

Andean Report by Mark Sonnenblick

Peru doesn't have to lose cocaine war

The Catholic Church and some military and political factions are resisting the surrender to narco-terrorism.

Peru is being destroyed as a sovereign nation by the idea that it is "too poor" and "too dependent on the cocaine industry" to eradicate it. When Alan García became President in 1985, he rallied his nation to fight drugs, usury, and communist terror. The drug mafia was hit hard. If he does not soon resume the moral initiative, Peru will be destroyed.

Peru has stopped coca bush eradication. Prime Minister Guillermo Larco Cox cynically suggested that the United States should buy the coca leaf crop. President George Bush equally cynically stated on Nov. 1 that the Andean countries, the front line in the cocaine war, could only get U.S. aid "to encourage and support fundamental economic reform in the countries of the region on the basis of market-driven policies." Such policies are precisely what has facilitated drug trafficking.

García is doing just what Bush demanded. In the next few months, Peru will take investments in exchange for relief on its foreign debt, open up free ports, and host an International Monetary Fund mission.

The García government's cutting farm subsidies is "contributing to the propagation of narco-terrorism," a faction of his own APRA party charged. In an Oct. 24 newspaper ad, the Cultural Association for the Social Protection of Youth and the Population demanded "a radical change in our agrarian policy." It urged Peru to join "the total war on drug trafficking" declared by "our sister Colombian republic."

García's policies caused econom-

ic output to drop 20% in the past year. Poverty and misery are ubiquitous. A senior Bush administration official admits, "This country is in the middle of an economic crisis" and "doesn't have the money" to stop a 20% increase in coca production this year. The politicians—from left to right—conclude that Peru needs the \$3 billion brought in yearly by cocaine exports. But an *EIR* study has demonstrated that Peru's dependence on coca dollars caused rather than alleviated the economic collapse.

The war on drugs has ground to a halt. Gen. Alberto Arciniega, army commander in the major coca zone, argues, "Most of my troops come from this area. In effect, the police were wiping out their families' livelihood while I was asking them to fight the Shining Path [terrorist gang], which was sworn to protect growers. Shining Path looked like heroes. It was a crazy idea."

The Bishops Council of the Catholic Church condemned the politicians in the United States and Peru hankering for "dialogue" with narco-terrorists and legalization of drugs. It demanded "radical action against the cocaine traffickers and the corrupt civil and police authorities implicated by omission or commission in the perverse drug trade." It noted that the terrorists "ally with the heads of the drug trade, to expel civil and police authorities from the zones where they operate. In exchange for protection and services given their business, the drug traffickers supply the terrorist groups with weapons, money, food, and transport."

Shining Path called an "armed strike" for Nov. 3 and is well on its way to disrupting the Nov. 12 municipal elections. Over 60 candidates and office holders have been assassinated in the past month. Hundreds of others have quit in the face of death threats. Security sources say the terrorists could prevent elections in a third of Peru's territory.

"Tell Luis Vásquez we will put a bomb in your offices at any moment," an anonymous caller to the offices of the Peruvian Labor Party threatened on Oct. 17. Vásquez, Secretary General of the PLP, is an associate of American statesman Lyndon LaRouche. Since the Colombian government went to war against the drug cartel in August, the Labor Party has been campaigning for Peru to do the same.

Two weeks before, PLP organizers had found painted on their office door, "Death to Informers—Shining Path," and a hammer and sickle. Later, the telephone lines in the office of the PLP were suddenly disconnected. Telephone company technicians reported there had been "an act of sabotage, deliberately disconnecting the lines."

Retired military officers have issued a call for immediate action to save Peru while it is still possible. "President Alan García [must] make the political decision . . . to combat terrorism before it is too late," the Association of Retired Armed Forces Officials demanded in an Oct. 17 release. Peasants, local officials, and members of the Armed Forces and police are being massacred, while the Military High Command and politicians look out for "their personal political interests," they charged.

The retired officers blasted the "cowardly attitude" of the military brass, which sends soldiers to battle without equipment.