



Coup in Peru?

OE Watch Commentary: Peruvians witnessed some dramatic political activity in October, but it seems to have been less than it seems, at least according to perspectives reflected in the accompanying references. President Martín Vizcarra closed the legislature, a move that his opponents quickly labeled a golpe de estado, a coup d'état. The Peruvian system is a half-parliamentary one, with the president having the capacity to close congress contemplated in the country's constitution. Contemplated doesn't mean jurisprudentially settled, however; as the situation is causing obvious confusion among Peruvian experts in the matter. Based on the accompanying sources, the bottom line appears to be this: The military is standing behind President Vizcarra's decision, the latter has scheduled new elections for January, and the President seems to enjoy majority public support for the move. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Martin Vizcarra, President of Peru.

Source: Galería del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin%20Vizcarra_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin%20Vizcarra_(cropped).jpg), CC BY-SA 2.0

“...The constitutional experts are not in agreement...”

Source: Karem Barboza Quiroz, “Perú: “Esto no es un golpe de Estado (This is not a coup d'État),” *El Comercio*, 4 October 2019. <https://elcomercio.pe/politica/actualidad/disolucion-del-congreso-carlos-ramos-nunez-magistrado-del-tc-esto-no-es-un-golpe-de-estado-noticia/>

“Karem Barboza [interviewer from El Comercio] Q: Doesn't this seem like a coup d'État?”

Carlos Ramos Núñez [Magistrate and Director of the Center for Constitutional Studies of the Constitutional Court of Peru] A: No, it is not a coup d'État. It is a constitutional mechanism foreseen in the Constitution and that forms part of something very normal in the Constitution of '93, that is to reinforce the power of the presidency of the Republic. That is to say, it is not a creation of this government, it is a creation of the Constituent Assembly of the year 93.”

Source: Martín Higuera, “Se mantiene la incertidumbre en Perú ante una situación política inédita (Uncertainty continues in Peru in the face of an unprecedented political situation),” *Libertad Digital* (Madrid), 3 October 2019. <https://www.libertaddigital.com/internacional/latinoamerica/2019-10-03/se-mantiene-la-incertidumbre-en-peru-ante-una-situacion-politica-inedita-1276645727/>

“The confrontation between the Executive and the now ex-congressmen continues while experts debate the constitutionality of what happened...The most recent antecedent, and similarly a crisis with the Legislative Power of Peru, of the same magnitude as the current one with the decision last Monday of President Martín Vizcarra, dates to 5 April 1992 when Alberto Fujimori decided to dissolve congress. Nevertheless, although it has been a noted fact lately, there are few coincidences between the two moments, given that, on that past occasion, Fujimori did not take into account the conditions contemplated by the Constitution in order to take that step...Also, in that [1992] occasion, he did not convoke elections, which Vizcarra did with a date of 26 January 2020... The constitutional experts are not in agreement. What Vizcarra did was interpret the that the Congress had rejected a motion of no confidence requested by the then Prime Minister, Salvador del Solar, who did so to modify the method of election of the members of the Constitutional Court...”

Source: Juan Manuel Vargas, “Perú: Los militares respaldan a Vizcarra tras disolución del congreso (Peru: the military supports Vizcarra after dissolution of congress),” *RCN Radio and EFE*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.rcnradio.com/internacional/militares-respaldan-vizcarra-tras-disolucion-del-congreso>

The highest-ranking chiefs of the Peruvian armed forces met at the Palace of Government in order to give President Martín Vizcarra their support after the dissolution of the Congress by the President this Monday...a supreme decree announced that parliamentary elections would be carried out 26 January 2020, following the period established by the Constitution in order to resolve a dissolution of the legislature.