

7-28-1992

Peru: Wave Of Rebel Violence Shakes Lima

Erika Harding

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur>

Recommended Citation

Harding, Erika. "Peru: Wave Of Rebel Violence Shakes Lima." (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/9801>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiSur by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Peru: Wave Of Rebel Violence Shakes Lima

by Erika Harding

Category/Department: General

Published: Tuesday, July 28, 1992

In response to a series of car bombings around Lima since President Alberto Fujimori dissolved the congress on April 5, the government imposed emergency anti-terrorist measures including a nighttime curfew, and closing off several downtown streets to private vehicle traffic. In early June, following the detention of 16 Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebel leaders, Fujimori asserted that the insurgents were "surrounded and disgraced." (See NotiSur 07/07/92.) On July 16 Sendero Luminoso launched a new offensive focused on urban areas and civilian targets. (See NotiSur 07/21/92.) July 20: Sendero rebels announced plans for an "armed strike" (paro armado) to take place July 22-23 in Lima and Ayacucho. The occasion marks the sixth armed strike organized by Sendero Luminoso in Lima since 1989. The most recent occurred in February this year. Rebels detonated a car bomb outside the offices of the Freedom and Democracy Institute (Instituto de Libertad y Democracia-ILD), an independent think tank located in Lima's Miraflores neighborhood. Three people were killed and 19 injured. The ILD is run by former presidential anti-drug adviser Hernando de Soto. Lima police reported numerous rebel attacks, including the shooting of a community leader and bomb explosions at a hospital, textile plant, and six banks. In testimony to the UN Human Rights Commission, Justice Ministry representative Ada Linares said that the 1980 constitution remains in effect, with the exception of a few articles which were "partially and temporarily" suspended. The latter include guarantees for individual civil and political rights. According to Linares, the Fujimori administration has never incarcerated people for political reasons, nor imposed any restrictions on freedom of expression. Next, Linares denied that the number of disappeared persons has increased in recent months. Next, contrary to recent reports, she said civilians have not been subject to trial in military courts in areas placed under a state of emergency by government decree. Subsequent to Linares' testimony, the Commission expressed "concern" about the Peruvian government's human rights record. The Commission was expected to issue a formal report on Peru within the following week. July 21: Oscar de la Puente, who currently serves as both foreign minister and prime minister, told reporters that the government is considering imposing the death penalty against individuals convicted of terrorism. According to Justice Minister Fernando Vega Santa Gadea, if the death penalty is restored, as a signatory nation Peru would be in violation of several international human rights conventions. According to recent public opinion polls conducted by Lima newspapers, about 80% of capital city residents support the death penalty applied to convicted terrorists. Under the 1980 constitution, the death penalty is used only in the case of individuals convicted of treason when Peru is subject to foreign aggression. In a communique, President Alberto Fujimori announced he had would not attend the Ibero-American summit in Madrid in order to "remain at the front of the command against terrorism." Next, Fujimori ordered a reinforcement of army and police patrols with deployment of approximately 10,000 troops around the capital in preparation for the Sendero Luminoso's armed strike. A nighttime curfew and restrictions on automobile access imposed 40 days previously remained in effect. The recent Sendero Luminoso offensive has resulted in at least 25 deaths, 14 disappearances, 250 people wounded and 300 buildings destroyed or damaged. Police reported that rebels killed a police officer in a marketplace; bombed a public restroom, injuring 12 people; bombed two bridges south of the city; bombed two schools and numerous buses and police posts;

and, detonated a small home-made bomb at a club for Air Force personnel. Analysts said the timing, charge and placement of the recent bombs indicate that Sendero Luminoso is shifting away from carefully targeted attacks to more generalized violence in an effort to spread panic throughout the city. According to Col. Oswaldo Bedregal, military attache at the Bolivian Embassy, a car bomb exploded in front of the Embassy, located in Lima's San Isidro district, causing extensive damages and injuring six people. July 22: Foreign news services reported that most bus drivers and municipal workers failed to show up for work on the first day of the Sendero-imposed armed strike. Many schools were reported closed. Few people traveled far from their homes, and there was little traffic outside of taxis and private vehicles. Government security forces were conspicuously deployed around the government palace, military installations and bridges. An unidentified government spokesperson said about 85% of public employees showed up for work, although many arrived late. Police sources reported that Sendero rebels bombed a school for the children of military personnel, resulting in 12 injuries. Next, rebels burned four buses and three taxis. The taxi drivers were killed. In a communique, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission denounced the wave of violence perpetrated by the Sendero rebels. The Commission is affiliated with the Organization of American States (OAS). July 23: Police reported that a 400-kg. car bomb exploded in front of the state-run gas company Sol Gas building in Lima's San Borja district. Three people were killed and 10 injured in the blast. Next, substantial material damage to the building and surrounding neighborhood was reported. Police officers deactivated a car bomb in the San Isidro financial district, and four others in the Miraflores area. At a downtown intersection, a city bus was bombed. By the end of the day, the casualty toll resulting from approximately 50 bombings over the two-day strike came to 12 dead, and an estimated 40 injured. Police reported a mortar attack against a naval base the previous evening caused heavy material damage, but no casualties. The mortar hit an empty officers' barracks located near the El Callao port. July 25: During a speech broadcast nationwide, Fujimori announced that rebels accused of murder would henceforth face trial in military rather than civilian courts. Next, rebels convicted of murder are to be classified as "traitors." Next, Fujimori said the sale of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used to increase the explosive power of bombs, would now be strictly controlled and possession will be considered a crime equal to possession of firearms. Government security forces commenced a house-by-house search for Sendero rebels, weapons and explosives in the poor neighborhoods surrounding the capital. Soldiers reportedly detained over 200 people suspected of collaborating with Sendero rebels. Military sources reported that 73 Sendero rebels were captured in several towns throughout Lambayeque department. According to the sources, the rebels were planning attacks to coincide with commemoration of national independence or the nation's "fiestas patrias" on July 28-29. The US-based human rights monitor Americas Watch released a new report titled, "Peru: Civil Society and Democracy Under Fire." According to the report, Peruvian security forces continue to "systematically" violate human rights. The report condemns both Fujimori's auto-golpe and the violence perpetrated by the Sendero Luminoso. The report warns that abandoning constitutional democracy has eroded the government's legitimacy and has not helped in fighting the guerrillas. Next, continued abuses by public security force personnel have provoked a generalized rejection of the government, making the cooperation necessary for fighting the rebels impossible. Among the measures specifically condemned in the report were the takeover of the Canto Grande prison and the promotion of Gen. Jose Valdivia Duenas to head the armed forces joint chiefs. According to Americas Watch, Valdivia was implicated in the massacre of dozens of campesinos in Cayara in 1988. July 26: The government extended the state of emergency applied to Lima and Callao for another 60 days. Leaflets distributed around Lima by Sendero Luminoso called for another armed strike on July 28-29. (Sources: Notimex, 07/21/92,

07/24/92; Spanish news service EFE, 07/20- 22/92, 07/25/92; Associated Press, 07/20-23/92, 07/25/92;
Agence France-Presse, 07/20-26/92)

-- End --