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Peru: Report On Recent Violence

by John Neagle

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March 21: President Alan Garcia called on Peruvians to "stay calm" in the midst of pre-election violence. He also requested political candidates to avoid giving advantages to "the enemies of democracy." Elections for president, and members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are scheduled for April 8. Garcia said that the guerrillas will not succeed in their attempt to throttle the electoral process. He stated that 14 helicopter gunships delivered March 20 to the army are intended to help the military maintain order. During the week Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebels launched an offensive in Lima, burning 12 buses and causing \$400,000 in damages. At dawn Wednesday, presumed rebels burned a cotton processing plant located in Lurigancho, northeastern Lima. March 22: Police reported that on Wednesday night presumed Sendero Luminoso rebels threw explosives from passing cars at the Agriculture Ministry and National Input Commercialization Enterprise in Lima. No injuries were reported, although property damage was extensive. March 23: In Lima, suspected Sendero Luminoso guerrillas assassinated Jose Galvez Fernandez, candidate for national deputy of the center-right Democratic Front (FREDEMO) coalition. The attack occurred as he left his home in the Comas neighborhood of Lima. On Friday morning, rebels bombed several government and bank branch offices, and killed four national deputy candidates. The Interior Ministry announced a 30-day state of emergency for Lima department, which includes the capital city and neighboring port of Callao. Police and guards assigned to tourism, forestry, budget, judiciary and the agency responsible for protection of minors were placed at the disposal of the national police to protect the lives of congressional and presidential candidates. In addition, classes were suspended at the police academy to enable instructors and cadets to join the effort. Military units surrounded the San Marcos University campus and detained two dozen students. The military action was reportedly taken to remove flags put in place Thursday by Sendero Luminoso throughout the campus. March 24: A car bomb exploded Saturday night in front of the Economy and Finance Ministry. The driver of the automobile and a three-year-old died in the explosion, and 40 people were injured, 12 of them seriously. Shock waves from the explosion shattered windows throughout the 10-story structure, and in nearby buildings. Police said they did not know if the bomb was placed in the car without the driver's knowledge. March 27: Police reported that 11 dynamite attacks were recorded in Lima and in Huanta and Huamanga, Ayacucho department, on Monday night and early Tuesday morning, causing heavy material damage. The targets included five offices of the FREDEMO party coalition, two bank branch offices, an office of the Peruvian Telephone Company, a residence in the luxury Miraflores neighborhood, and an office of the ruling APRA party. No injuries were reported in any of the explosions. On Monday night, police deactivated two bombs at movie houses in Lima suburbs. Pamphlets distributed in the streets of Lima announced that the Sendero Luminoso had called an "armed strike" for March 28. Rebels briefly seized three radio stations in Lima, forcing workers to broadcast taped messages urging people not to vote and to observe the strike. An armed strike in rebel terminology means a general strike carrying the threat of violence against workers who refuse to participate. Police said rebels also stopped buses on Lima's outskirts, and painted them with strike slogans. In Huancayo, 192 km. east of Lima, Sendero Luminoso guerrillas detonated a car bomb on the main square at 1:35 p.m., when presidential candidate Alfonso

Barrantes was scheduled to hold a rally. Four people were wounded. Barrantes postponed the time of the rally until later in the afternoon after police warned that the rebels may have learned his itinerary. The rebels also set off a car bomb in front of a hotel Monday night in downtown Huancayo, injuring one man and damaging the building. Police detained more than 3,000 people in a roundup in Lima Monday night and Tuesday morning. Most were stopped for not carrying documents and were released after a few hours, police said. A third of Peru is under emergency status, affecting half of the country's population of 22 million. (Basic data from Notimex, 03/21-24/90, 03/27/90; Xinhua, 03/24/90; AP, 03/27/90)

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