

## Who benefits from renewed South American border wars?

by Gretchen Small

Diplomatic efforts have put a hold on combat between Peruvian and Ecuadorian military forces as of Feb. 1, but the South American nations stand closer to full-scale war than at any time in decades. Estimates of those killed in the border fighting so far range from 31 to 50, and both countries are mobilizing their populations for war. On Jan. 27, the Ecuadorian government declared a state of emergency, called up its reserves and soldier-age youth, and imposed special war taxes to finance a special National Defense Fund. Peru has massed troops and equipment in the north, as Peruvian television broadcast shots of President Alberto Fujimori, meeting with military commanders on the northern front, in military fatigues.

The ramifications of the Ecuador-Peru conflict are not limited, however, to the potential disaster of war between those two neighboring countries. Two larger processes, both dangerous to the integrity of all of the nations of the South American continent, have already been set in motion by the conflict.

One immediate danger is that the conflict between the two nations could set off the chain of unresolved border conflicts between other Ibero-American nations, primary among them being Colombia-Venezuela, Peru-Bolivia-Chile, and Chile-Argentina. Such a "domino effect" has happened before in Ibero-American post-independence history. Already, the Chilean government has both sided with the Ecuadorians in its conflict with Peru, and reactivated its own simmering border dispute with Argentina.

The second danger, is that the conflict provides the pretext for the activation of ready-to-roll plans to impose, in the hypocritical name of "peace-keeping," supranational rule and the destruction of the national militaries upon all nations of the region, either directly by the United Nations, or

through the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS has been gradually transformed since the 1982 Malvinas War into the regional enforcer for the U.N.

In either case, no nation of Ibero-America stands to gain, no matter the particular outcome.

### Who benefits? The Mexican angle

Border skirmishes are not infrequent on the continent. Why did this one escalate so quickly to the point that one wrong step by anyone could bring on regional strategic disaster? The answer to that question, now being raised by many in the region, lies outside the immediate players and geographic area involved.

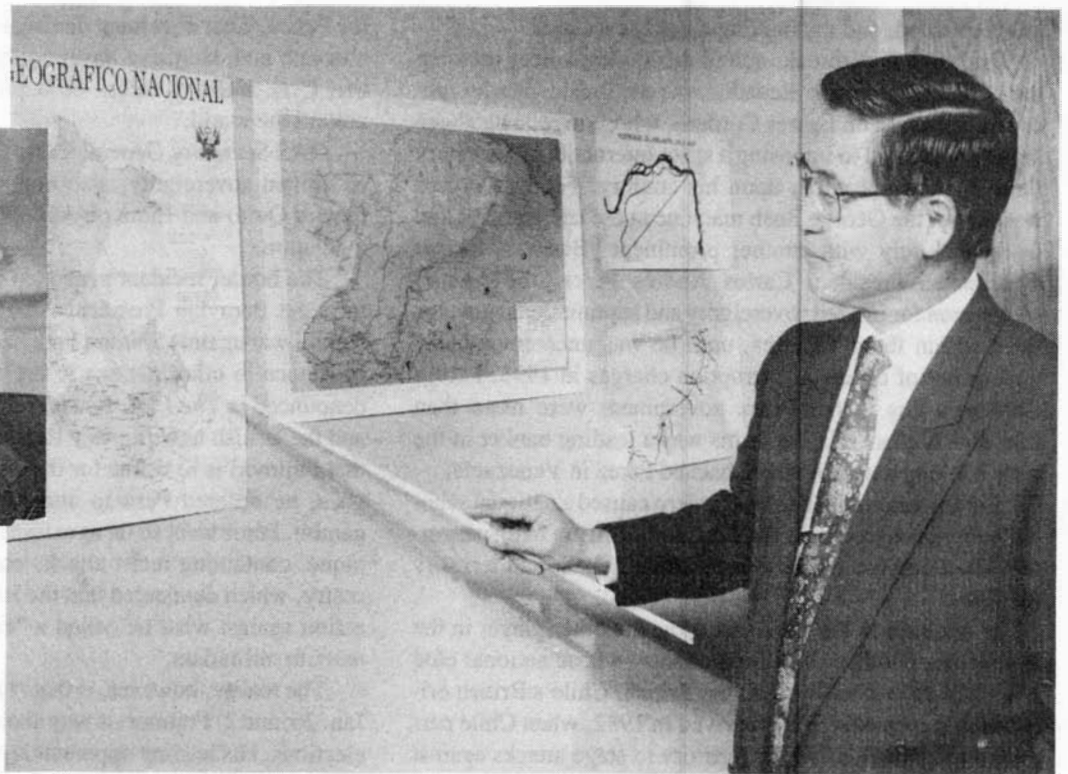
In a brief statement issued on Jan. 31, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA), which has adherents in every country of the region and identifies with the policy-outlook of Lyndon LaRouche, pointed its finger at the British Crown, whose agents have been documented to have fomented every border conflict in the region in the two centuries since independence. The MSIA charged that the timing of the conflict is the most telling evidence of whose interests stand to gain from it, and thus where responsibility must be put.

"The international financial and monetary system is completely disintegrating. The most recent symptom of this is the explosion of the Mexican monetary crisis which has shown the entire world, and particularly Ibero-America, that the much-lauded 'Mexican model' very simply doesn't work," the MSIA wrote.

"Faced with this, it's clear that the only reasonable solution for the nations of the region is the formation of a debtors' cartel to declare a debt moratorium, impose exchange controls, create a customs union and integrate their economies around several large infrastructure projects, as proposed in



*President Fujimori points to a map of Peru, which is bounded on the north by Ecuador and on the south by Chile. Inset: Ecuador's ex-President León Febres Cordero, who has built up the border "issue."*



1982 by U.S. economist Lyndon H. LaRouche in his famous *Operation Juárez*. There is no other sane response.

"Thus we consider it extremely suspect that the crisis between Ecuador and Peru has exploded at this very moment and is dividing Ibero-America at a strategic juncture when the debt moratorium alternative is already under discussion in Mexico. It's evident that these types of conflicts are encouraged in order to destroy continental unity. . . . Encouragement of border conflicts has been a favorite strategy of the British Empire," it charged.

The MSIA cited a 1993 book published by this news service, *The Plot to Annihilate the Armed Forces and Nations of Ibero-America*. The book, well-read in the region, warned that the international financial interests directing the plot to eliminate the nation-state altogether internationally, would seek to *foment* border conflicts in the area, only to then turn around and impose supranational structures in the name of "keeping the peace" afterwards. *The Plot* identified the British hand as the principal agency here, as well as several proposals already on the table for transforming the OAS into the agency for supranational rule.

Not surprisingly, the London *Financial Times* was the first since the Peru-Ecuador crisis began to raise the cry that the military of both countries should be made to pay for triggering the conflict. The voice of the City suggested that the problem stemmed from the fact that "neither government has been willing or able to undertake reforms to convert their armed forces into modern professional armies," the latter the

going euphemism for reducing national militaries to the status of adjuncts of the United Nations' growing international forces.

### **Local players, or being played?**

The last full-scale war between Ecuador and Peru was in 1941, a war concluded by the signing of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, which demarcated the border between the two countries, and established Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and the United States as the guarantors of any further border disputes. Some 78 kilometers of the border are still disputed, however, and succeeding Ecuadorian governments have disavowed the Rio Protocol, charging that they were forced to sign under duress.

As the Rio Protocol was signed on Jan. 29, 1942, tensions frequently rise around the time of its anniversary. Two clashes occurred between military patrols in the disputed territory in early January of this year. On Jan. 25, Ecuadorian President Sixto Durán Ballén announced that he was convoking a meeting of the Rio Protocol guarantor countries to hear Ecuador's charges that the Peruvian military had violated Ecuadorian territory. Within 24 hours, the Peruvian Foreign Ministry called a press conference to reject the charges, but welcomed Ecuador's acceptance, and activation, of the Rio Protocol as the proper venue for settling disputes.

Two hours later, Ecuadorian Army helicopters bombed a Peruvian border post, thus effectively overturning their President's convoking of the Rio Protocol group. The Peruvi-

ans responded, and the fighting quickly escalated.

Prior to this outbreak, one of the loudest voices pressing the border issue inside Ecuador was the President who preceded Duran, León Febres Cordero, whose regime had been largely dedicated to imposing a strict International Monetary Fund austerity program upon his country. Febres Cordero was part of the George Bush machine in the hemisphere, and worked closely with another prominent "Bushie," former Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, the leading spokesman for limited sovereignty and supranational government within Ibero-America, until he was unceremoniously thrown out of office on corruption charges in 1993. Febres Cordero's ties to the Pérez government were more than friendly: A close relative of his was a leading banker in the dirty banking network which backed Pérez in Venezuela.

Before this crisis, Febres Cordero caused a national scandal with his charges that the Ecuadorian Army had "permitted" the Peruvian military to infiltrate Ecuadorian territory for years.

In addition to Peru and Ecuador, the other player in the area in this conflict is Chile, a country whose national elite has historically been close to the British. Chile's British orientation was most recently revived in 1982, when Chile permitted the British to use its territory to stage attacks against Argentina during the Malvinas War.

Chile and Ecuador have traditionally been geopolitical allies, while Chile and Peru have a major border dispute dating back to the 1879 War of the Pacific. In recent years, the Chilean military has sold weapons and provided training to the Ecuadorian military, and in the current crisis, Chilean television has been retransmitting the Ecuadorian coverage of the conflict.

Most worrisome under current circumstances, however, is that Chile has adopted a renewed hard-line stance in its border disputes with Argentina. The two countries had submitted one contested area, the Laguna del Desierto, to arbitration by an Ibero-American committee last year. The arbitrators found in favor of Argentina last October, and this month, a binational commission, working with a Spanish geographer, was to demarcate the final border. The Chilean government announced at the end of January that it would appeal the arbitration, and would not participate in the border demarcation until its position was heard.

### **Ibero-American problem, and solution**

With the border issue now defined as the number one national issue, Ecuador's government has called upon the United Nations and the OAS to take the lead in resolving the conflict, ignoring the threat posed to Ecuador's own national sovereignty by bringing in these instruments of the global anti-nation-state plot. In a letter to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Ecuador's Foreign Minister Galo Leoro called upon the U.N. hatchetman to activate the peace-keeping mechanisms laid out in his 1992 document, *Agenda*

*for Peace*. That document declares outright that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed," and urges that U.N. military forces be deployed to areas of conflict around the world.

OAS Secretary General César Gaviria, another advocate of limited sovereignty, also hopped into the fray. Gaviria flew to Quito and Lima on Jan. 27 and 28, proposing OAS mediation.

The border incident provoked by Ecuador is being used to target Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, whose successful war against Shining Path narco-terrorists has inspired resistance in other nations to the anti-sovereignty schemas denounced in *The Plot*. Ecuadorian war propaganda, Pérez, and the British news agency Reuters are all pushing the line that Fujimori is to blame for the war, because, the argument goes, he ordered Peru to attack as a desperate reelection gambit. Pérez went so far as to issue a special Jan. 31 communiqué, containing racist attacks on Fujimori's Japanese ancestry, which demanded that the Rio Protocol countries take action against what he called a "criminal maneuver of *fujimorista* militarism."

The reality, however, is that: 1) Ecuador attacked first on Jan. 26; and 2) Fujimori is way ahead in the polls for the April elections. His leading opponent is one of the British Crown's favorite Ibero-Americans, former U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar. Ecuador, through its dangerous provocation, has de facto joined that lying international campaign to overthrow Fujimori and impose the U.N.'s man in Peru.

For the moment, the adamant rejection of U.N. or OAS involvement by Peru's President Fujimori has held the day. Fujimori announced on Jan. 28 that he would meet with Gaviria, but only to "inform him" of the situation.

Although Argentine President Carlos Menem also initially called upon the United Nations Security Council to take up the conflict, Menem has since deferred to the Rio Protocol group, of which Argentina is a member. Representatives of the four countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States) began meeting in Brasilia on Jan. 31, and will send observers to the border area in conflict.

Venezuela's government offered "to collaborate in any way possible to resolve the crisis," suggesting that the previously scheduled meeting of the Presidents of the Bolivarian countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama), to be held Feb. 2 in Venezuela, might provide a forum in which the Presidents of Peru and Ecuador could begin a dialogue.

In a communiqué issued on Jan. 26, Peru's Foreign Ministry noted that the outbreak of the border dispute contradicts the possibilities opened by the fact that this is "a time in which the hemispheric community is encouraging important projects of continental integration." It will only be from the standpoint of unity, defense of the sovereignty of all the nations, and large projects to build up the economies of regions, that such border conflicts can be peacefully resolved.