

## Andean Report by Lucía López de Méndez

### Peru paralyzed by narco-terrorism

*Government indecision, and the naming of Armando Villanueva, have emboldened Peru's narco-terrorists.*

The Peruvian authorities had announced with great fanfare that the new interior minister, Armando Villanueva, would be releasing a brand-new and broad-ranging antiterrorist strategy. But the speech given by Minister Villanueva on March 10 was nothing more than another show of dangerous indecision and lack of strategy in the face of the narco-terrorist advance in that country.

President Alan García reorganized his cabinet in February with the justification of "combating subversion on all fronts." García said that the guerrilla groups had forged "a public, visible, and shameless alliance with the drug traffickers," and stressed that "the fundamental problem is terrorism."

Unfortunately, by giving Villanueva—already Peru's prime minister—the post of interior minister as well, García blasted any hope that a viable antiterrorist strategy was this time in the making. Villanueva, one of the first Peruvian politicians to propose "dialogue" with the Shining Path assassins, closely coordinates with the Soviet Embassy in Lima, and has traveled so many times to the Soviet Union that he has won the nickname "Mister Moscow."

Villanueva's speech, of two hours' duration, was little more than a rehashing of old proposals, but the Peruvian networks of the Anglo-American "secret government" known as Project Democracy have taken full advantage of the policy vacuum provided up by Villanueva to mobilize forces

against the only two concrete proposals that the minister in fact did make: 1) that terrorists were tried in military, and not civilian, courts (Villanueva urged the creation of special tribunals to hear cases of terrorism); and 2) that citizens between the ages of 18 and 50 years give obligatory military service.

Both proposals, which would significantly broaden the anti-subversive capacities of the Peruvian military, are under attack for "violation of constitutional rights." The magazine *Caretas* accused Villanueva of wanting "to turn every citizen into a soldier, to thus subject them to its jurisdiction," in the style of "the Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin eras." Pro-terrorist senator Javier Valle Riestra astutely observed that "Villanueva did not propose the formation of special tribunals; he only insinuated them, and urged that the idea be debated." Valle Riestra warned that he would be on his guard against such proposals, since "democracy, in its fight against terrorism, must not cede to militarism."

At the same time, the magazine *Oiga* published an article in its March 20 edition entitled "Complaints against ambivalence toward subversion." The article protests that instead of a genuine anti-terrorist plan, Villanueva served up a laundry list of generalities and appeals without practical content. And Villanueva's omissions, said the article, suffered from "lack of information on the strategy of subversive groups in the political, social, and psychological terrain. The message

was centered on the military area, leaving in the dark the manner in which subversion is waging the battle in other areas."

Among military officials, however, many understand that nothing less than an integrated civil-military strategy to win the war against terrorism is acceptable. And they have made proposals to the government to that effect. The terrorists have been recruiting extensively among Peru's poor—who join more out of fear than out of ideological commitment—not only in the rural areas, but also in Peru's cities and towns, and especially in Lima itself.

The response of the terrorists to Villanueva's speech was not long in coming. On March 11, the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) attacked the main office of the ruling APRA party in Lima. On March 19, a bomb was exploded at the Venezuelan Embassy in the Peruvian capital, and authorities arrested MRTA members for suspected involvement in the act.

The next day, Reuters news agency and several Peruvian newspapers reported that Venezuelan terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, better known as "Carlos" or "The Jackal," was in Peru advising one of the rebel groups. Other police sources reported that Ramírez was probably in Peru because the MRTA was preparing a major offensive for April, when the foreign ministers of various Ibero-American countries will be meeting in Lima.

All the narco-terrorist groups in Peru are on the advance. In early March, the Shining Path surrounded the town of Azangaro, on the border with Bolivia, and left it *incomunicado* with the rest of the country. Some observers state that the action was a training to prepare for a siege of Lima itself in June of this year.