

Peru Upset as National Heroes Are in the Dock

by Luis Vásquez Medina

“We are not assassins; we offered our lives for our country, and we have nothing to repent.”

—Gen. Jaime Patiño

On May 17, retired Gen. Augusto Jaime Patiño, who had led the celebrated 1997 operation which freed 72 hostages held by terrorists at the residence of the Japanese ambassador to Peru, was arrested—for this heroic action itself—and put behind bars at the offices of the Anti-Terrorism Unit of the National Police, where he remains. This arrest has triggered a furor in the nation, including among Peru’s Armed Forces. Four days earlier, a Lima judge had issued arrest warrants against 11 members of the Peruvian Armed Forces, who had participated in the daring raid of April 22, 1997 which freed the hostages whom the MRTA narco-terrorists had held for 126 days. The warrants were issued on the request of anti-corruption prosecutor Richard Saavedra and associate prosecutor for human rights Ronald Gamarra Herrera, the latter an underling of the current Alejandro Toledo government.

Among those accused by Toledo’s prosecutor, on charges of “aggravated assassination, are two retired generals and nine active-duty officers, who among them represent the elite of the Peruvian military.

Rigorously organized and impeccably carried out, the 1997 rescue operation in Lima, which was dubbed “Chávin de Huántar,” was considered by experts one of the most successful rescue actions in recent military history worldwide. It was carried out by a commando force of more than 100 men, the majority of them colonels and generals of the Peruvian Army and Navy. The operation succeeded in freeing all but one of the hostages unharmed, although two officers also gave their lives along with the unfortunate hostage. One of the officers killed, Col. Juan Valer, a member of then-President Alberto Fujimori’s Presidential bodyguard, died while using his body to shield then Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela, when a terrorist shot him at point-blank range.

‘One of the Few Successful Operations’

The national and international campaign to jail the Peruvian heroes who saved the nation at its most difficult moment, is clearly intended to serve as a death blow to the Peruvian Armed Forces. But more than this, its intent is to degrade and demoralize the Peruvian people themselves, if they can be induced to accept such immorality. In this very special sense,

the very existence of Peru is under attack.

At the time, the rescue operation had been praised by everyone, starting with U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, as well as others, such as then U.S. Southern Command Commander Gen. Charles Wilhelm. In 1998, Wilhelm characterized the operation as “one of the few successful operations against international terrorism in the past 20 years.”

However, the Peruvian judiciary, thoroughly terrorized today by the government of Harvard-trained banker Toledo, which in effect is permitting the resurrection of narco-terrorism in Peru, remains committed—despite the rejection of 80% of the population, according to polls—to jailing the heroes of “Chávin de Huántar.”

The pro-terrorist prosecutors filed their case against the officers on the basis of statements made by Hidetaka Ogura, a Japanese diplomat of leftist persuasion, who is known to have openly collaborated with the MRTA kidnappers during the siege. Ogura’s statement that he had seen several MRTA kidnappers surrender, and later turn up dead—as proof that the military command had carried out extrajudicial executions—was corroborated by another hostage, Peruvian police general Máximo Rivero, who was head of the Police Anti-Terrorism Unit at the time of the embassy seizure. Rivera, who was psychologically broken and, according to other hostages, spent his entire captivity “in a lamentable state,” had been a prisoner of the “Stockholm syndrome,” whereby kidnap victims psychologically identify with their captors.

The accusations are also based on reports from a committee of forensic experts brought in from England, with money from Amnesty International. Among these experts is Peruvian forensic specialist José Pablo Baraybar, who had worked for the International Court which studied war crimes in Yugoslavia. Baraybar’s forensic work in identifying the remains of victims in Kosovo has been strongly criticized by the scientific community, which places his trustworthiness and impartiality in doubt.

Soros Behind the Manipulations

The arrest orders against the officers, who have not yet been tried, have triggered widespread outrage within the Peruvian community. Given such a response from the population, the Toledo government has tried to clean up its act, but the facts clearly prove that high-level figures in the Toledo government are up to their eyeballs in this attack on the Peruvian military. For example, prosecutor Ronald Gamarra, an MRTA sympathizer and key figure in this infamous operation, is a paid employee of the government. Gamarra comes from the ranks of non-governmental organizations sponsored by mega-speculator and drug-legalization enthusiast George



Peruvian army commandos on the terrace of the Japanese Ambassador's residence on April 22, 1997. The commandos who saved 72 hostages from MRTA terrorists in this lightning raid, are now on trial for it! President George W. Bush, visiting Peru last year, asked for freedom for one of the MRTA terrorists, American Lori Berenson.

Soros: the Legal Defense Institute (IDELE) and the Association for Human Rights (APRODEH).

The IDELE is a multimillionaire NGO, financed by the Ford Foundation; the U.S. State Department’s Agency for International Development (AID); the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, otherwise known as Project Democracy; the German Catholic Church; and by Amnesty International of British intelligence. IDELE has on its board a number of officials of the current government, such as Susana Villarán, formerly in Toledo’s cabinet, who is a follower of “Theology of Liberation” founder Father Gustavo Gutiérrez and an advocate of cocaine legalization in Peru.

As for APRODEH, the other NGO—which through its director, Francisco Soberón, has sponsored prosecutor Ronald Gamarra—its own board of directors boasts Toledo’s cabinet minister Fernando Rospligiosi Capurro, as well as Pedro Francke, who until recently was the director of the Toledo government’s anti-poverty program. APRODEH is financed by the German Church, the Ford Foundation, and Amnesty International, as well. And then there is Toledo’s Foreign Minister Diego García Sayán, George Soros’ contact man in Peru, who referred to the situation with the commandos in a statement made from Germany on May 18, where he declared that it is “proven that there have been extrajudicial deaths, and therefore there must be an investigation.”

Military Fights Back

After the affront of seeing General Patiño held in the same jail where the terrorists are, on May 27, the commandos who participated in the 1997 rescue travelled from the headquarters of Fort Hoyos Rubio del Rímac, from the Special Forces

Division of Chorrillos, and from other military dependencies, to Army General Headquarters. They travelled in Army vehicles, and were guarded by soldiers. One hundred and thirty-six commandos met with the General Command of the Army and with the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces, Gen. Víctor Bustamante. During the meeting, the officers told General Bustamante of generalized discontent within the military ranks in the face of this mad assault. General Bustamante responded by assuring the commandos of the Army's decision, as an institution, to assume the defense of the commandos. "No one is going to surrender. . . . First they'll have to take me, but I will not allow a single Army commando to be taken prisoner," sources report the general as stating.

It is also known that every officer with an outstanding arrest warrant against him is remaining in his barracks, to avoid arrest. The warrants incredibly include Gen. Williams Zapata, head of the chiefs of staff of the second military division. Gen. Williams Zapata is today commanding special troops in pursuit of a Shining Path column in the region of Ríos Ene and Apurímac, where these narco-terrorists—with the probable help of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC)—have taken 400 hostages among the Asháninka Indians.

Retired Gen. Luis Alatrísta, who was head of the commandos during the Peru-Ecuador War of Cenepa, and is considered one of its heroes, has declared himself in open rebellion against the judicial witch-hunt.

In the context of the generalized protest against this judicial persecution, the May 23 edition of the newspaper *La Razón* published an interview with this author, who reported that prosecutor Ronald Gamarra was in the legal apparatus of the MRTA itself, serving, according to official documents from the military trials, as a lawyer for both Shining Path and MRTA terrorists who had been convicted.

Whatever direction these developments take, the damage has already been done; in the case of the commandos who liberated the Japanese compound in 1997, as in the case of the "faceless judges" who sentenced the terrorists, names have been revealed, and photographs of the military commandos who carried out the operation have even been published. The wife of General Alatrísta, another of the commandos facing an arrest warrant, has charged that she has received threatening phone calls, apparently from MRTA terrorists.

In the *EIR* book published in 1993, entitled *The Plot to Annihilate the Armed Forces and Nations of Ibero-America*, it is charged that the globalist assault against the Armed Forces of the continent, not only seeks to materially undermine them through draconian fiscal austerity, but also seeks to destroy their morale, and to alter the positive perception that Ibero-American society has of its armed forces. The book warns that to achieve these objectives, the globalists want to demolish the key value of that military morale, which is the concept of heroism.