

Peru's Reaction To CIA's Action

Lima, Peru

Official disclosures that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency contributed financially to political parties and communications media opposed to the late President Salvador Allende's regime in neighboring Chile have caused significant repercussions in Peru.

As the only Socialist-style regime left on continental South America, Peru's Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces is particularly concerned about what one local commentator called "any attempt at 'destabilization' or pro-imperialist or pro-bourgeoisie penetration."

That to an important extent has behind Peru's recent request that all U.S. Peace Corps volunteers be withdrawn from this country.

No government official accused the Peace Corps of engaging in any activities other than its technological assistance to Peru in the fields of agriculture, public health, forestry, fisheries, nutrition, engineering and irrigation.

But the timing of the request that the volunteers be withdrawn plus comments in the pro-government press left no doubt that their role had become suspect, especially since President Ford's admission in September that the CIA had given at least \$8 million to anti-Allende elements in Chile.

Moreover, it is likely that some other non-Peruvians and individuals working here—missionaries, charitable societies, cultural associations and fraternities—sooner or later will be asked to leave.

"The government does not

want any 'alien influences' operating," remarked a Latin American diplomatic observer.

At a press conference not long before the public announcement of the Peace Corps expulsion, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, Peru's strongman president, declared that "it would not be unusual if foreign espionage organisms were oiling the counterrevolutionary machinery."

By "counterrevolutionary" Velasco meant activities against a kind of "Peruvian Socialism" the armed forces are working to implant here.

At the same press conference, Velasco said "the CIA can be everywhere."

"We've got our eyes wide open and no one is going to surprise us."

He named two former officers of the U.S. embassy in Lima who he said were asked to leave Peru several years ago because of "activities related to the CIA." They are widely known throughout Latin America as professional members of the U.S. career diplomatic service, and the State Department has flatly denied that either has ever had any connection with the CIA.

In the case of the Peace Corps volunteers, the official reason given for the request that they be withdrawn was that Peruvians are now able to perform their tasks so their services are no longer needed.

Recently Peru sent diplomatic notes to the U.S. embassy here expressing its decision to end Peace Corps services.

Reuters