

Peru 'Truth Commission' Oversees Terror Revival

by Manuel Hidalgo

A column of more than 100 Shining Path narco-terrorists assaulted a workcamp of the Argentine company Techint on June 8, in the Ayacucho region of Peru, and took 71 workers hostage, several of them foreigners. The zone has been plagued by terrorists and drug traffickers, but the Alejandro Toledo government—imposed on Peru by Wall Street and the U.S. State Department—has withdrawn from many of these areas the counterinsurgent military bases that were established there in the 1990s. After conducting negotiations with Techint, Shining Path freed the hostages, walking away with undisclosed amounts of money, food, medicines, equipment, and explosives. This is the second major terrorist operation that Shining Path has carried out under the Toledo regime; the first was the car bomb that was exploded in March 2002, in the area of the American embassy in Lima.

Just two days before the mass kidnapping, Antonio Navarro Wolf, a former leader of the now-defunct Colombian terrorist organization M-19, and now a congressman in that country, took advantage of his invitation to Peru by its Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to greet his Peruvian colleagues in the terrorist MRTA, and its jailed leader Víctor Polay Campos. According to Truth Commission member Sofía Macher, in a June 7 interview: “Shining Path is not a band of criminals. It is a political party.”

This coincidence of terrorism and apology for terrorism shows that the Shining Path resurgence is no accident, but the consequence of careful and long-term planning. Although the kidnapping and ransoming of the hostages was a great propagandistic victory for Shining Path, this has not been its greatest triumph, but rather a gift from the Peruvian government itself. In the past two years, the Toledo government has freed nearly 500 jailed terrorists, under a ruling of the Inter-American Human Rights Court—in total, 2,000 terrorists have walked out of jail—and has annulled the trials of another 2,000 terrorists still in jail. As if this weren't enough, the so-called Truth Commission has begun an offensive to reinforce and revive two bloody narco-terrorist bands, Shining Path and MRTA, as “political parties,” with the argument of “reconciliation,” a strategy designed to ultimately lead to a general amnesty.

In April 2000, the LaRouche movement of Peru had warned in its newspaper *Solidaridad Iberoamericana*, that “If Toledo reaches the Presidency, Shining Path will take power.” In March of this year, they repeated the warning. The

Shining Path outbreak now must be seen in its context: The efforts by the Colombian FARC to extend its operations to neighboring countries like Peru; and the mobilization of thousands of coca-farmers from Peru's 14 major coca-growing areas, under the slogan, “No to coca eradication,” the same slogan that Shining Path raised in these areas since the 1980s. This is the biggest escalation in favor of drug legalization to be seen in recent years. And with all this, the Toledo government has drastically cut back the armed forces' budget, effectively making Peruvian society defenseless.

The Lie Commission

The Truth Commission was created in 2000 by the temporary regime of Valentín Paniagua, and its members were nominated in 2001 by current President Toledo. Members include spokesmen for the pro-terrorist “human rights” non-governmental organizations (NGOs), leftist ex-professors from the University of Huamanga, from the era when Shining Path chieftain Abimael Guzmán dominated that University, and personalities drawn from Jesuit networks around the Catholic Church. Against many protests, the Commission began with the backing of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Agency for International Development (AID) of the U.S. government, the British Council of Peru, and various European NGOs.

The Commission set to work pulling together public hearings for victims of violence. This by no means meant the families of citizens, police, and soldiers who were victims of the narco-terrorists, but rather families of the narco-terrorists themselves! This facilitated the regroupment of family members whom Shining Path have also considered an important part of their organization's support network, and who serve very specific functions. According to the anti-terrorist police, groups of Shining Path family members have since taken to holding gatherings outside the framework of the Truth Commission, with still unknown consequences.

The second step taken by the Truth Commission was to twist the arms of the political parties, with the threat of opening up investigations against them for “human rights violations” during the governments in which they participated. The parties acceded to participating in hearings throughout this month, where the main attraction was the showing of well-prepared videos of jailed Shining Path leader Oscar Ramírez Durand, and of MRTA's imprisoned Luis Cárdenas Schulte and Víctor Polay Campos, all declaring their “repentance” and readiness to participate as leaders of political parties.

In the meanwhile, the Toledo government is facing protests from a growing number of once-productive but now ravaged sectors of the economy. Faced with a general strike, Toledo imposed a state of emergency May 26, and ordered out the military; this done, his administration decreed, on June 16, increased taxes on public services and on fuel—all on the orders of the International Monetary Fund and Peru's creditor banks.