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U.S. cuts aid to Honduran government

Thomas C. Fox | Sep. 10, 2009 NCR Today

The Obama administration on Thursday cut off all aid to the Honduran government over the ouster of President Manuel Zelaya, making permanent a temporary suspension of U.S. assistance put in place after he was deposed in June, according to the Associate Press.

The report states that the State Department made the announcement as Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was meeting with Zelaya. The action cuts more than $31 million in non-humanitarian assistance, including $11 million remaining in a more than a $200 million five-year assistance program run by the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

"The secretary of state has made the decision, consistent with U.S. legislation, recognizing the need for strong measures in light of the continued resistance to the adoption of the San Jose Accord by the de facto regime and continuing failure to restore democratic, constitutional rule to Honduras," State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said.

After meeting with Clinton, Zelaya welcomed the move.

"It is gratifying that the United States has taken a strong position against the coup," he told The Associated Press in a brief interview. Zelaya said more pressure may be necessary.

Honduras' interim government sent a letter to Clinton vowing it would withstand any price to defend democracy in the Central American country.

"Whether you wish us well or not, we will pay any price, we will bear any burden, we will take on any difficulty, we will support any friend and oppose any enemy to ensure the survival and the success of liberty and democracy in our country," interim Interior Minister Oscar Raul Matute said in the letter, echoing President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address.

Zelaya was deposed and exiled on June 28 amid suspicions among his opponents that he wanted to overturn a constitutional provision limiting Honduran presidents to a single term. He has denied that was his goal.

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