

Hillary Oversells Honduran Deal

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Several major news outlets reported this morning that ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya was returning to power. “Deal Reached in Honduras to Restore Ousted President”, [read](#) a *New York Times* headline. “Zelaya Set to Return to Power”, [said](#) the *Washington Post*.

However, experts on Honduras dispute this version of events.

“There seems to be plenty of misreporting on this initially... The [*Washington Post*] and some other places have reported that Clinton has said that the agreement says that Zelaya will return to power, but this is not accurate as far as I can tell,” said Ian Vasquez, director of the Cato Institute’s Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, in an interview with NewMajority.

“They’re reporting that it’s a done deal. My understanding... is that Congress will have to vote [on his return],” agreed Ray Walser, the Heritage Foundation’s Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America.

According to Walser, media outlets are “hastily reporting a deal which is still far more complex and fragile [than is being said].”

While Manuel Zelaya has [told](#) a Honduran radio station that “this [accord] signifies my return to power in the coming days,” the reality is that the agreement only concedes that Congress, in consultation with the Supreme Court, will vote on whether he can return.

It would be very surprising if the very Congress and courts which removed Zelaya from office would now vote to see him return. Indeed, Vasquez tells NewMajority that he “would bet against it.”

“There is a potential that this is really a victory for the Micheletti regime,” said Walser.

The United States and the Organization of American States were threatening not to recognize the outcome of Honduras’ coming elections if Micheletti’s interim government and Zelaya didn’t have agreement in place by Election Day. Now that there is an agreement between the two camps, Hondurans will be able to go to the polls on November 29th with a dramatically reduced fear that the international community will condemn the results.

The misreporting seems to stem from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s desperation for any sort of good news. This morning, Clinton [announced](#) that Honduras had overcome its “crisis through negotiation and dialogue.”

Clinton “is in Pakistan, with people blowing up bombs, and trying to lecture [Pakistan] on Al-Qaeda – the last thing on her mind is Honduras... there’s not much good news out there, so she wants a snatch at any little piece of [it],” said Walser.

The fact of the matter is that the situation in Honduras is far from resolved. For Zelaya to resume his former duties, the Supreme Court will need to convene and issue a non-binding ruling on the constitutionality of his return. Following this, Congress would embark on a lengthy debate on the matter, with the possibility of filibusters. As of now, there is nothing resembling a timetable for Zelaya to return to the presidential office.

One thing is certain – if Zelaya somehow manages to engineer a return, it will be a terrible blow to democracy in Honduras.

His return would be “a tragedy for the future of Honduran democracy,” said Abe Greenwald, a Policy Advisor at the Foreign Policy Initiative. “Any time that we step in on behalf of anti-democratic forces, it will come back to

bite us in the long run... We're showing people like Hugo Chavez that we have no interest in defending democracy.”