

Peru: Héctor Béjar's resignation, 'The President and the government put themselves hostage to the military'

written by Carlos Aznárez
August 21, 2021



Héctor Béjar

The government of Pedro Castillo has suffered its first defeat, by yielding to the pressures of the right-wing coup and the most reactionary sectors of the Armed Forces. The imposition of the resignation of Foreign Minister Héctor Béjar is, without a doubt, an enormous show of weakness and will have consequences in the

future. To discuss this issue we spoke with **Ricardo Jiménez**, sociologist and activist of ALBA Movimientos del Perú, and a regular contributor to Resumen Latinoamericano.

-What are your impressions of what happened?

-Héctor Béjar's resignation is undoubtedly the first and hardest blow against the current government of President Castillo and the process of change that the President is trying to promote. It is the hardest because Béjar is the most important, the most educated and I would say the most capable, without any doubt and by far, of the entire cabinet. On the other hand, demonstrating these capabilities, he had the luck, the ability and the capacity to act quickly. I have no doubt that he saw this possibility and acted quickly, with incredible serenity to evict the infamous Lima group and restored relations with Venezuela, which are two hard nuts for the Peruvian right wing to crack. He left in place a policy that will not be easy to reverse, I think the possibility is remote. It would be a serious step backwards, on the verge of treason on the part of Castillo, if he were to reverse the Chancellor's policy.

-As you rightly say, he acted with speed, knowing that pressures would increase, and he also left a legacy.

-Even though Bejar only served a few days he left us this tremendous legacy, a turn of the screw in foreign policy towards sovereignty and respect for peace among peoples. It seems unbelievable that so quickly the right-wing would strike this blow, just weeks into the new government, in the most important part of the cabinet, if we look at the capacities and potentialities. What is behind, is the coup and the attack of the right wing that does not come from now, but from before. We are facing what I metaphorically call the "third round". In few countries of the world does what is happening here take place, where this third round of coups has been imposed on us

and has not ceased, before, during and after this elected government.

-Héctor Béjar says that the Navy accused him of having insulted them. However, what he said is based on very clear evidence. He pointed out that members of the Navy had been involved in terrorist acts, even before the Shining Path was active in Peru.

-Of course, as the great Spanish singer Joan Manóel Serrat used to say: “the truth is never sad, that which has no remedy” The same thing happens here, history cannot be changed, the facts cannot be changed, you can google it, the evidence is overwhelming. The same American CIA gives official reports on the Peruvian state and they refer to a time in the 70’s, where there was the Condor Plan, where there are even open trials in Peruvian courts of the Peruvian judiciary to former military of the Navy of that time, where the attacks are clarified. As Héctor Béjar affirmed, before taking office as Chancellor, in a statement that was also manipulated, edited and presented tendentiously and wildly distorted by the media, is that the Navy undoubtedly participated in terrorist attacks.

-Héctor Béjar also said in an interview that I was able to see that the dangerous thing about this is that Pedro Castillo is now practically forced to ask permission from the armed forces if he can continue or not to continue with this or that minister that has been questioned. He shows a scenario of much conditioning by the military and the right wing, and that is dangerous in the immediate future.

-Of course, it is very serious, we cannot underestimate the risk that this brings, because the president and the government have put themselves in a position of being hostage of the military. They have given in very quickly, it is undoubtedly a mistake, the most serious that has been made, which will have consequences, which have not yet been experienced. They should have waited longer and should have negotiated better with the pro-coup sectors within the Navy.

-How was the operation that ended up removing Béjar from his post?

-The operation was more or less like this: in Peru it is called *cargamontones*, an incessant, cruel and merciless avalanche, in all the media, on all the front pages of the newspapers, the front pages of the newspapers, in the prime time of the news programs, fake news, all against the Chancellor. Then, a communiqué from the Navy, an official communiqué from the high command of the Navy in office, questioning the Chancellor and the famous declarations and finally Hector is forced to resign. This successful strategy in this situation, without any doubt, will be rehearsed again and again by the right wing coup plotters. From the beginning they have complained that this government, for the first time in 200 years of the country, chose ministers without consulting the powers that be. Now what they have achieved is a type of veto power by managing to leave out the most emblematic figure, the most qualified. I was very hurt by the lack of vision of the government, of the premier, of the president, at least they should have waited, because this move was to call Hector to Congress to ask for explanations. That would have been a really good opportunity because Hector would have given a lesson not only of history, of laws and international legality but also to show how to stand up to the right wing in Congress, and it would have done the country a lot of good if we had all witnessed this. In this sense and in my opinion the premier and the president have made a mistake. There are strong ties between the Navy and the military coup, they are at the forefront of the coup. Former admiral Montoya is in the congress, and he has coordinated without any doubt all this, with the fake news of the media and the high commands of the navy. Here what should be done now is that the state prosecutor's office prosecute the admirals who made this statement, because it is unconstitutional. A flagrant act before the law, it is a crime of the armed forces, and this gesture should have been made before taking any decision. In order not to leave a precedent of impunity because it is extremely dangerous.

-Béjar says: "I did not resign, Guido Bellido told me that I had to leave". Why did Guido Bellido make such a forceful decision?

I do not know Bellido or the president personally, I have no way of knowing the exact reasons. My analysis is that the right wing has managed to attack on several fronts, let's remember that the most attacked, besides Hector, was Guido Bellido, also accused of terrorism, a ridiculous and absurd accusation. And they do it with the same campaign style. There was also talk of questioning him. In these days, the congress has to decide whether or not to give a vote of confidence to the cabinet headed by Bellido. I think Bellido has made the mistake of saving himself by burning Hector's gun. The right wing has succeeded, I think, although I may be wrong, that he was on the chopping block and thought I will save myself by putting Hector on the chopping block, and that that's what set the fuse. On the other hand, it is natural, it is a coalition government, Hector is not part of Peru Libre, he is not part of the Magisterio, which are the two primary forces of the government. He is a reference cadre, the most important, by far, of the Peruvian left, who was invited to be part of the government because of his qualities and capacities, which are extraordinary, so there is no trust built amongst these forces, They joined in this process of change which is good, but at the same time the lack of trust is their weakness. Two months ago nobody thought about the possibility of this government and this process of change. We have to have the perspective that this has just begun, struggles and processes of change are like that, they are given and taken. We must also remember that within the first 15 days, the government has achieved what was not achieved in the 40 years of neoliberalism: that the large mining consortiums pay the taxes they owe. They have paid close to 2,000 million soles, an important amount just when the country needs it most. For the government it has been a public success, and there is still a lot to be done in this area, they have paid 10 years, but they owe 12 years more, or something like that. But neither can we underestimate the fact that for 40 years they felt like not paying taxes and they did not pay them. I

do not know the reasons for the privileges for which these mining businesses, which have multimillionaire profits, were. To top it off, now with the rise of the dollar, they have super profits and they have never felt like paying for their profits, while the rest of us citizens have to pay punctually. The government has achieved this, it has been an important blow. Now there is a struggle in Congress. I also risk the analysis that it may have been a negotiation for the vote of confidence, that maybe they have said “look, this fuse is burning, but the cabinet receives the vote of confidence and they show they can govern”. It may be, I hope so. Because it will be worse if even that does not happen.

Let's see what happens in these days. There may also be false promises and deceptions, I do not believe that the right wing can control the pack that is in the congress, they are uncontrollable. The same thing happens to them as to us, there is a coalition where there is Fujimorism and four or five other right-wing forces that are with the coup and nobody controls them. Nor do they have the confidence and discipline that someone can speak in the name of all.

-The logical reflection that comes out of this after listening to you is that progressive governments are weak, no matter how many votes of the people they got. Héctor Béjar was saying that the people should be in the streets consolidating the support to this government, the problem is that they are not summoned. In this sense, now an important piece has fallen, but another and another can fall, and so at some point you end up in a situation where you leave or live enslaved to the conditions. Let's hope that, as you said, this will be a fuse to save the whole, but it hurts, it hurts because of the value that Héctor Béjar has for the great fatherland, not only for Peru.

-I do not know if you saw the words of Vladimir Cerrón, in a public tweet that has been circulating, he says it with all lucidity: never before and never after, will Peru have a Chancellor of the stature of Héctor Béjar. The pain is deep, the blow is very

strong.

Source: [Resumen](#)

