

'Anti-drug' accord buries economic and military sovereignty of Peru

by Luis Vásquez Medina

On May 14, in an unexpected appearance before the Peruvian Congress, President Alberto Fujimori announced that his government had just signed an "anti-drug" accord with the United States. The Bush-Fujimori agreement, praised by U.S. government officials as a model for the region, sets a dangerous precedent for the elimination of national sovereignty in the Americas in two crucial areas.

First, under the guise of a supposed war on drugs, the accord, a *bilateral* treaty with the United States, requires as a condition for anti-drug collaboration that the government of Peru implement a specific economic policy. According to Article 17 of the agreement, Peru is obliged to continue the liberal "structural adjustment" policy which has meant genocide. This not only violates Peru's sovereign control over its internal policies, but these are the very economic policies which spread the narcotics trade in the first place. As is known—Peru's judiciary even recognized this fact in 1986 in examining the ultra-liberal economic policy applied by then-Finance and Prime Minister Manuel Ulloa during 1980-83—liberal policies are the primary cause of the rapid expansion of drug trafficking and the underground economy.

Second, the accord subordinates Peru's military—from planning of strategy, to operational command—to U.S. dictates. The central axis of the accord is the creation of a "bilateral association" between the two governments which will determine policy jointly for all aspects relating to the drug trade. In the case of Peru, where narco-terrorists now control or dominate an estimated one-third to one-half of Peru's territory, to hand command of narco-terrorist strategy in Peru to the United States, is to de facto hand control of *all* domestic military strategy to a foreign government. The extent of this control is astounding. Point 25 of the accord specifies that the "bilateral association"—the United States—must take the responsibility to "feed, equip, train, provide uniforms, and adequately support the military and police forces which will fight drug trafficking."

Moreover, the anti-drug agreement establishes the possibility that U.S. troops will be deployed on Peruvian soil. During his recent trip to Venezuela, Fujimori openly referenced the likely deployment of U.S. advisers to the Peruvian Amazon region. The agreement's author, Hernando de Soto,

told the press on May 17 that "the militarization of the region is a fact, and if you weren't aware of it, it's possible that there are as many DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] agents there as there are in Bolivia."

Blackmail over debt

Prior to the signing of the bilateral agreement entitled "Agreement for Drug Control Policy and Alternative Development," the United States exerted outrageous pressure on Peru. One week prior to the signing, Vice President Máximo San Román appeared on Lima television to report that the United States was conditioning its participation in the "support group"—the group of industrialized nations which is financing \$800 million of Peru's arrears with the International Monetary Fund—to the signing of the anti-drug agreement. Roberto MacLean, Peru's ambassador in Washington and Hernando de Soto's former lawyer, had sent a number of similar messages to Lima.

U.S. pressure was not aimed at the Fujimori government, which has offered abundant proof of its submission to the Bush administration. Rather, it was directed at the growing civilian and military opposition, which became visible as soon as news of the agreement became known. There's no question that this opposition will continue to grow, and will have unpredictable consequences, once the accord is put into effect. By naming Hernando de Soto as the Peruvian negotiator, Fujimori had already discounted any possibility of a sovereign negotiation. De Soto, whose economic quackery has been praised by George Bush, was denounced in 1987 by *EIR* for having been financed by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), a front organization for the Washington, D.C.-based Project Democracy apparatus. Exposed as a "secret government" apparatus in the Iran-Contra scandal, Project Democracy promotes the legalization of the "black" or "underground" economy, including drug trafficking.

It was the Bush administration and De Soto's Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), exclusively, which discussed and wrote the anti-drug accord. With blatant disregard for the Constitution, these parties excluded any role for the Peruvian Congress.

Drug trade to continue

It is not just the anti-drug accord's commitment to neo-liberal economic policies which makes a farce of any war on drugs. The U.S. has allocated a miserable \$100 million for purposes of coca eradication (not to be disbursed until 1992), which is a pittance for eradicating or permanently substituting with other crops, the more than 300,000 hectares of coca cultivated in the country.

With no real provisions for funding or investment, the accord's centerpiece is the granting of property titles to peasants who now illegally grow coca. The accord states that only *after* this legal mechanism is applied, can further agreements for crop substitution be made with the coca growers, who can then also hope to apply for bank loans. De Soto, the author of this "brilliant" strategy, explains that this is the only way the government can establish a presence in the coca-growing regions and be better situated to negotiate power with the narco-terrorist groups which currently control them.

Most analysts in Lima agree that this accord is bound to fail; the U.S. financing involved is pathetic, while Peru's institutions for financial development are completely bankrupt. Nor do agricultural producers have any possibility of selling their goods, due to lack of communication and transportation infrastructure. Only the granting of property titles to coca growers, then, would be implemented; under existing conditions, any effort to impose crop substitution would unleash a social explosion, which would only benefit narco-terrorism.

U.S. troops in the Andes

As *EIR* indicated months ago, the Bush administration's new imperial order entails a permanent U.S. troop presence on the South American continent. For the strategists who, unfortunately, have decision-making power in Washington, wars of subversion are the simplest mechanism to destroy Peru's Armed Forces and eliminate any concept of the nation. As has already occurred in the case of the anti-drug accord signed between the U.S. and Bolivia, the accord with Peru has unleashed growing anti-U.S. ferment. The narco-terrorist groups Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), have been handed the pretext to raise the anti-imperialist banner against the "Yankee invader." Already the San Martín Front for the Defense of Popular Interests and the Selva Maestre Agrarian Federation, both front groups for the MRTA in the coca-growing Huallaga region, have called for a general uprising. Just days before the signing of the accord, the MRTA carried out the most spectacular action to date. A 1,000-man army took the capital city of Rioja in the Huallaga Valley, destroyed police headquarters, and took 11 policemen hostage.

Oiga magazine, which on matters of security and subversion functions as a mouthpiece for factions of the Peruvian Navy, has predicted that the accord will accelerate the pro-

cess of permanent civil war in the Peruvian Amazon. The correctness of *Oiga's* analysis is shown by the fact that Article 16 of the accord, allegedly to guarantee defense of human rights, states that "both parties agree that they should include provisions such as granting unrestricted access to the International Committee of the Red Cross" in zones of conflict. As De Soto admitted, this measure was imposed by the U.S. negotiators. As a further assault on Peruvian sovereignty, subsequent to the signing of the accord, De Soto began negotiations to bring in the United Nations to oversee the implementation of the accord, citing numerous requests for U.N. presence from coca growers.

Curiously, the first thing the MRTA did after taking Rioja was to ask for the intervention of the International Red Cross to negotiate the freedom of the police hostages. To make the point, the MRTA sent the mayor of Rioja to Lima to personally negotiate the Red Cross intervention. *Oiga* commented appropriately that "if the government agrees to allow the Red Cross to participate in negotiations with the MRTA, this would give [the MRTA] sufficient cause to appeal to the Geneva Convention and demand international recognition as a belligerent force; that is, their status would be elevated, granting them the same juridical standing as our Armed Forces, and even the right to attend international forums to pose their demands."

Emasculating the Army

The signing of the agreement takes place at a most unfortunate moment for Peru's Armed Forces. Government austerity policies have reduced military wages to miserable levels; their Soviet-supplied equipment is obsolete, and there is little hope of replacing it. The Armed Forces must face entire narco-terrorist armies under politically adverse conditions, characterized by the tendentious "human rights" campaign which the U.S. State Department has directed against them.

The anti-drug accord wants to redefine the role of Peru's Armed Forces. U.S. "drug czar" Bob Martinez stated in Lima, and repeated in La Paz, that the Bush administration's goal is to have the Peruvian Armed Forces function within the accord as mere anti-drug police. This has provoked great concern among nationalist military layers. Just days after the signing of the accord, the former Armed Forces Chief of Staff, retired Gen. Carlos Mauricio, stated in Lima that the role of the Armed Forces cannot be divorced from three major problems: subversion, drug-trafficking, and underdevelopment, which must be confronted simultaneously, because they are intimately linked. A few weeks earlier, he had called for the application of a Marshall Plan in the Upper Huallaga Valley, the largest coca-producing region in the world, to put an end to drug-trafficking. Such a plan would have to be based on investment in transportation infrastructure, to make it possible to transport agricultural products from the zones where coca is now produced illegally, to coastal urban cities where people are suffering hunger and malnutrition.