

No decision by Peruvian president on Maduro's attendance to Summit



Lima, March 28 (RHC)-- Peru's new president says he is going to leave the decision of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's attendance to the Summit of the Americas to top diplomats in his Foreign Ministry.

Martin Vizcarra, who had been Peru's vice president, abruptly became president last week after Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigned amid growing graft allegations.

Kuczynski had been one of Maduro's most outspoken critics, and barred him from the Summit that will take place in Lima on April 13-14.

Maduro vowed to attend the summit anyway, and his loyalists exulted over Kuczynski's downfall with a fireworks display last week.

But Vizcarra declined to weigh in on the dispute as he focuses on building support across Peru by promising to refocus the government's attention on domestic problems that had been neglected while Kuczynski struggled to remain in power.

After returning from a coastal region still reeling from severe floods last year, Vizcarra was asked at a news conference what he thought about Maduro's being banned from the summit.

"Our foreign policy is so delicate we must leave it in the hands of specialists," Vizcarra told journalists at the presidential palace. "The foreign affairs ministry is taking the corresponding decisions that we'll support."

The comment appeared to signal a more hands-off approach to foreign policy.

A spokesman in the foreign affairs ministry said its position of barring Maduro was unchanged, but noted that Vizcarra had not yet sat down to talk with top diplomatic officials.

Vizcarra promised a "completely new" Cabinet upon taking office on Friday, but has yet to name his foreign minister or other appointments. He said he would unveil his Cabinet next Monday.

Vizcarra said there would be no changes to the agenda of the Summit of the Americas, which will celebrate "democratic governance against corruption" in a host country where three out of the four past presidents are subjects in graft probes.

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