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## **Peruvian Military Launches Counteroffensive Against Sendero Luminoso Guerrillas**

*by John Neagle*

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On April 10, Prime Minister Armando Villanueva said fighting on April 9 in Peru's jungle region marked the beginning of a counteroffensive against Sendero Luminoso guerrillas. In two separate clashes, military troops killed 34 leftist guerrillas. State news agency Andina broadcast a military communique stating that soldiers fought with a guerrilla column for six hours near Uchiza, 245 miles northeast of Lima, resulting in 20 rebels killed and three soldiers wounded. The fighting left 20 rebels dead and three soldiers wounded. The fighting came two weeks after a combined force of rebels and drug traffickers reportedly overran the town's police post, killing 10 defenders and three civilians. Uchiza is located in the Upper Huallaga river valley, a region known as Peru's "cocaine cradle." Critics blasted the national government for failing to adequately defend the post and to send reinforcements. On April 9, another 14 rebels died when navy marines patrolling the Ucayali River 180 miles south of Uchiza, fought with guerrillas for several hours. Andina did not report on troop casualties in this incident. (Basic data from AP, 04/14/89)

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