

SENDERO LUMINOSO
AND PERUVIAN COUNTERINSURGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Sendero Luminoso first appeared in Peru in May 1980 by burning several ballot boxes and hanging dogs from streetlights. This unusual event signaled the beginning of one of the most violent insurgencies in the Western hemisphere. Abimael Guzmán, the founder of Sendero Luminoso, set out to utterly destroy Peruvian society in order to replace it with his vision of a utopian communist society by creating a peasant uprising starting in the Andean highlands and spreading throughout Peru, eventually surrounding the capital, Lima.

The government of Peru virtually ignored Sendero Luminoso for two years, which allowed the group to establish strong base areas in and around the department of Ayacucho. When the government finally reacted, it was forced to declare a state of emergency in the south central highlands and send in the military to regain control.

Through successive administrations over the next decade, Peru was engulfed in violence and destruction, human rights abuses, corruption, and economic catastrophe. Sendero Luminoso demonstrated an uncanny ability to avoid the military's concentrated efforts while expanding into new regions of Peru. The group also benefited from the drug trade to finance the insurgency by providing protection to coca farmers and narcotraffickers in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Only after Guzmán's capture in 1992 did the government witness visible progress in the fight against the insurgents. Sendero Luminoso rapidly declined without Guzmán's leadership and the remnants withdrew to the Upper Huallaga Valley. Yet many of the conditions that led to the creation of Sendero Luminoso still plague the country, including corruption in the government, poverty, and a weak economy. The missing catalyst is another leader like Abimael Guzmán.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, was one of the most successful insurgent groups in the Western Hemisphere in the late 20th century. What is most remarkable about the group's expansion was that it occurred at a time when most Marxist-based institutions were collapsing. Equally remarkable was its popularity, given its philosophy of creating a utopian society through the violent destruction of all societal institutions. The group managed to mobilize the Andean peasants with promises of a better life. Successive administration failures also contributed to Sendero's resiliency.

According to current U.S. Army doctrine, there are three basic prerequisites to the emergence of an insurgency: (1) a vulnerable population that hopes for change, (2) leadership, and (3) lack of government control.¹ All of these conditions existed in Peru and enabled Sendero Luminoso to make headway. For long-term endurance, an insurgency must be able to create popular support and maintain unity of effort. Sendero Luminoso certainly demonstrated a will to resist, as witnessed by the fact that, despite aggressive counterinsurgency operations, it survives to this day. Sendero had effective leadership, it was disciplined, and it developed a highly effective intelligence network as well as a propaganda machine. Its reach extended throughout Peru and it eventually established networks in other countries, including the United States.

An insurgency, of course, must have a favorable environment. Approximately the size of Alaska, Peru is a struggling nation of 22 million people, with a great disparity in the standards of living and distribution of wealth. The country is divided into three major regions: the Costa, Sierra, and Montaña. The Costa, or coastal region, is the most developed and contains Peru's five largest cities, including Lima, as well as the bulk of the nation's industries and its most

¹United States, Department of the Army, *Field Manual No. 90-8 Counterinsurgency Operations*, p. 1-2.

extensive agricultural areas. The majority of the business and landowners in the Costa are of Spanish origin, middle-class, and consider themselves white. This region offers the greater opportunity for employment and advancement; however, historically jobs have gone to those of Spanish descent, marginalizing the people from the Sierra and Montaña regions. The Sierra is a mountainous region covering roughly a quarter of the territory and half the population of Peru. Peruvian Indians, who trace their roots to the Incans, inhabit this area and live at poverty levels. They speak primarily Quechua, which further alienates them from the Spanish-speaking people of the Costa region. This area has little arable land and what land is under cultivation is stony and windswept. The only trafficable roads wind along the valley floors and are little more than dirt trails; there are no main roads from the coast.² Due to the prohibitive mountain terrain and lack of access, the Sierra region historically received little government attention. The Montaña region consists of the Amazon River basin and takes up two-thirds of the land of Peru, but is sparsely populated, mostly by tribal Indians. Many believe this region contains rich oil reserves, but remains undeveloped because of the lack of access to the dense jungle. The poor economic conditions, especially in the Sierra region, favored insurgency.

Insurgencies develop through several phases.³ In Phase I, the insurgency is latent and incipient. Its organizers conduct selected acts of terrorism, such as attacks on police forces, assassination of local government officials, and sabotage infrastructure. They may also conduct discreet tactical operations to increase influence in the area and, perhaps more importantly, to acquire arms and ammunition.

Phase II is guerrilla warfare. As the insurgent group gains strength and numbers, it openly challenges the local police and small military units in order to establish control over areas of the country. The insurgents then set up their own government over these areas to demonstrate

² Daniel Masterson, *Militarism and Politics in Latin America: Peru from Sancho Cerro to Sendero Luminoso*, p. 76.

³ U.S. Army, *Counterguerrilla Operations*, p. 1-3.

to the populace that they alone can provide the services the State failed to provide. The goal of this phase is to expand control over other areas and people, in order to mobilize additional support through public service and propaganda. If this fails to generate support, however, the insurgents will resort to coercion and terrorism. The nature of the guerrilla actions and terrorist strikes against the military often provoke an equally violent reaction, or overreaction, from the government forces. The guerrilla acts in the hope that the military will overreact against the general population, causing larger numbers of people to support the insurgency. Each guerrilla success, no matter how minor, followed up with effective propaganda, provides psychological support to the insurgency and demoralizes the government forces. As the government dedicates greater effort to the military aspects of counterinsurgency operations, fewer resources are available for development projects, which hinder its ability to reverse the conditions that caused the insurgency.

Phase III insurgency, also called a war of movement, is conventional warfare. This phase occurs when larger insurgent units conduct combat operations against government forces to capture and retain key objectives. Sendero Luminoso only briefly achieved phase three. Although it engaged in large-unit attacks on government forces, it never was able to retain its objectives for more than twenty-four hours and never was able to sustain the momentum to continue to fight determined government forces.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of guerrilla forces? One of the strengths typically is intelligence collection. Virtually every person is a potential spy or informer for the insurgents in their areas of operation. Another asset is the fact that the rebels are native to the region. They therefore know the traditions and speak the language of the local populace, making them very hard to distinguish from the average citizen. This characteristic becomes even more important during foreign interventions in support of a government. Motivation and discipline are other

strengths. Guerrilla tactics are another advantage because of the ease of planning and execution and difficulty in preventing. Elusiveness, surprise, and brief violent action characterize such tactics, which can be further divided into terrorism and harassment. Some examples of terrorism include bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, threats, mutilations, murder, torture, or blackmail. Insurgents generally use terrorism for coercion, provocation, and intimidation. Examples of harassment include ambushes, raids, and other small-scale attacks dispersed in geography and time which give the perception that the guerrilla can strike anywhere. Finally, physical conditioning is an asset and was so especially in the case of Sendero, which operated in the Sierra, an environment that imposed enormous physical hardships on government troops.

Insurgent movements also have several weaknesses, the primary being limited personnel and resources. Numerically small at first, a guerrilla band must rely on early tactical successes, supplemented by intense propaganda, to attract recruits. The insurgents must also balance the need to recruit new members against security concerns of being penetrated by government agents. Guerrilla forces typically start out with few weapons and little access to money and must acquire additional resources through operations or contributions from the local populace or even foreign governments. The insurgents are also limited in their ability to reach mass segments of the population, especially in areas without modern infrastructure and internet access.

Sendero Luminoso exploited the poor economic conditions to convince the most negatively affected and vulnerable population, the Indian population of the Sierra, to pick up arms and fight against the government. Sendero leaders patiently recruited these people by capitalizing on government neglect while providing hope of a better life. The group progressed through the phases of development and started with simple acts of protest, such as painting slogans on government structures, escalated to terrorism, and eventually resorted to large scale military assaults. Due to the isolation of the Sierra, the government ignored the growing

insurgency and allowed it to expand to the Costa region, which eventually necessitated a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign.

Counterinsurgency describes the full range of measures used by a government to protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.⁴ It comprises the actions taken by a nation to promote growth by building viable institutions (political, military, economic, and social) that respond to the needs of the people and has three targets: the population, the insurgents, and external actors. The government of Peru initiated a limited counterinsurgency campaign beginning in 1983, focused mainly on the military aspects or counterinsurgency operations. Although the focus was on military operations against the insurgents, it also enacted various political, economic and social changes.

Essentially, the State must take various actions to change the conditions that fuel the insurgency. Most importantly, the government must focus on improving the lives of the population. It may also use diplomacy – negotiation with the insurgents. State-sponsored amnesty programs are an example of this. The government may resort to restrictions on civil liberties in order to deny the insurgents the freedom to operate. While this method is the most effective, it can also have adverse consequences and undermine the legitimacy of the current administration. The more restrictions the State can impose without causing more people to rebel, the quicker it can defeat the insurgency. The regime may also target and destroy the insurgent leadership. This technique is effective in a leader-centric organization, but usually only in the short-term as new leaders step forward to fill the vacuum created by the loss. Finally, counterinsurgency operations focus on the active military element of the insurgent movement only. Counterinsurgency operations, such as those launched by the Peruvian military in 1983-84, are a supporting component of counterinsurgency.

⁴ U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, p. 1-4.

In order to restore order, the government must target insurgents. It must isolate them from the general population, both physically and psychologically, by employing a strategy based on balanced development, mobilization, and neutralization. The military contributes to this effort by conducting six major operations: intelligence-gathering, psychological operations, civil affairs, population and resources control, advisory assistance, and tactical or counterinsurgency operations.

The commander plans counterinsurgency operations to exploit the guerrillas' weaknesses and prevent them from exploiting the government's vulnerabilities. Interdiction of the insurgents' logistics support is one crucial task, but the commander must also protect his own lines of communication and infrastructure, such as power stations and water treatment plants. Finally, he sends out combat patrols to collect actionable intelligence, or information that leads to operations that cripple the insurgent organization. Local paramilitary or militia often perform many of these tasks and, along with the police, are chiefly responsible for community defense. These organizations emphasize physical security and securing the lines of communication. The Peruvian government employed such groups, who were known as *Rondas Campesinas*.

Sendero Luminoso is a self-described Maoist organization that professes to advance the principles Mao Zedong introduced in China. According to Mao, during any revolution, guerrilla operations offer the greatest likelihood of success in an underdeveloped nation. Sendero adopted this tenet by continuously forwarding the call to the "People's War" and focusing on armed strikes. A guerrilla force must have powerful political leaders who "work unceasingly to bring about internal unification. Such leaders must work with the people."⁵ The insurgents must

⁵ Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 3-2.

balance operations against the enemy with actions supporting the people. Sendero typically rejected or attacked all who did not adhere to Guzmán's interpretation of Mao.

Mao also stated that the guerrillas must be sympathetic to the needs of the masses. They derive their existence and support from the people and must attempt to meet the needs of the people or the insurgency will fail. The insurgent leaders must be well trained, self-confident, able to establish severe discipline, and able to cope with counter-propaganda. These leaders must be role models for the people.

The rebel force must develop a bond with the community. This takes place by first arousing the people through propaganda and unifying them through political indoctrination. This bond allows the insurgents to establish bases, or geographic areas that openly support the insurgency. Within the base areas, the leaders then begin to arm the guerrillas. Over time, the guerrilla force obtains more sophisticated weapons within the base area by defeating the government forces, which in turn allows it to expand this base. Through this cycle of base expansion and bonding with the communities, the rebels are able to gain strength throughout the nation as the government forces' strength declines. This rebel-communal bond also allows the insurgents to regain territory lost to the State during the course of the struggle.

Mao provided several 'rules' and 'remarks' that outlined guerrilla behavior toward the local populace. These guidelines delineated the means of establishing and maintaining bonds with the local communities. The Viet Cong adhered to Mao's rules and enjoyed great early acceptance and support among the people of Vietnam and serve as an example for Sendero to follow. Mao's three rules were:

1. All actions subject to command. This means that each individual, cell, or detachment must act in accordance with orders of the guerrilla commander and ultimately, the party leadership.

2. Do not steal from the people.
3. Be neither selfish nor unjust.⁶

Mao placed great importance on being proper 'guests' of the locals when occupying their homes and villages to rest, feed, and heal the guerrilla army. He also advocated the following 8 instructions to ensure the guerrilla was a proper guest:

1. Replace the door when you leave the house.
2. Rollup bedding on which you have slept.
3. Be courteous.
4. Be honest in your transactions.
5. Return what you borrow.
6. Replace what you break.
7. Do not bathe in the presence of women.
8. Do not search those you arrest without authority.⁷

Sendero initially lived by these principles and this made it extremely popular with the local population. However, as the government forces moved into territory formerly controlled by the insurgents and began to gain support, Sendero resorted more to coercion and terror to maintain control.

Unlike Sendero, Mao openly recruited and accepted former enemies into his guerrilla force, believing they provided valuable intelligence. Similarly to Sendero, he believed that any new member must undergo political training and indoctrination prior to participation in any operations. Only by making sure that new individuals were truly committed, could they be trusted. This principle made government penetration of Sendero almost impossible.

⁶ Ibid, p. 6-2.

⁷ Ibid.

Mao believed that unorganized guerrilla warfare cannot contribute to victory and those who attack the enemy using a combination of banditry and anarchism do not understand the nature of guerrilla action. Guerrillas are to exterminate small forces of the enemy, to harass and weaken large units, and to attack enemy lines of communication, all to compel the enemy to disperse his strength. “We must make war everywhere and cause dispersal of his forces and dissipation of his strength.”⁸ During the progress of hostilities, guerrillas gradually develop into conventional forces that operate in conjunction with other units of the guerrilla army. Mao’s principles of guerrilla tactics can be summarized as follows:

-Enemy advances, we retreat

-Enemy halts, we harass

-Enemy tires, we attack

-Enemy retreats, we pursue.⁹

By adhering to Mao’s philosophy of guerrilla warfare, Sendero Luminoso capitalized on the existing environment and convinced the population of the Sierra to organize and revolt against the government. These people were prime candidates to support this peasant-based revolution as years of government neglect or half-measures elevated their frustration. Despite the government’s success in quelling previous insurgent groups, the people of the central highlands were desperate for change and willing to resort to violence to improve their future.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U.S. Army, *Counter guerrilla Operations*, p. 2-10.

CHAPTER 2 FORMATION (1968-1980)

Several factors contributed to the emergence of Sendero Luminoso, including dismal economic conditions, marginally effective government, and people eager for change. Several governments attempted to address these concerns throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The military was at the forefront of these efforts when it took over control of Peru through a series of coups, mainly to prevent what it perceived as middle-class elitist organizations from assuming power. With the government experiencing such turbulence, Marxist-based organizations were able to take root, both among the urban working class and rural peasantry. Several Marxist leaders appeared during this time, but none more committed to violent overthrow than the leader of Sendero Luminoso, Abimael Guzmán. He used the education system in the highlands to spread his beliefs of the need for violent revolution and organized the peasants for war.

Latin America was a particularly turbulent region in the early 1960s. Many of the countries were experiencing some form of political turmoil ranging from protests and strikes to revolution. Most of the striking workers were aligned with Marxist groups or left-wing labor unions, adding to fears of Communist revolution. This political turmoil, as well as economic trouble, led to military coups in many Latin American countries in order to restore order or prevent Communist takeovers. President Fernando Belaúnde Terry of the Popular Action Party (PAP) struggled with those same problems in Peru in the 1960s. Economic problems imposed extreme hardship on the peasants, most of who worked on large haciendas for low wages and meager rations. As a result, unrest spread throughout the country, challenging Belaúnde and his administration to maintain order. At the same time, insurgents from several Cuban-style foco

guerrilla movements were attacking isolated military and police posts in the countryside.¹ By 1966, Belaúnde found himself forced to send in the military to crush the guerrilla movements and contain the peasants, establishing a precedent of violent military action.²

The Peruvian military had never been one to show restraint. Since 1914, the military had demonstrated a willingness to intervene in political matters.³ In 1962, military leaders took over in a coup after the election of President Victor Raul Haya de la Torre of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), which they violently opposed, as a result of several clashes with ‘Apristas’ dating back to 1930. That year, Lieutenant Colonel Sanchez Cerro had seized power to preempt an APRA electoral victory and begun to crack down on the organization. Apristas launched violent protests, killed twenty-six soldiers, and assassinated Cerro himself in 1933. The military retaliated by killing several thousand Apristas.⁴ The military opposed APRA’s populist ideology centered on the urban middle class. APRA wanted to mobilize and empower the urban middle-class to create a State-directed capitalist economy.⁵

The military once again intervened in 1968 due to President Belaúnde’s continued weak leadership. Several other conditions led to the coup, including Haya de la Torre’s victory in the national elections that year and the military’s vow to keep APRA out of power, as well as the strong nationalistic sentiment in the military. Another key factor was Belaúnde’s settlement with

¹ Cuban style foco guerrilla movements were characterized by a military style organization under the control of one leader. Their primary line of operation was military with political work taking a secondary role. The foco theory was that communist revolution could be inspired by taking to the mountains and instructing the indigenous population on the importance of overthrowing the regime and coming down from the mountains to take the cities. These groups also typically wore olive drab uniforms to set themselves apart from the general population.

² Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 204.

³ Masterson, *Militarism and Politics in Latin America*, pp. 29-30.

⁴ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *The Peruvian Coup: Reasons and Prospects*, p. 3; Masterson, *Militarism and Politics in Latin America*, pp.33-34.

⁵ Julio Cotler, “Democracy and National Integration in Peru,” in Cynthia McClintock and Abraham F. Lowenthal, eds., *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, p. 8.

the U.S.-owned International Petroleum Corporation (IPC).⁶ The settlement with the IPC in August 1968, known as the Act of Talara, was a particularly unpopular decision. At a time of growing national debt, rising inflation, and worsening unemployment, most Peruvians considered this a sell-out to the Americans and added to growing ‘anti-Yankee’ sentiment. In essence, the Belaúnde administration took control of several oil fields from the Americans and, in return, dismissed a claim against the company for \$144 million in “unjust profits.” The decision led to a split in the PAP and guaranteed Belaúnde’s defeat in the national elections.

The military, which initially had supported Belaúnde and his economic reform measures, grew increasingly disillusioned with the government and cabinet ministers. The more difficult the issue, the more reluctant the administration was to make a decision or take the action necessary to bring the economy under control. The military high command made plans to intervene as early as 1966, using the recent coup in Argentina as a blueprint, but postponed action. Prior to the election, APRA leaders had tried to gain military support by promising new equipment purchases and expressing regret over past clashes, but Army leaders were unswayed.

The combination of Belaúnde’s weak leadership, the Act of Talara, belief that the cabinet ministers were interested only in self-enrichment, the split in the PAP, and the probable APRA victory in the impending elections led the military to act.⁷ On October 3, 1968, a small group of army officers conducted the actual take-over and then invited the navy and air force to participate. The commanders of the three services formed a “Revolutionary Junta” and named General Juan Velasco president. He formed a cabinet from the top-ranking officers and surrounded himself with advisors made up of highly nationalistic army officers. One of his first actions was the nationalization of the IPC, an extremely popular action in Peru but one that

⁶ C.I.A., *Peruvian Coup*, 1.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 5.

placed him at odds with the United States, which subsequently withdrew all aid. This led Velasco to turn to the Soviet Bloc for support.⁸

Velasco established diplomatic and commercial relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries and they, in turn, began sending economic and military aid to Peru. For example, from 1954-1968 Peru had received no funding from Communist countries. But in 1969, the Soviet Union sent \$6 million in aid and in 1970 this increased to \$28 million with an additional \$25 million from Eastern European countries.⁹ This support from communist countries disappointed some in the government, but Velasco was able to remain in power by capitalizing on anti-U.S. sentiment.

It is important to remember that the Peruvian armed forces, like those of most other Latin American countries, see themselves as the arbiter of national politics and believe it is their duty to intervene in the political process when internal stability is threatened. That attitude affected civilian elected representatives and shaped all decision-making in the government. Politicians in Peru to the present must always keep one eye on the military when taking action to ensure that it meets with military approval.

Velasco and his military regime were active in support of the peasants. Since the mid 1950's the military had been a leading voice in favor of reforms to avoid rural unrest. The government now made several attempts at agrarian reform, promising to break up the holdings of large landowners and distribute the land to the peasants. While the government did not succeed in mobilizing the peasantry, other non-governmental organizations were able to operate more effectively in the highlands. Two socialist confederations were particularly active. The National

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Economic Credits and Grants Extended to Less Developed Countries 1954-70 and years 1969 and 1970*.

Agrarian Confederation (CAN) was established in 1974 under official auspices.¹⁰ Some top government officials apparently hoped that CAN would provide a vehicle for government control over the peasantry, but CAN resisted such a role. A second confederation, the Peruvian Peasant Confederation (CCP), also experienced considerable growth during the 70's. Peasants from both these groups occupied arable land on large haciendas and the government accepted their takeover. However, as CAN became more independent and larger in numbers, the administration declared it illegal and disbanded it.

These two groups provide examples of the peasantry's ability to mobilize with outside influence and underscore the importance of dedicated leadership in that process. In part as a result of recruitment by the two confederations, the vote for the Marxist left skyrocketed in the Peruvian highlands. For example, 40 percent of the vote in the highlands and 27 percent nationwide went to Marxists candidates in 1978.¹¹ This was an important indicator of the growing radicalization of the Peruvian countryside.

Another reason for the Marxist appeal was the increasingly unequal distribution of income. The economy of Peru was almost entirely export-oriented and centered in the coastal and urban centers. Nearly all goods produced were sold outside the country and most of the companies producing the goods were foreign-owned; therefore, little of the money found its way to the government or Peruvian economy. These companies also provided the best-paying jobs to the few lucky enough to get them, mainly the better educated Peruvians of Spanish heritage who lived in these urban centers. The rest of the poorly paid workers in these regions were turning to leftist workers' unions. In contrast, the mountainous interior of Peru was grossly underdeveloped and populated by Indians. The only foreign-owned businesses were mining-

¹⁰ Cynthia McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion: Origins and Trajectory," in Susan Eckstein, ed, *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, p. 74.

¹¹ Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 185.

related and the Indians who worked in the mines were exploited and paid very low wages and thus receptive to appeals by Marxist groups. Additionally, this reliance on foreign-owned corporations made it difficult for the government to generate the revenue needed to carry out reforms that might ameliorate the plight of the masses.

These conditions set the stage for the emergence of a group such as Sendero Luminoso. The government was unable to respond adequately to the needs of the people of Peru in general and the poverty-stricken peasants in particular. This was true for both the elected leaders like President Belaúnde and the military junta. Also, the activities of groups such as CAN and CCP demonstrated that the peasants could organize and take action. Finally, education reform led to an increasing number of peasants becoming educated, but unable to find jobs in the weak economy. The result was growing resentment which resulted in mass protests and workers strikes throughout Peru by the end of the 1970's. Military leaders grew disillusioned and agreed to a restoration of civilian rule. At the time, however, they made it clear that they were leaving the government, but not relinquishing power.¹²

Communism per se has never had widespread appeal in Peruvian society - the major political parties, such as PAP and APRA, were anti-Communist – but Marxist ideology had developed a significant following.¹³ However, there were several influential Marxist thinkers, the most prominent of which was José Carlos Mariátegui, who helped to found a Communist Party in 1929 that affiliated with the Communist International.¹⁴ Mariátegui was a vocal advocate of land reform because, he argued, the people of Peru could never be free until they had dealt decisively with the question of land-to-the-tiller. He believed that the large estates had to

¹² Philip Mauceri and Maxwell A. Cameron, "Unholy Alliance: Drugs, Corruption, and the Peruvian Military During the Fujimori Administration."

¹³ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Peru and the United States: The Implication of the IPC Controversy*, p. 15.

¹⁴ Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 375.

be broken up and the land distributed to the peasants. He envisioned the creation of a utopian society based on ancient Incan collectivism and communal traditions.¹⁵ Mariátegui died in April 1930 without having realized his dream.

In the late 1950's, the split between Beijing and Moscow created new opportunities for Latin American revolutionaries. The Maoist model of peasant-based revolution inspired Latin Americans long dissatisfied with the bureaucratized orthodox communist parties. Chinese Communist influence grew in the region, a fact highlighted by the trip to China by several communist leaders from Peru at the invitation of the Chinese government.¹⁶ This provided the opportunity for young, impressionable individuals to see first-hand the events in China and the application of "true communism" by Mao Zedong. It also led to the development of a group committed to spreading its own form of Maoism based on the Chinese experiences.

Marxism found its greatest appeal among the intellectuals, historians and economists. Many of these leftists taught in the universities, which gave them the ability to influence the student population. Even in the late 1960s during the Velasco regime, they gained greater influence by defending ultra-nationalist causes.¹⁷ Despite this broad exposure, these groups were unable to organize or effect any real change in Peru.

Sendero Luminoso was much shrewder and more dedicated than the Peruvian guerrillas of the 1960s, and much more effective in building an alliance between its militants and the peasantry. According to Sendero propaganda, it traces its roots to Mariátegui's vision of a utopian society achieved through violence and preserved through dictatorship.¹⁸ In contrast to earlier revolutionary groups, Sendero Luminoso did not simply arm the peasantry and attempt to

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 197.

¹⁶ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Plans of Chinese Communist Party to Call Meeting of World Communist Leader*.

¹⁷ C.I.A., *The Implications of the IPC Controversy*, p. 15.

¹⁸ "Military Line," p. 3.

foment unrest, but instead studied its culture in order to understand its motivations and needs. In this regard, Sendero's patience, dedication, and long-term perspective have been virtually unique among Peruvian revolutionary groups.¹⁹ This long-range approach, as well as leadership and organization, were the keys to its success.

Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, the original leader of Sendero Luminoso, was a political activist in Ayacucho for more than fifteen years before the group launched its violent campaign. Guzmán was born on December 3, 1934 in Arequipa, a large city off Peru's southern coast. He joined the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) at the age of fifteen as it was splitting along Marxist-Maoist lines. Guzmán recalled in an interview his childhood memories of strikes and protests and confrontation between the Apristas and Communists. At the same time he began studying Marxist material because he found it interesting. He graduated from the University of Arequipa, where he had earned degrees in philosophy and law with theses on the "Kantian Theory of Space" and "The Bourgeois Democratic State."²⁰

Guzmán began teaching philosophy at the National University of San Cristobal of Huamanga in Ayacucho in 1962. He was also active mobilizing support for his belief in the armed struggle and disseminating his message among the more charismatic and popular teachers. He organized and committed significant effort to political meetings and discussions at his home. Guzmán was one of the main reasons the PCP split into two factions, when he formed the Red Faction or Bandera Roja (Red Flag) of the communist party in 1963, which advocated armed conflict and followed the Maoist philosophy of peasant revolution. Guzmán voiced disdain for any movement that differed from his own; he felt that only through a violent armed revolution could any real change occur and that anything else would be wasted effort.

¹⁹ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," p. 77.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 77.

Guzmán guided the Red Faction toward his goal of creating a revolution in Peru starting in the countryside and eventually surrounding the cities. In other words, by creating a peasant revolution in the Andean highlands, the insurgency would starve out the cities that rely on the produce from the peasants and eventually create unrest and revolution in the cities. During this time, a series of peasant protests and strikes forced the government to make concessions to their demands. Guzmán felt vindicated that the peasantry could bring about change. In 1964, the PCP split again with one faction joining other leftist groups to form the People's Defense Front, a group advocating use of the electoral process. Guzmán demonstrated his commitment to violent revolution when he declined to join this front. He criticized the new coalition as ineffective and not representative of the interests of the peasants and insisted that the party be rebuilt by upholding "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought and the thought of Mariátegui," and by sweeping away revisionism.²¹ Guzmán consistently adhered to his philosophy advocating the need for violent revolution, following the theories of Chairman Mao. In 1965, Guzmán traveled to China during the height of the Cultural Revolution and witnessed the revolutionary transformation taking place, including the actions of the Red Guard and the relentless combat against revisionism.²² The visit profoundly influenced him and shaped his thought and philosophy. Although Mao later admitted that the Cultural Revolution had been wrong, Guzmán never wavered. He came away from his trip convinced of the need for a protracted people's war, one that would target the "three mountains that weigh on the people: imperialism, bureaucrat-capitalism, and semi-feudalism."²³

By 1966, Guzmán and the Red Faction gained control of the University council which led to support for Guzmán among Ayacucho's urban population. This gave him control of the

²¹ "Military Line," p. 4.

²² Simon Strong, *Shining Path: The World's Deadliest Revolutionary Force*, p. 33.

²³ Heriberto Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified and Why it is the Road to Liberation," p. 5.

university newspaper, which he used to publish fiery editorials and articles that ridiculed the government. By 1969, Guzmán was the head of Academics for the Department of Humanities. He promptly changed the curriculum to promote his agenda of armed revolution. In response to the growing communist threat, the Velasco regime ordered the arrest of the leaders of the People's Defense Front and the Red Faction of the PCP. Guzmán used his short stay in jail to win key leaders over to his cause, which ultimately allowed him to consolidate power in the Red Faction and his idea of armed conflict. This consolidation left two main groups in the party: the Red Faction in Ayacucho led by Guzmán, and the Bolshevik faction centered in Lima. Eventually, the group in Lima splintered after failing to achieve any significant gains through the electoral process, leaving Guzmán's faction as the de facto Communist party, which adopted the name Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path around 1970. By 1976 he had developed sufficient internal control to establish base areas in preparation for armed struggle.²⁴

Guzmán focused on the education system as a means of developing the cadres necessary to carry the word to the peasantry in the countryside. As a result, the students learning under his radical curriculum eventually became teachers in the surrounding peasant communities. From this time until 1981, the university produced roughly 5,000 teachers. Although there is no data on how many of these teachers were Senderistas, the number was significant because by the mid 1970's, Sendero Luminoso virtually controlled the entire high school education system in Ayacucho.²⁵

During the Seventh Plenum of April 1977, the party adopted the slogan "Construction serving the armed struggle" and Guzmán began sending his cadres into the countryside to build regional committees or shadow governing bodies. The next year, the party endorsed "Outline for

²⁴ "Military Line," p. 5.

²⁵ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," p. 78.

the Armed Struggle,” which made the countryside the principal theater of action and in June 1979 the Party announced the People’s War. Prior to launching the People’s War, Guzmán had to overcome several obstacles, including removing those who doubted that revolutionary conditions existed and that an uprising could be successful, and those who still believed that non-violent means were best. This led to the formation of the “First Company in Deeds,” a group made up of the most loyal followers pledged to be the first to start the revolution.²⁶ The initial plan was to boycott the upcoming elections and then begin armed conflict. The First Company would conduct acts of sabotage and military assaults, armed agitation and selective annihilation, and distribute propaganda.

Sendero Luminoso fanatically adhered to the policies set forth by Abimael Guzmán. Members of Sendero Luminoso or Senderistas consider themselves “Gang of Four Maoists.” During the consolidation of power in the communist party this fanaticism appealed more to the students than to the peasants. Sendero Luminoso has shown little inclination to changing its ideology, remaining fully committed to installing Marxist oriented rule. Its leadership points out that

it is through violence that our people have conquered their economic gains, rights, and freedoms. Everything in fact was won through revolutionary violence, in ardent battles against the reactionary violence; that is how the eight hour day was won, our lands were conquered and defended, our rights were won and tyrants were overthrown. Revolutionary violence is, therefore, the very essence of our historical process....[I]t is easy to understand that the development and victory of the Peruvian revolution, of our democratic revolution, the emancipation of the people and the class, will be achieved solely through the greatest revolutionary war of our people, raising the masses in arms through the People’s War.²⁷

The members of Sendero Luminoso say that they carry their “lives on their fingertips,” ready to give their lives for the cause on a moment’s notice to advance the

²⁶ “Military Line,” p. 5.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

world revolution.²⁸ As a matter of fact, Guzmán and other leaders of Sendero Luminoso felt that once the revolution advanced in Peru, it would be the catalyst for a world-wide revolution, serving as the example for millions of what was possible through violence.

Guzmán was convinced that, by defeating the enemy and controlling small rural communities, more peasants would join the revolution, enabling them to ultimately capture the cities. For good measure, he added that the struggle would free Peru from Yankee domination while serving the worldwide proletarian revolution.²⁹ Guzmán stated three laws that govern the People's War: People's War in the countryside to the city; construction of the revolutionary armed forces, the People's Guerrilla Army; strategy and tactics that are formed through the encirclement and annihilation campaigns.³⁰ He outlined additional goals including peasant participation in government, repudiation of foreign debt, and nationalization of foreign companies and holdings. Guzmán's philosophy became known as 'Gonzalo Thought,' so named because the party faithful knew him as Chairman Gonzalo. He also claimed to be the 'fourth sword of Marxism' after Lenin, Marx, and Mao Zedong.³¹

Sendero Luminoso is organized around three main divisions: the central apparatus, the People's Guerrilla Army, and the Popular Front. The first consists of a Politburo of five members who form the real decision-making body of the party. The Politburo uses the Central Committee consisting of nineteen members to disseminate orders and guidance to six regional committees based on geographic regions.³² The Popular Front is made up of several legal organizations that provide support functions to the leaders and the People's Guerrilla Army,

²⁸ Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified and Why it is the Road to Liberation," p. 5.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 3.

³⁰ "Military Line," p. 1.

³¹ Strong, *Shining Path*, p. 71.

³² "Military Line," p. 4.

including recruiting, legal defense for arrested members, and family support for members killed in action or imprisoned.

Guzmán structured the People's Guerrilla Army after the pattern Mao Zedong laid out in his works and based upon the cell. Each cell consists of five to ten members, each with specialized duties. There is little to no intercellular contact in order to minimize damage should government force capture a cell member.³³ The cell leader receives orders from a commander, who controls several cells, loosely resembling a platoon structure. These commanders also report to a company commander who is usually a member of the local People's Committee. The People's Guerrilla Army not only fights, but participates in the organization and daily functioning of the base areas. The base area is a geographic locality where the government forces are subject to hostile action and revolutionaries receive at least passive support, and not actual structures built in the countryside. People's Committees, elected by a delegate assembly composed of one-third each of party members, poor peasants, and middle-class peasants, govern the base areas. These committees divide the land that has been taken from the big landlords and the government, first to those who have none, then to those who have some land already. The People's Committees also enforce collective planting and harvesting with assistance from the People's Guerrilla Army. They form new laws and provide justice in the base areas by organizing people's trials where mass meetings of the community vote to decide the guilt or innocence of someone accused of a crime and to decide penalties. Sendero formed dozens of these committees to replace the local governments in areas they controlled. Several base areas and their people's committees were grouped together under the control of regional committees, composed of senior military and political representatives from the people's committees.

³³ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," p. 79.

Within each base area or district, the people's committee selects an overall military commander and several political commissioners. This group also functions under Guzmán's control, as the forum for both military and political matters. The commander forms the soldiers into several groups with responsibilities for local sentry duties, reconnaissance, arresting traitors, and preventing dissemination of enemy propaganda. They also provide stretcher-bearers, distribute food, and conduct comfort missions.³⁴

During its formation and consolidation, Sendero Luminoso not only replaced the government organizations with its own people's committees, but had to impose its own societal laws on the people to indoctrinate them fully into the communist party. Prior to the start of the guerrilla war, Guzmán consolidated power not only through the University, but also through the regional committee of Ayacucho; all to continue to forward the premise that only through violent action could change occur. Guzmán directed the regional committee to conduct three main functions: political indoctrination of the peasantry, military training, and logistical support of the guerrillas.³⁵

Ayacucho was an ideal area to launch Guzmán's People's War. The region possessed a rebellious cultural tradition, having consistently voted opposition candidates to the assembly in successive elections. Sendero's popularity in Ayacucho derived from the leaders' ability to identify with its social base and address local concerns. Sendero neither promoted nor restricted religious observations and conducted all training using Quechua, which is the main language of the peasants.

Outside leadership is of particular consequence in turning localized rural rebellions into nationally coordinated revolutionary movements. Peasants typically engage in revolutionary

³⁴ Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 5-4.

³⁵ "Military Line," p. 4.

activity when a revolutionary elite adds a new layer of leadership and doctrine to peasant life.³⁶ Sendero was unique among Peruvian Marxist groups in its openness to young provincial militants as leaders. Initially, the group's leadership was predominantly white intellectuals, but by 1980 the leadership was largely Ayacucho-born. These locally-developed militants pushed to begin the armed struggle in 1980. In contrast to previous Peruvian revolutionaries from middle-class backgrounds, the Senderistas were prepared to live austere for many years in remote, bleak places. They learned the Indian language if they did not already know it and often married into the communities. Much of Sendero's strength came from its success in garnering support from the Peruvian Indians, a segment comprising close to one-half of the country's population. Successive governments ignored and even suppressed the Indians, making them ideal candidates for recruitment in subversive movements. Authorities ignored the Indian population to the extent that it was almost inevitable that it forge links with revolutionary movements.³⁷

³⁶ Eckstein, "Power and Popular Protest," p. 38.

³⁷ Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 212.

CHAPTER 3 SENDERO ACTION AND EFFECT

Sendero Luminoso capitalized on the worsening economic and social situation in Peru and was fully prepared to launch its insurgency. Conversely, the security forces were not ready to conduct a counterinsurgency - the military was organized for a conventional war against its neighbors and the police suffered from years of under-funding and poor training. The government, in general, was not prepared to face a challenge from a well-organized, aggressive guerrilla force due to poor relationships between the administration and security forces, especially the military. This situation manifested itself as Belaúnde chose to first, ignore the initial Sendero actions and then later, offer limited response. Sendero benefited from the weak response by expanding to a serious force that threatened the Peruvian government, which finally deployed the military to counter the insurgents – marking the country's descent into a state of general violence.

During the 1980's, Latin American countries were experiencing great economic hardship as a result of years of increasing debt. The situation in Peru in 1980 was one of despair. Most of Peru's economy was geared toward making loan payments to its creditors, resulting in spiraling inflation, business closures and unemployment. Peru's gross domestic product fell by 8.3% from 1981 to 1983.¹ The people at the bottom of the economic ladder, the peasants, suffered the most because nearly all of their sources of income disappeared completely.

This economic uncertainty and social injustice provided a fertile environment for terrorist activity. The Sierra was among the hardest hit regions and this allowed Guzmán and Sendero Luminoso to continue to develop the movement and gain followers. Sendero

¹ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 385.

capitalized on the bleak economic conditions across the country by recruiting among the various disgruntled groups such as striking workers, anti-government political protesters, and peasants. Another potential target for Sendero recruitment was the coca farmers and narcotraffickers. Peru was under pressure from the United States to conduct coca eradication efforts and these measures angered the coca farmers. Coca cultivation was the only means of income for many of the peasants and government eradication policy did not provide for substitute crops.

This economic and social crisis was the precise condition Guzmán needed to launch Sendero Luminoso into action. All the government economic relief was focused on the economically developed Costa region. The people of the Sierra were suffering at below-subsistence levels and looking for relief. Sendero Luminoso cadre promised the peasants a better life if they were willing to join the cause. Guzmán's vision of a peasant-governed society appealed to many who were convinced the Lima government did not care about them. The time for action had finally come.

The government forces that would oppose Sendero Luminoso varied in quality and capability. The Peruvian military consists of three services, the Army, the Navy (including the Marine Corps), and the Air Force. The Army is considered the primary service and consists of 85,000 soldiers, mostly of Indian descent.² The officer corps is made up of mestizos, or mixed personnel with a mostly middle class background. The Navy has about 27,000 personnel and is considered an exclusive career path for well-off white Peruvians.³

² David Scott Palmer, "The Armed Forces: Mission and Organization," in Rex A. Hudson, ed., *A Country Study: Peru*.

The Air force consists of about 15,000 personnel and is primarily involved in counter narcotics operations.⁴

Despite the loss of U.S. support during the Velasco regime, the Army, on paper, was a formidable one indeed. The American government withdrew military support to Peru after the Velasco coup and over human rights issues. The Carter administration continued sending vocal and angry rhetoric to Central and South America to improve its human rights record. In response to this pressure, many Latin American countries, including Peru, renounced U.S. assistance. This allowed the Soviet Union to move into Latin America. Moscow viewed the break between the U.S. and Latin America as an exploitable situation. Many of these countries welcomed Soviet arms dealers and advisors, including Peru.

As it turns out, Peru was the only Latin American country to buy Soviet hardware. In 1982, Peru purchased several Su-22 Fighter bombers, Mi-8 Hip helicopters, T-55 medium tanks, anti-aircraft artillery, SA-3 and SA-7 missiles and small arms.⁵ In all, Peru spent close to \$1.2 billion dollars on hardware and technical assistance.⁶ It also made purchases from France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and Israel. Even the U.S. sold arms to Peru as it agreed to tougher counter-drug efforts. The philosophy of the military leaders was simple: 'the best arms at the best price, regardless of the seller.' This made the Peruvian military one of the most modern and formidable in Latin America. Of course, the military was not geared toward a counterinsurgency fight, but a conventional ground war against its neighboring countries, Ecuador and Chile, with which it had engaged in several border clashes in the past.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *Peru-USSR: Implications of the Military Relationship*, p. 5.

⁶ Ibid, iii.

In 1980, all three services and the National Intelligence Service (SIN) operated under the direct control of the President, the commander in chief. The military also formed a Joint Command of the Armed Forces that established military policy, training priorities, and conducted routine operations during peacetime. The Joint Command was headed by a Chairman, the position rotating among the services in one-year terms. This organization appeared to give the President of Peru great power, but the military and intelligence services were not integrated which resulted, on several occasions, in the military being operationally and tactically surprised. In addition, the Joint Command could overrule the commander in chief and therefore actually controlled the military. This relationship forced the chief executive to seek the approval of the Joint Command prior to taking any action that might impact on the military.

In contrast to the military, the Peruvian police, poorly manned, funded and equipped, were among the worst in Latin America. The force consists of three divisions under the direction of the Ministry of Interior with about 5,000 personnel total.⁷ The Civil Guard, similar to a typical metropolitan police force, is the largest division and is responsible for crime control and general security. The next division is the Republican Guard, which is responsible for prison security and special guard duties, such as the President's guard. The third division is the Peruvian Investigative Police (PIP), a plainclothes force comparable in duties to the FBI. Each of the divisions possessed its own specialized counterterrorism or counterinsurgency unit. The Civil Guard operated the Sinchi counterinsurgency battalion, roughly 400 personnel. The Republican Guard manned the Llapan Atic counterterrorism unit, similar to a SWAT team. The PIP had a large counterterrorism directorate (DIRCOTE). At

⁷ David Scott Palmer, "Police Forces," in Rex A. Hudson, ed., *A Country Study: Peru*.

the start of the 1980s, none of these organizations were capable of conducting security operations against a dedicated foe.

Sendero initiated its first actions in May 1980, just after the military relinquished power to Belaúnde. These consisted of random acts of terror, such as assassinating local government officials and sabotaging unguarded infrastructure, a Phase I insurgency according to U.S. military doctrine. Senderistas moved into many mountain communities, combining ideological indoctrination with physical intimidation against those who resisted their call to smash authority and establish an egalitarian utopia. The insurgents then embarked on a campaign of low-risk, high-profile terrorist attacks consisting primarily of dynamiting electrical towers, public buildings, and such symbols of authority as the Justice Ministry and police posts.⁸ These first actions were minor irritants to the government and confusing to the people, who did not understand their implications. A Communist Party pamphlet described the action as “striking with agitation and armed propaganda through the seizure of radio stations, leaflets, and posters.”⁹ These pamphlets went on to describe these initial strikes as “a defiant political blow of transcendental significance that, displaying rebellious red flags and hoisting hammers and sickles, proclaimed: ‘It is right to rebel’ and ‘Power grows from the barrel of a gun.’”¹⁰

The various independent cells continued to carry out acts of terrorism in the Sierra and occasionally around Lima. Intermittently, these cells joined together in detachments to conduct larger operations. Most of the activity occurred around the provinces of Ayabamba and Ayasarca and around the outskirts of Lima. One of the more daring early actions was setting fire to the San Martín municipal building. These early acts were in keeping with

⁸ Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 210.

⁹ Heriberto Ocasio, “Why the People’s War is Justified and Why it is the Road to Liberation,” p. 3.

¹⁰ Military Line, p. 5.

Guzmán's philosophy of focusing the rebellion in the countryside and surrounding the cities. At this time, Sendero Luminoso consisted only of a few armed cells and possessed only crude weapons including, revolvers, a few shotguns, and a small amount of dynamite stolen from local mining companies. In one example of Guzmán's hearkening to the Incan traditions of the peasants, his cells used old Incan slings to hurl the dynamite at the targets.¹¹

Armed with these few crude weapons, and also with clubs and knives and sometimes even fake wooden rifles, the cells attacked the local landlords or large landowners and divided their holdings among the peasants. This redistribution of land among the peasants was extremely popular. For years they had waited for promised government land reform. Sendero Luminoso moved in and accomplished what the government was unable to do.

Although the early Sendero attacks centered on the Andean highlands, they occasionally struck selected sites in the cities, especially in Lima. One of the favorite targets was the United States. Sendero cells attacked anything they considered symbols of Yankee imperialism, such as the Bayer chemical plant, the U.S. Embassy, and the symbolic Kennedy statue in the affluent Lima suburb of Miraflores.¹² From 1980 until 1982, by carrying out these effective, small-unit actions across a large area of Peru, Sendero was able to establish control in extensive areas of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurimac. Some of the more notable attacks during this time include the attack on the U.S. Embassy on August 31, 1981, when dynamite thrown from a passing car caused structural damage to the chancery and ambassador's residence. By October 1981, the government had declared a state of emergency in Cangello, La Mar, Huanta, and Victor Fijardo provinces. Established for 60 days, it

¹¹ Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified," p. 3.

¹² Ibid, p. 3.

granted the government extra powers to impose curfews, detain people, and restrict freedom of movement.¹³

According to Communist Party propaganda, the development of the guerrilla war had three components: armed strikes, conquering bases, and developing the bases.¹⁴ The armed strikes lasted from May 1981 to December 1982 with the main objective of taking control of more areas of Peru in order to establish base areas. Guzmán later called this period the War of Little Wars, denoting the independence of the separate actions. The group's supporting effort during this time was to capture or steal as many weapons as possible in order to equip the growing number of insurgents who flocked to the cause. The rebels continued to attack the local leaders or gamonales as the primary target as well as isolated, weakly defended police detachments as a secondary target. Once they gained control of an area, they established People's Committees to replace the local governing body. These committees ensured that an area, once under Sendero control, remained under Sendero control, initially by providing services and benefits to the people. For example, the insurgents often entered a village and rid the area of thieves, abusive bureaucrats, and other undesirable people. They also provided services such as education, agricultural assistance, and medical care. Those that did not willingly participate were subjected to intimidation and violence. The People's Committees were the key to the consolidation of Sendero power over growing areas of the Andean highlands. In two short years, Sendero Luminoso expanded to a phase II guerrilla war.

By 1982, Sendero Luminoso was well on its way to controlling several provinces in and around Ayacucho and was becoming increasingly bolder in its attacks. It also continued

¹³ Gustavo Gorriti, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru*, p. 99.

¹⁴ Military Line, p. 7.

to target U.S. and other foreign-owned or associated structures. The U.S. Embassy reported that the insurgency posed a threat to government stability and confirmed that the insurgents were arming themselves with small arms and machineguns purchased in Peru or stolen from police and military posts.¹⁵ The rebels funded their operations during these early years through robberies, typically striking buses filled with foreign tourists.

Sendero was attracting increasing numbers of followers. New recruits were subjected to extensive political indoctrination and paramilitary training conducted at clandestine “people’s schools” prior to being put into cells to carry out attacks. Additionally, new recruits often conducted their initial attacks alone under a single leader in order to prove their commitment to the cause. These measures increased security from penetration by security personnel, but also limited the speed of growth and size of the insurgent force. Nevertheless, as a testament to their increasing popularity among young peasants, in a 1982 poll 82 percent listed Sendero Luminoso as the most appealing group to join.¹⁶

The Belaúnde government’s weak response to the insurgency also contributed to rebel popularity. For more than two years, the government deliberately ignored the Sendero rebellion. In most public statements, Belaúnde referred to members of Sendero Luminoso as thugs and bandits and attempted to dismiss the threat they posed. The administration sent the Sinchi battalion to Ayacucho in a feeble attempt to restore order, but the unit was abusive to the people and ineffective against Sendero.¹⁷ Belaúnde was hesitant to use the military because he feared its leaders. He remembered how General Velasco had ousted him in 1968 and the experience left him timid when dealing with the military. The remoteness of the areas

¹⁵ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Latin America Review-Peru: Sendero Luminoso*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Cynthia McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion: Origins and Trajectory,” in Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, pp. 62-63.

¹⁷ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Latin America Review-Peru: Sendero Luminoso*, p. 3.

that Sendero Luminoso occupied also made it difficult to mount an effective campaign of repression against them.

In March 1982, Sendero Luminoso ushered in a new phase of the rebellion. In a well-coordinated military offensive, 300 guerrillas operating in three separate columns, assaulted and held the maximum security prison of Ayacucho and released a total of 247 prisoners, including over 100 suspected terrorists.¹⁸ The rebels followed this success with simultaneous strikes on several civil guard posts and municipal offices. The insurgents also sabotaged the electrical towers near Lima, blacking out the city for several hours. Communist Party propaganda described these successful operations:

The people's Liberation Army carries out guerrilla actions against the armed forces, leads the masses to attack and liberate the so-called "strategic hamlets" of the government, carries out assassinations of proven enemies of the people, and carries out sabotage of the economic foundations of the old state. In cities they have conducted massive armed strikes that have paralyzed commerce and industry for days at a time- preparing the masses in the cities for insurrection, basing themselves mainly in the vast shantytowns of urban poor that surround the city centers.¹⁹

This forced Belaúnde to act. He expanded the emergency zone to include sixteen provinces in Ayacucho and the neighboring departments of Apurímac and Huancavelica. The emergency zone decree allowed the police to move in once again and assume control of the region by restricting movement and suspending civil rights. Government forces could detain individuals for weeks without cause. Human rights groups accused the police of committing many atrocities once they moved into areas and some statistics seem to support those claims. For example, there had been only fourteen civilian casualties prior to 1982 and none were listed as missing or 'disappeared' – a popular term used to describe those who were missing and presumed dead at the hands of the government – but once the police moved in, the

¹⁸ Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified," p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

numbers increased. The real victims were the peasants. On one side, they had the government, which curtailed their movement, imposed curfews, and treated them harshly. On the other side, the Senderistas threatened to kill anyone suspected of supporting or cooperating with the government. As one peasant stated, the situation was a “plague on both your houses.”²⁰ One thing was clear: Sendero Luminoso had gained the government’s attention and was becoming a serious guerrilla force.

How could Sendero Luminoso – essentially, a band of organized peasants with crude weapons and no formal military training – achieve such success? Most of it can be attributed to the laxity and inefficiency of the civilian security forces. Rivalries among the various intelligence and law enforcement organizations hampered the government’s efforts. The competing organizations often refused to share information or to follow up leads. The administration needed to modernize and restructure these groups to centralize intelligence and law enforcement activities and facilitate closer coordination. There was no doubt that the situation was getting worse throughout Peru.

For much of 1982, government authorities in the Ayacucho department withdrew from small, exposed outposts to static, defensive positions in larger communities. Sendero Luminoso units expanded into evacuated areas and maintained pressure on the demoralized police and civil authorities through a campaign of assassinations, ambushes, and attacks on isolated outposts. Still, Belaúnde hoped he could avoid committing the military and use the police to maintain order. But despite Belaúnde’s hesitance to use the military, several factors made military intervention more likely including evidence of increasing popular support for Sendero Luminoso, expanding terrorist activity in the northern and jungle regions of Peru, and larger and more sophisticated operations against important government targets.

²⁰ McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion,” p. 85.

Finally, at the end of the year, President Belaúnde granted control of the counterinsurgency to the military. The military quickly moved into Sendero-controlled areas and performed defensive functions, while the police – benefiting from military transportation, communications, and weaponry - conducted more aggressive patrolling. In December, the armed forces entered Ayacucho and launched an ambitious counterinsurgency campaign. The addition of the military to the fight against Sendero Luminoso instantly improved morale across the various government agencies. The military, in general, behaved much better toward the populace than did the Sinchis and other police forces, and popular support for the government started to rise. The restoration of the government presence in small towns and villages put pressure on Sendero and caused the withdrawal of its activists from communities where previously they had enjoyed free rein. The use of the military also freed the Civil Guard from extra guard duties, thereby enabling the police to take a more aggressive stance and initiate security patrols in the countryside, which encouraged locals to inform on Sendero sympathizers and activists. These factors brought about a major consequence – it forced Sendero Luminoso increasingly to use violence and coercion against the peasants in order to receive support.

Prior to the military counterinsurgency campaign in the south central highlands, Sendero Luminoso generally had enjoyed active support among the peasant population in the emergency zone, followed Maoist ideals, and was helpful to the people. After the military offensive, Sendero Luminoso increasingly had to resort to coercion of the population in order to maintain control. If the peasants provided support at all, it was only passive, consisting mostly of information on recent military activity. The peasants no longer willingly spied on the government forces, nor willingly fed and sheltered Senderistas, out of fear that military

patrols would find out and impose their own swift justice. When the military entered a Sendero-controlled village, the insurgents would disappear into the surrounding countryside, leaving the villagers at the mercy of the military patrols. The soldiers dealt harshly with those they suspected of aiding the insurgency. Senderistas often returned to villages right after the military units departed and assassinated ‘traitors’ or anyone believed to be helping the government.

The military offensive also produced a climate of revenge and a flood of rumors, including some regarding the alleged death of Guzmán.²¹ The rebels claimed that the government encouraged peasants to kill Senderistas or anyone suspected of being an insurgent. Belaúnde countered that the violence stemmed from long-standing rivalries between highland communities. When the military moved into a new area, the local leaders often informed the commander that Senderistas were active in neighboring villages or provinces, when in fact they were just trying to enact revenge for old disputes. The government also charged that Sendero Luminoso was being supported by foreign countries or groups, but the available evidence indicates it was not. For example, most weapons captured from the rebels were of local registry.²² Belaúnde probably made the claim in order to enhance the chances of receiving foreign assistance himself. Despite some negative results, there is no denying that the military involvement hampered Sendero Luminoso and was a popular move among the security forces and the population. One senior Army General said that the president took the right approach in giving the military a secondary role and leaving

²¹ United States, Department of State, *Peruvian Terrorists Lose the Initiative*, p. 3.

²² *Ibid*, p. 2.

the police as the main effort because it allowed the military to initiate civic action projects to gain further public support.²³

In response to the new military campaign and series of Sendero setbacks early in 1983, Guzmán outlined a new strategy he called ‘the Great Plan of Conquering Bases.’²⁴ This plan outlined four tasks: 1) a general reorganization of the party, 2) the creation of the People’s Guerrilla Army and the Revolutionary Defense Front of the People, 3) the consolidation of the People’s Committees in the countryside and the Revolutionary Defense Movement of the People in the cities, and 4) the Military Plan of Conquering Bases. The reorganization of the party consisted of decentralizing control of military operations to allow individual cell leaders more freedom of action to increase the pressure on the government forces and regain control of the areas lost to them.

Sendero increasingly strayed from the methods that brought it early success. It built an impressive base of support among the population by blending into the community. The rebels provided services and established law and order and reversed years of government neglect. Yet, when the security forces moved in, Sendero abandoned its long-term strategy of making friends and building alliances among traditionally oppressed villagers. Instead, the Senderistas became oppressive and abusive, coercing support among the people. This caused Sendero Luminoso to lose much of its support. The peasants and people living in the emergency zone pragmatically showed support to whoever happened to be controlling the immediate area at the time.

The military knew it had to do something to consolidate gains and this resulted in the government’s initiating a civil works campaign in order to improve the life of the people in

²³ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁴ Military Line, p. 7; Simon Strong, *Shining Path: The World’s Deadliest Revolutionary Force*, p. 102.

the emergency zone and retain their support. The government committed millions of dollars and built new infrastructure such as roads, improvements on the electrical grid, and improved water supplies. In an effort to demonstrate confidence that his policies were working, Belaúnde made a surprise visit to the city of Ayacucho in June 1983.²⁵ The Ministers of the Interior and Energy and Mines, as well as all three service ministers and the commanding generals of Peru's three national police forces accompanied him. The president reviewed a military honor guard, presided over a downtown parade by military and police units, and participated in a flag raising ceremony where he paid tribute to the security forces engaged in countering Sendero Luminoso. He also made several high-profile visits to various other towns, in some cases to inaugurate public works projects and emphasize the efforts the government was making for the people.

²⁵ United States, Department of State, *Peru's President Belaúnde Makes Surprise Visit to Emergency Zone*, p. 1.

CHAPTER 4 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (1983-1990)

For the remainder of the 1980's, Peru witnessed an erratic counterinsurgency campaign, as successive administrations wrestled with competing demands in an attempt to defeat Sendero. Belaúnde ceded control of the counterinsurgency to the military at the expense of civic works projects. The military established its presence throughout the Emergency Zone and worked to restore local governments, including creating local militias to help defend government-controlled areas. The security forces had some successes, but were better known for a series of abuses and atrocities. Additionally, the chief executive failed to balance counter-narcotics efforts with the counterinsurgency and lost U.S. support, while driving the narco-industry to Sendero for protection. By the time of Belaúnde's ouster in the national elections, Peru was an abusive martial state and the insurgency was spreading to new regions. The new president, Alan Garcia, attempted to address the needs of the population while bringing the military under control. He launched a series of expensive civic projects, while reorganizing the military to make it more responsive to civilian control. The government also offered amnesty to the insurgents and increased its support to the local militias. The administration was successful in reducing the insurgency to previous levels, but its economic initiatives eventually proved catastrophic to the economy and the counterinsurgency. By the time of his defeat in the national elections, the economy was in disarray, death squads appeared and Sendero was once again on the rise.

The military expanded its counterinsurgency campaign throughout the Emergency Zone beginning in 1983. Its first priority was to identify pro-Sendero communities and then send company-sized patrols into those areas. The forces conducted raids on suspected

insurgent strongholds in order to kill or capture guerrillas, but the raids often resulted in arbitrary acts of violence against the populace. Soldiers often burned entire villages, and there were many reports of rapes, beatings, torture and other atrocities. Later, government officials learned of multiple mass graves in the area which the locals attributed to this violence.¹ The second priority was to reestablish civilian control in the emergency zone. One method the military employed was to create local civil defense patrols among the peasant community, otherwise known as Rondas Campesinos or Montoneras.² These groups defended the communities against Sendero incursions and relieved the government forces from having to garrison towns. Unfortunately, they also often abused their power, further escalating the violence.

According to members of Sendero Luminoso, the military campaign was nothing more than persecution, repression, and torture of the peasants. On several occasions, troops moved into villages and imprisoned large numbers of residents, sometimes capturing insurgents, and then killed them and placed them in mass graves. The most hated of the various security forces was the Sinchis, the counterinsurgency battalion of the Civil Guard. Since first operating in the area in 1982, the Sinchis earned a reputation for being extremely brutal. Former prisoners routinely accused the Sinchis of torturing prisoners, raping women, and murdering suspected insurgents.³ The counterguerrilla activity created a condition of general violence, also known as the Dirty War, in the southern Sierra. In all, from 1983 to 1984, more than 8,700 Peruvians were killed and another 4,000 “disappeared.”⁴ Guzmán claimed that these harsh government actions aided the revolution by increasing the size of the People’s

¹ Cynthia McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion: Origins and Trajectory,” in Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, p. 89.

² Ibid.

³ Military Line, p. 7.

⁴ McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion,” p. 90.

Guerrilla Army, creating more People's committees and base areas, and adding to the party. Years later, he spoke in an interview about the most difficult test Sendero Luminoso had to face was the government's 'genocide' of 1983 and 1984 – how they fought through those great difficulties and came out strengthened.⁵

As the counterinsurgency campaign continued into 1984, the violence between the military and Sendero Luminoso increased to horrible proportions. Each operation resulted in high casualties. The level of violence was so high that the population became almost indifferent to the death toll – fifty people in the San Francisco area, thirty peasants in Chiara, forty after an operation in Rosario, thirty people in Pomabamba, forty commissioners of the various People's Committees in Vinchos.⁶ By May the Army had established approximately fifty counterinsurgency bases of one hundred men each in the emergency zone. These soldiers conducted aggressive patrols, attempted to maintain a constant presence in the villages and searched for insurgents.

Despite the increasing death tolls, there were signs of progress. President Belaúnde placed General Adrian Huaman Centro in command of the emergency zone in January 1984. General Centro improved conditions by enforcing moral behavior within the ranks, which resulted in fewer reported abuses. He also initiated several small-scale development projects and met with local civilian leaders on a daily basis to address their grievances. This shift in focus from counterinsurgency operations to a broad counterinsurgency effort caused the population to actively support the military – but the support lasted only as long as the military was present. In most cases, the population supported whoever appeared in their villages, whether government forces or rebels.

⁵ Heriberto Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified and Why it is the Road to Liberation," p. 5.

⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

Police intelligence efforts in the urban areas also showed results in 1984 with the first arrest of a major Sendero leader. Counterterrorist units found it extremely difficult to penetrate Sendero cells because of the nature of the insurgent indoctrination program. Newcomers to the group were isolated and knew only their fellow cell members. Only the cell leader had contact with Senderistas outside the cell. Therefore, government intelligence operatives gathered most of their information from citizens who overheard insurgents discussing operations and possessed enough courage to come forward. Despite these difficulties, in July 1984, the police were able to arrest Laura Zambrano Padilla, the political commander of the Lima Metropolitan Regional Committee and director of the group's local activities since 1982.⁷

As a component of its counterinsurgency efforts, the government conducted effective information operations to amplify its successes. Starting with Padilla, the police routinely paraded the captured leaders in front of the media to be broadcast across Peru. The state included anti-Sendero themes and messages with the broadcast to show the futility of the rebellion and the fate of those who joined. This practice not only garnered support for the government, it influenced many against siding with the rebels. The counterinsurgency operations were improving conditions in the emergency zone, but they also spread the turmoil to other departments of Peru as the rebels looked to establish new base areas away from military influence. One of the new areas was the Upper Huallaga Valley, where Sendero Luminoso first appeared in May.⁸

The government's counterinsurgency campaign forced the leaders of Sendero Luminoso to look at alternate means to resource their operations. The Upper Huallaga Valley

⁷ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review-Peru: Standoff With Sendero Luminoso*, p. 1.

⁸ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review-Peru: The Continuing Sendero Luminoso Challenge*, p. 19.

(UHV) region to the north of the emergency zone provided the solution. The UHV is Peru's richest coca-producing region and was central to the cocaine trade. Under pressure from the United States, Peru was conducting widespread coca eradication efforts in the UHV, which deprived farmers of their only source of income and drove them to Sendero for support. The insurgents protected the farmers and their crops from poorly equipped counter-narcotics forces and in return received a large payoff from the drug cartels. The rebels also provided protection to the transporters of the coca leaves as they took the crops into Columbia and Bolivia for further processing. The counter-narcotics efforts not only provided the insurgents funding for increased operations, it cost the government critical popular support. A Peruvian general aptly summed up the dilemma: "We have to have popular support to fight terrorism – we have to be a friend of the population, and you can't do that by eradicating coca."⁹

By May 1984, the government had added the Upper Huallaga Valley to the emergency zone. Most activity centered on Sendero clashes with counter-narcotics police. In contrast to their efforts in Ayacucho, the insurgents moved into many of the villages and murdered local officials who did not agree to serve with them. Other officials resigned after receiving death threats.

As a result, the military commanders ordered counter-narcotics efforts halted in the UHV and allowed farmers to resume coca cultivation. Almost immediately, this paid dividends as locals began providing intelligence on Sendero activities. Acting off this new information, military units successfully trapped several Sendero patrols in the area, but failed to capture them. Nonetheless, this operation severely curtailed Sendero activity in the UHV. The Army continued patrolling in the region, forcing many of the insurgents to flee into

⁹ Frank Lalumiere, *Cocaine: A Trans-National Issue*, p. 14.

adjacent areas where they could conduct only sporadic attacks against poorly defended police outposts. The halt to coca eradication brought renewed pressure from the United States, which withdrew aid to Peru.

In response to the spreading violence and increasing threat from Sendero Luminoso, President Belaúnde granted expanded counterterrorist powers to the military across much of Peru. Essentially, the military could act almost at will, without any consideration for civil rights or due process. The police still had jurisdiction over Lima, but they failed to show visible progress. Despite the arrest of Padilla in July, Sendero forces continued to carry out attacks on financial institutions and security forces throughout the city, leading Belaúnde to add it to the military controlled zone.¹⁰ The military was chasing Sendero, it seemed, all over Peru, but could not deliver the decisive blow. The Belaúnde administration focused almost entirely on military operations, to the detriment of any civic programs that might improve the lives of the peasants. The only thing that limited the spread of Sendero support was the rebels' own atrocities against those who did not willingly assist them.

At the same time, the Belaúnde administration experienced the first of several major scandals that signaled trouble ahead. Jaime Ayala, a news reporter, went missing in August 1984, along with six members of a Protestant evangelical church in Callqui. Many peasants in the area blamed the government forces for their disappearance, and the military, in turn, blamed Sendero Luminoso. The media also discovered several clandestine mass graves near Huanta. Belaúnde denied that the security services were responsible and blamed the media for spreading misinformation, while Army leaders claimed that Sendero Luminoso carried off their dead after battles and buried them in these graves. Government experts identified the bodies and discovered that many of the victims were people previously reported as

¹⁰ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(20 September 85), p. 11.

“disappeared.” They also reported that the victims were males, aged between seventeen and forty, and disfigured to hinder identification. The victims were bound and blindfolded and killed by a variety of means. The manner of death did not indicate rebels killed in a firefight with the military, but executions. Public reaction was one of uniform horror.

At the close of 1984, Sendero Luminoso attempted to disrupt the national elections in which Belaúnde ran for reelection against Alan Garcia, the Aprista candidate. In October, the rebels set fire to several electoral offices in villages across Peru. They then attacked two offices of the National Election Board in Ayacucho and Lima and burned the voting rolls. The rebels also attacked the registration centers in the central Peruvian towns of Jivia and Jesus, killing twelve government officials in the process. The Civil Guard finally moved to secure the election offices and in doing so made several arrests. This protective measure immediately curtailed Sendero attacks on the electoral offices and influenced the government to take additional measures.¹¹

As the elections grew closer in early 1985, Belaúnde increased the military presence in the emergency zone, sending between 5,000 and 7,000 soldiers into the southern highlands. He also sent an additional 2,500-3,000 soldiers in the northern highlands and UHV. In all, over 10 percent of the Army participated in active operations against the rebels.¹² Additional security forces were maintaining static security positions on key infrastructure. On election day, the army had nearly 40,000 additional troops at approximately 4,000 polling stations throughout the country, thwarting Sendero Luminoso’s attempts to ruin the election.¹³

Security forces had done well in controlling the group in Ayacucho and other areas in the southern Sierra. This was mainly due to the counterinsurgency bases established the

¹¹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(15 November 1985), p. 32.

¹² McClintock, “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso Rebellion,” p. 89.

¹³ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(6 May 1985), p. 20.

previous May and aggressive patrolling over the past year. The community self-defense groups (*rondas campesinos*) and the initiation of small-scale development projects was particularly effective. Sendero's mobility and well-established support network allowed it to avoid a crippling blow, but it could no longer completely dominate any region and was on the defensive. Its recourse to savage terrorism, which included the massacre of entire villages to deter the population from cooperating with the government, reflected its weakened position. Sendero's effectiveness in the UHV was limited due to the lack of established networks and advanced preparation, such as they had in Ayacucho. Swift military action also hindered the insurgents in that area. But the counter-narcotics efforts prevented the total elimination of Sendero in the UHV.

The actions by the security forces hindered the insurgency in Lima, resulting in the arrest of several urban commanders in mid-1984, but the rebels still managed a few successful operations during the elections, such as the bombing of two of the political party headquarters and the assassination of several police officers. Unlike activities in the highlands, operations in Lima attracted widespread media attention and enhanced Sendero Luminoso's image as a major force. The Belaúnde administration attempted to counter this negative publicity by placing captured Sendero leaders on national television to admit their guilt. This could not counter the negative publicity, however, and the population lost confidence with the authorities' ability to maintain order in Lima.

Despite limiting Sendero to a Phase I or II insurgency, the military under President Belaúnde never delivered the decisive blow. The insurgents continued to attack isolated Civil Guard posts, peasant self-defense groups, and vulnerable policemen in the cities. The cyclical nature of Sendero's operations (high activity followed by recruiting and planning) allowed

them to remain a formidable force. The insurgents' ability to resupply themselves by theft or attacks made them virtually invulnerable to interdiction efforts. Still, Guzmán's goal of a nationwide revolution appeared remote. Sendero lost the momentum it had early in 1980-1982, but continuing economic difficulties provided it with endless opportunities. Until the government improved the social and economic conditions that had caused the rebellion in the first place, Sendero Luminoso would remain a problem.

It was no surprise when President Belaúnde lost the election. Sendero Luminoso could claim a victory of sorts in the electoral defeat of Belaúnde. Some experts considered the Belaúnde government "one of the worst governments Peru ever had."¹⁴ During his administration, the country had suffered economic decline and ever-escalating violence. The people were simply tired of the Dirty War that they suffered under the Belaúnde administration.

The new president, Alan Garcia was the first member of APRA to actually take office without military intervention. But relations between Garcia and the military were strained from the beginning. Garcia had based his campaign on a populist platform, promising a domestic stimulus package and rejection of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies that many believed had crippled the economy. Like his predecessors, he would have to deal with massive social and economic problems, ones that Sendero Luminoso would actively continue to exploit.

After his July 1985 inauguration, President Garcia quickly raised human rights standards in the security forces. He fired three top generals associated with atrocities and

¹⁴ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," p. 91.

instituted training programs to better civil-military relations.¹⁵ He also passed the Law of Political-Military Commands which established a legal basis for political-military commands in the Emergency Zone and placed them under the control of the National Defense Council.¹⁶ This council consisted of four military officers, including the commanders of the services and four civilians, including the president, and was responsible for oversight of counterinsurgency planning. It was hoped this organization would make the military more responsive to civilian control and thus more likely to demonstrate better human rights practices.

However, the cycle of violence between Sendero and the security forces caused problems for Garcia from the outset. Only four months into his presidency, a major scandal broke when the media reported that nearly seventy-five civilians from the village of Accomarca had been massacred in August.¹⁷ In a familiar scenario, the media, along with many of the local villagers, blamed military patrols for the massacre. The military, in turn, blamed Sendero Luminoso. Garcia promised that he would rein in the military and stop such atrocities and the people looked to him to take swift action. He ordered the congress to investigate the incident and after several weeks it determined that, in fact, a company operating from a counterinsurgency base near the village had committed the atrocity. At the same time and not knowing the results of this investigation, the regional commander, General Jarama testified before the congressional commission, insisting that his units had not been involved. Upon learning of the testimony, Garcia called a meeting of the National Defense Council and ordered Generals Jarama and Mori, another Emergency Zone commander, to attend. At the meeting, the chief executive criticized the military's human rights record as

¹⁵ Carol Graham, "Government and Politics: Interest Groups-The Military," In Rex A. Hudson, ed., *A Country Study: Peru*.

¹⁶ David Scott Palmer, "National Security: Changing Constitutional Basis," In Rex A. Hudson, ed., *A Country Study: Peru*.

¹⁷ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," p. 90.

well as its performance in counterinsurgency operations in the Emergency Zone. No senior military representatives defended the two generals, and Garcia ordered them retired without benefits. He also dismissed General Cesar Enrico, the Chairman of the Joint Command.

As news of the meeting spread, many in the military feared that Garcia was starting a purge of military leaders over suspected human rights abuses.¹⁸ To the public, it appeared that Garcia was openly confronting the military leadership, an unheard of practice among chief executives. In reality, he previously reached an understanding with the military that he would not prosecute old cases, but would deal harshly with any new abuses. He also allowed all military personnel to be tried in military tribunals to avoid civilian courts and lengthy prison sentences.¹⁹ This gave Garcia a visible public boost early in his presidency, while also providing him with important support from the military leadership.

The military command followed Garcia's action by curtailing the activity of the counterinsurgency units, having them reduce the number and intensity of patrols and remain near their garrisons. The cutback in activity meant much lower levels of interaction between the military and the populace and had the positive effect of lowering the number of civilian deaths, which dropped from 1,721 in 1984 to under 500 in 1985.²⁰ Additionally, the number of disappearances dropped from an average of 880 per year during 1983 and 1984 to 205. The lowered activity also meant fewer restrictions on civil rights and more freedom of movement for villagers – and resulted in increased Sendero activity.

In December, rebels conducted a series of dynamite attacks in Lima to mark Guzmán's 51st birthday. The insurgents attacked the house of the founder of APRA, as well

¹⁸ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Peru: Armed Forces Chief Dismissed*, p. 1.

¹⁹ United States, Department of State, *Alleged Navy Involvement In Disappearance of Naval Officer*, p. 2.

²⁰ McClintock, "Peru's Sendero Luminoso Rebellion," pp. 89-90. This number continued to drop in 1987 and 1988 to 390 and 283 respectively.

as ten banks, a shopping center, eight electrical towers, a judicial office, and other sites causing minimal damage and no injuries.²¹ Just a few months later, in May 1986, a Sendero squad assassinated a Peruvian rear admiral in Lima, the highest ranking officer killed to date and the exclamation point on an increasing level of activity.²²

By mid-year, Sendero was once again executing strikes across Peru and appeared to be preparing for a major event. This occurred in June when rioting Senderista inmates took over Lurigancho, Santa Barbara, and El Fronton prisons. Immediately after learning of the incident, President Garcia ordered the military to reestablish control of the prisons. After a short standoff, security forces raided all three prisons and restored order, but killed over 240 inmates, including all the prisoners at Lurigancho prison, who reportedly surrendered prior to the raid.²³

President Garcia was shocked at the casualties his police and military forces had inflicted and quickly ordered investigations by both Congress and his attorney general. Tensions again rose considerably among the military leaders over a feared purge. Within a week of the massacres the initial investigation revealed that the Republican Guard police force was behind the raid at Lurigancho prison. Garcia announced that fifteen police officers and eighty policemen would stand trial, while commending the actions of the army. Additionally, the investigation revealed that the military executed the raids at the other two prisons, but with only a few casualties at Santa Barbara and only thirty-five at El Fronton. The military thus appeared to be absolved of wrongdoing, but many politicians criticized the findings and the government's investigation.

²¹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(13 January 1986).

²² United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Latin America Brief*.

²³ United States, Department of State, *GOP Orders Investigation*.

Garcia again demonstrated political maneuvering by voicing concerns publicly, while making private agreements. By June 28, the chief executive was publicly lashing out at the police forces and military over human rights abuses. He later met privately with top military leaders for several hours however, and appeared to calm the situation. Minister of Justice Gonzales Posada resigned over the incident, fearful because of terrorist threats against his family.²⁴ The president later announced during a press conference that the military had acted appropriately during the raids and the incident had a positive aspect because a great number of terrorists had been eliminated. He also stated that Peruvians would have to learn to live with heightened levels of violence.²⁵ Garcia later formed a national council on human rights to provide oversight on human rights abuse cases and make recommendations on upholding laws. Despite the prison incident he remained extremely popular with a 75 percent approval rating.²⁶

The state then began an active period of initiatives to maintain high public opinion while maintaining pressure on the insurgents. One of Garcia's key steps was the reorganization of the military and police in April 1987. The government created the Ministry of Defense to oversee the three military services.²⁷ The new ministry consisted of the combined chiefs of the armed forces and a National Defense Secretariat of retired generals. For the police, the administration placed the three police divisions under a new organization, the National Police, under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. In the new organization, the Civil Guard was renamed the General Police, the Republican Guard became the Security Police and the Intelligence Police became the Technical Police. The government also created

²⁴ United States, Department of State, *Current Crisis in Peru*, p. 2.

²⁵ United States, Department of State, *President Garcia Says Crisis is Over*, p. 2.

²⁶ DOS, *Current Crisis in Peru*, p. 2.

²⁷ David Scott Palmer, "The Armed Forces: Mission and Organization," in Rex A. Hudson, ed., *A Country Study: Peru*.

a new police intelligence unit called DINCOTE. Garcia pushed these reforms in order to unify command of the police and military and further enhance civilian control of these entities. Previously, each separate service and police division reported directly to the chief executive. The reorganization reduced the span of control to the two ministries. President Garcia also hoped the new unified commands would improve communication and synchronization of the forces, while eliminating redundant tasks.

His new Justice Minister, Carlos Blancas, announced another administration initiative in September. The plan called for Senderistas to lay down their arms and open negotiations with the government. The arrangement also offered amnesty to any Senderista who turned himself in and provided intelligence on the organization. The amnesty program proved to be an effective intelligence-gathering tool. The call for talks, however, was rejected by Guzmán and used as a propaganda point that Sendero Luminoso was winning the People's War.

The Garcia administration also launched an ambitious development program in the Emergency Zone, focusing on roads, schools, and health clinics. The number of projects increased five-fold over the previous year.²⁸ The government also extended credit to peasants at low rates and created short-term public employment projects. Naturally, this encouraged the peasants in the highlands, many of whom never had seen any government support. Additionally, the local military commanders ensured that their soldiers behaved better when among the people. The commanders themselves communicated daily with the local leaders and many of them spoke Quechua. These factors combined with the Senderista violence against the local farmers, all contributed to increasing support for the government. Locals even openly informed the military of Sendero activities.²⁹

²⁸ United States, Department of State, *Embassy Visit to Ayacucho and Parcco*, p. 2.

²⁹ DOS, *Embassy Visit*, p. 8.

Garcia's counterinsurgency efforts led to a sharp decline in Sendero activity in early 1987. The government continued to pursue the Senderistas throughout the Emergency Zone, which had shrunk to Ayacucho, Apurimac, and Huancavelica Departments. General Jorge Sanchez Manrique commanded the forces in the Emergency Zone, which continued active patrolling from the many counterinsurgency bases that dotted the countryside. The general also increased support to the Rondas Campesinas, which were becoming an increasingly effective tool. The few attacks Sendero carried out were outside the Emergency Zone to the north in Junin Department or to the east in Cusco and Puno Departments.

Discovering that they had an opportunity outside the Emergency Zone, Sendero began to pick up activity in these lightly patrolled areas. The insurgents also renewed attacks against foreign businesses in Lima including the Bank of Tokyo and Chase Manhattan.³⁰ The rebels also harassed development project workers and any military units that appeared vulnerable. The Senderistas were careful to not become decisively engaged and appeared to be testing the military in many areas looking for a weak point or perhaps disguising their true intentions.

They found their target when in May, they launched a major attack against a police station in the UHV near the town of Santa Lucia. Nearly 200 insurgents moving in three columns converged on the isolated police post in an attack that lasted several hours. The police called for help from a nearby military garrison, but no soldiers responded. Many of the police fled, and the rebels killed all who fell into their hands. The Senderistas controlled the town of Santa Lucia for over twenty-four hours until the Army moved into the area, and then the insurgents withdrew. This event signaled a renewed burst of activity from Sendero, mostly in the UHV, including bombings of a hydroelectric plant, mortar attacks, and

³⁰ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(9 April 1987), p. 6.

assassinations. The insurgents often attacked the power grid which left areas of Peru without power for days at a time and disrupted industrial activity.³¹ One dramatic example was Sendero's attack on the Lima power grid on New Year's Eve that blacked out the city for several days. The strike was well timed to occur exactly at midnight.

The insurgents also intensified their intimidation against people who cooperated with the government. No one was safe – rebels killed several civilians including a six year old child in Cayumbo for providing assistance to the police in the area.³² They killed twenty-six peasants returning to their village from a government-sponsored fair near Ayacucho. The insurgents also stabbed two civilians in a people's trial in a village square for cooperating with the government.

The new Sendero activity was costing the government millions of dollars. This, as well as the increased spending on public works projects, heightened the already troubled economic situation and forced President Garcia to take drastic measures. In June 1987, he nationalized foreign banks in an effort to gain currency. This generated vehement protests from abroad and the IMF cut-off funds to Peru. The end result was the start of a three year economic slide. By the end of 1987 the economy started to suffer from hyperinflation. By March 1988, inflation was climbing over 1,000 percent.³³ This situation brought the government public works projects to an abrupt halt and severely limited most support to the peasants.

Sendero Luminoso capitalized on this weakened economic situation by increasing its activity, moving once again into Phase II insurgency. With a new wave of attacks, the group

³¹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(22 October 1987), p. 31.

³² United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review-Latin American Terrorism in 1987*, p. 19.

³³ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review-Peru: Sendero Luminoso's Latin American Contacts*, p. 19.

was causing destruction throughout the country. The insurgents bombed nine businesses and government offices in Huancayo on February 10. They burned the government offices outside Tocache Nuevo only three days later.³⁴ They also killed a judge and a local official from Incaacay and continued to murder civilians who cooperated with the government. In one incident in Ayacucho, they killed forty-six peasants who failed to provide support.

Although these assaults occurred all over south central Peru, the focus of the activity was in the UHV. In February, the insurgents ambushed two army convoys, killing eighteen soldiers and wounding sixteen more. They also attacked several police buses in May resulting in seventeen dead and thirty-three wounded. Sendero also increased raids against local mining companies in order to acquire more explosive material. At one point Sendero stormed the government controlled mining company CENTROMIN near Cerro de Pasco three times in less than ten days.³⁵

The group also began to demonstrate behavior proving it was a force on the rise and seeking to generate additional support from abroad. On several occasions, the rebels became emboldened enough to openly participate in legal political rallies. Additionally, several Senderistas lectured at universities in neighboring countries. Sendero also joined a group called the Revolutionary International Movement – a small European based international organization of groups with Marxist, Leninist, Maoist ideologies.³⁶

The government did score one major success. On June 12, the police arrested the group's second in command, Osman Morote.³⁷ The arrest provided a needed boost to the government and the public's perception of the police. Besides being Guzmán's chief

³⁴ Ibid, p. 6.

³⁵ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(10 March 1988), p. 6.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 18.

³⁷ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review-Peru: Arrest of Sendero Luminoso Leader*, p. 13.

lieutenant, Morote also served as the military commander of the Huancavelica zone, although he recently moved into the UHV to reorganize forces in that critical area. Morote was a member of the central committee and a key strategist of the People's Guerrilla Army. Although his capture generated much excitement, the compartmental nature of Sendero prevented any major security breach

The government was unable to capitalize on this key arrest as Morote was acquitted of the charges brought against him only a month later. The acquittal enraged the public and most people suspected the judges had been bought off or intimidated into the acquittal. Many criminal judges admitted that they feared for their lives and those of their families when dealing with Sendero cases. Garcia promised the public that Morote would not go free and the government presented additional charges against him. The president also pledged to present new anti-terror laws to congress within the year.³⁸ Only days later, a vigilante group calling itself the Rodrigo Franco Democratic Command killed Morote's attorney. Sendero claimed the group was sponsored by the government and vowed revenge.

The insurgents continued to gain strength as the nation moved toward national elections in 1989. The rebels killed almost indiscriminately, targeting any group or individual that wasn't Sendero. The scale of the attacks seemed to be increasing, especially against the civilians. In particular, the violence between Sendero and the Rondas Campesinos escalated in villages across Peru. In one incident, Sendero killed 39 peasants in Ayacucho as the peasants prepared for a patrol. Many of the Rondas scored successful hits on Sendero as well.

Equally serious as the Sendero threat, the economic problems were quickly reaching disaster status. Inflation rose to nearly 7,500 percent.³⁹ Support for President Garcia's party

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, p. 212.

(APRA) eroded. The chief executive's economic policies proved disastrous and drove millions to the illegal economy. The only real wages that could be earned were in coca production and Sendero secured most of the coca production in the UHV. The group also continued to gain funds through extortion from companies and bank robberies.

In a final effort to help Peru's collapsing economy, Garcia pledged to cooperate with the United States counter-narcotics effort, which brought in an influx of aid dollars. Starting at the end of 1989, he also allowed U.S. Special Forces Mobile Training Teams into Peru to assist and advise the Peruvian military in counterinsurgency operations. At least three teams conducted training in base defense and interdiction techniques. In February 1990, The United States and Peru signed an exchange of notes on extradition of drug traffickers, a major victory for the United States in the War on Drugs.⁴⁰ The exchange confirmed explicitly that persons charged with narcotics trafficking and related drug offenses were subject to extradition to the United States for trial.

Despite the stronger ties, President Garcia could not overcome the economic problems and Sendero threat. A relatively unknown political outsider and former mathematician, Alberto Fujimori, won the national election, perhaps because he was an outsider. The people were certainly ready for a change. The past two administrations had failed to deliver on their promises. The economy was worse than ever. The insurgency was growing and seemed stronger than at any time since 1982. The people were willing to do almost anything to reverse the negative trends in Peru.

⁴⁰ "White House Fact Sheet on the Peru-United States Extradition Agreement," George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, (15 February 1990).

CHAPTER 5 FUJIMORI COUNTERINSURGENCY (1990-2000)

As Fujimori took office, Sendero Luminoso numbered close to 25,000 militants and controlled about one-fourth of all municipalities, but more significantly, it undermined the moral, social, and political order of Peru.¹ The new president had developed a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy to defeat Sendero, but the insurgency was not his only concern. The president also inherited an economy suffering from hyperinflation and cut-off from international aid, as well as a restive population looking to the government to improve their lives. The chief executive introduced “Fujishock”, a series of austerity measures designed to bring the economy under control and return foreign aid and investment. In addition, he was now responsible for a government and military facing numerous charges of corruption. Fujimori purged the military leadership in order to place loyalists in position to carry out his programs. The president focused on economic and government issues to strengthen his position, even at the expense of allowing Sendero to grow, before launching his counterinsurgency. Eventually, he assumed absolute control of the country in a self-coup in order to push through his anti-terror initiatives. Although many decried his actions, Fujimori was able to capture Guzman and all but destroy Sendero Luminoso; by the end of the 1990’s only a handful of rebels remained.

The chief executive had learned from watching previous administrations that he had to gain firm control over the military. He had observed how the Belaúnde administration operated in fear of the military and the Garcia administration lost control of it and faced continual human rights scandals. Fujimori wanted the military to answer to him and him alone. In order to direct the military, the president turned to his most trusted advisor Vladimiro Montesinos. Montesinos

¹ Susan Eckstein, “Where have all the Movements Gone? Latin American Social Movements at the New Millennium,” in Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, p. 362.

suggested which generals the commander in chief should retire, which ones to promote, and which to place in key posts.² Together they developed a plan to purge the armed forces of possible opponents and lay the basis for tighter control of the high command.

Almost immediately after taking office, Fujimori relieved the commander of the Navy and his intelligence chief for actively opposing his candidacy during the presidential campaign. He also replaced the top two Air Force commanders, who had a history of working against each other in order to gain power, with loyalist officers. Fujimori promulgated Decree Law No. 752 in November 1991 which allowed him to appoint the military commanders from among the senior-ranking generals and allowed the appointed officers to remain at their posts indefinitely.³ Previously, the senior-ranking general had assumed the command of the armed forces when the previous general retired and officers serving in other senior leadership positions served only for one year before rotating out. Armed with his new legislation, he made General Nicolas Hermoza Rios, another loyalists officer recommended by Montesinos, the Army commander. He then placed the Ministries of Defense and Interior under the SIN. This move effectively placed Vladimiro Montesinos as the director of intelligence, the national police, and the military. With Hermoza now in place indefinitely, the president began appointing other reliable officers to key positions and further reorganizing the military. With all the military service commanders personally appointed by Fujimori, he had co-opted the military leadership and established firm control.

To improve Peru's economy, the president launched immediate austerity programs and began repayment of debts in coordination with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Both

² Enrique Obando, "Civil-Military Relations in Peru, 1980-1996: How to Control and Coopt the Military (and the consequences of doing so)," In Steve J. Stern, ed., *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*, p. 395.

³ Philip Mauceri and Maxwell A. Cameron, "Unholy Alliance: Drugs, Corruption, and the Peruvian Military During the Fujimori Administration."

measures brought instant international approval and increased aid. Foreign investors now viewed Peru as a more stable and favorable environment for investment. By December 1990, Fujimori was making progress with the economic situation in Peru. His administration's adherence to IMF measures dropped inflation from 400 to 10 percent. However, the austerity measures were also sparking labor unrest which bolstered Sendero's ability to recruit in Lima.

The administration increased cooperation with the United States in the areas of counter-narcotics and intelligence-gathering. One of the most notable examples was the involvement of the CIA with the counter-terrorism intelligence agency of the Peruvian National Police, DINCOTE. Benedicto Jiminez of DINCOTE approached his superiors and the CIA agents about forming his own special cell to track down Sendero leaders. Jiminez was appalled by standard DINCOTE techniques which involved torture and other abuses of power, and wanted to follow more traditional investigative techniques. His leaders were skeptical, but approved his proposal and gave him a small budget and four agents. The CIA station chief in Lima took a wait-and-see approach out of concern about becoming involved in another human rights scandal.⁴ In June 1990 Jiminez' group raided a major Sendero safe house in Lima, capturing several mid-level leaders. As a result of the successful raid, the CIA provided additional assistance to this group, including video equipment to use on stakeouts.

With this added help, Jiminez and his cell in March captured key Sendero Luminoso documents and videos in Lima, proving that Sendero leader Abimael Guzmán was still alive. Using techniques learned from the American agents, Jiminez also identified the Sendero logistics and financial chief for Lima and began tailing him. After weeks of painstaking observation this operative led them to other Sendero cadres. As a result of Jiminez' success, the CIA also established a training program at DINCOTE headquarters. Although the DINCOTE operators

⁴ Charles Lane, "'Superman' Meets Shining Path: Story of a CIA Success," *The Washington Post*.

were effective in gathering information, they did not have the technology and skills to develop the information into actionable intelligence and exploit it. The CIA focused its training program on developing exploitable intelligence information and began training the Peruvian detectives how to analyze, cross-reference, and classify documents. The CIA mentors, along with an expert from Scotland Yard, also taught the Peruvians better surveillance techniques. The CIA provided high-powered optics, telephoto cameras, listening devices, night vision goggles and vehicles, as well as money for general operating expenses. By July, Jiminez' group had expanded to about eighty-two personnel.⁵

The Drug Enforcement Agency also intensified its cooperation with Peru, assisting the Peruvian Air Force to interdict drug flights into Colombia. Many in Peru resented the pressure the U.S. placed on Latin American countries, including Peru, over the counter-narcotics effort. The U.S. tied much of its aid to counter-narcotics performance measures. Many also criticized the fact that crop-eradication efforts did not provide replacement crops to help peasants earn income. The Peruvian military refused to participate in counter-narcotics operations because of the many demands by the U.S. Even President Fujimori worked toward trying to remove performance conditions from economic and military aid with U.S.⁶

In response to increased foreign presence, Sendero Luminoso stepped up its violence against foreigners. In August 1990, for example, it attacked and killed two Mormon missionaries near Huancayo. A handwritten note left near the bodies demanded that all "Yankee invaders" leave Peru. It also detonated several car bombs the same week in Lima, including one that targeted the Mexican embassy, and one near the presidential palace on August 13.⁷ In October, Sendero assassinated a prominent human rights activist and also detonated a bomb near the wall that

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *National Intelligence Daily*, p. 8.

⁷ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(6 September 1990), p. 6.

surrounded the German embassy in Lima.⁸ On December 10, Sendero killed seven Peruvian residents and destroyed all the equipment and facilities at an exploration camp of Mobil Oil at Barranco in the UHV. It also detonated four explosive devices in Lima aimed at the Soviet, Japanese, and American Embassies.⁹

By the start of 1991, Sendero was a major force in Peru, operating with increasing freedom of movement and effectively attacking targets at will. Although Sendero continued to avoid large-scale firefights with military units, it attacked smaller military forces and outposts and most police units. By most criteria, Sendero Luminoso was a Phase III Insurgency. It posed such a threat that senior officials in the George H. W. Bush administration feared that it might be able to seize power. Bernard Aronson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, was especially alarmed, comparing Sendero Luminoso to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia.¹⁰ He was one of the primary proponents of increased CIA assistance to Peru.

By August, Sendero Luminoso's continuing campaign against foreigners was having an effect. The group appeared to specifically attack Japanese targets, possibly because of Fujimori's Japanese descent. In mid-July, Sendero killed three Japanese aid workers near Huaral and a Peruvian-Japanese businessman in Lima. Japan withdrew all of its aid workers from Peru in response. Sendero also attacked and killed a Canadian aid worker and an Australian nun. The Fujimori administration seemed powerless to prevent the attacks. The president advised foreigners residing in rural Peru to evacuate areas of guerrilla activities and move to urban centers, such as Lima.¹¹ Although this act undoubtedly saved the lives of more aid workers, it also prevented the people who needed aid from receiving it and confirmed their feeling that the

⁸ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(1 November 1990), p. 26.

⁹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(10 January 1991), p. 20.

¹⁰ Lane, "Superman Meets Shining Path."

¹¹United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Terrorism Review*(8 August 1991), p. 6.

government did not care for them. It also emboldened the insurgents and increased their belief that if they caused enough death and damage, the government and its supporters would withdraw or quit.

As always, several reports appeared charging the government with corruption and abuse. The first charge to be raised against the Fujimori administration occurred in December 1990 when counter-narcotics police made allegations against the army concerning narcotics corruption. The army, in turn, denied the police access to the UHV, which hindered their efforts. The charges specifically named General Oswaldo Hanke, commander of the UHV military region.

In another incident in November 1991, the media accused the army of killing five human rights and legal workers in the central Sierra. This, once again, placed the military at odds with the president and his campaign promise to protect civil liberties. Human rights groups claimed that nearly 111 workers ‘disappeared’ in 1991 and blamed the army for most of the disappearances.¹² In the media, Fujimori pledged to prosecute any offenses, but just as Belaúnde and Garcia had been forced to do, in private he had to negotiate with military leaders out of the fear of a possible coup.

Antiterrorist death squads also reappeared at the end of 1991. These groups carried out several attacks against persons with suspected ties to Sendero or involved with prosecuting human rights abusers in the military. Most indications pointed to the Rodrigo Franco Command, a vigilante group that had close ties to the police during the Garcia administration. The group was also suspected of committing two notable attacks in Lima. One, a raid on a party in the slum of Barrios Altos, resulted in seventeen deaths, the other fourteen in a small village outside of

¹² United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Peru: Army Implicated in Human Rights Killings*, p. 4.

Lima. What was notable was that in both attacks, nearby police stations failed to respond and then conducted unhurried investigations that opened them to charges of collusion.¹³

Despite these problems, by early 1992, Fujimori was satisfied that he had established firm control of the government. The Peruvian economy was much improved and despite Sendero activities, foreign investment was returning. The improvement of relations with the United States had brought a resumption of American aid. He was solidly in control of the military and enjoyed more domestic control than any chief executive since before the Velasco coup in 1968. He could now turn his full attention to destroying the insurgent threat.

In contrast to Belaúnde and Garcia, Fujimori actually developed a national strategy to defeat the insurgency. The centerpiece of this strategy was a series of laws designed to bolster the military's control of the areas designated as emergency zones. These laws also increased judicial powers over accused terrorists. These measures included allowing suspected terrorists to be held for up to 15 days without being charged and allowed judges to remain anonymous when presiding over terrorism cases. Many international human rights groups complained about the new measures and this international pressure influenced the congress as it debated the proposed legislation.

Fujimori became impatient when the congress failed to approve or weakened many of his initiatives. He also believed the judicial system was weak and corrupt. Over the course of his presidency thus far, the courts had released nearly two hundred suspected rebels.¹⁴ Additionally, Fujimori had pressed the judicial branch to try Sendero Luminoso leader Abimael Guzmán in absentia. This move drew criticism from many within and outside the government, including the rival APRA representatives such as former President Alan Garcia. Despite common knowledge

¹³ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁴ Obando, "Civil-Military Relations in Peru," p. 397.

in Peru of Guzmán's role in Sendero, he was exonerated by the Supreme Court for lack of evidence.

Fujimori reached the limit of his patience on April 6. He ordered the military to deploy throughout Lima to prevent possible unrest, dissolved congress, disbanded the judiciary, and suspended the constitution, declaring a "national reconstruction" government.¹⁵ He also placed congressional leaders and former president Garcia under arrest on charges of corruption. Leaders from the armed forces and national police all issued statements in support of the president, which effectively prevented any significant protests. The people of Peru stayed at home; most did not trust congress either so there was little protest. Fujimori could now press on with his sweeping changes to fight the insurgency and with his economic recovery program. He issued a statement that his cabinet would draft new laws and eventually hold a plebiscite on a new constitution. For the time being, democracy was finished as Peru became the first South American country of the 1990's to slip back into authoritarianism. Many believed that civil rights were now on hold and human rights violations would rise.¹⁶

The effect of President Fujimori's power grab or auto-golpe as it was called in Peru, was to concentrate power in a triumvirate consisting of the President, Security Advisor Vladimiro Montesinos, and the Chairman of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces, General Nicolas Hermoza Rios. The military now controlled all security matters in Peru, which greatly increased the potential for abuse of power. Naturally, with this sort of power structure there was little if any accountability or oversight of the military or intelligence network. Methods no longer mattered, only results did.

¹⁵ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Spot Commentary-Peru: President Mounts "Palace Coup."*

¹⁶ Ibid.

The leaders developed a two-pronged strategy to defeat the insurgency – one was a severe curtailment of freedom of movement and suspension of many civil rights, the other was to bolster the anti-Sendero mobilization of the people by civil patrols, the *rondas campesinos* first introduced by the Belaúnde administration. In order to generate support, Fujimori tied government benefits for villages and departments to *rondas* activity and also provided the *rondas* with more modern arms and training. As a result, by 1993 there were more than 4,000 *rondas* throughout Peru actively working to defeat Sendero Luminoso.

In response to the auto-golpe, the United States cut off military and economic assistance, but, covert aid apparently continued, including CIA funds for the intelligence cell within DINCOTE that was still searching for Sendero leaders. In June, the group arrested the Sendero logistics and financial chief. Jiminez interrogated the individual and learned of several possible safe houses in Lima that Guzmán could be using. Jiminez and his group established surveillance on them and carefully searched the trash carried out by the residents. The searches from one of the houses turned up many items that indicated Guzmán's presence, including psoriasis medicine, Absolut vodka bottles, and empty cartons of Winston Lights cigarettes. On September 14, Jiminez ordered a raid of the house which resulted in the capture of the elusive Sendero Luminoso chief.¹⁷

This particular moment was a critical time for the intelligence services, the police, and the government of Peru. Up to this time, many of Sendero's leaders had been killed during their capture, either as a result of firefights with the military or while trying to escape. Many believed that they had been murdered during the course of interrogations or simply executed at the time of capture. Some intelligence officers reported Montesinos wanted Guzmán to meet the same fate. As a matter of fact, Montesinos personally had placed General Antonio Ketin Vidal as the head

¹⁷ Lane, "Superman Meets Shining Path."

of DINCOTE so Vidal could send him progress reports on the search for Guzmán. Officers testified that he also wanted the general to have forces in place to kill the Sendero leader if he was captured. But when Guzmán was arrested, Vidal did not follow Montesinos' plan and instead paraded Guzmán in front of the media for all of Peru to see. Montesinos reportedly was furious.¹⁸

Guzmán's capture was the turning point in the fight against Sendero Luminoso. Guzmán was more than the head of the group; he was the spiritual bond that held the movement together. With his arrest, Sendero lost the guidance of "Gonzalo Thought," those principles set forth by Guzmán. The group could no longer claim to be the 4th sword of communism. Naturally, Guzmán had deputies and a politburo, but Guzmán was Sendero, just as Osama bin Laden is Al Qaeda. He had killed or discredited any who had grown too strong and the cronies who remained were left in charge and forced to take the group into the future. Due to Sendero's compartmentalized structure, many of these subordinate leaders did not even know each other. Undoubtedly, Guzmán's fall left Sendero with a great power vacuum and severely limited. Peru braced for Sendero's response, expecting an onslaught of activity. Although the leader was gone, the individual cells did not need to be told to strike.¹⁹

President Fujimori's approval rating increased from 56 to 73 percent after Guzmán's capture and this increased his ability to manipulate the constituent congress and the judiciary.²⁰ He continued to use decree power to reform the judiciary and transferred jurisdiction of terrorism cases from civilian courts to military tribunals. In doing so, he stated the need to respect the "popular will" of the people in handing down sentences to convicted terrorists. This change also quickened the process of terrorism trials and all but guaranteed conviction and life sentencing.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Peru: A Hard Act to Follow*, p. 5.

²⁰ United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *Peru: Fujimori Riding Higher*, p. 4.

He followed these decrees by promising Guzmán a fair trial and a harsh sentence that would be handed down by October 7. Two of Guzmán's subordinates were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment days earlier.²¹

By September 1993, Sendero was on the verge of collapse. The group had taken nearly twelve years to reach its zenith, but after Guzmán's arrest, only one year to fall apart. It had not conducted any major attacks in almost a year and had experienced a series of high-level leadership arrests. Then, in a surprise move, Guzmán issued several letters from prison in which the government claimed he called on his followers to lay down their arms and engage in peace talks with the authorities. On 24 September, after nearly a year in captivity, Guzmán issued a statement that was known as the 'speech from the cage.'²² Guzman stated:

...[W]e are living historic moments, each of us must be clear that this is the case, let us not fool ourselves. In these moments we should mobilize all forces to confront difficulties and continue accomplishing our tasks and conquering our goals, successes and victory! That is what we must do. We are here as children of the people and we are struggling in these trenches, it is also about combat, and we do it because we are Communists, because here we defend the interests of the people, the principles of the party, the People's War. That is why we do it, we are doing it and will continue to do it! We are here in these circumstances. Some think this is a great defeat. They are dreaming and we tell them to keep on dreaming! It is simply a bend, nothing more, a bend in the road. The road is long and we shall arrive. We shall triumph. You shall see it. You shall see it.... [T]his is the situation, this is where they have brought us. But we have a fact, a Peruvian revolution, a people's war, and it is, and will continue to advance.²³

The government claimed Guzmán was calling for Sendero to lay down their arms and to seek peace. There were even some within Sendero who felt this way. Many of the insurgents were weary after over thirteen years of armed struggle. Fujimori claimed that Guzmán had called for negotiations "to reach a peace accord to put an end to thirteen years of People's

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ocasio, "Why the People's War is Justified," p. 1.

²³ Abimael Guzmán, "Speech fro the Cage."

War.”²⁴ Given the text of the speech, this is a dubious interpretation and was most likely made as part of the government’s propaganda campaign. Guzmán’s message actually encouraged the insurgents to continue the fight. The government propaganda created to a rift within Sendero, with some saying the difficulties were too great to continue and calling for a “fight for a peace accord.”²⁵ The hardcore insurgents refuted this position and continued fighting. Sendero now found itself back to a Phase I insurgency limited to random terrorist attacks. In October, militants detonated a car bomb in the parking lot near the departure terminal at Lima’s international airport, injuring twenty persons and damaging the Americans Airlines cargo office. The next month, Sendero tossed a satchel charge in front of the U.S.-Peruvian Binational Center.

One of the surprising losers of the Guzmán capture was the cell within DINCOTE headed by Jiminez. Despite the success of the mission and the popularity of the group, Montesinos successfully dismantled the group that had captured Guzmán. The leader of DINCOTE, Vidal, was promoted to the National Police, but, in reality, his new position had much less authority. Jiminez was shunted off to the Peruvian embassy in Panama as a police attaché. Montesinos’ moves caused a debate within the CIA about whether to continue to provide assistance to Peru and with whom to coordinate. CIA authorities did not want to deal with Montesinos because of his suspected ties to death squads, but many did not believe he was involved. Eventually, the leaders concluded that Sendero had been defeated and that the agency should now focus on the war on drugs and that Montesinos was useful for that purpose.²⁶

To maintain momentum, in 1994, the Fujimori administration announced a new amnesty program to insurgents. Any insurgents who turned themselves in and cooperated with the government would not face charges in military courts. This initiative contributed to the drop in

²⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁵ Heriberto Ocasio, “Why the People’s War is Justified and Why it is the Road to Liberation,” p. 2.

²⁶ Lane, “Superman Meets Shining Path.”

violence in 1994. Sendero killed only 150 persons, down from 516 in 1993. The only incidents of note were a car bomb at Air Force Headquarters in February that killed two and a sabotage of several electrical towers in October, cutting off power temporarily in nearly all of Lima.

Sendero struggled to survive. The group had to recruit new members, rebuild and resolve its leadership problems. Additionally, Sendero discovered that a coca plant fungus and a more aggressive government counter-narcotics policy had disrupted its financial support system in the UHV.

The decline continued in 1995. What activity Sendero did generate was limited to isolated rural areas, mainly in the UHV as the group labored to maintain its financial network and to rebuild. The police arrested many Senderistas prior to the national elections, preventing any attempt to disrupt the vote. In a major coordinated operation, counterterrorist police arrested approximately twenty members of Sendero Luminoso in the cities of Lima, Callao, Huancayo, and Arequipa. Among those captured was the number two leader and central committee member Margi Clavo Peralta, who later publicly announced her support for peace talks with the government.²⁷

But the authorities suffered setbacks in the campaign against Sendero Luminoso. In October a Sendero patrol attacked several army patrols near Aspuzana, killing fifteen soldiers. Many of the people in the nearby villages welcomed the Senderistas, but it is unclear whether their welcome was genuine or based on fear or convenience. As a result of this and other attacks in the area, President Fujimori declared a state of emergency once again in the UHV.²⁸

Sendero once again reached out for meaningful external support, but the effort was in vain. There were displays of sympathy, but little else. In March, the London-based

²⁷ United States, Department of State, *1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report*.

²⁸ Luis Quispe, ed., "Peru: Reports in the press," *Peruvian Newsbriefs*.

Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) issued a call to “Rally to the Defense of our Red Flag Flying in Peru!” RIM also stated its opposition to the call for a peace accord which would have “represented a compromise of the fundamental interests of the people and an abandonment of the People’s War and the revolutionary road.”²⁹ This interest from abroad most likely came about by the influence of Senderistas who had fled to other countries. Several groups sympathetic to Sendero Luminoso formed in various countries, during the course of the “People’s War,” including the United States.

Despite the call for help, Sendero and the insurgency were all but finished. Peru entered a period of relative calm and the Fujimori administration was riding a wave of popularity and prosperity (in Peruvian terms). The only news involving Sendero Luminoso anymore was the occasional arrest of a Sendero leader, such as that of senior Sendero leader Elizabeth Cardenas, aka Comrade Aurora, in December.³⁰ It appeared that President Fujimori could turn his focus from military matters and the insurgency to domestic and economic issues.

Sendero disrupted this period of calm, when it made an unexpected attack across the south central highlands. The insurgents attacked an army patrol in Santa Cruz, but were forced to withdraw. Another group attacked the military base at Los Milagros, capturing and executing the officers. More police surrendered after an attack in Huanuco. A column of one-hundred Senderistas took over the city of San Miguel for twenty-four hours. The attacks shocked the nation with their suddenness and ferocity. What frightened most experts were the insurgents’ sophisticated command and control and ability to synchronize the multiple attacks in multiple areas.

²⁹ Ocasio, “Why the People’s War is Justified,” p. 2.

³⁰ United States, Department Of State, *1996 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report*.

These rebels caught the military unprepared. Most of the counterinsurgency garrisons had settled into a routine. They performed predictable patrols and were not really looking for signs of a Sendero resurgence. The military spent most of November retraining and re-establishing their patrols. Highly trained and refocused, the army went into action in December, when the combined forces of the Special Operations Division of the Army and the special operations division of the National Police held at least four clashes with Sendero groups. As a result of the new campaign, the security forces captured nearly fifteen rebels, among them four political-military commanders. They also dismantled six Sendero popular committees in the UHV. The security forces scored a key victory when they captured and destroyed a large quantity of war material and explosives in the San Jose Crespo Castillo District.³¹ The brief Sendero resurgence was finished.

The security forces maintained the offensive into 1998. On April 20, the police captured Pedro Domingo Quintero, the second-highest ranking Shining Path rebel, and Oscar Ramirez Durand's right-hand man at a restaurant in Lima. Quintero, a former teacher, had been the Shining Path's ideological leader since Guzmán's arrest. With Durand, he mapped out the Shining Path's military strategy. Recently, he led Sendero's recruitment campaigns, aimed at local youth. President Fujimori claimed that Quintero's capture was made possible due to a rare film of a high-level Sendero meeting obtained by the police in 1991. The same film was used to arrest Guzmán. Police interrogated Quintero which led to a raid on Lima shantytowns on April 24 and the arrest of a local Sendero field leader, Alberto Ramirez, together with the head of operations, Maximo Anosa.³² The police also captured Rodolfo Condori, the group's explosive expert as well as a large quantity of explosives.

³¹ Quispe, ed., "Peru: Reports in the Press."

³² "Shining Path Leaders Captured."

By August 1998, a rift between the top three leaders of Peru forced President Fujimori to make a change in military leadership. He dismissed General Hermoza as chairman of the joint command and appointed General Cesar Enrique Saucedo Sanchez, formerly the Interior Minister and man who commanded the forces that raided the Japanese Embassy after a takeover by terrorists. General Julio Salazar Monroe, who was the head of the SIN, took over as defense minister. Prior to the announcement, Montesinos ordered troops and tanks to occupy key positions in the capital in order to prevent a possible move by Hermoza to counter the dismissal. Montesinos was the clear winner in this move because it allowed him to consolidate control over the intelligence community and the military. General Salazar was a noted Montesinos crony and willing to relinquish authority to Montesinos, as he did as head of SIN.

Despite the shake-up, the military and police continued to score successes. In July 1999, the military captured Durand after a two week sweep into Peru's central jungle which included fighter jets, helicopters, and both ground and river troops.³³ The combined force of military and police pinned him down to a remote area where the Amazon jungle merges with the Eastern slopes of the Andes. President Fujimori traveled to Jauja to personally oversee the manhunt. As a result of the arrest, and Sendero's loss of another leader, the insurgents did not conduct any major attacks for the remainder of 1999. However, clashes continued in the central and southern regions with soldiers pursuing two columns of 60-80 rebels, led by Comrade Alipio.³⁴

By 2000, the main effort against Sendero Luminoso was in the courts. Several Sendero leaders were convicted and received sentences of thirty years to life in prison. The military continued to round up remaining Sendero leaders, focusing on the UHV and Apurimac/Ene River Valley where the remnants of the insurgency remained. Much of the successes resulted

³³ "Peruvian Security Forces Capture Shining Path Leader."

³⁴ United States, Department of State, *1999 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report*.

from increased U.S anti-terrorism training and aid to the Peruvian forces. By the end of the year, Sendero strength was estimated to be down to 100-200 militants.³⁵ Additionally, Peru was cooperating fully with U.S. law enforcement including sharing intelligence and sharing access to databases.

³⁵ United States, Department of State, *2000 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report*.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path was one of the most successful insurgent groups in the western hemisphere. The group gained control of substantial portions of Peru through its violent insurgency. It formed in the Andean highlands as a result of the dismal socioeconomic conditions, which created the prerequisites for an insurgency to develop: (1) a vulnerable population hoping for change, (2) leaders available to direct the insurgency and (3) lack of government control.

The peasants of the Andean highlands lived for centuries in poverty. Yet they never revolted against the government. These people accepted their way of life and simply went about their business to survive. They were all but ignored by successive governments of Peru. Yet the Velasco coup in 1968 and the subsequent agrarian reform put the first glimmer of hope in their mind. The government promised to address their needs and when the government failed to deliver, the peasants became susceptible to Sendero influence.

Of course, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso provided the needed leadership to propel Sendero Luminoso into action. Guzmán had a vision of a self-sufficient utopian society for Peru and believed that only he could lead Peru to that goal and only through the People's War could it get there. Guzmán's vision turned a group of students and peasants into one of the most lethal terrorist organizations in the world. He was able to motivate this group to give up what little they had, to live voluntarily in harsh conditions, in some cases to learn a new language - all to create a bond with the people he claimed to want to help. Guzmán provided direction to Sendero, personally leading the group from a band of untrained vandals carrying sling shots to a well-trained efficient guerrilla force. Equally significant was the fact that, once Guzmán was

captured, Sendero rapidly declined to an almost insignificant force. Guzmán's leadership was Sendero Luminoso and without him Sendero Luminoso no longer existed.

Except for the short-lived attempt at agrarian reform in the early 1970's by the Velasco regime, the government ignored the Sierra until Sendero Luminoso started its terror campaign in 1980. The peasants never showed signs of organizing against the government and because of the isolation provided by geography, it was easy for the government to disregard the region. This lack of control or presence provided Guzmán the freedom of maneuver he needed to organize Sendero Luminoso. He was able to transform the National University of San Cristobal of Huamanga into an insurgency incubator that created rebel leaders instead of educated peasants ready to use their knowledge to better their communities. The cadres were able to move about the area freely, openly recruiting new members.

The peasants of the Andean highlands today still desire change, but recognize that the government is trying to provide the change. Successive administrations attempted to address the needs of the peasants with varying results. The government simply did not have the resources to address all the needs in a timely manner. Yet after a quarter of a century of effort, progress has been made. Conditions still provide the potential for mobilization against the government, but not to the extent that existed prior to 1980.

Leaders like Abimael Guzmán do not come along very often. He was a rare force that could impose his will on a mass of people to make them do things that, when examined from the outside, seem strange or illogical. Does the next Guzmán exist now in the Andean highlands? It is highly doubtful, but that is a question that can only be answered if Sendero re-emerges to pose a serious threat to the government once again.

The government established and maintained a continuous presence in the Sierra as a result of the Sendero rebellion. This presence remains today. Although the State may not be able to provide immediate change to the peasants, it maintains contact with them to show concern for their needs. The police force, once one of the worst in Latin America, is now functional. The military greatly improved its human rights record and many aid organizations operate throughout Peru. The government maintains control throughout Peru.

Therefore, the prerequisites of an insurgency do not exist as they did prior to 1980. The administration is addressing the population's needs. The government maintains contact with the people. The military treats the people better. The people see their lives slowly improving. The only unknown variable is the leadership. Is the next Guzmán out there?

Besides improving the conditions that exist within Peru, the government conducted an effective counterinsurgency campaign. Many may argue that point but the end state supports the claim. The method the government used to win was brutal at times with random violence committed against the people as well as the insurgents. But by restricting civil rights, targeting the leadership, and conducting counterinsurgency operations, the government defeated Sendero Luminoso. Counterinsurgencies by nature are lengthy campaigns. Failing counterinsurgencies can drag out for decades and successful campaigns take many years because the insurgency is never defeated until the conditions that created the insurgency are improved.

The speed that the insurgency collapses militarily increases with restrictions on civil rights up to the maximum that the people will endure. These limitations take several forms such as curfews, checkpoints, emergency zones, even the jurisdiction of trails. The people of Peru endured all these and this hastened Sendero's downfall. The government can increase these control measures to speed up the collapse of an insurgency, but at some point the people will

reach a 'breaking point' at which they reject the government and swing to the insurgency. This breaking point is much higher in underdeveloped nations because the people are accustomed to hardship and little freedom to begin with. For example, people in the United States complain about minor air travel restrictions, whereas the Peruvians endured almost total restrictions on movement, rights to assemble, rights to due process, and even rights to live where they wanted and many more without complaint.

The second component of the government effort was to develop intelligence information and target the leadership and cohesion of Sendero Luminoso, as demonstrated by the Fujimori administration during the 1990's. President Fujimori used Vladimiro Montesinos to create an effective, imposing intelligence network throughout Peru. He also used his decree power to remove restrictions on intelligence collection to allow the intelligence network to observe all aspects of Peruvian life. This all-encompassing intelligence effort allowed the Fujimori administration to locate and capture hundreds of Sendero leaders, including Abimael Guzmán. The military and police also used torture and violence to gain information on Sendero leaders, especially during the Belaúnde administration. It is safe to say that a large percentage of captured Senderistas underwent torture during interrogation. Those harsh methods did produce results, leading to the capture of other rebel leaders, but undoubtedly many innocent people were wrongly persecuted. Additionally, the amnesty program offered by successive administrations was an effective method of bringing in many Senderistas including the leaders. By the mid to late 1990's, many insurgents turned themselves in to avoid capture or death. These same insurgents willingly provided information on other members and hastened the decline of Sendero Luminoso.

The military counterinsurgency campaign also contributed to Sendero's defeat. The Dirty War launched by the Belaúnde administration in 1982 was a violent, uncontrolled effort. The military was not prepared to conduct small-unit actions in the highlands because they were trained for a conventional war against Peru's neighbors including Ecuador and Chile. It took the military roughly three years to develop more effective counterinsurgency techniques to defeat Sendero Luminoso tactically. One of the military's most effective techniques was the counterinsurgency bases it established near key towns and infrastructure. The units operating out of these bases severely restricted Sendero's ability to conduct attacks. The military also enjoyed superior firepower over Sendero throughout the war. In addition to the counterinsurgency bases, the military effectively used the local civil defense patrols or *rondas campesinas*. The *rondas campesinas* provided security for some of the smaller villages and more importantly, provided intelligence information on Sendero movements. The biggest benefit from the *rondas* was that it involved the peasants in the counterinsurgency rather than in the insurgency.

Sendero Luminoso never achieved Guzmán's goal of a general peasant uprising that surrounded the cities and caused the government to fail. The insurgency achieved a Phase III insurgency only a couple of times when large formations attacked and occupied territory in the Upper Huallaga Valley. The rest of the time Sendero oscillated between Phase I and Phase II. The majority of the peasants never shared Guzmán's vision. They initially supported Sendero Luminoso because Sendero provided services that the government never provided. When Sendero stopped providing these services to the people, their support waned. The peasants wanted benefits such as clean water, reliable electricity, and help to grow their crops, not the People's War.

The lack of outside support also hampered Sendero. Most successful insurgencies succeeded through some external support. Yet Sendero intentionally chose to reject this outside help. Only after the movement was serious decline did its leaders begin to carry its message abroad in a futile attempt to garner significant support.

Sendero Luminoso was associated with Mao Zedong because it attempted to create a peasant uprising in Peru. But Sendero did not strictly adhere to Mao's doctrine. He stated that in order for guerrillas to be successful, the insurgency must have powerful political leaders who "must work with the people."¹ By working with the people, Sendero would have continued to receive support. But Sendero did not work with the people once the government sent forces in against it. From that point onward, Sendero focused on destroying anything not Sendero. The group no longer assisted the peasants but coerced and threatened them and, as a result, their support ceased. As Mao stated, the guerrillas derive their existence and support from the people and must attempt to meet the needs of the people or the insurgency will fail.²

¹ Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 1-2.

² Ibid.

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VITA

Russell W. Switzer, Jr. was raised in Boulder, Colorado. He graduated from Fairview High School in 1981 and entered the United States Marine Corps Reserve as a field artilleryman. He entered active duty when he joined the United States Army in 1986 as an infantryman. His first assignment was to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he served as a scout and sniper including being deployed to Panama in Operation Just Cause in 1989-1990. He then spent a year learning Russian at the Defense Language Institute and served as a Signals Intelligence Analyst in Germany. During his tour in Germany in 1993, he earned his Bachelor of Science and applied for and was accepted to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia receiving a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry. He served at the National Training Center as an Opposing Force platoon leader, executive officer, and scout platoon leader. He then moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and commanded an airborne rifle company in the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. His next assignment was at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, where he served as a platoon, company and battalion level observer/controller. He also served with the Multinational Corps Headquarters – Iraq and Multinational Force – Northwest during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His military schooling includes the Infantry Basic and Advanced Courses, Command and General Staff College, Joint Firepower Control Course, the Airborne, Jumpmaster and Pathfinder Schools and the Ranger Course. He is married to the former Rae Currey of Bellingham, Washington, and together they have seven children.