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## Argentina and Peru, two soft blows in favor of the US and the far right

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**Sources:** CLAE

*The impeachment and arrest of President Castillo in Peru has inescapable parallels with the media and judicial harassment in Argentina against Vice President Cristina Fernández, with the media, legislative and judicial persecution that deposed Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and led to the jailing of now-elected President Lula da Silva, as well as with the illegal impeachment of Lugo in Paraguay.*

The legislative coup perpetrated on Wednesday in Peru represents the bet of the elites to cut off any attempt to undertake the urgent institutional renewal that the Peruvian people demand and deserve and to put another obstacle to the possibility of rearming the process of regional integration.

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What occurred in Peru was a parliamentary coup d'état with military support that dismissed the rural teacher and trade unionist Pedro Castillo, arrested by his own head of custody and transferred to a barracks in Lima, to assume Vice President Dina Boluarte, who was not elected to that or any other position, thus betraying the popular mandate to join the coup.

Pedro Castillo was elected by popular vote with the promise of convening a constituent process that would put an end to the political chaos and allow to return a minimum governability to a nation that today is immersed in a kind of parliamentary dictatorship.

He knew that he had to take to the streets the people of the regions historically forgotten by the elites and the middle and upper classes of Lima, which with 35% of the electoral roll, had always defined who would be the President, to arrive at a new Constitution to replace the one promulgated by the dictator Alberto Fujimori in 1993. In Peru there is a unicameral Parliament, designed as a counterweight to presidential power, would give rise to a power capable of generating the necessary balances.

### **The OAS again**

But Castillo tried to govern, even with the rules of the enemy, triggering from that moment the impeachment process that ended with his imprisonment. In this scenario of ungovernability, the government invoked the application of Articles 17 and 18 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the OAS and requested his presence as a facilitator of the dialogue. The demand was met by acclamation and the OAS sent a mission made up of foreign ministers and deputy foreign ministers from Argentina, Belize, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Costa Rica.

The report of the High Level Group of the OAS (GAN) did not satisfy the opposition, since it pointed out that the media are concentrated in a few hands, lack objectivity and in some cases are destabilizing, and that there are sectors that promote racism and discrimination and do not accept that a person outside traditional political circles occupies the presidential chair. Nor did he like that the crisis of governability was attributed to the "civil war" between the executive and legislative branches.

The GNA proposed a 100-day truce and called for dialogue, but neither side agreed. Castillo appointed Betssy Chávez, a minister already censured by Congress, as president of the Council of Ministers to replace Aníbal Torres, seeking that Congress would deny her confidence when she presented her new Cabinet within a maximum period of 30 days. By refusing a second time, the Executive would be empowered to constitutionally dissolve Congress and call new elections.

But the game ended on December 7 with his announcement of the institutional breakdown. The OAS Permanent Council held a special session in Washington, in which its secretary general, Luis Almagro, called for dialogue and called Castillo's actions (dissolving Parliament) an "alteration of the constitutional order," and almost immediately, recognized Boluarte as the new president.

In the session of the OAS there were some voices that warned about the constant conspiracy that Castillo faced, and the government of Mexico communicated that it offered political asylum for the ousted president, who now awaits a criminal process, motorized by a judicial branch that also collaborated in putting him against the ropes, for trying to carry out a coup d'état.

### **Impeachment proceedings**

The Latin American right has replaced the bloody barracks and military dictatorships with campaigns of defamation and sowing hatred and panic, by the subversion and ungovernability induced by the call and by the legislative coups.

The conviction of Argentine Vice President Cristina Fernández de Krichner is a new chapter in the articulation in Latin America of the judicial, economic and media powers against popular governments as has happened in recent years.

To their impossibility of appealing to the Military Power as a disciplinarian as in the twentieth century they appeal to the other powers of the State. Now it is not only a question of proscribing Cristina and disqualifying her politically, but of dismantling a popular movement that they could not destroy in the past and surely will not be able to do so now.

### **Washington's Predicament**

Washington reacted by giving the green light to the coup d'état before it happened and celebrating it once consummated: when Castillo announced the dissolution of Congress, the beginning of an exceptional emergency government, the reorganization of the Judiciary and the Attorney General's Office, and the convening of a Constituent Assembly, the US embassy in Lima categorically rejected any extraconstitutional act to prevent Congress from fulfilling its mandate. .

And he called for reversing the attempt to close Parliament to continue the normal functioning of democratic institutions. On Thursday, the State Department praised Peruvian institutions and civilian authorities for ensuring democratic stability, or for following its soft-coup script. A State Department spokesman had already stated that he considers Castillo a "former president."

This "Democratic" U.S. government remains unflappable in its contempt for the sovereignties of other countries and in its belief that it has the power to dictate to the rulers what they can or cannot do. The worst thing is that there are leaders in our nations who follow these dictates to the letter. The parliamentary sabotage against the Castillo government was permanent in these 16 months.

This forced 60 cabinet changes in that span, which has removed three presidents in the past six years. Is the functioning of the institutions normal to refer to a political system that since 2016 has prevented the complete development of a presidential term and has paraded six presidents, with episodes as embarrassing as the five-day presidency of Manuel Merino or the swearing-in of Mercedes Aráoz without even allowing him to occupy the position?

The profound dysfunctionality of the current political system only favors the oligarchic right and Washington's impositions for the election of another corrupt president (seven of the last 11 presidents have been prosecuted for this office), or leaving the country in the hands of a Parliament with all-embracing powers, which would make it impossible to govern the country.

### **Blow by blow, verse by verse**

The impeachment and arrest of President Pedro Castillo in Peru has inescapable parallels with the media and judicial harassment in Argentina against Vice President Cristina Fernández, with the media, legislative and judicial persecution that deposed Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and led to the jailing of now-elected President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. as well as with the illegal dismissal of Fernando Lugo in Paraguay.

Moreover, it is directly related to the media and judicial machinations that preceded the coups d'état perpetrated against José Manuel Zelaya (Honduras, 2009) and Evo Morales (Bolivia, 2019).

There is a common denominator: they are all progressive leaders who have sought to reverse with varying success the social injustices suffered by their countries and the shameful submission to the policies dictated by Washington practiced by the oligarchies, the powers that be, the hegemonic press, when they manage to climb into political power.

Castillo's television political suicide was the final chapter a sort of slow-motion coup d'état that had been building since the moment the rural teacher assumed the presidency; whose purpose was to corner the ruler to make it impossible to exercise his office and prevent him from fulfilling the popular mandate he received from the citizenry.

In 18 months of government, Castillo could not carry out his proposal, which included the convening of a constituent congress and the deactivation of the Constitutional Court – because his management was systematically sabotaged by the right and the fujimorista and military ultra-right, in the legislative, judicial and media spheres.

The proposal for institutional reorganization was welcomed by 15 months of ungovernability, common in Peru in recent decades. That makes the management of the Executive unviable. The data leaves no doubt: since 2018, the country has had six presidents, several of them dismissed by the Legislative, and even prosecuted, for accusations (real or false) of corruption, which led to the suicide of former president Alan García.

The dysfunctionality of the institutions was exploited from the first day of his government by a corrupt, racist and oligarchic right that experienced as a grievance the arrival at the Government Palace of an indigenous trade unionist willing to apply a program of social justice, sovereignty and recovery of the most basic powers of the State in matters of economy. Perhaps with the naivety that he could carry them out.

The Peruvian ruling class could never accept that a rural teacher and peasant leader could be brought to the presidency by millions of poor, black and indigenous people who saw in Castillo the hope of a better future. In the face of constant attacks, Castillo became increasingly distant from his political base. He formed four different cabinets to appease business sectors, increasingly yielding to right-wing demands to dismiss left-wing ministers who challenged the *status quo*. He broke with his party, Free Peru, and was questioned by its leaders.

He asked the already discredited Organization of American States for help in seeking political solutions, rather than mobilizing the country's main peasant and indigenous movements. In the end, Castillo fought alone, without support from the masses or the parties of the left. And the OAS offered him a lead lifeline: it strengthened the parliamentary coup with the excuse of the misstep of the former president, perhaps suggested by the same destabilizing organization of America.

Even before the 2021 elections, the right and the pro-military ultra-right undertook a lynching campaign against Castillo, for which they made use of their media and their parties and all the positions of power they control, and did not hesitate to close ranks around the candidacy of Keiko Fujimori. daughter of dictator Alberto Fujimori, one of the most corrupt and repressive presidents in recent history.

Boluarte assumes the presidency without having a party that supports it, without a parliamentary bench in a Congress led by a repressive military, José Williams, confronted with what was his party and with a right that has already shown itself willing to do anything to defend its subaltern interests. Meanwhile, the clamor of the street remains the same as it has been for almost two decades: let them all go.

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