

## Andean Report by Cynthia Rush

### Fujimori takes a step back

*In his Independence Day speech, the Peruvian President let the enemy define his agenda toward the terrorist threat.*

Peruvian citizens were hoping that when President Alberto Fujimori addressed them on July 28, national Independence Day, he would present them with a tough strategy for combatting the murderous Shining Path narco-terrorists. The group, which models itself on Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, had just subjected the capital city of Lima to two days of savage car bombings, fires, and sniper attacks—an "armed strike"—July 22-23. Fourteen people died and hundreds more were wounded. This came on the heels of the July 16 car bombing in the Miraflores section of Lima which devastated a four-block area, killed 30, and also wounded hundreds.

Unfortunately, Fujimori did not live up to expectations. On July 24, he had announced several tough measures to combat terrorism, including equating subversion with treason, subjecting terrorists to military trials, and imposing strict controls on the sale and distribution of chemicals used by Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) for building bombs. In his July 28 speech, however, Fujimori let Peru's enemies in the U.S. State Department and self-proclaimed "human rights" lobby define the agenda, rather than providing the leadership the country needs.

In a two-and-a-half-hour speech, in which observers described him as nervous and rambling, Fujimori bent to those who demand a return to "democracy" in Peru, by which they mean letting terrorist sympathizers in Congress make policy, and ensuring that the International Monetary

Fund's austerity policy remains intact. Fujimori shut down the Congress on April 5, charging its members with corruption and abetting subversion. But in his speech, he acceded to pressures, promising that elections for a Constituent Assembly would be held on Nov. 22, and that municipal elections would follow in February 1993.

Worse, Fujimori praised Amnesty International and Americas Watch, the two human rights groups whose reports claim that Peru's Armed Forces are worse violators of human rights than Shining Path. Their most recent reports were better, the President said, because they acknowledged the terrorists' crimes as well.

This Andean nation is struggling under conditions of total warfare. Shining Path continues to announce armed strikes in several cities in the interior, and brutally murders or terrorizes those who violate its orders. Internationally, the country is cut off from financial and military aid and is under extraordinary pressure—especially from the Bush administration—to return to "democracy."

Under these siege conditions, anything less than total mobilization in defense of the nation-state and its institutions, and firm emergency measures in both the military and economic realms, provides dangerous openings to those who want to see the Peru wiped off the map.

Already, in the immediate aftermath of the speech, press and leading politicians attacked Fujimori for failing to announce any new measures, and limiting himself to defending his

"self-coup" of April 5. Manuel D'Ornelles, editor of *Expreso* newspaper, which is owned by the oligarchic former prime minister Manuel Ulloa, wrote on July 29, "The President's credibility has been strongly eroded."

This is the line retailed by such U.S. agents as former presidential adviser Hernando de Soto, and pornographer Mario Vargas Llosa, who has publicly called for eliminating the Armed Forces altogether. De Soto, a key asset in the Washington-based Project Democracy apparatus, told the London *Financial Times* that "the Fujimori coup has done Sendero a favor. By destroying the credibility and legitimacy of government, he's left a political vacuum which Sendero is ready to fill. This requires a political, not a purely military response." De Soto insists that subversion can only be fought by reestablishing the brand of "democracy" Washington demands. The Aug. 3 *Newsweek* quotes De Soto warning, "The moment [Fujimori] falters and loses credibility, the whole system collapses."

Any concessions to the forces intent on dismantling the Peruvian state causes great nervousness among the Armed Forces. Reportedly, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction among the military leadership with the content of Fujimori's speech.

Also, according to several press sources, there is a generalized discontent among the Armed Forces over the state of penury they are forced to endure, with no increases in budget or wages. An article published by the Lima correspondent of the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* July 28 reported that middle-level officers of the Peruvian Armed Forces are unhappy with Fujimori's actions and particularly critical of his anti-subversive policy. The author likened this discontent to that expressed by nationalist army officers in Argentina and Venezuela.