

# Bolivian president blasts capitalism

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LA PAZ, Bolivia --

President Evo Morales called capitalism the "worst enemy of humanity" at a conference of Latin American leftist intellectuals on Tuesday.

A coca-growers' union leader who became Bolivia's first Indian president, the leftist Morales has nationalized oil and natural gas resources as part of his effort to redistribute wealth in South America's poorest country.

"The transnational corporations always provoke conflicts to accumulate capital, and the accumulation of capital in a few hands is no solution for humanity," Morales said at forum in Cochabamba. "And so I have arrived at the conclusion that capitalism is the worst enemy of humanity."

Morales also said Bolivia's new constitution, now being written, would declare Bolivia a pacifist nation and explicitly renounce war. "Instead of making more weapons and bullets to kill humankind, we must concentrate on producing more food," he said.

The president spoke at a two-day conference on the role of media in political efforts to create a new Latin American socialism, sponsored by Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba, and Ecuador. Morales counts Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban leader Fidel Castro as close allies.

Morales has criticized the historic role of foreign business interests in Bolivia, often noting that the 1879 War of the Pacific, in which Bolivia lost its seashore to Chile, was sparked in part by a British trading company's rush to control the coast's valuable guano and saltpeter deposits.

Bolivia later lost tens of thousands of soldiers and another wide swath of territory in the 1930s Chaco War with Paraguay, which many historians describe as a proxy battle between U.S. company Standard Oil and Dutch-British Shell Oil over land thought to hold valuable petroleum deposits.