

Andean Report by Valerie Rush

Peruvian terrorism . . . from within

García's ability to counter the terrorist scourge is seriously hampered by pro-terrorist forces on the inside.

In the course of just one day in Peru in late April, terrorists dynamited several departmental and local post offices, a radio station, a local city council office and courthouse, blew up a major high tension tower, set off at least one car-bomb in the central plaza of a city, assassinated three mayors, and dynamited and burned to the ground Peru's most modern cotton gin mill—the second largest in all of South America. On May Day, a 200-man column of Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) terrorists marched past the congressional building in the center of Lima, setting off dynamite explosions.

An "average" day for Peru, where, despite the strong commitment of President Alan García to wage war against this terrorist plague, the government has been hamstrung by a powerful pro-terrorist bloc inside the Congress, and by elements within the ruling APRA party itself that answer to the dictates of the Socialist International.

Exemplary has been the ongoing interrogation of the entire García cabinet by the United Left (IU) bloc of congressmen, where the stated purpose of the provocative grilling has been to bring about the "downfall" of the García cabinet. Interior Minister José Barsallo Burga, despite his relative ineffectiveness in waging a successful war on terrorism, was specifically targeted by the IU, and blamed for the alleged "militarization" of the country they claim has been carried out in the name of fighting subversion.

Behind the grilling of Barsallo, however, lies the real target: Deputy

Interior Minister Agustín Mantilla. Mantilla, an intimate of President García and a hard-line anti-terrorist, has been charged by anti-government forces with personally murdering five prisoners during the bloody 1986 prison uprisings by captured Shining Path terrorists. If Mantilla is forced out by the ensuing scandal, President García will have been stripped of one of his few remaining allies in the war against terrorism.

While the left hopes to use the terrorism issue to force the final emasculation of the García government, agents within the ruling APRA party like Senator Javier Valle Riestra have undermined the government's ability to resist such assaults by calling for open dialogue with the terrorists. Valle Riestra has consistently frustrated efforts to give the military a greater role in the war on terrorism, including preventing the creation of special anti-terrorist tribunals, and recently told the daily *Voz* that if the "militarization" of the country were to continue, "the leftist and APRA youth will march off to the mountains to join this cause."

At least one cabinet minister was not intimidated by the pro-terrorist barrage inside the Congress. When Transport and Communications Minister Gen. Germán Parra (ret.) arrived at the Chamber of Deputies, he succeeded in turning the tables on his would-be interrogators. Challenged to explain why his ministry had not made progress in building more highways and communications networks in the country, he pointed to the constant terrorist sabotage of such basic infrastructural projects. He then picked up

a copy of Prof. Friedrich von der Heydte's book *Modern Irregular Warfare* (translated into Spanish and published by the Schiller Institute), which identifies international terrorism as a form of irregular warfare, and proceeded to read to the assembled cabinet and congress from the relevant chapter on "sabotage operations," to explain his point.

Recent statements by Gen. Adrián Huamán Centeno, one of Peru's most prestigious generals and counterinsurgency specialists, reflect the anger and frustration of the armed forces at the government's failure to break out of the confines of legalistic and sociological debate over Peruvian anti-terror strategy.

General Huamán responded to a question from *Sí* magazine about whether the government was losing its war against terrorism, with the comment, "It is not necessary to be a strategist to realize that what is happening—and I'm not afraid to say it—is that we are daily worse because no one is doing anything worthwhile. The only thing being done is talk, talk, talk. . . . Some say that they are going to defeat subversion with the Constitution in hand. What are they going to do? Throw the pamphlet at their heads? It is like being thrown into the ring with hands and feet tied. If you don't do anything, and the other guy has a defined plan, he has to win."

Asked how the government should deal with the country's "emergency zones," General Huamán responded, "I think it is too late to speak of emergency zones. Sendero is all over the country."

An April 24 headline in the daily *El Nacional*, warning, "The Pope's Life is in Danger!" from a planned Shining Path assault during the Pope's May trip to Peru, suggests just how late the hour may be.