

García defeats Peru coup attempt

When, late in the day on April 4, rebellious Air Force commanders in Peru ended a two-day insurrection, Peruvian President Alan García had once again not only survived, but had come out strengthened against those domestic and foreign interests committed to overturning his nationalist economic policies. The commanders leading the insurrection were forced to back down, when they found no other military or political force prepared to join at this time, in a coup against García.

The failed rebellion exposed more than a dirty network within the Air Force. The events brought to the surface a broader array of forces—linked to the drug trade, the Socialist International, and “Project Democracy” in the United States—who have been preparing the ground for the overthrow of García.

The immediate crisis was triggered on April 2, when the government issued a decree firing Air Force Commander Gen. Luis Abram Cavallerino. During the previous month, Abram had visited foreign diplomats, military commanders, and leading political figures—from right to left—to organize against García’s government. Ostensibly, Abram’s efforts were directed at blocking the government’s proposal to create a single Ministry of Defense, subsuming the now-separate ministries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and thus centralizing intelligence and defense matters for more effective action. Abram’s campaign joined that of retired Army Gen. Luis Cisneros (interior minister during the initial build-up of the cocaine industry in Peru from 1976-80). Cisneros organized 157 retired military officers to issue a public statement opposing the defense ministry plan.

Abram’s opposition to the government went beyond the defense ministry question, however. In March, he attempted to sabotage García’s trip to Mexico, a trip which international bankers had tried to prevent for over a year. As García set to leave, Abram ordered Air Force Minister Gen. José Guerra Lorenzetti not to accompany the President. General Guerra remained loyal to the President.

When García fired Abram shortly after his return, Abram rebelled. Holed up with other commanders at the Las Palmas base, Abram put the Air Force on “Alert One,” and demanded that Guerra resign instead. At midnight, April 2, Air Force jets flew low over Lima, as a black-out cut electricity to the city center—including the presidential palace—an event tersely described the next day as a

“technical failure.” Armored cars, anti-aircraft weapons, and sandbags were placed to defend the palace.

“Those who dress in a uniform do not have the right to political opinion . . . much less the possibility of openly confronting the proposals and decisions of the President,” García told the nation, in a 45-minute television address the night of April 3.

Those who hoped to force García to reverse Peru’s policies on debt and domestic development, were again disappointed. In his speech, García announced that Peru will henceforth only repay 10% of its loans to the World Bank, citing the Bank’s imposition of conditionalities on its loans to Peru, and the fact that Peru has paid back more money than the Bank has lent. By restricting debt payments to national needs, Peru has accumulated \$2 billion in reserves, García said, thus assuring that Peru has enough capital to import needed machinery.

The President announced increases of 27-40% in the minimum wage, and in salaries for public servants and workers not covered by collective bargaining agreements. To boost production, he called for creation of a government credit fund for industry.

García’s appeal to the nation emphasized his military advantage. With 80% of the population supporting his presidency, any coup would be suicidal. Soon afterward, the Army and Navy commanders assured García that they would stand by him.

Reactions to the coup’s defeat revealed the broader plot. *Diario Marka*, a mouthpiece for Peru’s terrorists, bitterly attacked the leader of the United Left party, Alfonso Barrantes Lingán, charging that he had helped defeat the coup, and thus sold out the interests of the Left! The pro-terrorist *Kausachum*, a paper run by Project Democracy agent Augusto Zimmerman, called the firing of Abram an “offense” to the entire Peruvian military. (Zimmerman, an advocate of legalizing the drug trade, maintains ties with Project Democracy through the Democratic Party’s Ted Sorenson). The rabidly anti-García “right-wing” weekly *Oiga* joined the Left in calling the firing of Abram, “illegal.”

The coverage in *Caretas*, a weekly connected to the Israeli Mossad and former Prime Minister Manuel Ulloa, was more sophisticated. “Not This Way,” read the magazine’s cover after the aborted coup. Calling the Air Force actions a “trial balloon,” *Caretas* noted that García’s APRA party—heavily penetrated by the Socialist International—had remained strangely silent during the crisis.

On April 10, words of protest passed into action. A seven-man terrorist squad entered a popular restaurant one block from the Army’s Armored Division base in Lima, and machine-gunned the premises. Seven people died, and 25 were wounded.