



# SPOT COMMENTARY

PGov- CWP/Intel

6 April 1992  
0630 EDT

## PERU: President Mounts "Palace Coup"

President Fujimori late last night dissolved Congress, disbanded the judiciary, and suspended the constitution, declaring a "national reconstruction" government; he plans to institute sweeping changes to fight the insurgencies and press ahead with his economic recovery program. Armed forces leaders and the head of the National Police have issued a joint communique supporting Fujimori. The President said his cabinet will draft new laws and, eventually, hold a plebiscite on a new constitution. (C/NF)

Military units have deployed in Lima to maintain order, and Army troops have placed congressional leaders and former President Garcia under house arrest. Press reports say the military has closed at least one radio station; another apparently has been barred from reporting opposition reaction to the coup. (C/NF)

Comment: Since his inauguration in July 1990, Fujimori has disdained consensus-seeking and consistently criticized Congress and other government institutions for corruption and for blocking his reforms. One spur for the coup may have been the Supreme Court's recent decision to exonerate the Sendero Luminoso insurgency's leader--who was being tried in absentia--for "lack of evidence." The economic recovery under way last year has stalled, and Fujimori probably believed a partisan battle with the legislature--which reconvened last week after a three-month recess--would block a quick turnaround. (C/NF)

Broad-based popular protests against the coup are unlikely. Recent polls show that most Peruvians disapprove of Congress; many undoubtedly also realize that Fujimori will crack down hard on dissenters. In the short term, the coup may paralyze policymaking in several areas, notably counternarcotics. If the President strengthens the military's hand in the counterinsurgency, human rights violations almost certainly will increase. It is unclear whether Fujimori intends to stay beyond his constitutional term in office, which ends in July 1995. (C/NF)

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