

Declassified Documents Show CIA Interference in Ecuador Goes Back 50 Years



Quito, June 7 (RHC)-- According to newly-declassified documents and testimonies, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had a permanent operation to intervene in political and social decisions of Ecuador for more than half a century.

Starting from the 60s, the CIA infiltrated governments, police, civilian groups, and NGOs to advance U.S. interests in the country, and continues to fight for its power and influence in the region.

The declassified documents show that among the CIA's less known activities include the infiltration of hundreds of its agents into diplomatic offices, political parties and military forces in Ecuador.

Agents at Ecuadorean airports would report on passengers traveling to socialist countries such as Cuba and Russia, and mail sent to these countries was opened and recorded for the CIA to analyze. Any "special interest" guest in a hotel would be under surveillance constantly.

Spies kept extensive lists of data on targets such as full name, residences, workplace, phone number, preferred leisure activities and locations, hobbies, the name and dossier of spouses, and the names of

schools attended by the children of targets, among other information.

Relevant information of interest to the agency was then passed onto U.S. headquarters. The agency's main targets at the time were the young Socialist or Communist political groups in universities. The Revolutionary Union of Ecuadorean Youth (URJE) was considered the most dangerous organization and the main target for destabilization, along with its parent party, the Communist Party of Ecuador.

Agents would infiltrate social groups and systematically work to discredit their popularity while fabricating or planting evidence to ensure that leaders were falsely prosecuted for crimes such as the bombing of right-wing political headquarters or even churches.

The CIA counted on the support of right-wing media outlets who published false information and didn't question the sources or veracity of facts. It was through such methods that the leftist movement lost unity and power in political and social spaces in the country.

Despite the documentation and testimonies verifying these activities, the CIA so far hasn't acknowledged that its mission in the country also involved infiltrating social movements, radio stations, airlines, hotels and even hospitals.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) are seen by many as tools used by the U.S. government to advance their political, economic and social interests.

Many opposition groups and media networks in Latin America are funded by USAID, the NED or other U.S. based private and public institutions. In addition to Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa, other leftist presidents have denounced that these institutions are operating to destabilize their governments as was the case with the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and NED funding to opposition groups, and more recently the civil liberties groups behind the impeachment process against Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff.

According to President Correa, these organizations were acting politically to promote social unrest and opposition towards his government's policies. In 2012, Correa threatened to kick out the USAID after accusing it of financing opposition groups and of involving itself the country's internal politics. He said other progressive governments were analyzing whether or not to take the same actions.

Some reports also indicated that President Rafael Correa could be targeted by the CIA, given his strong opposition to U.S. intervention in the country and region. Since taking office, he has closed a U.S. military base in Manta and expelled two U.S. diplomats who worked for the CIA. He has also given asylum in the Ecuadorean embassy in London to Julian Assange.

As it did 50 years ago, the CIA continues to intervene and infiltrate through new methods and new assets in Ecuador.

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