When All the Evils Come Together

Cocaine, Corruption, and Shining Path in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, 1980 to 1995

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This article addresses the problem of the interaction between guerrilla groups, coca-growing peasants, drug traffickers in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV), and the strategies used by the military to defeat the guerrillas. It also warns about the dangers of involving the armed forces in drug law enforcement. The article shows that waging counterinsurgency operations and drug law enforcement are two very different matters that have to be treated separately. It shows that involving the armed forces in drug law enforcement only worsens the problem by facilitating the spread of corruption in the armed forces.

The Shining Path, a splinter group of the Communist party of Peru, was founded in 1970 by Abimael Guzmán who, at the time, was a professor of philosophy at the National University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Ayacucho. In the mid-1960s, the Peruvian Communist party suffered several breakdowns and splits. Shining Path is the result of the subsequent schism of the Red Flag Communist party (*Partido Comunista Bandera Roja*), the Maoist faction of the Peruvian Communist party. Between 1970 and 1980, Guzmán organized the structure of his party and began the task of ideological propaganda and recruitment among his students and colleagues. The Shining Path's armed action began in 1980 in the Andean departments of Ayacucho and Apurímac. A counterinsurgency campaign in 1983 prevented the crea-

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tion of a permanent territorial base there, but it led to an expansion of insurgent operations northward in the Andes. In the mid-1980s, Shining Path guerrillas advanced into the *altiplano* (highlands) in the Southern Andes and the UHV, the foremost coca-producing region in the world and the core of the cocaine industry in Peru.

This study will concentrate on the UHV, where Shining Path managed a stronghold and established a secure base of support. The region is particularly interesting because drug trafficking in the area generated a particular pattern of interaction with coca-growing peasants and drug traffickers that allowed Shining Path to obtain the economic resources to finance its revolution in the rest of the country. This article has two goals. The first one is to show how the Peruvian government could effectively deal with a strong insurgent group such as Shining Path.[1] The article will show how the Peruvian military was able to identify the interests of the valley's coca-growing peasants and, subsequently, win them away from Shining Path. The second goal is to show how the involvement of the military in drug law enforcement activities after the defeat of Shining Path led to a worsening of the problem because of the spread of drug trafficking related corruption within the armed forces.

This work suggests that state presence in the UHV was weak and that the support of the guerrillas by the coca-growing peasants was strong in terms of the percentage of the population in the area. Nevertheless, the Peruvian military was able to overcome its weakness by attracting the peasants to its side and, thus, depriving the guerrillas of the support of the peasants. The later involvement of the military in drug law enforcement activities in the UHV created a new problem. There was a spread of corruption in the armed forces, including collusion between drug traffickers and military commanders in coca-producing areas.

It is worth clarifyidsdng that, even if the influence of U.S. diplomatic pressure over the drug control policies adopted by the governments of the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru) had been broadly recognized, this article will not go into further details on the pattern of interaction between the Peruvian and the U.S. governments during the period under study. Instead, this work will concentrate on the decisions made by local governmental players in the UHV.

THE STAGE

The government of Peru has never exercised full control over its national territory. Vast sections of eastern and southeastern Peru have always been a political no-man's-land. This was the case in the UHV. This lack of state presence in the UHV left an institutional vacuum that was filled, in this case, by an

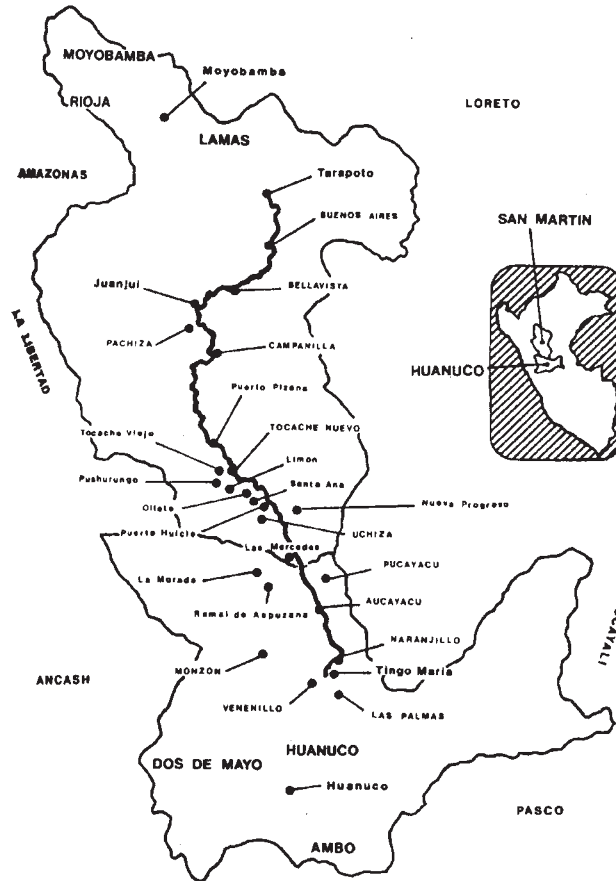

Figure 1: The Huallaga Valley
SOURCE: González (1987). Reprinted with the authorization of Revista QueHacer, Desco, Lima, Peru.

insurgent group. The UHV is located on the eastern slopes of the northeastern Peruvian Andes or *Selva Alta*, at altitudes ranging between 1,500 and 6,000 feet above sea level. The Huallaga river (1,100 km) crosses, from south to north, the Peruvian departments of Huánuco and San Martín.[2] It forms a valley that is a long strip of tropical jungle and savannas divided into the following three parts: the UHV, from the city of Tingo María to the town of Campanilla; the Central Huallaga Valley, from the city of Tarapoto to the department of Loreto; and the Lower Huallaga Valley, in the Amazon rain forest, in the department of Loreto.

Figure 2: Peru
SOURCE: *The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection* (n.d.).
NOTE: The map was produced by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Coca and cocaine production and Shining Path activity are spread unevenly across the departments of Huánuco (35, 315 km^2) and San Martín (53, 064 km^2). The UHV was deserted and isolated from the rest of the country until the late 1940s, when the first real roads were completed and the area started to be colonized. It was not until the 1960s that the state began to play a significant role in colonizing the valley. Under President Fernando Belaúnde (1963 to 1968), the region was viewed anew as a source of rich natural resources and a possible solution to Peru's greatest migration problem, which was the flooding of the country's major cities by the rural population. The

state began to organize settlement projects, promoting the region as a land of plenty thatpromised wealth for all Peruvian citizens. In the early 1960s, the government began the construction of the Marginal Highway that was meant to start the process of developing the largely untouched interior. Thousands of impoverished city dwellers and highland peasants set off on the exodus toward Peru's new promised land. Settlers brought the tradition of *chaccheo*, or coca chewing, which farm workers, in particular, found useful for reducing sensations of thirst, hunger, and fatigue; thereafter, coca began to be produced in small amounts to satisfy local consumption. Belaúndes's plans for colonization were abandoned once he was ousted by General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968 to 1975). The new administration concentrated all its efforts on import-substitution, industrialization, and the confiscation and collectivization of land in the sierra and coast regions; the promises of infrastructure building and development for the settlers were unfulfilled. The departments of Huánuco and San Martín were subjected to a first wave of immigration from the rest of Peru during Belaúnde's development politics in the 1960s and to a second wave during the coca boom in the late 1970s. The UHV's population increased at an average annual rate of 6% between 1965 and 1988 (Riley, 1996, p. 108). The population of Huánuco and San Martín was growing at an average annual rate of 2.6% (Huánuco) and 4.5% (San Martín), respectively, between the national census of 1981 and 1993 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 1993, p. 19). Since the mid-1970s, a chain of facts contributed to the rise of a coca-cocaine boom in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, and to the articulation of a vertically integrated and highly organized industry at the beginning of the 1980s. On the demand side, there was a decrease in the consumption of heroin in the United States and an increase in the demand for cocaine. This phenomenon assumed the characteristic of a cocaine epidemic (Kozel, 1992, p. 162).[3] The following statement made during a hearing before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, held in July 1979 (*Cocaine: A major drug issue*), clearly shows the mood of the U.S. government concerning the increasing rate of cocaine consumption:

> This is the first of a series of hearings dealing with the subject of cocaine. . . . As chairman of the special task force on cocaine—and my name is Tennyson Guyer—recent developments concerning the state of cocaine have come to my attention which call for decisive and immediate action. The availability, abuse, and popularity of cocaine in the United States has reached pandemic proportions with 19 metric tons illegally entering the United States in 1978. (p. 1)

On the supply side, the following events happened in an almost synchronized and sequential way, leading to a particular set of conditions that contributed to the rise of a well-integrated industry in the Andes that had Colombia as its epicenter.

Since the late 1960s, the main drug-trafficking activity in Colombia has been the production and transport of marijuana toward the United States (Bagley, 1988, p. 74). However, the growth of marijuana production in the United States and intensive eradication campaigns with the use of herbicides in Colombia produced a marked decline in marijuana production (Arrieta, Orejuela, Sarmiento P., & Tokatlián, 1990, p. 218). In addition, in the late 1960s, a small Colombian-based cocaine-smuggling network had developed under the control of exiled Cubans based in Miami. By this time, coca was cultivated in Colombian territory in small plots by Páez Indians in southwestern Colombia and the Western Cordillera. As the demand grew in the United States, the traffickers begun to import coca paste from Bolivia and Peru (Bagley, 1988, p. 74).

In the late 1970s, the rise in demand for cocaine in the United States coincided with a crisis in the main industrial sectors of Colombia that were located in big cities such as Medellín and Cali (Fonseca, 1992, p. 513). This caused a rise in the underground economy that included the development of the cocaine industry. The new generation of cocaine traffickers came from displaced sectors of the industrial middle class, from marijuana traffickers, from emerald-smuggling rings, and even from the old landowner class such as the Medellín cartel's Ochoa family (Kaplan, 1989, p. 33). Through a Darwinian selection process of armed competition, by the end of the 1970s, two main coalitions of traffickers' groups (the so-called Medellín and Cali cartels) dominated not only the Colombian but also the South American cocaine industry. By the beginning of the 1980s, they consolidated their position by eliminating the Cubans from the transporting and retailing networks. The rise of the Medellín and Cali cartels marked the passage from a cottage activity to a modern organization run by a managerial core, with armed protection groups, chemists, lawyers, pilots, and money launders. Bolivia and Peru, which have a large Indian population that has traditionally grown coca leaves for centuries, became vertically integrated to the Cali and Medellín coalitions as producers of the raw material (coca) and suppliers of the intermediate goods (coca paste and cocaine base).[4]

How and why did this happen? In other words, which factors determined the coca boom in Peru and Bolivia?

Coincidental with the rise of the cocaine demand in the United States and the formation of the Colombian cartels, Peru and Bolivia started to suffer the effects of the foreign debt crisis that affected most of the South American

countries in the early 1980s. In the case of Peru, the external crisis and the recession were particularly acute from 1983 forward. Peruvian gross national product (GNP) dropped by 12%, and inflation reached an annual rate of 250% (Fonseca, 1992, p. 510). In the case of Bolivia, the foreign debt crisis was worsened by the drop in the price of tin, Bolivia's main export (Fonseca, 1992, p. 509). In both countries, a huge mass of unemployed were absorbed by the underground economy, especially by the illegal growing of coca that far exceeded the traditional internal needs of the peasants. As the demand for cocaine rose, the price of coca leaves started to climb. For a poor Bolivian or Peruvian peasant, the production of coca became the panacea. In regions such as the UHV in Peru and the Chapare in Bolivia, where no infrastructure existed to produce and transport legal crops in a competitive way, coca leaves became the main export product.

Another factor that contributed to the coca-cocaine boom was the policy of colonization of the Amazon region carried out by the governments of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru in the 1950s and 1960s (Smith, 1992, p. 12). Thousands of peasants were encouraged to colonize these wild territories under the promise of land redistribution and basic infrastructure to make settlements viable. These promises were never fulfilled, and by the mid-1970s, when the traffickers began to encourage and demand increasing amounts of coca, this product became the main agricultural crop in regions such as the UHV in Peru, the Chapare in Bolivia, and the Guaviare in Colombia. A wave of new settlers began to arrive, attracted by the "green gold fever." In the case of Peru, illicit coca cultivation expanded from less than 10,000 hectares in the early 1970s to about 65,000 hectares in 1979 to 280,000 in the late 1980s (McClintock, 1988, p. 128).

THE ACTORS AND THEIR SCRIPTS (1980 to 1990)

Special Project for the Control and Eradication of Coca in the Upper Huallaga (CORAH) Eradication Teams

During Fernando Belaúnde's second presidential term (1980 to 1985), the Peruvian government created CORAH in 1981 as result of strong pressure by the Reagan administration. The mission of this project was to eradicate (manually at the beginning, and later, with the help of chemical herbicides) illegal coca plantations in the UHV. A team of 480 workers was assigned to the task. The eradication effort was complemented by the Upper Huallaga Area Development Project (PEAH, created in 1982), a United States spon-

sored program (USAID) for the development of legal agricultural production and employment opportunities. The mission of PEAH was to advise and finance the replacement of coca by other crops once forced eradication had been completed in an area.

The Police

To protect the eradication teams from guerrillas, traffickers, and peasants, a special unit of the Peruvian *guardia civil* called *unidad móvil de patrullaje rural* (UMOPAR) was created in 1981 and deployed in the valley between 1982 and 1987. The mission of UMOPAR was interdiction (repression of traffickers and coca paste production). This was a force of 500 men financed by the U.S. government and supported logistically by DEA agents in the field. The force was dismantled by President Alan García (1985 to 1990) because of its ineffectiveness, its unpopularity among the local population, as well as because of charges of corruption and human rights violations. UMOPAR was replaced by the counterinsurgent *Sinchi* Battalion of the guardia civil (*policía general* since 1988), which was previously operating in the Andean department of Ayacucho (Labrousse, 1991, p. 352). The sinchis made airborne interdiction missions from the Vietnam-style base of Santa Lucía in the Huánuco department. The mission of the police was limited to drug law enforcement activities, whereas the army concentrated on counterinsurgency operations.

The Armed Forces

The armed forces, particularly the army, carried out full-scale operations in the area during 1984 and 1989. Their strategy was to concentrate first on Shining Path as an immediate threat and then cope with drug trafficking once the guerrillas were defeated. The army was assigned to develop political and military control of the UHV, and to concentrate its efforts on counterinsurgency operations without any involvement in coca eradication and interdiction. Especially after 1991, when they were under pressure by the U.S. government, the air force participated in the interception and destruction of traffickers' airplanes and the destruction of coca-paste production sites (Obando, 1993a, p. 88). The goal (and mission) of the military was to prevent Shining Path from establishing a permanent base in the UHV and to establish the authority of the state in the area. By doing this, they hoped to reduce the threat posed by Shining Path to the Peruvian state. After Fujimori's self-coup (*autogolpe*) on April 5, 1992, all the armed forces started to become increasingly involved in interdiction activities.

Shining Path

The strategy of Shining Path was to carry out protracted guerrilla revolutionary warfare with the aim of overthrowing the government, taking over power, radically changing the political regime, and changing the social and economic system. Abimael Guzmán, the leader and founder of the movement, was a puritanical disciple of Mao Zedong and based his strategy on the doctrine of protracted war, which Mao expounded in the 1930s (Mao, 1954, pp. 43-58). Following the doctrine meant carrying out guerrilla war in the countryside, promoting the creation of liberated zones or support bases, gradually increasing the support of the rural population to strangle the cities from supplies, and finally, taking cities by assault once popular urban uprisings occurred. The interest of the guerrillas in controlling the UHV area stemmed from the possibility of establishing a support base where they could extract resources from coca-growing peasants and traffickers. These resources financed the popular war at the national level (Gonzales, 1992, p. 121; Palmer, 1996, p. 182). In 1988, Guzmán announced through *El Diario*, a Lima newspaper acting as a mouthpiece for Shining Path, that his original estimate of a 50-year revolutionary war had been pessimistic and that it was already time to carry the war into the cities, Lima in particular (Clutterbuck, 1995a, p. 26). He had, by then, moved into Lima with his central committee to initiate agitation in the surrounding shanty towns of that city and to launch a campaign of urban terrorism supported with funds obtained in the UHV.

Table 1 shows the evolution of the estimated number of armed cadres of Shining Path from 1986 to 1997. At its height in mid-1992, it was believed that Shining Path had between 3,000 and 4,000 armed cadres and 50,000 supporters in various civilian support groups and political cadres (this does not include the mobilized population in favor of Shining Path, like the coca-growing peasants) (Palmer, 1993, p. 306).[5]

Drug-Trafficking Organizations

Peruvian drug-trafficking organizations, commonly called *las firmas* (the firms) are, when compared to the Colombian cartels, weak in terms of their internal organization, paramilitary power, and capacity to form coalitions and political agreements with rival organizations.[6] They are integrated with and subordinated to the Colombians in the process of cocaine production. Their role consists of supplying coca paste or cocaine base (the first two stages in cocaine production) to the Colombian traffickers, who refine it into cocaine hydrochloride (HCL), the marketable product. After the disruption of the Cali cartel in 1995, the Peruvian traffickers increasingly began to sell their own limited cocaine production to Mexican cartels for transport to the

TABLE 1
Shining Path's Armed Cadres (1986 to 1997)

Year	*Armed Cadres*
1986	up to 2,000
1987	up to 2,000
1988	up to 2,000
1989	up to between 4,000 and 5,000
1990	up to between 4,000 and 5,000
1991	up to between 4,000 and 5,000
1992	up to between 5,000 and 8,000
1993	up to between 5,000 and 8,000
1994	up to 3,000
1995	an estimated 3,000
1996	an estimated 3,000
1997	an estimated 1,500

SOURCE: The International Institute for Strategic Studies (1986, p. 194; 1987, p. 197; 1988, p. 204; 1989, p. 201; 1990, p. 203; 1991, p. 206; 1992, p. 186; 1993, p. 193; 1994, p. 219; 1995, p. 225; 1996, p. 230; 1997, p. 226).

United States (Drug Enforcement Administration, 1996; Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1997). In the period under study, the number of firms in control of about 100 smaller subgroups was estimated to be about eight (Andean Commission of Jurists, 1994b, p. 7; Lee, 1991, p. 109). The bigger firms were run by bosses such as Reynaldo Reynoso (arrested in 1985); Catalino Escalante, alias *El Vampiro*; Guillermo Cárdenas, alias *Mosca Loca* (killed in 1984), and his son Jorge, alias *Mosquito Loco* (arrested in 1997); Demetrio Chavez, alias *El Vaticano* (arrested in 1994 in Colombia); Elías Chavez, alias *Lan Chile*; the Colombian Waldo Vargas Arias (arrested in 1997 in Colombia); the Cachique Rivera brothers (Abelardo, the leader, was arrested in Colombia in 1995); and the López Paredes brothers or *Los Norteños* (Andean Commission of Jurists, 1994b, p. 7; Lee, 1991, p. 109).

The sociologist Edmundo Morales made several excellent analyses of both the cocaine economy and the drug-trafficking organizations in Peru (Morales, 1986, 1989). According to Morales's observations, the division of labor within the coca-cocaine industry corresponds pretty much to the prevalent class structure in Peru (Morales, 1986). Highland Indian peasants worked in the production of coca leaves and coca paste, whereas the commercialization and further stages of production were managed by middle-class *mestizos*, who migrated to the new frontier, attracted by the "cocaine rush" (Morales, 1986, pp. 153-156). Most of these mestizo cocaine entrepreneurs were secure in government jobs, small businesses, and commercial agriculture (Morales, 1986, p. 156).[7]

Drug-trafficking organizations in Peru were generally composed of five different groups of players with strictly different roles (Morales, 1989, p. 87). These included the outside boss; the international link man or pick-up man; the local boss or *el patrón*, who actually runs the local firma, and his personal bodyguards; the runners or collectors of coca paste; and transportation staff members, also called *burros* (donkeys) or *correos* (mailmen) (Morales, 1989, p. 87).

The outside boss was always a Colombian who routinely visited the area to check out the business and brief the local boss. The international link man was the one who periodically went to the UHV by plane to purchase and transport the merchandise to Colombia. The local boss could be either a Colombian or a Peruvian national who stipulated prices, controlled local populations, and managed the purchase of coca paste and its transformation into cocaine base (*pasta lavada*) (Morales, 1989, p. 89). Each local boss had, on the average, four bodyguards divided into *karate boys*, for intimidation tasks; and hit men, whose missions ranged from executing traitors to silencing the media people or killing honest law enforcers. Going down in the structure came the runners who collected the coca paste from small producers, and the correos and burros, who delivered the coca paste to consumer markets and refining laboratories (Morales, 1989, p. 91).

What happened in 1995 is that local bosses were becoming increasingly independent from the Colombian outside bosses, and they were replacing them in the management of the organization.

The traffickers shared a common interest in corrupting governmental officials, defending themselves against the police and the guerrillas, and coercing the peasants to lower the price of coca leaves. Nevertheless, the firmas did not develop the capacity for creating an efficient coalition to achieve these goals. They were strong enough to extort lower coca prices from the peasants, and to brutalize them when they did not respect their contracts for specific amounts of coca, but they were not capable of successfully confronting the police, the army, or the guerrillas (Clawson & Lee, 1996, p. 181; Tullis, 1995, p. 72). The fact that Peruvian traffickers had weak paramilitary forces is important because this factor caused them to accept the racketeering of Shining Path in exchange for protection from the police.

The Coca-Growing Peasants

In the period under study, the peasants were the more important players in the UHV because they were a potential source of support for either Shining Path or the army. Peasant support was the key to victory in the valley. The settlers were small producers who had an average of 0.5 hectares of coca (Gros, 1991, p. 826; Labrousse, 1986, p. 117). Generally, the entire family of settlers

participated in the production of coca (rural families in Peru have an average size of 4.9 persons) (Doughty, 1993, p. 110).

The coca-growing peasants of the UHV were disorganized and isolated. They did not form corporate peasant communities as in their regions of origin or as in traditional coca cultivation zones such as La Convención and Lares.[8] They were separated from the traditional peasant communities (*ayllus*) of their territories of origin. They were loosely organized, making it easier to mobilize them through a carrot-and-stick strategy. Moreover, there were no strongly organized confederations of coca grower trade unions in Peru (as is the case of Bolivia) capable of defending the interests of the UHV peasants against the coca eradication campaigns of the government (Lee, 1991, p. 78). Shining Path simply occupied the place of these nonexistent trade unions.

There are different estimates about the number of coca growers in the UHV. The most commonly cited figures are between 60,000 to 100,000 families (McClintock, 1988, p. 129) and 300,000 farmers (Palmer, 1996, p. 181). One author suggested that the figure of a million people is more likely if the families of an estimated of 250,000 peasants are taken into account (Obando, 1993a, p. 84). For these farmers, the production of coca is not only the source of their survival, but it is a far more profitable crop to grow than any legal crop. Buyers (traffickers) usually pay for the crop in cash right at the farm or nearby (without any kind of bureaucratic procedures and taxes, as is the case for legal crops). The UHV has the climate and soil that is almost ideally suited for growing the two varieties of coca plants highest in alkaloid content for the processing of cocaine. Coca prices range anywhere from 4 to 34 times higher than leading alternative crops, which are cacao and corn, respectively. Moreover, transporting other products to markets outside the UHV was increasingly problematical due to the dramatic deterioration of the single access highway. Peasants simply grew what would bring the highest return at the least risk (Palmer, 1996, p. 181). It was in their interest to protect themselves; their families; and coca, their main source of revenue. The families growing coca had incomes ranging from $8,000 to $50,000 per year (McClintock, 1988, p. 129) in the mid-1980s, in a country where the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was $920 (Hudson, 1993, p. xvii).

THE PLAY

First Act, 1984: Shining Path Arrives in Town

When the guerrillas arrived to the Huallaga Valley, the coca-growing peasants were in a crossfire situation between the traffickers and the CORAH/UMOPAR teams. As soon as Shining Path arrived in the valley,

their cadres systematically murdered the representatives of the weak coca-grower trade unions, after which, they were able to easily overwhelm the thugs at the service of the traffickers (Gonzales, 1992, p. 107). From that point on, Shining Path was the only intermediate between the traffickers and the peasants. They became the only source of protection for both groups against the police. The movement started attacking the detachments of CORAH and UMOPAR, with serious losses on the government side. It became increasingly difficult for the eradicators to work in security. At the same time, Shining Path organized delegations (*delegaciones*) of peasants headed by one of their members to fix the coca prices in favor of the peasants. In this manner, they regulated the coca market in the valley in favor of the peasants. Shining Path also started to extract enormous amounts of money to finance the revolution in other parts of the country. These resources stemmed from extortion. The movement fixed taxes of about $10,000 to $15,000 for each plane leaving the valley with coca paste and base to Colombia. They imposed a revolutionary tax on the peasants, who had to pay a fifth (*la quinta*) of their coca production, either in cash or in coca leaves (Gonzales, 1992, p. 121; Palmer, 1996, p. 182). The movement established order in a region where brutality and arbitrariness always prevailed. They established a very strict set of moral rules whereby acts such as adultery and drug consumption were punished with summary execution. Prostitutes and homosexuals were obliged to leave the area under the threat of death. However, Shining Path did not systematically terrorize the population in the way that they terrorized the peasants in the Andean department of Ayacucho, for example. In this case, the movement clearly identified the interest the peasants had in maintaining their security and the source of their revenue (Gonzales, 1992, p. 111). The preferred option of the peasants, when choosing between the state of violence in the valley and the protection of Shining Path (even under their rules), was to side with Shining Path and support their movement. The peasants provided a recruiting base, an intelligence service, and logistical support. They were, paraphrasing Mao Zedong (Mao, 1962, p. 67), the water in which Shining Path could move as a fish in a populated sea. Moreover, the peasants helped Shining Path in the sabotage of bridges, blockades of routes, and the destruction of the Marginal Jungle Highway, the only roadway that linked the region with the rest of Peru.

Second Act, 1984 to 1985: The Army Takes Over and General Carbajal

When the government noticed that Shining Path was consolidating a liberated zone in the UHV, and that the coca eradication programs did not yield results (due to the continuous attacks of Shining Path), the valley was

declared an emergency zone and put under military command in July 1984.[9] More than 2,000 army and *infantería de marina* troops (marines) were deployed in the area under the command of Army General Julio Carbajal, who assumed the political-military control in the valley (Head & Rosenau, 1990b, p. 11). To defeat Shining Path, General Carbajal realized that he had to gain the support of the peasants. He soon noticed the importance of stopping the coca eradication teams to win the peasants' support. UMOPAR men were confined to their barracks and were not allowed to enter the valley, and the military did not provide protection to CORAH teams. The result was that both Shining Path and the traffickers massacred the eradication teams, and the eradication operations ended. This move quickly turned the support of the peasants (and, paradoxically, of the traffickers) in favor of the army. Between the option of siding with an illegal group such as Shining Path, which imposed a harsh moral regime and demanded a tax on their coca production, and the army, the peasants chose the army (which allowed them to produce coca without the interference of the police and eradication teams). At the same time, they counted on the protection of the army against UMOPAR and CORAH. Within 6 months, the support of the peasants (in terms of information and lack of cooperation with Shining Path) enabled the army to carry on successful military operations, and Shining Path was practically ousted from the valley. The army stopped coca eradication and protected the peasants to win their support. The negative aspect of this strategy was that drug trafficking flourished in the region and traffickers were given the opportunity to improve the structure of their business.

Third Act, 1985 to 1987: Guerrillas Versus Guerrillas

The situation changed in 1985 when Alan García won the presidential elections. His interpretation of the Shining Path problem (at the national level) was that the guerrilla movement stemmed from socioeconomic problems, therefore programs of social assistance and economic development in poor rural areas should take precedence over repression. Moreover, he sought to reduce the high degree of autonomy that the armed forces had in managing the repression of Shining Path in areas that were declared to be under a state of emergency. As part of this policy, the state of emergency was lifted, and the army was ordered to retreat from the UHV (Crabtree, 1992, p. 110).

García's drug-trafficking control policies were far more aggressive than that of his predecessor.[10] The eradication programs continued and more emphasis was placed on interdiction campaigns (destruction of laboratories and airstrips, and arrest of traffickers) as part of a strategy named Operation Condor (McClintock, 1988, p. 131). Shining Path began to regain support

and presence in the Huallaga Valley, but when the *senderistas* came back to the valley, they found that they had competition from another guerrilla group, the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA), which had begun to operate in the department of San Martín.

The MRTA was founded in 1983 and started its armed operations as an urban group in 1984. They sought a rural base in the UHV, which, with its Indian base and unpopular foreign presence (the DEA and American adviser teams), was a fertile ground for recruitment. The MRTA disputed the control of the UHV until 1987. Shining Path controlled many towns in the southern part of the valley up to Tocache, and the MRTA dominated the area to the north of Tocache. The competition between the two groups for peasant support was violent. The more important battle was for the city of Tocache (the foremost coca-producing area in the valley) in March 1987, after which Shining Path emerged victorious and MRTA confined its operations to the north of the department of San Martín (McClintock, 1988, p. 138). In the peasants' view, the MRTA was abhorred by the traffickers and combated by the army and Shining Path.[11] Siding with them would imply the possibility of being brutalized and persecuted by these three groups. Another fact that reduced peasant support for the MRTA is that the movement adopted a moral, anti-coca position (Gros, 1991, p. 824). The peasants logically sided with Shining Path, and the MRTA movement remained basically as a urban insurgent group.

Fourth Act, 1987 to 1989:
The UHV Becomes a Liberated Zone

By 1987, it was clear that Shining Path was again assuming control of the valley. One signal was the successful attack of Shining Path on the police station in the town of Uchiza in the state of San Martín, and its subsequent occupation on May 31, 1987. President García reestablished the state of emergency in the department of San Martín. Because of interbureaucratic fights between the police and the army in terms of their missions and the priority that the García administration had given to drug law enforcement, control in this area of operations was given to the police. This was decided to prevent a further interference of the army in the operations against drug trafficking. Because of the success of the Operation Condor interdiction campaigns, there was a dump of coca prices.[12] This, however, reinforced the animosity of the peasants against the government and enhanced the power of Shining Path as they pressed the traffickers for better prices and increased their popularity among the peasants. The situation became worse when, in 1988, García decided to authorize the aerial spray of the herbicide tebuthiuron, which was manufactured by Eli Lilly, under the name of Spike, for the eradication of

coca.[13] Shining Path used this as a strong political tool. They showed it as an imperialist attack on the population, claiming that the goal was to eliminate both coca trees and peasants with the herbicide, a message that had a strong effect among the farmers. By 1988, the UHV was a state within the state, controlled by Shining Path (Gonzales, 1992, p. 110). Shining Path had consolidated a liberated zone with the support of almost the entire population and with the ability to extract resources from taxes imposed on traffickers and peasants to finance the revolution.

Fifth Act, 1989 to 1990: The Military Comes Back to the Scene

Because of the state's complete lack of control over the UHV, García decreed an emergency zone in early 1989 that included the departments of San Martín, Huánuco, and Ucayali. This meant that the military became the administrative directors of this increasingly conflict-ridden region rather than the civilian authorities, who have the support of the police. The government's concern had shifted from drug war to guerrilla war. The situation would radically change when Peruvian Army Brigadier General Alberto Arciniega Huby assumed control over this emergency zone in April 1989. He commanded a force of 4,000 troops, backed by Soviet-made Mi-25 helicopter gunships (Head & Rosenau, 1990a, p. 3). As Carbajal did in 1984, he rapidly realized that the peasants were the power base of Shining Path and its main logistical tool. He also realized that the peasants' interest was centered on the protection of their lives and their source of revenue, coca. Since the very beginning, Arciniega adopted a broad strategy of carrots and sticks toward the peasants to win their support. His first act upon entering Uchiza was giving the inhabitants the choice between the destruction of the village, if they remained loyal to Shining Path, and protection from Shining Path, if they respected the state's institutions and authorities. He carried out aggressive military actions against Shining Path without particular regard for human rights. In fact, 50 disappearances were reported in the UHV during Arciniega's command (Gonzales, 1992, p. 116). On the other hand, he restricted the eradication activities of the police and CORAH in the UHV (Arciniega Huby, 1994, p. 115; Head & Rosenau, 1990a, p. 5; Labrousse, 1991, p. 355). He went one step further by organizing the construction of rural infrastructure using a regional cooperative, the Upper Huallaga Agrarian Cooperative (Labrousse, 1991, p. 355). This strategy won the support of the peasants, despite the repression (Gonzales, 1992, p. 116). Arciniega became the referee who dealt directly with conflicts between growers and the police. He gradually made it possible to build up support among the population. By applying this type of policy, Arciniega displaced the guerrillas as the preferred

option of the peasants. Backed by air support, the army rapidly defeated Shining Path, which had been deprived of its recruitment base, logistical support, and intelligence service. In December 1989, General Arciniega left his post as political-military chief of the UHV as part of the normal rotation in the command positions of the Peruvian army (Obando, 1993a, p. 87).

It is reported that Arciniega had been accused by U.S. officials of being corrupted by the traffickers and that the Peruvian government had received strong pressures for his dismissal. Arciniega vehemently denied the accusations. He was reassigned to Lima. These accusations have never been proven (Gonzales, 1992, p. 117; Obando, 1993a, p. 100).

1990 TO 1995, NEW STAGE, NEW SCRIPTS, SAME ACTORS, AND . . . SAME PLAY?

New Stage

After July 1990, when President Fujimori was inaugurated as president, several factors and policies contributed to the overturn of Shining Path's supremacy in the UHV.

First, President Fujimori (1990 to 1995 and 1995 to present) radically changed his policy toward drug control. His new approach, called the Fujimori doctrine, did not consider the coca-growing peasants to be part of the criminal chain of drug trafficking (Clawson & Lee, 1996, p. 218; Obando, 1993a, p. 89).[14] As far as coca production was concerned, he felt that efforts should be geared toward promoting economic development in the UHV, and providing access to the internal and international markets for legal products. Subsequently, on April 1991, a new penal code eliminated the grower as an integral part of the drug-trafficking chain (Andean Commission of Jurists, 1994a, p. 3). The forced eradication of mature coca bush plantations stopped in 1989 (Clawson & Lee, 1996, p. 218). This played a key role in the decrease of peasant support for Shining Path in the area.

Second, the Fujimori administration encouraged and legalized the formation of civil defense committees or self-defense groups (commonly called *rondas*) in the UHV, a strategy that has had good results in non–coca-producing regions where Shining Path operated in the 1980s. The rondas are groups of peasants armed by the government for the purpose of defending themselves against Shining Path and the traffickers (Degregori, 1994, p. 89; Obando, 1993a, p. 92). During this period, drug law enforcement was concentrated on interdiction activities, which included the continued harassment of the traffickers and the shutdown of trafficker planes by the Peruvian air force.

Third, coca-growing peasants were migrating to other regions, such as the department of Cuzco and Apurímac, as a result of the fall in coca prices (caused by reductions in demand by the traffickers due to increasing interdiction activities). Coca production (and peasant migration) now shifted south to the departments of Madre de Dios, Puno, and Apurímac (Clawson & Lee, 1996, p. 135; Obando, 1993a, p. 94).

The fourth factor was the arrest of Abimael Guzmán and part of the central committee (*la cúpula*) of the Shining Path in September 1992 by the special antiterrorist police, *Dirección Nacional Contra el Terrorismo* (National Counterterrorism Directorate, DINCOTE). This event profoundly disorganized the movement, which was based on a deep personality cult and strongly centralized in terms of political and military planning in the high ranks of the party (la cúpula) (Obando, 1993b, p. 45). These arrests interrupted the flow of information and money from the revolutionary cells of the UHV to the Shining Path cells in the rest of the country (Obando, 1993a, p. 95; 1993b, p. 53).

After the capture of Guzmán, which was because of the combination of a repentance law (enacted in 1992) that offered leniency for cooperation and the general repression of the movement, Shining Path started losing active militants. Moreover, the movement split in 1993, after a series of letters to the government (published by the press) and declarations on television in which Guzmán praised the political measures taken by President Fujimori (in reference to the autogolpe). He also called for an end to the armed action and the opening of negotiations with the government.[15] The movement split in two factions, Black Shining Path, which would be willing to participate in negotiations, and Red Shining Path, which continued the armed operations north of the UHV (Balencie & De la Grange, 1996, p. 122).

Finally, since 1989 (the first effects were noticed in 1991), a very destructive fungus (*fusarium oxisporum*) slowly, but in geometrical progression, destroyed the coca bushes from south to north along the Huallaga river (Clawson & Lee, 1996, p. 154).

New Scripts

Up to 1992, with the exception of the air force, the armed forces did not participate in drug law enforcement activities. After Fujimori's self-coup in April 1992, this situation radically changed, as the president announced in April 15, 1992 that the armed forces would be fully involved in interdiction activities. This meant that army and marine troops deployed in the area would participate in interdiction activities, that is, in the repression of drug traffickers. In addition, in 1992, a new air force region (Air Force Region VI) was created in the UHV with the purpose of controlling airstrips and intercepting

illegal flights. Air bases in the area were equipped with T-32 Tucano and A-37 Dragonfly planes. The armed forces were formally authorized to participate in interdiction activities by Law No. 26.247, passed on November 24, 1993.[16] This law allowed military forces to pursue and detain those implicated in illegal drug trafficking in areas lacking a national police presence, which was the case not only in many of the provinces of the Huallaga Valley departments but also in most of the Peruvian Amazon. Several reasons could have motivated this move.

First, in the mid-1980s, Alan García put an emphasis on drug interdiction to avoid completely alienating Peru from the United States because of its anti-American stand. In 1992, Fujimori might have fully involved the armed forces in drug law enforcement activities to mitigate possible U.S. sanctions because of the democratic breakdown.

Second, achieving a more effective drug law enforcement was one of the justifications of the autogolpe; mobilizing the armed forces against drug traffickers was probably one more way of justifying the coup.

Third, particularly after the capture of Guzmán in December 1992 and the subsequent weakening of Shining Path, the armed forces may have accepted involvement in drug interdiction activities because Shining Path diminished as a threat in their eyes.

The final reason is the fulfillment of the commitments agreed to by Peru in a bilateral treaty signed with the United States in July 1992. In fact, during a multilateral antidrug summit in San Antonio, Texas on February 1992, President Bush was able to persuade his counterparts from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, and Venezuela to reaffirm their commitments to drug law enforcement efforts. However, even if Peru agreed to strengthen interdiction efforts, President Fujimori had already adopted a firm stand in not resuming coca eradication activities. Now 4,000 marines and army troops plus the air force detachments would be in charge of policing a business that generates about 900 million dollars a year (Andean Commission of Jurists, 1992, p. 4). Before 1993, there were cases of corruption because the military was operating in a drug-producing area. Junior officers were paid off for protection against the police. From 1993 on, the problem of corruption escalated because military officers earning $283 (division general) to $213 (second lieutenant) a month would have to face the task of arresting criminals who could offer them the possibility of earning up to $70,000 a year (Menzel, 1996, p. 155; Obando, 1996, p. 33).[17]

Same Play?

Since 1992, cases of corruption involving the protection of drug traffickers by officers of the three armed services have been a common fact.[18] Moreover,

this type of corruption has reached as high as generals in the army and, allegedly, at least three commanders of internal military fronts.[19] It is a common fact that officers compete for positions in the UHV because of the high economic profits that they can obtain from bribes offered by drug traffickers (Menzel, 1996, p. 197). The fact that commanding officers are rotated in on a yearly basis has helped to spread corruption in the military ranks. The UHV is not witnessing an unholy alliance between drug traffickers and the armed forces, but the military's replacement of Shining Path as the racketeers in the area. One actor leaves the scene and another occupies the role to play the same play.

New developments could further worsen the situation. In 1996, the Peruvian government reinitiated the forced eradication of mature coca (U.S. Department of State, 1998). At the same time, the development component of the Fujimori initiative never materialized (Geopolitical Drug Watch, 1997; 1998, p. 186). Under these conditions, the UHV may become a civil war theater, for the peasants are now well armed and organized in rondas, and they may be able to resist the eradication efforts by themselves. If this occurs, military corruption might be worsened by massive and flagrant violations of human rights in the UHV. The only beneficiaries of such a scenario would be drug traffickers and Shining Path, which may find an opportunity to recover peasant support.

CONCLUSION

In December 1995, President Fujimori announced the retreat of the armed forces from drug law enforcement operations. One of the alleged reasons was that keeping the military out of drug law enforcement would make them "less vulnerable to manipulations" (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1996a). This decision was formally implemented by Legislative Decree No. 824 in April 1996 (Presidente de la República, 1996). This decree attributes all drug law enforcement responsibilities to the Peruvian National Police. The armed forces only keep the responsibility of flight interceptions (air force) and sea and river patrols (navy). The circle is now closed, but as far as military corruption is concerned, it is probably too late.

This article has shown that the counterinsurgency strategy used by the military in the UHV was very effective in gaining control over this geographic area. The military commanders in the field understood the nature of the problem that they were facing, and they adopted the right strategy. However, the politicians in Lima reversed the effects of these policies by ordering the wrong follow-up policies. In the case of President Fujimori, the wrong decision was ordering a full involvement of the military in the war on drugs. As this article has shown, before the assignment of this drug law enforcement

function to the military, there were already cases of collusion between military officers and drug traffickers because the armed forces were operating in a cocaine-producing area. Assigning drug law enforcement tasks to the military only worsened the corruption problem and added one more dimension to the problem of drug trafficking in the UHV.

One lesson that can be drawn from this article is that the problems of powerful insurgent movements and drug trafficking coexisting in one geographical area does not necessarily mean that each of these problems are the same. They have to be approached with different strategies and with adequate tools. The Peruvian military was very effective in defeating the guerrillas, because that is what they were trained for.[20] However, as shown in this article, the fact that the military might be good at fighting guerrillas does not necessarily make them good drug law enforcers. This is especially true when they are operating in an area where they can be offered bribes by drug traffickers that are the equivalent of 6 year's salary in a single night (Clutterbuck, 1995b, p. 90). With the guerrillas defeated, it is now time for a very well-trained and very well-paid special, drug law-enforcement police unit to focus on interdiction activities.[21]

The other lesson that can be drawn from this article is that the coca issue in Peru is more than just a law enforcement problem. It is also an economic development matter. President Fujimori is certainly playing with fire by not fulfilling the promises made to the peasants quickly. In the absence of substantial rural development policies, the resumption of coca eradication could place Peru at the brink of the double threat of a direct, armed confrontation between the government and the rondas, and the renewed support of Shining Path by the peasants.

NOTES

1. The strength of a guerrilla movement depends on the amount of population and territory that is under its control. The larger the area that is under control, the lower the monopoly of the means of physical violence by the state. This means that, in areas controlled by the guerrilla movement, this monopoly will be disputed to the state.

2. The departments (*departamentos*) are the main political division in Peru. Each department is divided into provinces. In 1989, the departments were grouped into 12 political regions. The department of San Martín became a region in itself, and Huánuco was added to the Andrés A. Cáceres political region.

3. As explained by Kozel (1992, p. 162), according to data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), the number of deaths and medical emergencies caused by cocaine consumption more than tripled between 1975 and 1981. He explains that the dramatic rise in consumption was worsened in the mid-1980s by the appearance of crack, a cheaper and more potent form of cocaine.

4. Smith (1992) explains the production of cocaine.

> The process of refining coca into cocaine has three stages. The first takes place near the fields. Growers gather their crop and place it in maceration pits: large containers made out of plastic sheeting. The dried leaves are mixed with kerosene and potassium carbonate, which separate the alkaloid from the organic matter. After the waste material is removed, the product is mixed with sulfuric acid. The gooey paste is dried into balls, which form the most common trading article in the Peruvian Amazon foothills: cocaine paste or cocaine sulfate. This initial processing reduces the bulk, cutting down the volume by a factor of 10 and making the product easy to store or transport.
>
> The next stage makes cocaine base: a purer cocaine alkaloid without other alkaloids, mixed in. This process requires more equipment (filters, dryers, centrifuges) and chemicals (alcohol, kerosene, sulfuric acid and potassium permanganate). Traffickers set up their labs or "kitchens" in the middle of the rainforest, with portable diesel power generators, plastic sheeting and elaborate logistical support for supplying the chemicals.
>
> Finally, trained chemists turn the cocaine base into cocaine hydrochloride. This stage requires more sophisticated laboratory techniques and industrial volumes of ether so that the semi-processed material can become the crystalline salt necessary for inhaling—the usual form of consumption. (p. 14)

5. See Tarazona-Sevillano (1992, pp. 171-190) for a detailed description of the structure of the movement.

6. Firm is a very appropriate name if we consider that drug trafficking is an illicit industry, but an industry nonetheless. For the purposes of this article, the terms *drug-trafficking organizations* and *traffickers* will be used interchangeably.

7. The term *mestizo* is defined by Morales (1989) as "the Latin American who is the result of the combination of different ethnic groups bearing Spanish values" (p. 1).

8. These zones are located south of the Huallaga Valley in the department of Cuzco. In these areas, the government legally recognized the production of coca, and that production is destined for traditional uses. The national state coca company, *Empresa Nacional de la Coca* (National Coca Leaf Enterprise, ENACO), purchases the production. The peasants have traditionally grown coca for centuries in these zones, and there are strong peasant communities and fully developed coca-production trade unions. Therefore, peasants are better organized to establish community self-defense organizations (*rondas*) and resist the extortion attempts of traffickers and guerrillas. This is why traffickers and guerrillas preferred the UHV (see Gros, 1991, p. 820).

9. Gonzales (1992) defines what an emergency zone is.

> An emergency zone . . . is one in which certain constitutional rights, such as freedom of assembly and movement, residence inviolability, and detention with a court order, are temporarily suspended for sixty days, a period that may be, and often is extended. According to the 1980 Peruvian Constitu-

> tion, the zones under a state of emergency are placed under the political-military control of the armed forces. (p. 124, note 19)

10. There are several speculations on García's degree of commitment with drug law enforcement and with U.S. proposals and demands. According to McClintock (1988, p. 135), there are three possible reasons. First, the structure of the his party, the *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (Popular American Revolutionary Alliance, APRA), was becoming increasingly corrupted by the narco-business, and García wanted to eradicate it before it corrupted the political system. Second, because the business was confined to the Huallaga Valley, it was the time to act before it could expand to other areas and gain more political influence. Finally, the aggressive antidrug campaign was a way of avoiding being completely alienated from the United States because of his heterodox nationalist economic policies that included a cease in the payments of foreign debt, a reduction of payments to 10% of exports per year, and several attempts at nationalizing the foreign private bank; and his (verbal) support to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

11. McClintock (1988, p. 138) explains that the traffickers chose to support Shining Path because MRTA was supported by Colombia's M-19 guerrilla movement, which had been at odds with the Colombian traffickers, the bosses of their Peruvian counterparts. In addition, the traffickers assessed Shining Path to be the more effective group at opposing antidrug personnel.

12. McClintock (1988) explains that "as a result of the decline in processing and trafficking capabilities, the supply of coca leaves and paste exceeded the traffickers' demand, and the price of coca paste plummeted by more than 50% in some areas" (p. 131).

13. Lee (1991) comments on Peru's spraying program in the following:

> However, Peru's spraying program suffered a possibly fatal setback in May 1988, when Eli Lilly announced that it would no longer supply tebuthiuron for the program. "A number of practical and policy considerations prevent our participation," said a Lilly spokesman. Lilly was certainly afraid of lawsuits stemming from improper use of the chemical. A company representative quoted by Lima daily *El Comercio* said that Spike "could cause irreversible harm to flora and fauna and even affect human beings if it is not applied with extreme caution." (p. 206)

14. According to Obando (1993a, p. 89), the person who inspired the Fujimori doctrine was Fernando De Soto, Fujimori's main adviser on drug control policy at the beginning of his administration.

15. With regard to the split of Shining Path, Clutterbuck (1995a) offers the following information:

> By August 1993, 400 terrorist had surrendered under the Repentance Law and the numbers escalated fast. The number of full-time terrorists in the SL [Shining Path] columns in the Huallaga Valley fell from 1000 to 250 in the

> 12 months from January 1993 to January 1994, it was announced on June 1994 that 3095 SL terrorist had surrendered in the previous two years. The annual number of people killed in the war fell from 3101 in 1992 to 1692 in 1993 and about 500 in 1994. (p. 36)

16. Law No. 26.247 was passed by the Congreso Constituyente Democrático. It states that the armed forces are authorized to pursue and arrest people implicated in illicit drug traffic related crimes in areas where there are no national police detachments. Available: http://www.congreso.gob.pe/ccd/leyes/cronos/1993/ley26247.htm

17. For specific cases of drug-trafficking–related corruption in the military deployed in the UHV, see Menzel (1996, p. 155) and Andean Commission of Jurists (1994c, p. 5).

18. For specific cases of military drug-trafficking–related corruption in the UHV after 1992, see Menzel (1996, pp. 185, 196, 200), Andean Commission of Jurists (1994c, p. 4), Obsérvatoire Géopolitique des Drogues (1994, pp. 184-185), Geopolitical Drug Watch (1997), and Foreign Broadcast Information Service (1996b).

19. According to Tapia (1997, p. 58), in the first semester of 1990, five internal military fronts or counterinsurgent commands (Huallaga, Huamanga, Mantaro, Inca, and Ucayali) were created. These commands overlapped with the emergency zones.

20. Head and Rosenau (1990b, p. 4) explain that General Arciniega applied the counterinsurgency training he had received at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth during the 1970s.

21. Aside from the fact that UMOPAR has been dissolved because of its record of corruption and human rights violations, we have seen that this unit concentrated its activities not in interdiction but in supporting coca eradication teams. As far as the Sinchi Battalion is concern, it is a counterinsurgency unit and not a specialized, drug law enforcement unit. According to Palmer (1993, p. 300), in the period under study, a top national police general earned U.S.$150 per month, and a newly enlisted policeman earned between U.S.$10 and U.S.$15 per month.

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