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## Peru: Report On Impact Of Government Strategy To Reduce Political Violence Since "auto-golpe"

by Erika Harding

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Since the "auto-golpe" on April 5, the government has reported some gains in the war against the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels. During the weeks after the takeover, Sendero rebels launched a wave of car bombings around Lima. The guerrillas blew up several police stations, a commercial and financial center and a local television station. In response, President Alberto Fujimori imposed a nighttime curfew on most automobile drivers. Pedestrian traffic and most public transportation are unaffected. Since the restrictions began, there have been no more car bombings. In June, the political violence death toll was 270, compared to 413 in May. Eighty attacks were recorded in June, of which 34 took place in Lima. The number of attacks in May was 123. On July 2, Fujimori announced the capture of 16 alleged insurgents, including Luis Alberto Arana Franco, whom authorities described as the rebels' logistics chief in the capital. According to the president, Sendero was "surrounded and disgraced." Fujimori asserted that the arrests of Victor Polay, leader of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), former deputy Yehude Simon (on charges of collaborating with MRTA), and Sendero leader Arana Franco "reflect the advance of the anti-insurgency struggle." Enrique Bernales, head of the dissolved Senate's pacification committee, said that Sendero Luminoso is merely taking time to regroup, as it always has done following a period of concentrated action. Pablo Rojas, head of the National Human Rights Commission, said the administration has made some genuine progress against Sendero Luminoso in metropolitan Lima, but not elsewhere. He added that he did not believe the government had seriously damaged the guerrillas' ability to operate. Other government actions aimed at reducing political violence include a June 21 decree which lowers the age of adult responsibility in terrorism cases from 18 to 15. Prison terms for individuals convicted of terrorism range from 20 years to life. Sentences for individuals between the ages of 15 and 18 may be reduced at the judge's discretion. Next, the government promulgated a decree July 2 establishing a minimum 15-year prison term for public employees found guilty of "disappearances." In 1990, Amnesty International reported that at least 3,000 people disappeared in Peru over the previous eight years after detention by public security forces. For the fourth consecutive year, in 1990 Peru ranked first world-wide in terms of the number of disappeared persons. Of 484 cases registered by the UN in 1990, Peru accounted for 232. According to Diego Garcia Sayan, executive secretary of the Andean Jurists Commission, of 2,340 cases recorded by the United Nations in 1990, the government has resolved only 96. Over the first 18 months of the Fujimori administration, Amnesty International reported 150 disappearances and extra-judicial executions of another 50 people. Human rights groups estimate that nearly 25,000 people have died in political violence since Sendero Luminoso was created in 1980. Over half were agricultural workers, caught in the cross-fire between the armed forces and the rebels. On July 4 in Ayacucho, President Fujimori warned security forces not to abuse civilians in the fight against leftist insurgents and promised that police and soldiers who violate human rights will be punished. The president spoke out harshly against officers who have abused peasants. He announced no new laws, and made no specific promises to curb abuses. Fujimori said that winning public confidence was key to defeating the insurgents and human rights abuses can turn the populace against the

government. [In 1992, a military court for the first time convicted a member of the armed forces for human rights abuses stemming from the killing of 69 peasants in an Andean village in 1985. The day after Fujimori's speech, Lima daily newspaper La Republica reported the convicted soldier, Lt. Telmo Hurtado, never spent a day in jail and is still an active member of the army.] (Sources: Agence France-Presse, 07/02/92, 07/03/92; Spanish news service EFE, 06/21/92, 07/02/92, 07/04/92; Washington Post, Associated Press, 07/04/92)

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