

Andean Report by Aurelio Córdova

'Sword and Cross' under fire

Peru's narco-terrorists are targeting the Armed Forces and the Catholic Church in their new terror rampage.

With the Oct. 19 shooting attack perpetrated by the narco-terrorist MRTA against Peruvian Army Gen. Mario Britto Moreno, a new selective escalation of violence has begun against, particularly, the Army and Catholic Church, the two institutions which retain the capacity to resist their onslaught.

The intent of this new killing rampage is twofold: to drive the government of President Alberto Fujimori into a dictatorial mode guaranteed to trigger warfare that would grind up the Peruvian nation, and to maneuver the government into total dependency on what many Peruvians dub "cocanomics"—that is, legalization of the vast underground cocaine economy.

Fujimori is already leaning dangerously in that direction. In an address Oct. 26 to the foreign diplomatic corps in Lima, he announced he would not attempt to repress the drug trade, using the phony argument that this would strengthen the terrorists. "Here in Peru, we are not going to run the risk of being defeated because we put the peasants, their innumerable relatives, friends, and countrymen on the side of the drug traffickers and terrorists," he stated. Instead, Fujimori outlined his strategy of fighting drug trafficking through the creation of a "free market environment," to lure coca growers out of the hands of the cartels. He endorsed the proposal of "informal economy" expert Hernando de Soto to grant land titles to coca growers, on the false assumption that legalizing the growers' activities instead of shutting them down will end their reliance on the terrorists, stop the

violence, and ultimately turn them to legal crops.

General Britto, who was seriously wounded in the MRTA ambush, offered a very different alternative. The political-military commander of the drug- and terrorist-infested Upper Huallaga Valley jungle region, Britto had just left a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce of Tarapoto, where agreement had been reached to deploy joint civic-military brigades for the rapid completion of the Tarapoto-Yurimaguas highway. Britto's operational strategy, according to the magazine *Sí*, has been to focus on the construction of transport and other infrastructure as a means of ending the isolation of the poverty-stricken region, and to remove it thereby from the stranglehold of narco-terrorism.

Britto, reported *Sí*, strongly opposed the approach of his predecessor, Gen. Alberto Arciniegas, which was in effect to ally with the coca-growing peasantry and their "Dope, Inc." masters ostensibly in the name of "fighting terrorism." Britto chose instead to find ways of economically assimilating the region into the rest of the nation, as the alternative to cocanomics.

Two days after the attack on Britto, 13 soldiers and 7 civilians died in a dynamite attack in the Upper Huallaga Valley, which was reportedly carried out by the Shining Path terrorists. On Oct. 23, Shining Path assassinated a non-commissioned officer from the Army Intelligence Service in the city of Huancayo, and the next day murdered Lt. Col. Augusto Caballero Castillo, an intelligence officer linked

to the Joint Armed Forces Command, in Lima.

All the military victims of this terror wave had the common denominator of having served in the so-called emergency zones ravaged by narco-terrorism.

The Catholic Church has increasingly caught the bloody attentions of the terrorists. On Sept. 27, children as young as 12 years of age, belonging to the ranks of Shining Path, assassinated Agustina Rivas, a nun from the town of La Florida, in the province of Junín. In early October, they dynamited the archdiocese and home of Msgr. Luis Bambaren, the bishop of Chimbote. On Oct. 6, another nun was murdered in the central jungle region of the country, and one week later a priest and seven parishioners were killed inside their church in northern Huamachuco province.

In answer to this terrorist orgy, a group of ruling party congressmen linked to the country's fundamentalist Protestant sects has begun to clamor for dialogue between the Fujimori government and the terrorists—an appeasement strategy which would only lead to more terrorism. Their campaign has been seconded by the visit of a mission from the pseudo-Christian World Council of Churches, which is in Peru seeking to document its charges that the Armed Forces—not the narco-terrorists—are to blame for violation of human rights in the emergency zones.

The international side of this campaign in favor of legalizing narco-terrorism is headed by the Woodrow Wilson Institute in Washington, D.C. and by the German publishing house Meno, headed by the Venetian Giuseppe Zambon, which has just published a book in German, *The Andes Tremble*, filled with interviews and proclamations by Shining Path leaders.