

Andean Report by Valerie Rush

Fighting the war against terrorism

Peru's tough new law is a lesson in waging war to liberals and the weak-hearted.

West Germany's government recently halted extradition of the murderous Mohamed Ali Hamadei to the United States—fearfully citing his possible execution under U.S. law as the reason. The U.S. administration is itself up to its neck in "Irangate," the result of secret dealings with terrorists. Both countries, and the many others who have watched the wrecking of their national institutions by terrorists, could learn something from Alan García's Peru, which just passed an anti-terrorism law with teeth.

Since taking office in July 1985, the García government has been besieged by the combined offensive of the international banks abroad, and terrorist butchers like the Shining Path at home. Fully aware that Peru is a nation at war, President García has responded in kind, with measures designed to expose and neutralize the forces—above and below ground—who are aiding and abetting the terrorist enemy.

The new law, whose eight articles addressing "the crime of terrorism" were added to the Peruvian Penal Code under congressional approval, includes the following points:

- A jail term of no less than 18 years for any member of a terrorist organization or individual who participates in a terrorist act against persons, or public or private property, or anyone using kidnaping and extortion to try to free a convicted terrorist.

- 15 to 20 year jail term for anyone who wittingly aids and abets a terrorist act, including supplying

money, safehouse, explosives, weapons, or other support.

- Two to three year jail term for anyone who publicly encourages a terrorist act via radio, television, press, or other media.

Another measure, which dictated three to five years in jail for anyone caught publicly praising or apologizing for the acts of a convicted terrorist, was later retracted on the initiative of the congressional wing of the sponsoring APRA party, for alleged infringement of freedom of opinion. This last had nearly the entire Peruvian press corps—among others—up in arms, screaming about the "Sword of Damocles" over their heads.

It has, in fact, been the press which has persisted in giving aid to the enemy through its coverage of the "sociological" roots of terrorism, coverage which has drawn strong denunciations from outgoing Attorney General Elejalde, who just survived a terrorist hit against himself and his family. It was also the press that howled at the "violation of academia," when Peruvian anti-terror police raided three Lima universities Feb. 13, capturing quantities of weapons, explosives, and propaganda—even the reputed head of Shining Path's Lima cell—in safehouses on campus.

Retraction of the portion of the anti-terror code which would have stopped cold the careers of Shining Path's "fellow-travelers" in the media, universities, and even Congress, was orchestrated by the head of the anti-García faction within the APRA

party, Sen. Armando Villanueva. Villanueva, who traveled to Moscow a few months ago, heads the Ibero-American connection to the Soviets for the Socialist International. On Feb. 28 he stated that "one should never reject dialogue with Shining Path, even if they respond with a bullet in your head."

The García government's anti-terrorism measures—with or without the final article—were apparently more than the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) could handle. The Moscow-directed party is the largest bloc in the IU coalition of leftist opposition parties, and has served as a battering-ram against the García government. On Feb. 25, the longtime general secretary of the PCP, Sen. Jorge del Prado, denounced the anti-terrorism code as "fascist," and called for "direct armed struggle" against the Peruvian government.

Asked by reporters if he saw a basis for PCP collaboration with Shining Path terrorists, del Prado said, "Yes, it is possible, but after a process of ideological maturation. . . . I have the impression, for example, that many people in Shining Path will want to change. . . and [understand] that it is indispensable to link their struggle with the masses."

The Peruvian Catholic Church has endorsed President García's war on terrorism. The secretary general of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, Monsignor Alzamora, said of the new anti-terror code on Feb. 27 that the Church "approvingly views the search for more effective means of doing away with subversion." One week earlier Cardinal Landazuri had personally met with García to endorse the university police-raids, which the Cardinal described as a proper answer to "the clamor of the people" for an end to terrorism.