

# U.S. targets Peru's Armed Forces in bid to install a 'narco-democracy'

by Manuel Hidalgo

Peru underwent yet another bloodbath, when the narco-terrorist Shining Path called an "armed strike" for Feb. 14. In the name of "propaganda" for the event, Shining Path carried out a series of attacks throughout the previous week which led to at least 10 deaths, including the explosion of a car-bomb against the U.S. ambassador's residence in Lima, which killed two. On the day of the "strike," Shining Path blew up a military bus carrying 16 soldiers; 6 were killed.

One day after the strike, the country learned that a "selective annihilation" team of Shining Path terrorists had assassinated María Elena Moyano, the popular mayor of Villa El Salvador and coordinator of emergency food programs for Lima's poor. Months earlier, Moyano had organized protests when Shining Path had dynamited one of these "people's kitchens" and had begun to assassinate community leaders who defied them.

Shining Path's "people's war," which has produced 24,000 dead, 4,000 missing, and \$20 billion in losses since its beginning a decade ago, can only be compared to the deliberate extermination policies of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Shining Path controls nearly one-third of the national territory of Peru, according to reliable sources, and is close to capturing the impoverished slums ("belts of misery") which surround Lima. These sources say that Shining Path has 50,000 members and 250,000 sympathizers, and that the government, in open acknowledgment of its incapacity to stop this subversive advance into Lima, has urged slum dwellers to form self-defense squads.

In the face of this civil war in Peru, the policy of the Bush administration is *surrender* to narco-terrorism, disguised as a "democratic dialogue" with the forces represented by Shining Path and its terrorist sister organization, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). Washington seeks to impose upon Peru the same model it so recently used in El Salvador, where "dialogue" with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) led to a surrender of half that country to the narco-terrorists—with more to come.

If in El Salvador the farce was "negotiated" through the ready offices of the United Nations and its former secretary general, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, in Peru's case that role may

be performed by the same Pérez de Cuellar (now returned to Peru), or perhaps by the leftist machinery of the São Paulo Forum, led by Sandinista Daniel Ortega and by the Brazilian Luiz Ignacio da Silva ("Lula").

It is, perhaps, no coincidence that Peru has been chosen for this next laboratory "peace" experiment. The man who served as the U.N. mediator for El Salvador was Alvaro de Soto, brother of George Bush's favorite "free trade economist" Hernando de Soto. Hernando was until recently a top adviser to the Peruvian government of Alberto Fujimori, and heads the "informal economy" think tank known as the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), which has offices throughout Ibero-America, the largest being in Peru and El Salvador. The pro-drug and free trade prescriptions of De Soto's ILD dovetail precisely with the efforts of the Anglo-American financial establishment to install a "narco-democracy" in Peru, for which neighboring Colombia offers the first such model.

## Campaign to discredit the military

In both El Salvador and Peru, the precondition for the success of the "peace negotiations" is the destruction of these countries' defense forces. As the Bush administration has made abundantly clear, it prefers Shining Path to the Peruvian Armed Forces.

The first step in the campaign to discredit and then dismember Peru's military were accusations of violations of human rights by the one-worldist international human rights lobby. In mid-1991, a group of U.S. congressmen headed by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) asked the U.S. government to suspend anti-drug military aid to Peru, on the grounds of alleged human rights violations by the Peruvian military. That campaign was to increase in the following months, with a series of reports issued by Americas Watch, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), and Amnesty International.

To this campaign can be added that of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) of the Organization of American States. In September 1991, an HRC delegation visited Peru to denounce the Armed Forces. To gather material for their accu-

sations, they visited the prison cells of drug kingpin Reynaldo Rodríguez (a.k.a. "The Godfather"), Shining Path's number-two leader Osmán Morote, and Alberto Gálvez Olaechea, the leader of the narco-terrorist MRTA. Gálvez asked the HRC to consider the Tupac Amaru officially as a "belligerent force" which "respects the Geneva Convention" on warfare.

On Nov. 18, Amnesty International published an advertisement in the *New York Times*, accusing the Peruvian military of being the worst violators of human rights in the world. Since then, Amnesty has been conducting an international campaign to discredit the Peruvian Armed Forces. At the same time, the Peruvian government is going to be "tried" before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica, on charges of permitting extra-legal executions of prisoners. The "trial" is expected to indict a leading Peruvian military officer.

The U.S. establishment also seeks to blame the Peruvian military for the failure of its hypocritical "Andean war on drugs." On Nov. 11, U.S. Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) told the *New York Times* that the Peruvian military and police forces are "thoroughly corrupt," since instead of fighting the drug smugglers in the Upper Huallaga Valley, they were allegedly permitting the take-off of drug-laden airplanes from official airports. The same argument was used by Hernando de Soto as the pretext for his recent resignation from his drug advisory post.

The U.S. State Department has not hesitated to use the matter of military aid—and especially equipment and spare parts—as blackmail to force the government to pursue a "demilitarization" strategy. The initial suspension of U.S. military aid to Peru served to increase pressures by the State Department to get the Peruvian government to tie the hands of the military in the war on subversion. Defense Minister José Malca had to accept, among other conditions, the annulment of military judicial jurisdiction over human rights cases and the entrance of government prosecutors into the barracks and military detention centers. The military is also at a tremendous disadvantage on the legal front, in the face of the vast and powerful legal apparatus of the narco-terrorists, who manage to free subversives as fast as they are captured.

The suspension of U.S. aid has left the Armed Forces defenseless against subversion. When the Armed Forces last year asked Economics Minister Carlos Bologna for an emergency outlay of \$200 million, the London *Economist* reported last Oct. 12 that Peru could not afford the luxury of spending that kind of money and throwing overboard the austerity program imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Needless to say, Bologna denied the money, and then Defense Minister Jorge Torres Aciego was forced to resign.

The Fujimori government has refused to defend any sort of anti-subversive strategy, and has instead let spokesmen of the human rights lobby undermine the legal basis of a serious anti-subversion fight, with the argument that it needs

to be "demilitarized" and placed under civilian control. At the end of February, leftists and social democrats convinced the liberals in the Peruvian Congress to approve various modifications of the National Defense Law. The fight against narco-terrorism is now under the control of a Unified Pacification Command, largely civilian in its composition, and not under the Armed Forces command as before. The military has also lost its power to operate in emergency zones, again thanks to the human rights lobbyists, while President Fujimori has won the authority to choose military commanders, eliminating any and all institutional autonomy.

### **The scenario of a 'dialogue'**

At the same time, the campaign to legalize the narco-terrorist MRTA escalates. The argument offered is that, because of the bloodthirsty nature of the Shining Path, it is the Tupac Amaru which offers the best likelihood of following the path of the now-legalized Salvadoran FMLN or the Colombian M-19. From the leftist followers of Liberation Theology, to liberal publications such as *La República*, *Expreso*, and *Caretas*, there appears to be a competition as to who can best flatter the MRTA with offers of "dialogue."

The MRTA is playing its part to a tee. In September 1991, the MRTA bankrolled the so-called Free Fatherland Movement as its legal front, with a program for a "great national dialogue." The only problem is that this movement doesn't seem to be able to shake its terrorist habits, and has sought to impose its "dialogue" program by assassinating Andrés Sosa, an orthodox Marxist leader, and threatening other dissidents. According to the Lima daily *La República* of Jan. 27, the fight is "among those who seek to remain a small militarist and anarchic group, and those who pose the end of armed struggle and conversion to legal political action. A National Congress of the MRTA will soon define its path."

When former U.N. Secretary General Pérez de Cuellar returned to Peru in early January, the liberal press hailed him as "the great Pacifier," and he has already opened his doors to initiating a Salvador-style dialogue in Peru. On Feb. 10, his aide Alvaro de Soto was interviewed by *La República*. According to De Soto, still a U.N. official, the problem with Peru is that "its government is not prepared to have a dialogue while the armed groups are refusing to lay down their weapons." But he is hopeful that this will change in the future.

There are other contenders for the "great Pacifier" role. On March 1, former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega told the Lima press, "I am prepared to become an interlocutor between the Peruvian guerrillas and the democratic forces of the country. . . . As I participated in the El Salvador and Guatemala negotiations, so, too, would I be ready to make peace a reality here." Ortega simultaneously acknowledged that application of IMF and World Bank austerity prescriptions would need to be applied, as he applied them in Nicaragua, since "that is the only solution to the lack of financial oxygen."