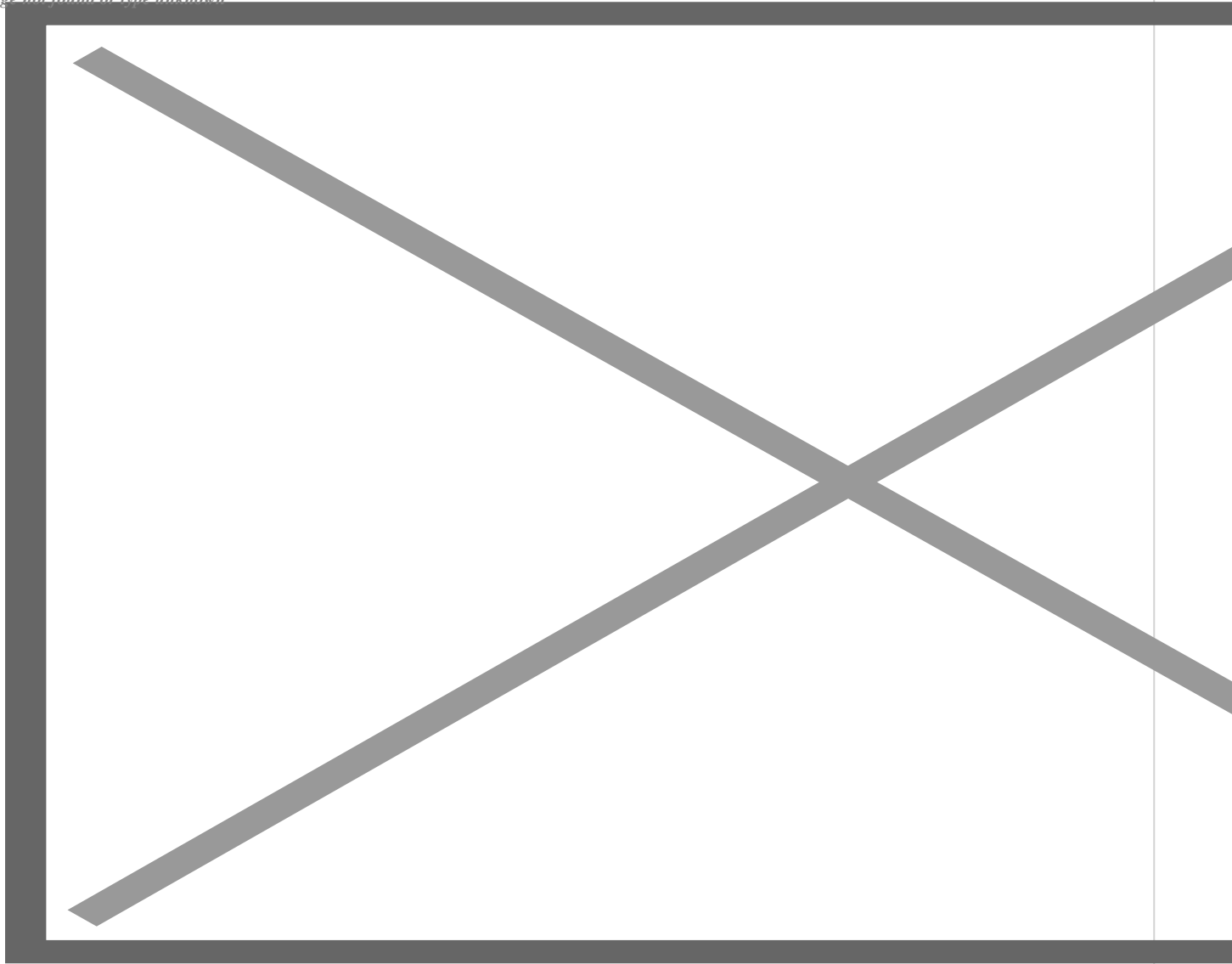


Mexico's AMLO calls Peru's designated-president a puppet

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?Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been an outspoken critic of Peru's Dina Boluarte

Mexico City, February 28 (RHC)-- Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has hit out at his Peruvian counterpart, Dina Boluarte, describing her as a “puppet” of oligarchs in the latest escalation of tensions between the two countries.

Relations between Mexico and Peru have been strained since December’s removal of former Peruvian President Pedro Castillo. On Monday, Lopez Obrador continued his criticism of Castillo’s arrest and imprisonment, calling the situation a “total farce” and a “great injustice”.

He speculated that the “end goal” of Castillo’s removal is “an oligarchy plundering the country’s natural resources.” “They need to have a puppet, a dummy governor of their own,” Lopez Obrador told a news conference.

Castillo was removed from office by legislators late last year after he attempted to dissolve Congress. He was replaced by his then-vice president, Boluarte.

Over the weekend, Boluarte announced the “definitive” withdrawal of Peru’s ambassador to Mexico after Lopez Obrador branded her government as unconstitutional. She also decried what she called Lopez Obrador’s interference in “Peru’s internal affairs and his repeated unacceptable questioning of the constitutional and democratic origins” of her government. Boluarte said the two countries’ relationship would continue at a business-only level.

Earlier, the Mexican president said his country “will continue to support [Castillo] who was unjustly and illegally removed from office.” On Saturday, Mexico’s foreign ministry said it regretted Peru’s decision to bring its ambassador home from Mexico.

The diplomatic spat started soon after Boluarte took office, with Lopez Obrador denouncing the impeachment and imprisonment of Castillo, who is in pre-trial detention for 18 months on charges of conspiracy and rebellion. Castillo has denied the charges.

Castillo’s removal also sparked weeks of protest that have left some 60 people dead and calls for Boluarte’s resignation. The Peruvian government declared a state of emergency to deal with the demonstrations, amid criticism from rights groups.

A former teacher and union leader from a small town in northern Peru, Castillo faced allegations of corruption and two prior impeachment attempts in less than two years in office. But he has maintained a strong base among rural voters and disenfranchised Indigenous groups.

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