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# USOAS

U.S. Permanent Mission to the  
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## The Terrorism of Sendero Luminoso Has No Justification

Statement of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi  
U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS  
OAS Permanent Council  
July 24, 1992

On May 18, President Fujimori told the OAS Ministers meeting in Nassau that he would:

- allow press and public access to government publications and information;
- restore constitutional rights; and,
- hold free and direct elections for a Democratic Constituent Congress to be organized on the basis of "participation, transparency, and true responsibility."

These specific commitments were reaffirmed before the OAS General Assembly on May 20 by Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Oscar De la Puente as the "Bahamas Commitment," which he declared "definitive and irreversible."

I believe it is fair to say that we were as a community greatly encouraged by these commitments. And we welcomed as a particular sign of seriousness and mutual respect the request by the Government of Peru that this Organization provide technical assistance and electoral observation.

The United States has a profound interest in seeing the people of Peru succeed in their quest for democracy. Our concern is based partly on our commitment to representative democracy and the rule of law, a commitment made explicit in the OAS Charter and in Resolution 1080/91. In the case of Peru, this interest also reflects the conviction that democracy is particularly relevant to Peru at this time.

Peru's people match in their diversity the extraordinary variety of their country's coasts, mountains and jungles. Peru was the seat of a long-lasting pre-Colombian civilization that ruled much of South America's West Coast from Cuzco. Peru was the capital of the richest vice royalty of the Spanish Empire in the New World. And, since independence, Peru has welcomed many streams of migrants -- from Japan, from Italy, indeed, from countries in both the old and new worlds.

This human and geographic wealth gives Peru enormous potential. But it creates conditions as well as potential. One of conditions is a special requirement for mutual understanding and respect. Peru's entire history suggests that no single, central, idealized policy can endure. The histories of Inca rule, of the Spanish conquest, of the caudillos of independence, even of the nationalist military revolution of 1968 -- all suggest that the good intentions of any one group, working alone, do not serve Peru in the long run.

The alternative to imposition, empire, tyranny, and violence may be difficult, but it is also clear: it is political participation and dialogue among Peruvians. I, for one, am profoundly convinced that only democratic institutions provide the framework for this sorely needed dialogue. (more)

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So it is both principle and affection for Peru and Peruvians that impels us to support efforts there to build constitutional democracy. Of course, in as complicated a world as the one in which we live, in this Organization and in this inter-American community as well as in Peru, an almost infinite number of questions, doubts, hesitations can legitimately emerge about how to respond to any particular situation.

But in this particular case there is one critical analytical error to be avoided: let no one mistake the terrorism unleashed by Sendero Luminoso for a reaction to Peru's on-going constitutional crisis. Sendero is taking advantage of this crisis, and the potential weakness it implies, but Sendero Luminoso's awful, brutal record began long before April 5, 1992.

Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson, testifying before a committee of the U.S. Congress on September 12, 1991, described Sendero Luminoso as "one of the most brutal guerrilla groups in the world; its barbaric practices remind many of the notorious Khmer Rouge."

The tragic reality is that Sendero Luminoso has cynically stolen the symbols and the pain of Peru's history to mislead and to inflict even greater pain. For the past week, Sendero Luminoso has been striking at Peru when its democratic defenses are down. But those of us who know Peru will never forget that Sendero was born to fight democracy.

In the late 1970s, Peruvians of all persuasion and occupations, military and civilian, costenos and serranos, decided that the ballot and respect for differences were the only possible building blocks for Peru's future. The results included the new constitution of 1979 followed by national elections in 1980, in which for the first time all adult Peruvians were enfranchised.

But Abimael Guzman, the politically ambitious middle class founder of Sendero, preferred to kill rather than accept democracy. While others discussed how to use political freedom to organize debate and bring peaceful progress, Guzman used his education and privileges to organize death. In April 1980, as Peru's voters went to the polls in their first free election in almost 20 years, Sendero was holding its first clandestine training camp for terrorists.

We have all heard accounts of both random and pointed cruelty perpetrated by Sendero: the deaths of priests and nuns, of teachers and students, young and old. Of the young Indian woman whose fingers were cut off as a warning to potential voters. To me the essence of Sendero is etched in something that happened ten years ago this week, on July 20, 1982, at the University of Huamanga in Ayacucho, where Guzman began his career as a professor.

The University of Huamanga had an experimental agricultural training center which conducted experiments in Andean Crop Selection in agro-industry and in the improvement of cattle breeding. Even in those already-turbulent times, the Center at Allpachaka was serving as a focal point for efforts to develop a better future for Peruvian agriculture and to help the rural poor. On July 20, Senderistas occupied Allpachaka. When the armed group left, the scene was described as follows in a contemporary dispatch filed by a journalist for the weekly newsmagazine Caretas:

Twenty-five Brown Swiss cows dead. Four Holstein breeding bulls beheaded. Twenty-five head of cattle stolen. Dynamited were the training center, the plant nursery, the dormitories, the tool shed, dining room, cheese production facility, the milk plant. Destroyed were the stock of bacterial agents, the cold cellar, the warehouse of veterinary medicines, files, administrative documents. Burned was the hay stack. (Gustavo Gorriti, Sendero, p. 333.)

There is an old Peruvian huayno that speaks of the country "donde las piedras lloran." It is an ancient Quechua evocation of pain and loss, of a land where even stones shed tears. But this is not just a story about farming, or about stones, or even about Peru. It is also a story about ourselves.

Peru is not alone in being challenged by this terrorism. Our own existence as a community is challenged by this terrorism. Every man and woman with a stake in civilized norms must stand firmly with the Peruvian people, advancing the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and hastening the demoralization and defeat of Sendero Luminoso.

(more)

If the current wave of bloody urban bombings is meant to provoke Peruvians into taking measures that will hobble progress toward institutional democracy, then our answer must be to redouble our efforts to help Peru to build democracy. If Sendero seeks to destroy all authority that is not that of Sendero and to fill Peruvians with terror, hoping that violence and counterviolence will stifle the dialogue and free expression critical to the recovery of democracy, then our answer must be to fight the violence and advance the dialogue.

My delegation is proud to cosponsor the resolution tabled by the delegation of Peru. And my delegation appeals that all of us here today, and all members of the inter-American community, consider seriously and urgently what additional measures we can take, singly and collectively, to help Peru.

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**Condemnation of Terrorist Violence in Peru**  
(OAS Permanent Council Resolution, July 24, 1992)

**The Permanent Council of the Organization of American States,**

**BEARING IN MIND:**

The information obtained on the criminal terrorist attacks that, since 1980, have caused the loss of countless human lives and great material damage to the Peruvian people and state; and

That, since the 16th of this month, the attacks perpetrated in Peru by the Shining Path and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement terrorist groups have reached high levels of criminality, and deserve to be described as genocide, unknown until now in this Hemisphere, because they do not simply terrify the populace but cause mass murder; and

**CONSIDERING:**

That the violence unleashed by the aforementioned terrorist groups represents an ongoing threat to the Peruvian people and state, whose Government has committed itself to reestablishing democratic institutions; and having, to this end, convoked general elections for November 22, 1992, designed to elect a Democratic Constituent Congress; and

That in Peru terrorist violence is very closely linked to illegal drug traffic,

**RESOLVES:**

1. To condemn energetically the criminal actions of the Shining Path and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement terrorist groups.
  2. To reaffirm that the violence unleashed by terrorism and drug traffic erodes and imperils stability and democracy in the countries involved.
  3. To express its full solidarity with the Peruvian people and state in the face of the escalating aggression being inflicted upon them by outlaw organizations linked to terror and illegal drug traffic.
  4. To request the Chairman of the OAS Permanent Council and the Secretary General to convey this resolution to Peru.
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"The Terrorism of Sendero Luminoso has no justification"

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(Source, Gustavo Gorriti, Sendero, which cites the "Caretas" dispatch at page 333.)

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