

Right Celebrates 'War of Pacific'

Chile and Peru Assert Mutual 'Preparedness' For Replay of 1879-81 Conflict

In a ceremony commemorating officers killed in two battles during the bloody 1879-81 "War of the Pacific" between Peru and Chile, the director of Chilean Military Intelligence, Hector Orozco, proclaimed: "If we are obliged to put down the spade and the plow to pick up the saber and rifle, let it be known right now that we will begin the march to the hour of combat and we will wage the war until the aggressor who dares disturb the peace of our Chile falls."

Orozco's Jan. 13 warning—the most bellicose declaration issued by a Chilean official during four months of rising tension in the southern cone—is unmistakably aimed at Peru, which is being portrayed as the "aggressor" in the Trilateral Commission's media campaign to provoke a second War of the Pacific. The latest scare story to ricochet across the continent was issued by the reactionary Cuban exile weekly *Zeta* in Venezuela, which alleged that the Chilean Navy three months ago sank a Peruvian submarine carrying Soviet and Cuban crew members!

"Be Prepared"

The Peruvian Army answered Orozco two days later with a plethora of pledges that Peru would uphold its territorial integrity against any threat. During a Jan. 15 commemoration of the same 1879 war battles which marked Peru's definitive defeat and the Chilean occupation of Lima, military and civilian officials alike stressed the need to "be prepared" and "to be united around the national banner."

"We are not warhawks nor will we be aggressors," one civilian speaker declared, "but we are ready to defend the sacred interests of Peru, mixing our blood with the blood of the Peruvian soldiers (who lie) fallen in this Sanctuary of Heroism."

Similar rumblings, directed at Chile, are coming from the more chauvinistic Argentine press. The daily *Clarín* two days ago, responding in the fashion predicted by Rand Corporation computers, branded Chilean dictator Pinochet's trip to Antarctica to stake a claim as a challenge to Argentine claims on the south pole. "Given the tensions" between Chile and Peru—Argentina's traditional geopolitical ally against Chile-Brazil axis—the daily asserted, Pinochet's trip assumes a "strategic importance."

Ecuadorian Rightists Feed War Scenario

The rightist Ecuadorian military junta used the occasion of the Jan. 13 anniversary of the overthrow of former nationalist president Gen. Rodriguez Lara to unveil new "national objectives" and a "national strategic concept" for that country. The five objectives include "tight internal security," "national defense," and "defense of territorial integrity," the latter an implicit reference to Ecuador's renewed territorial claims on Peruvian jungle territory.

The policy speeches by junta president Vice-Admiral Alfredo Poveda, and by the Foreign and Interior Ministers, cements the right-wing political turn from a commitment to social and economic progress — modelled in large part on the 1968 Peruvian Revolution — to establishment of a national security regime characterized by severe austerity, mounting internal repression, an "open door" to foreign investment, and territorial revanchism. As in Peru, the domestic economic and political "Chileanization" of Ecuador has occurred hand-in-glove with the rediscovery of ancient, Rand Corp. profiled "border hostilities."

"Everything dealing with National Security has had essential priority," Poveda declared, "we have not forgotten that an internally united State is internationally strong, and as a result, respected." He announced that the "armed forces are the guarantee of internal tranquility and external security...Therefore, we are strengthening them so that they can carry out their functions in the most adequate manner."

The Ecuadorian right wing has used the threat of war with Peru to deliver the final coup-de-grâce to its radical nationalist military opposition, whipping vacillating senior officers behind the junta's military purges. The Foreign Minister, and Poveda less explicitly, compared Ecuador's territorial claims to the longstanding Panama Canal Zone and Bolivian sea access disputes on the Latin American continent. The Ecuadorian decision to dispute territory has no legal basis whatsoever, having been settled 35 years ago after a short war and a treaty signed by both Peru and Ecuador.

The militant Ecuadorian Communist Party (PCE) charged in the latest edition of its weekly *El Pueblo* that the United States is fomenting military conflicts on the continent to destroy the potential for social and economic development. The U.S. is trying to set off a Peru-Chile war, the PCE paper stated, through constant media speculation "of imminent warfare" between the two nations. The party identified sabotage of any increase in relations between Latin American nations and the Soviet Union as an important additional aim of U.S. policy.