

# MIGUEL ANGEL MORATINOS

High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain

## Jim HOAGLAND

An old friend of the WPC and of many of us here, Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Foreign Minister of Spain.

## Miguel Angel MORATINOS

Thank you for inviting me and giving me this opportunity to talk on this important issue. Let me make two preliminary remarks. Number one, being Spanish I really ask my Latin American friends to be gracious with me because in Spain we have long histories, shared interests, so we have a lot of political and historical elements, but sometimes there is a lack of understanding with us, the former colony. Number two, I will try not to be ideological, but to identify the challenges of Latin America today, whether you are on the left or the so-called populist on the left, on the right, to be objective and identify the challenges for Latin America today from a Spanish and international analyst's point of view.

I will start by commending the World Policy Conference for this Latin American debate. It was unusual, even if there are not that many people, but thank you for being here with us. There was a reason and 10 years ago nobody cared about Latin America, it was not on the agenda because the situation was going quite well. Latin America was growing at an average 5%, there were no military putsches, no military coups. There was a bit of a success story in Salvador and at the end of the day, even in Colombia where the guerrillas went through the democratic processes. Even after the financial crisis in Europe and Spain, my compatriots were queuing up at the Brazilian Consulate asking for visas, so new architects and engineers were rushing to go to Brazil and Peru to get out of the crisis in Europe. I was going to Latin America and they would say to me, as Spanish Foreign Minister you have problems, you are in a bad situation and we are not now.

That did not make headlines, but today I will give you three main headlines. Number one, is a statement of a candidate in Argentina, Alberto Fernandez, who the polls say is going to win the election. He said that Argentina's main problem is hunger. Can you understand that the most important country for agricultural production cannot feed its citizens? Hunger. The second headline, President Macron or President Bolsonaro, the Amazon, and what is going on in the environmental framework. The Amazon means biodiversity not only for the whole of Brazil but the whole international community. What it means for the Latin American economy, not just the Amazon, but in Bolivia, the forests and raw materials, the environment and nature, because the health of the Latin American economy in the last four decades or even more has been totally dependent on raw materials. The third headline is Ecuador, which my friend Rozental mentioned. Indigenous people taking over the capital, Quito. Who could have imagined three or five years ago that Quito would be invaded and uprooted by the indigenous community trying to overthrow the regime?

These are three headlines that reflect the three main challenges for Latin America, and I will try to be brief. Number one, the economy and whether there are populists on the right or left, there has been no serious economic policy in the majority of the Latin American countries. There has been low productivity and you mentioned the figures. Today, they are growing at 0.5%, imagine even Brazil is 0.8%, Argentina 0.9%, Mexico 0%, and they are the producers of the most important natural resources that combine and facilitate the economy of international trade. There has been no fiscal reform. Do you know what the pressure of fiscal reform in Latin America is? The average is 10%, compared to 40% in Germany, 38% in Spain, in Sweden 50%. They do not pay taxes and they have not been introducing this fiscal reform. From the left to the Bolivarian, to Macri or to any government there has been in Latin America; the economic reform should be addressed.



The second challenge is the environment as I said, the Amazon is the symbol. What are they going to do with these resources? They cannot continue with this extractive production. In Bolivia they have lithium, gold and oil, only agricultural products and natural resources, but how are they going to be able to maintain and satisfy the sustainability agenda, the SDG agenda. This is an issue they have to address.

Third, there is the political and social challenge, which is the most important one and that is why today we still have people on the streets of Quito. There have been many success stories, Bolivia is not so popular of course. Then we can discuss. People around me may be against my position, but can you rule a country, taking the example of Bolivia, where 60% of the population are indigenous and until 2003 and 2004, just 15 years ago, they were not citizens? They did not participate in political life. They did not vote. They were totally outside the political system, then Evo Morales introduced them and succeeded in getting them into the new reality. Today, Bolivia is growing at 4% and they have a very nice and positive economic situation. I do not know if he is going to win the election. You cannot avoid taking into account the social element of Latin American countries. With all due respect to my Brazilian friends, of course you have elites, you have an economic class, but if you do not address the situation in the poor social areas of Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo, people will revolt. People will not accept it. That is one of the main concerns, what is happening in Argentina and why after the collapse of Kirchner, that was a disaster, and everybody knows how many problems this caused. However, then everybody expected Macri to be the magic formula, back to neoliberalism, but he failed again.

The three challenges have to be addressed together, the economic, the environmental and social and political reform.

**Jim HOAGLAND**

Miguel, thank you for that very forceful and clear presentation.