

United Nations by McFadden

Peru sets the agenda

The U.N. is celebrating its 40th anniversary, and Peru's fight on debt and drugs guarantees that this will be a hot one.

Because they are operating on the basis of will and action, rather than engaging in the interminable talk and "consensus politics" typical of United Nations gatherings, the delegation and leaders of Peru have become the epicenter of the U.N.'s current fall session. Of the three major issues which will define the events around the U.N.'s Oct. 21-24 fortieth anniversary commemorative period—debt, drugs, and the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative—Peru has established the terms of debate on debt and drugs.

Peruvian U.N. Ambassador Carlos Alzamora, following his successful effort at the U.N. Group of 77 meeting on Oct. 4 to force through a strong declaration on the international debt crisis (see page 8), took the fight against the International Monetary Fund to the U.N.'s Economic and Financial Committee. Speaking at the same time that U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker was trying to sell the Third World a batch of snake oil at the IMF meeting in Seoul, Alzamora exposed such maneuverings as a "fiction," a tactic for evasion and delay. Alzamora characterized the U.S. effort to shift away from the politically discredited IMF to a reconstituted World Bank, as nothing more than a "change in tactics."

Alzamora described how the looting of the Third World by the international bankers had caused the famous U.N. Decade for Development to work in reverse. In stark terms, he documented that the debt originally contracted by the Third World had already been paid many times over, and

that, for a nation like Mexico, its interest payments alone imposed a burden two-and-a-half times greater than the September earthquake.

This injection of economic reality into the normally impotent dronings of the so-called Second Committee, prompted a verbal shootout between the spokesmen for the United States and the Soviet Union, both of whom stood exposed by Peru's accusation and both of whom tried to point the finger of blame elsewhere.

U.S. representative Kyle Scott objected that, while the use of such phrases as "pound of flesh" might be "emotionally satisfying," they added nothing to the discussion, since the Third World had gotten into debt "voluntarily." Soviet representative V. A. Zvodin jumped in to try to blame the debt crisis on the "imperialist West," defensively arguing that the reason for the meager Soviet role in developing the Third World was the burdens imposed upon it by the "arms race"—which, of course, was the fault of the West.

Because of Peru's uncompromising fight against the international banks, the Soviet Union has been forced to try to cover for its own closet support for the IMF, by throwing Cuba's Fidel Castro into the fray. All indications are that Castro will make an appearance at the commemorative 40th anniversary session of the U.N., in an effort to take the lead on the debt fight. However, just as most debtor nations' delegates see through James Baker's transparent non-proposals, so do they see the fraud of Castro and his

Soviet masters.

Further indications of how hot Peru has made the debt issue are the reports that Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid will attend the commemorative session. He had canceled his General Assembly address because of the earthquake, and early reports had it that he would not come for the commemorative session. But with the debt issue placed squarely on the agenda by Peru, the political and economic fireworks promise to accelerate.

Peruvian President Alan García's challenge to the other nations of the world to join with his country to stamp out drug production, trafficking, and consumption, has established a standard of international action on the drug fight. Mrs. Nancy Reagan now intends to convene a second "First Ladies Summit" on drugs on Oct. 21, in New York City, to take advantage of the presence of other nations' first ladies. It appears that many wives of Ibero-American heads of state will attend, even if their husbands are not attending the commemorative session.

The key question now is whether the United States will orient toward Peru's shooting war against coca producers or toward the newly publicized Bolivian call for the creation of an international coca monopoly! Many diplomats at the U.N. were taken aback by the speech of Bolivian Vice-President Julio Garrett Aillone, who said that Bolivia, because of impoverishment, was unable and unwilling to stamp out coca production, and called for the consumer nations to buy up the coca leaves. Even more startling was President Reagan's letter to the Bolivian government, praising it for submitting to an IMF austerity program—an austerity program which in fact necessitates illegal drug production.