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On Dec. 12, police reported that suspected Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels beheaded 39 farmers, and killed at least 12 others, including a mayor. Officials told reporters that the violence was believed to be a protest against a government move to arm Andes farmers against rebel attacks. The murders occurred near Ayacucho department on Dec. 11. Twenty-two farmers were decapitated in Paccha annex, 16 in Chaquipampa, and one in Andabamba. Witnesses said the attackers pulled people from their homes and executed them in the town squares. A total of 200 persons participated in the killings. On Dec. 12, the body of Julio Casas, mayor of the Huachocollpa district, turned up in Huancavelica department, 520 km. southeast of Lima. He had been shot in the head. Casas was abducted a month ago. Suspected rebels killed 11 village watchmen, in Vicus, La Mar province, and set fire to public buildings and houses. On Dec. 8 in a public ceremony, President Alan Garcia gave a revolver to a civilian known as Commander Huayhuaco to lead the regional struggle against Sendero Luminoso. The national police said the government handed out 200 guns and ammunition to one group of Andean farmers. Six other people were killed in Peru during the weekend, including a provincial governor. (Basic data from AFP, 12/12/89)

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