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Peru: Police Arrest Employees Of Leftist Newspaper, Notes On Violence

John Neagle
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by John Neagle

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Nov. 2: Police arrested 13 employees of the newspaper El Diario, considered the public voice of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels. Newspaper director Janet Talavera was arrested earlier this year and remains in jail on charges of supporting terrorism, while editor Luis Arce Borja is in self-imposed exile in Europe. Major political parties and candidates for municipal office in Lima scheduled a "March for Peace" on Nov. 3 to counter a general strike called by the rebels. Candidates for the April presidential election agreed to join the march. The rebels are attempting to disrupt nationwide municipal elections scheduled for Nov. 12. In Washington, the State Department advised US citizens against traveling to Peru until after the elections. Radio reports said the military was exercising strict control along the main routes into Lima: the coastal Pan-American Highway, and the Central Highway leading east to the Andes. Other reports said rebels were stopping buses on rural highways and confiscating electoral identification cards from the passengers. Earlier in the week Prime Minister Guillermo Larco Cox said that at least 300 people were killed during October in political violence. Nov. 4: Police said masked gunmen pulled eight young peasants from their homes in the town of Pucara (300 km. east of Lima), and shot them dead. Police said they had no leads on the identities of the killers, and the Sendero Luminoso has not claimed responsibility for the slayings. Two of the eight people shot to death were sisters, age 15 and 19 years old, the police said. On Saturday evening, Sendero Luminoso rebels threw bombs at shops in Huancayo, causing damage but no casualties. The Education Ministry ordered schools in Huancayo to remain closed until after the elections. Most of the voting places were to be set up inside the city's schools. (Basic data from AP, 11/02/89; AFP, 11/02/89, 11/04/89)

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