

Andean Report by Gretchen Small

U.S. demands Guzmán be freed

State Department officials are traveling to Peru to demand that the Shining Path trials be overturned.

Even as Shining Path's narco-terrorist allies opened a second front in the Americas in Chiapas, Mexico, the Clinton administration escalated the U.S. campaign, begun by the Bush administration, to stop the one anti-terrorist war in the Americas which has had dramatic success: Peru's war against Shining Path.

During a January visit to Peru, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Alexander Watson and National Security Council adviser Richard Feinberg demanded that Peru eliminate the extraordinary military justice system which has sent hundreds of narco-terrorists off to jail, and that all trials of those already sentenced be overturned. Such an act would return Peru to the days when terrorized civilian judges freed terrorists as fast as the Army and police arrested them.

President Alberto Fujimori rejected this latest demand out of hand. Following a two-hour meeting at the Presidential Palace with Watson on Jan. 20, Fujimori informed the press that Watson had requested that his government order civilian courts to review all sentences handed down by military courts against terrorists, including that of Shining Path mastermind Abimael Guzmán, currently serving a life sentence.

"This is a risk which I cannot accept, and I think that judges in the United States would also not accept it. If this happened, most likely Abimael Guzmán would go free, with other terrorist criminals, under the argument that no evidence exists. The suggestion cannot be accepted," said Fuji-

mori angrily.

Until terrorism is entirely defeated, Peru will continue to try terrorists in military courts with anonymous judges, and keep its other emergency measures, Fujimori said, even if this means the United States won't release \$105 million in promised aid. Five terrorist attacks alone do \$105 million worth of damage, he noted.

Peruvian officials had hoped that Watson's visit signalled that the Clinton administration was breaking with the insane strategy initiated by the Bush crowd of isolating Peru for its decision to save the country from what Fujimori rightly called "a Latin American Cambodia," a narco-terrorist assault which has left over 26,000 people dead and inflicted some \$25 billion of damage to the economy in 12 years of war.

With defeated terrorists surrendering to authorities by the hundreds (110 turned themselves in during January in the Alto Huallaga area alone), the time had come for those in Washington who screamed that harsh anti-terror measures would fail, to admit they had been wrong.

This did not occur. From his arrival in Peru on Jan. 18, Watson attacked as "regrettable" Fujimori's decision to put Peru on a war-footing against terrorism on April 5, 1992. The U.S. delegation met first, not with government officials, but with the National Human Rights Coordinator, a group which defends the terrorists. The government had invited the delegation to visit Ayacucho, to see for themselves how the government has restored peace in the province where Shining

Path once imposed its terror at will. They refused, and instead held an unscheduled meeting with leaders of a gaggle of opposition parties, all of which oppose the anti-terror fight.

Peruvians were outraged. "Never in memory has there been such patronizing behavior between the U.S. and Peru," wrote *Expreso*, a newspaper usually eager to support U.S. initiatives. *Expreso* noted, as did many in Lima, the irony that it is the "ex"-Marxists running Peru's human rights groups who are fawning over U.S. officials these days; "traditional antagonists of U.S. presence in Peru" follow U.S. orders, "old socialists . . . who didn't think twice about changing Moscow for Washington."

The Catholic Bishop of Ayacucho, Juan Luis Cipriani, warned that the U.S. government is basing its actions on "totally biased information." While U.S. officials speak only of human rights violations, "never before has such hope and optimism been seen as there is today," now that terrorism is being defeated. "I admire the American people, but I ask a little more humility and respect toward the Peruvian people," Cipriani told *El Comercio* Jan. 20.

In his column Jan. 24, a dean of Peruvian journalism, Patricio Ricketts, asked: "Why and by whom was the U.S. government disinformed and disoriented?"

Some Peruvian papers suggested that the architect of this U.S. debacle was Feinberg, the former president of the Inter-American Dialogue, the pro-drug bankers' lobby which has much of the U.S. Congress and the Executive branch marching to its tune. Feinberg was not initially included in the delegation, the Peruvian press noted, but he moved in at the last minute. Pro-terrorist "human rights" activists have been warning that not all in Washington agree with the current policy.