

U.S. 'human rights' barrage against Peru in defense of Shining Path

by Valerie Rush

The February release of the U.S. State Department's 1992 report on human rights in Peru has led to a renewed international offensive against that besieged nation, with the intention of forcing the Fujimori government to retreat from its successful campaign against narco-terrorism and from its defense of national sovereignty. Peru is being overtly threatened with the "Haiti treatment," that is, either it surrenders its sovereignty and returns to the "democratic" fold (in this case, through a negotiated surrender to narco-terrorism), or it faces financial, economic, and diplomatic strangulation of the sort today being visited on the starving nation of Haiti.

The most immediate objective of the State Department pressure is to force the Fujimori government to free retired Gen. Jaime Salinas Sedo, recently convicted and sentenced to eight years in jail for his role in a November 1992 failed coup d'état against Fujimori. Salinas is Washington's man; in fact, he himself has openly stated that he was convinced to try the coup by the State Department's Bernard Aronson, who was appointed assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs in the Bush administration, and is yet to be replaced by a Clinton appointee. Should Washington fail to secure Salinas's release from prison, it will find it increasingly difficult to get its military assets elsewhere on the continent to do Washington's bidding in the future.

In a Feb. 21 interview with the daily *La República*, General Salinas revealed that during his stay in Washington preceding the coup attempt, his mission was shaped by Aronson and others: "I became more sensitive to these matters. I spoke with Bernard Aronson. I spoke with other Latin American politicians. I realized that reasons of state cannot be the only rules of conduct. I was convinced that beyond these rules, there exist others such as respect for human rights."

Turning the screws

The State Department human rights report, which accuses the Peruvian Armed Forces of "a systematic pattern" of human rights violations, draws the bulk of its "evidence" from the claims of Peru's self-proclaimed National Human Rights Coordinator, described in the report as "a respectable and independent committee." And yet, according to highly

placed Peruvian sources, the National Human Rights Coordinator is run by one Pilar Coll, a former member of the Maoist sect Revolutionary Vanguard, which advocated "armed struggle" and from which numerous members eventually merged into the murderous Shining Path narco-terrorists!

It is with this "respectable and independent" terrorist support group that Aronson has maintained "a close working relationship," according to the Lima daily *Expreso*. Not surprisingly, immediately following Aronson's recent meeting with the Peruvian justice and economics ministers, at which he passed on Coll's complaints against the Fujimori administration, the National Human Rights Coordinator took out a full-page newspaper ad demanding that the government retreat from every inroad it has made in the past year against the terrorist support infrastructure which has enabled Shining Path to remain on the offensive in Peru.

The State Department report has been complemented by a variety of other official and unofficial pressures against Peru, such as a recent report of the "human rights organization" Americas Watch, which blames the Peruvian military for committing human rights abuses while waging war against one of this century's most violent insurgencies, or the U.S. press barrage against Peru retailing the same "corrupt military" line.

But the greatest pressures on this impoverished nation have been financial. After Washington, claiming to have "reservations" over Peru's human rights record, refused to join a "Peru support group" charged with putting together an urgent \$400 million loan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) canceled its Feb. 24 plans to consider approval of Peru's letter of intent and the release of some \$1.8 billion in World Bank-IMF loans. The IMF's approval was to be considered the green light for Peru's "reinsertion" into the world financial community, from which it has been ostracized since last April's move by Fujimori to shut down Peru's corruption-ridden Congress and courts, which were running cover for the narco-terrorists.

Respected Peruvian journalist Patricio Ricketts, writing in the daily *El Comercio* of Feb. 26, commented, "Let's not fool ourselves. The U.S. has not committed an 'error' with

regard to Peru. In arrogantly denying us, in the most offensive manner possible, and with great fanfare, a tiny loan, knowing full well the damage that could cause us at a decisive point in our negotiations with the IMF, the 'friendly' empire perpetrates a monstrosity. . . . Not content with [its blackmail,] the State Department justifies its defamation of the country and its institutions, especially the military and the police, with terms never used against a communist country. This is dirty war under the flag of pulchritude. . . . Shylock is worried about human rights."

Washington's decision to hold Peru hostage to its "human rights agenda" comes from Clinton's National Security Council. According to the daily *Expreso*, "Confidential sources have confirmed that the delay [in forming the Peru support group] originated in the National Security Council and the White House." And the NSC input, insists *Expreso*, comes from Richard Feinberg, Clinton's recent appointee to the council's Latin America post.

Feinberg, in turn, comes to the NSC directly from the presidency of the Inter-American Dialogue, a high-level think-tank funded by such establishment institutions as the Ford, MacArthur, Aspen, and Carnegie foundations, which first made a name for itself in 1982 by recommending "selective" drug legalization for the Americas, and whose latest project is called, not surprisingly, "Redefining Sovereignty." The Dialogue has long functioned as the behind-the-scenes agenda-setter of the numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the Americas. More importantly, it dictated the U.S. foreign policy agenda of the Bush administration vis-à-vis Ibero-America, and through Feinberg, continues to do so today from the inside of the Clinton administration.

Peruvian journalist Jorge Zuñiga Sanudo described to the daily *El Comercio* of Feb. 23 how, immediately after Fujimori's so-called "self-coup" last April, Feinberg "untiringly distributed press releases condemning the April 5 actions in the hours just before the ad hoc meeting of Organization of American States' foreign ministers."

It was to Feinberg that Peruvian justice and finance ministers Fernando Vega and Jorge Camet were forced to grovel in a two-hour session on Feb. 22, during which they reportedly had to promise that Peru would "ask the advice of the United Nations on human rights matters," and would throw open its doors to any and all international observers, from the International Red Cross to Amnesty International. They further promised to establish a permanent dialogue between the government and the National Human Rights Coordinator, which President Fujimori had earlier denounced as an openly pro-terrorist organization.

The Red Cross scandal

Another major pressure point against Peru has centered around the so-called Red Cross scandal. The alleged reason that the United States refused to join the "support group" for Peru, according to a Clinton administration source cited by

Expreso, was to punish the Fujimori administration for having permitted a secret tape-recording to be made of a September interview between International Red Cross medics and imprisoned Shining Path chieftain Abimael Guzmán. The interview was then leaked to and published by the anti-government magazine *Caretas*, triggering protests by human rights lobbyists and Clinton officials alike that the secret recording had "violated" the terrorist's human rights. Despite a public apology by President Fujimori for the incident, which he declared was unauthorized, the Red Cross has insisted on a written apology.

The special irony of Washington's protests over the tape-recording is that the U.S. Justice Department did the same thing, and worse, in its dealing with Panamanian prisoner of war Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. As *EIR* reported back in November 1990, Cable News Network had broadcast the contents of confidential *pre-trial* conversations between Noriega and his attorneys which had been recorded illegally by the U.S. government. Despite this gross violation of Noriega's right to a fair trial under the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the courts refused to order a mistrial.

The added factor in the Peru case, of course, is that the local chapter of the International Red Cross is notorious for repeatedly siding with the cause of the Shining Path narco-terrorists against the government. For example, when the Fujimori government took the rather obvious security precaution of restricting access to prisons in the wake of Guzmán's capture, the Red Cross in Peru issued violent diatribes against the government, rivaling those of Shining Path itself. *El Comercio* editorialized Feb. 25 that the Red Cross's "local representation has held a position which reveals an open partiality toward subversive criminals." This is not the first time, continued the editorial, "that an international agency supposedly interested in humanitarian aid and human rights, shows itself to be sympathetic, or partial . . . toward leftist extremists."

Virtually every State Department asset inside Peru has been activated to pressure the Fujimori government, prominently including *Caretas* magazine's Enrique Zileri, whose anti-government sympathies are as well known as his pro-homosexual proclivities. Zileri recently won a public show of support from the State Department's Aronson, following his conviction for slandering one of Fujimori's top intelligence officers, Capt. Vladimiro Montesinos. In a satellite television interview broadcast in Peru, Aronson brazenly intervened in internal Peruvian affairs by virtually demanding that Montesinos be fired. Asked by a journalist about Montesinos, Aronson replied: "I believe you are asking what role he plays within the Peruvian government, if it is legitimate, within the bounds of legality, dealing with intelligence matters, or if he is contributing to an environment or a climate of intimidation against journalists and attacks against human rights officials. In that case, [Montesinos] does create problems for Peru and is not helping Peru."