

Peru's New

News Analysis

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LIMA, Oct. 26 — Three weeks after seizing power, Peru's new military government remains an enigma behind a cloud of nationalistic oratory.

When the armed forces overthrew democratically elected President Fernando Belaunde Terry on Oct. 3, they used as their pretext the charges that Belaunde had betrayed the national interest by his dealings with a U.S.-owned oil company and that "unworthy" members of his government were leading Peru toward "moral decomposition."

In Belaunde's place, the military installed a "revolutionary Government" of generals and admirals under the presidency of Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado. Since then, the Velasco regime has moved in a number of puzzling and sometimes contradictory directions.

An Inconsistent Stance

On one hand, it has adopted as its own the Belaunde government's program to combat the fiscal crisis afflicting the economy during the past year. On the other, it has attacked those members of Belaunde's cabinet most responsible for mapping this program with a relentless campaign of vilification and legal persecution.

So far, it has allowed most aspects of Peruvian life to function much as they did before the coup and has not tampered with the freedom of such institutions as the press. At the same time, however, the regime has signaled quite clearly that it plans to be in power for a long time and that the country should forget about such vestiges of democracy as elections, the free functioning of political parties or the reopening of Con-

Junta Unfurls Morality Banner

gress.

The few terse explanations that the regime has given for its actions are notable largely for two things: A tone of belligerent, muscular nationalism and an almost total lack of specifics about Peru's long-range direction.

A Vague Program

In a brief encounter with newsmen the other day, for example, Velasco gave them this description of his government's goals: "The revo-

lution is on the march and will not soon be halted. Its objectives are the most noble that a country can have, for they pertain to the concept of Fatherland, of flag and of honor . . ."

So far, the great majority of Peru's 12 million people—long accustomed to frequent periods of military dictatorship—seem to be taking this lack of clarity in stride. In fact, the evidence seems to indicate that this Andean country had been wearied by the recurring crises of the Belaunde period and was subconsciously yearning for a return to strong-man rule.

The Velasco regime's chief action to date—expropriating the principal assets of the U.S.-owned International Petroleum Co.—has met with an almost total outpouring of public approbation. And, when Velasco made a rare public appearance at the bullfights last week, he was greeted with frenzied applause and shouts of "Viva."

Despite this general attitude of placidity, there are a few politically aware Peruvians with experience in government, journalism and the professions who have been groping for clues

to the new government's intentions. In private, many of them express concern about what they regard as some ominous tendencies building up within the Velasco regime.

A Stress on 'Morality'

What disturbs them is the government's increasing stress on the role of "morality" in Peruvian life. In this, they profess to see a clear-cut parallel between the Velasco government and the punitanical military regime that seized power in Argentina two years ago.

As proof, they cite the Velasco regime's loud but vague charges that the Belaunde government was shot through with corruption. The first priority of the new regime, Velasco has said ominously, will be to bring thoses responsible to justice.

He and other prominent military leaders also have charged that the national congress, which has been closed down since the coup,

was filled with legislators who misappropriated funds for such illicit purposes as maintaining mistresses in Europe. At one point, the regime haughtily announced that the fleet of government-owned automobiles reserved for the use of congress was being turned over to the police so that there could be no doubt that they were being used for the "public benefit."

The Marijuana Peril

Although most of the regime's preachments about morality have focused on persons and organizations within the government, there are signs that it may be spreading to other sectors of Peruvian life.

The other day, the minister of government and police, Gen. Armando Artola Azcarate, gave a press conference in which he devoted a full third of his time to charging that one of the greatest dangers facing Peru is the increase in Marijuana smoking among Lima teenagers.

The action that has caused the most concern among democratically minded Peruvians has been the govern-

ment's efforts to prosecute three former ministers in the Belaunde government: Manuel Ulloa, former finance minister; Guillermo Hoyos Osoros, former justice minister, and Pablo Carrquiry, former minister of development.

These are the three men whom the Velasco regime claims were responsible for Belaunde's ill-fated attempt to work out an amicable solution with international Petroleum over a long-disputed oil field title. The agreement, announced in August, provoked an outpouring of nationalistic outrage and led ultimately to the military's coup.

Innuendo Used

After repudiating the agreement and expropriating the IPC assets, the Velasco government charged that the three ex-ministers were guilty of conflicts of interest and betrayals of Peruvian sovereignty. All three have been accused formally of "crimes against the state," and the charges now are being weighed by a special tribunal of the Supreme Court.

In each case, the govern-

ment's charges are either vague, based on innuendo or demonstrably false. For example, Velasco has said publicly that Ulloa, the leading figure of the Belaunde cabinet, was guilty of conflict of interest in the IPC matter because of his connections with Deltec, an international banking and investment firm.

IPC, Velasco pointed out, is a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, an organization in which the Rockefeller family has substantial interests. He then went on to charge that a "Mr. Rockefeller," also was one of the controlling figures in Deltec and that Ulloa, as a former Deltec officer, was therefore prejudiced on behalf of the Rockefeller interests.

However, it since has been established with almost complete certainty that no member of the Rockefeller family has any connection with Deltec, and Velasco has failed to make any elaboration on his original charge.

The rest of the government's case against the three former cabinet officers seems equally as contrived and flimsy. As a result, most observers here think that

even the Peruvian Supreme Court, which so far has shown itself slavishly attentive to the demands of the regime, eventually will have no choice but to pigeonhole the charges for lack of evidence.

Long Wait For Decision

But that could take months or even years. In the meantime, the accused are all liable to imprisonment and other forms of legal harassment while their cases are being adjudicated.

For these reasons, Carrquiry and Hoyos Osoros have taken asylum in the Mexican Embassy. And Ulloa, who is in Buenos Aires, has charged the government with a "frameup" and has said he will not return to Peru unless he receives a guarantee against arrest while his case is before the courts.

In explaining his refusal to return home, Ulloa said the current climate in Peru was one of "hate, passion and vengeance." It hasn't really come to that yet, but Peru's new military masters do indeed seem to be flirting the ideas that could make Ulloa's words a reality.