

Is the spirit of Malvinas reviving in Ibero-America?

by Cynthia R. Rush

As three International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored “democracies” in Ibero-America have crumbled over the past eight months, with more certain to follow, spokesmen for the Anglo-American establishment are hysterically denying that there is any relationship among the three nations in question—Haiti, Venezuela, and Peru. Events in these nations have nothing to do with economics, they say; nor does opposition to Washington’s nation-wrecking policies extend across national borders.

This explains why a statement in support of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, issued April 18 by imprisoned Argentine Army nationalists Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín and Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid, was virtually blacked out of the Ibero-American press, as was a subsequent interview with Colonel Seineldín published in the April 27 issue of the Argentine magazine *Somos*. The colonel, a hero of the anti-colonialist 1982 Malvinas War against Great Britain, confirmed what Washington is desperately attempting to black out or distort—that its drive to destroy the institution of the armed forces in Ibero-America in order to impose its free market “democracies” is uniting military nationalists across the continent.

Somos reported that Colonel Seineldín was elated when he recently received a “fraternal greeting” from a representative of the Venezuelan “Bolivarian” officers who tried to oust President Carlos Andrés Pérez on Feb. 4. When asked whether his own movement of nationalist officers, known as “painted faces” or *carapintadas*, existed on a continent-wide basis, Colonel Seineldín responded, “Formally, no—but spiritually, yes. . . . The cultural, political, economic, and military crisis of the subcontinent means that honorable and dignified men like us understand each other ‘at a distance.’ . . .”

In the April 18 statement in defense of Peru, Seineldín and Breide elaborated further. The devastation of Peru is due to “the anti-Christian adjustment policy applied by International Financial Imperialism, combined with terrorism, drug trafficking, cholera, and corruption,” the two warned. If these policies are applied elsewhere, “they will irreversibly plunge the entire subcontinent into situations similar to those

in Peru or Venezuela.” Peru, they said, is a country “whose ties to us run so deep that they require no further comment. They are our brothers, because we have a Common Father: General Don José San Martín.”

Only Mexico’s *La Jornada* and Peru’s Radioprogramas del Perú covered the April 18 statement on Peru; a few wire services, *La Jornada* and Brazil’s *Folha de São Paulo* reported on the *Somos* interview. An Associated Press representative in Lima told *EIR* that his agency wouldn’t touch Seineldín’s statement, because AP “was only interested in violence.”

U.S. strategy repudiated

But this conspiracy of silence doesn’t alter reality. Venezuelan Army Capt. Luis Valderrama, a jailed member of the Bolivarian military movement in Caracas, told a reporter for the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* that while he lacked full knowledge of the *carapintadas*’ political philosophy, he was certain that Argentine and Venezuelan military nationalists were united in one thing—their rejection “of the policy toward Latin America’s armed forces preached by the United States in alliance with our misnamed ‘democracies’ which support the White House’s strategy.”

Repudiation of this strategy, which seeks to transform the continent’s armed forces into local gendarmeries which can be deployed for whatever purpose the Anglo-American establishment deems appropriate, has come from other sources as well. In statements reported in Venezuelan, Argentine, and Mexican press, Chilean Sen. Sergio Onofre Jarpa, a right-wing nationalist closely allied to Gen. Augusto Pinochet, charged on April 21 that the Bush administration seeks to “suppress Latin America’s armed forces . . . the Pentagon doesn’t want Latin America’s armed forces to exist; they only want police forces specialized in fighting drugs and similar things, so that [the U.S.] will be the one to impose order in the region.”

Recently retired Venezuelan Gen. Carlos Santiago Ramírez echoed the same sentiment in remarks made to journalist José Vicente Rangel April 26. He warned that the United States seeks to eliminate Ibero-America’s armed forces and

replace them with local police forces. Those who are now shrieking about a return of "militarism" in Ibero-America, are merely using that as a pretext to advance their attack on the armed forces, General Santiago affirmed. Such individuals "are traitors and should be tried," he said. The Venezuelan general also blasted President Pérez for breaking off diplomatic relations with Peru, and violating the country's traditional respect for the principle of "self-determination of peoples."

Psychological warfare campaign

In a desperate effort to save their hides, the backers of the IMF's "democracies" in several countries are waging a campaign of lies and distortion to portray military nationalists as everything from leftist terrorists to totalitarian coup mongers.

In Venezuela, political cronies and press organs controlled by the corrupt President Pérez have charged repeatedly that the jailed Bolivarian officers are linked to leftist guerrilla groups, and most recently accused them of planning to assassinate prominent public figures such as former President Rafael Caldera and intellectual Uslar Pietri. Video cassettes and leaflets calling for strikes and violent political action have been circulated in the name of the Bolivarians, on university campuses and other locations. The jailed leaders of the Feb. 4 movement have emphatically denied issuing such material, and charge that this is the Pérez government's tactic to try to discredit them.

These tactics may not have more than a short-term effect, however. Things have changed in Ibero-America since April 5, when Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori disbanded Congress and the judiciary, and announced that he would run the country himself with the backing of the Armed Forces. The President's bold decision turned on its head the Anglo-American gameplan of eliminating the role of the Armed Forces.

The April 25 incident, in which a Peruvian Air Force jet shot at a U.S. Air Force C-130 transport which was flying in an unauthorized zone, best exemplifies the change on the continent. The U.S. plane was flying 60 miles off Peru's northern coast and refused to identify itself or respond to warning shots or orders to land. When the Peruvians finally shot at the plane, three American crew members were injured and a fourth died when he was sucked out of the plane. While U.S. officials said the C-130 was on a routine anti-narcotics mission, the Pentagon was unable to explain why it was so far from the region of the Upper Huallaga Valley where it had been used for surveillance.

Peruvian military sources quoted by Reuters April 25 had a different explanation. One source reported that U.S. anti-drug planes frequently ignore local air traffic regulations, and fly in areas not covered by U.S.-Peruvian anti-drug accords. Often they risk endangering commercial air traffic. "They fly wherever they please," this source said, adding that "we have

complained on repeated occasions about this to the [U.S.] embassy." Other reports circulating in Lima are that the plane was found to be carrying drugs, which both governments agreed to keep out of the official accounts of the incident.

Normally, Ibero-American militaries would be reluctant to challenge any U.S. plane, even if it were violating a nation's laws and sovereignty, for fear of provoking an international incident. Not this time. Moreover, the incident occurred one day after the Peruvian Air Force took over the large Santa Lucía air base in the Upper Huallaga Valley, the center of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) operations in Peru. Fujimori has expressed regret over the incident, but has offered no public apology and clearly doesn't intend to.

Economic policy is key

The Anglo-Americans are terrified at the implications of what Fujimori has done. Forced to tread carefully on the military issue, they are responding by manipulating the Peruvian President in the area in which he is most vulnerable, economic policy.

The Armed Forces cannot defeat the Shining Path narco-terrorists or put the drug traffickers out of business as long as International Monetary Fund austerity policy remains intact. Knowing Fujimori's desire to hold together his shaky political coalition of disparate elements, Washington pressured him into keeping free market ideologue Carlos Bologña as his finance minister after he threatened to resign in mid-April. Local and international proponents of free market austerity threatened that Peru's "reinsertion" into the international financial community—allegedly Fujimori's grand achievement—would disappear if someone as "prestigious" as Bologña were to leave the cabinet.

As a condition for staying on, Bologña demanded that other members of the cabinet who disagreed with his austerity policy resign, and that the timetable for returning to "democracy," which Fujimori said would take one year, be considerably sped up. For the moment, the Peruvian President has agreed to at least some of Bologña's demands, and is sending him off to Washington soon to meet with representatives of the IMF and World Bank. A longtime associate of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), run by George Bush's favorite Ibero-American economist, Hernando de Soto, Bologña also wants Fujimori to agree to bring back De Soto, who resigned some months ago, as a chief adviser to the President.

President Fujimori has promised that there will be "not one step back" to the *status quo ante*. It's unclear how far he's willing to go, however, to maintain a political coalition that is untenable for achieving the goals he has set for the country. Even with Bologña in the cabinet, Washington is extremely nervous about Peru. After Central Bank president Jorge Chávez refused to resign, stating that he had to maintain the "autonomy" of that institution, Fujimori unceremo-

niously sacked him, and named career bureaucrat Germán Suárez as his replacement.

The U.S.-educated Suárez has long been associated with local and foreign financial agencies, but is said to be politically close to Fujimori and willing to work with him on economic policy. Chávez, who openly consulted with Hernando de Soto during the period his resignation was being demanded, had been attacked from several quarters for maintaining a policy of tight monetary restrictions, despite pleas for more credit from national industrial and agricultural producers.

Documentation

'Carapintadas' emerge throughout the continent

The following are excerpts of an interview with Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín, the jailed leader of Argentina's nationalist forces, the so-called carapintadas ("painted faces," in reference to the camouflage paint worn by combat soldiers). The interview appeared in the April 27 issue of Argentina's Somos magazine:

He renamed the military jail where he spends his days "Maria Magdalena Prison Camp," and from there he dreams of spreading his ideas throughout Latin America. The 80 *carapintadas* jailed with him follow him in everything: in long exercise sessions in the mornings, in prayer . . . and in lengthy discussions of the problems of the country, and of the world.

Mohamed Alí Seineldín devours newspapers and could not tear himself away from the radio when Col. Hugo Chávez attempted a coup d'état in Venezuela. . . . One of the most recent joys the colonel has received was the "fraternal Bolivarian greeting" sent him through an interview in the daily *Clarín* by one of the Venezuelan military rebels. Last Tuesday, the daily passed from hand to hand among the Argentine *carapintadas*, who received the "greeting" with great joy: They took it as proof that *carapintadismo* is an international phenomenon. That they are not alone.

Q: Nearly two years after the Dec. 3, 1990 uprising, what self-criticism would you make? What mistakes were made?

Seineldín: From my viewpoint, the reality that exists today is proof that I made no mistake in my reasons. The error I

made was in not having gotten out our ideals and objectives to the public first; had I done so, we would have been able to avoid the misrepresentations made by the government in presenting us as coup-makers, renegades, and assassins. The other error was in not having anticipated the disproportionate reaction of [President Carlos] Menem who, in the face of a bloodless resistance, ordered a slaughter, producing a useless and unnecessary bloodbath and so many innocent victims.

Q: Do you think there is a basis for a military uprising in the country now?

Seineldín: I am not an advocate of military coups, but it would appear—as the saying goes—that "necessity has an ugly face." In this sense, I would not limit the possibility exclusively to the military, since when a democracy prostitutes itself, betrays the popular mandate and fails to protect the common good, it is the people who "open a space," which is in fact what is naturally occurring right now in Latin America.

Q: Did you back the coup attempt in Venezuela?

Seineldín: We identified with the causes and motivations of Lt. Col. Chávez Frías, Arias Cárdenas, and so many others, who were and are backed—as is well known—by the majority of the Venezuelan people.

Q: According to trustworthy sources, just before that coup attempt, you received a visit from emissaries of the Venezuelan *carapintadas*. Can you tell us of what you spoke?

Seineldín: No, I never received anyone, but I am permanently on top of what is going on there. In any case, I would like to note that the four years I spent in Panama enabled me to understand the situation in the countries of the region, to analyze the future, and to cultivate friendships which I maintain to this day.

Q: Is there then a Carapintada International?

Seineldín: Formally no, but in spirit, yes. The serious cultural, political, economic, and military crisis on the subcontinent means that honorable and dignified men like we agree with each other "at a distance," in the same way that San Martín, Bolívar, O'Higgins, Sucre, Artigas, etc. did. . . .

Q: You say you are not pro-coup, and you say that all uprisings respond to institutional goals, but nonetheless your speeches are all political. How do you explain this?

Seineldín: It is one thing to be a coup-maker, and another very different thing to have concerns for the political situation of our Fatherland. As a military man and also as a citizen, I feel great concern over the great crisis afflicting the nation, and I say what I feel. The current situation in the Armed Forces cannot be viewed in isolation from the general context of the country. . . .

Conditional support for Peru's Fujimori

The following statement was issued by Colonel Seineldín and his associate Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid on April 18, and was made available to EIR.

It is inconceivable that, Peru having been the center of the Spanish vice royalties, where General San Martín conceived of establishing the heart of the *Great Fatherland*: the United States of South America;

That Peru, having been the brother nation which without vacillation and speculation supported us during the campaign to recover the Malvinas Islands;

That, even though the world is aware of the critical situation Peru is experiencing, the result of the anti-Christian adjustment policy applied by International Financial Imperialism, combined with terrorism, drug trafficking, cholera, and corruption;

Yet it is not understood that these circumstances will irreversibly plunge the entire subcontinent into situations similar to those in Peru or Venezuela.

We deem legitimate the measures taken by President Fujimori, backed by over 80% of the Peruvian population and by their security and Armed Forces, as long as they are a *brake* to the policies of genocide and misery imposed by the usurious plans of the international banks and the International Monetary Fund, and hysterically supported by the sinister figures behind the so-called new world order, and by the bombs of Shining Path.

Most painful in this situation is the incomprehensible attitude of the Argentine government, which continues to destroy our historical tradition of "respect for the self-determination of peoples," and trample on the concept of "sovereign nations." This takes on particular importance given that Peru is a nation whose ties to us run so deep that they require no further comment. They are our brothers because we have a Common Father: Gen. Don José de San Martín.

Can there be, after God, anything as sacred as the Fatherland? This is something which the lackeys and traitors to the "Ibero-American cause" can only understand with great difficulty.

The overwhelming popular support enjoyed by the Peruvian President shows us a different reality: the end of partyocracy. Liberal democracy has made this a cult, taking what was only a tool, and making it an end in itself, and thus losing the Republic. No longer does it represent anyone, no longer does it protect the Common Good—only corruption, complicity, and mediocrity.

We pray to God and his Holy Mother that the ominous inventions of Savage Capitalism, and the interference of the Left and the Right, may cease their assault on free and sovereign peoples.

Capt. Gustavo Breide Obeid

Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín

Santa María Magdalena Prison, April 18, 1992.

Chile: Reject the Bush plan

The following report of statements made by Chilean Sen. Sergio Onofre Jarpa, is from the Mexican daily La Jornada of April 23.

Former dictator Augusto Pinochet maintains that the government of George Bush seeks to eliminate the Latin American armed forces, and one of his spokesmen, Sen. Sergio Onofre Jarpa—who was his interior minister in 1983 and his ambassador to Colombia and Argentina—suggested the need to convoke the National Security Council to deal with this matter. . . .

Onofre Jarpa said that what really concerns him is Washington's intention of eliminating the militaries of Latin America and the Caribbean, turning them into a police force specialized in fighting the drug trade, or "something like that." He said that this would mean renouncing sovereignty, and added that "the Pentagon seeks the elimination of the armed forces of our countries, so that the Pentagon itself would be the only force with the power to impose order in Latin America."

Venezuela: Don't destroy the armed forces

The following is a paraphrased report of a television interview conducted April 24 in Caracas with recently retired Venezuelan Gen. Carlos Santiago Ramírez.

Gen. Carlos Santiago said that there exists an erroneous conception inside the United States—even before the coup attempt of Feb. 4—that the Latin American armed forces are anti-democratic, and charged that there existed a plan to eliminate them and substitute them with political forces, or a "gendarmierie." He further charged that there exists a contingency plan on the part of the Pentagon and the U.S. government, going back many years, for the eventual invasion of Venezuela for its oil.

On the first issue, General Santiago said that the most serious aspect is not that the United States wants to eliminate national armed forces, but that there exist many politicians who are backing these plans. He offered, as an example, last year's meeting of the Organization of American States in Santiago de Chile, where a plan was discussed for creating a continental military force; also at other meetings of regional leaders. He said that those who discuss a return to militarism in the region as a pretext to eliminate the armed forces, are "traitors to the Fatherland," and should be tried accordingly.

The other issue General Santiago raised was that of Peru, and he said that President Carlos Andrés Pérez's decision to cut off Venezuelan relations with Peru was stupid, and totally contrary to the Venezuelan tradition of respect for the self-determination of peoples. He said that President Fujimori has had the support of the Peruvian people since his election, and has always been supported by both the people and the Peruvian Armed Forces.