Peru’s newly elected President Keiko Fujimori exploits killing of Shining Path commander as pretext for military rule

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Twenty-four hours after Keiko Fujimori assumed the presidency of Peru on July 28, security forces killed “Comrade Richard,” third in command of the remnants of the guerilla group Shining Path (SL), now operating as the Militarized Communist Party of Peru (MPCP), in the VRAEM (Valley of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro Rivers), one of Peru’s poorest and most isolated regions and a drug-trafficking hub of the country’s southern jungle.

In her inaugural address, Fujimori announced that the Armed Forces and National Police (PNP) would take the lead in internal security operations under states of emergency, alongside a reform of the prison system and a 15 percent increase in the minimum wage. At her first cabinet meeting the following day, the government took up a supreme decree requesting legislative powers from Congress. According to *RPP*, the stated purpose was to give the executive immediate legal tools to accelerate the state’s response to crime.

The sequence is a grave warning to the Peruvian and South American working class.

The MPCP, numbering between 100 and 200 members, functions as a protector of illegal drug production and trafficking routes in the VRAEM. It lost any capacity to threaten Peru’s cities decades ago. That military insignificance is precisely what makes it politically useful.

The Maoist politics of Shining Path, hostile to the working class as a revolutionary force, and its methods of individual terror served Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) as the pretext for the self-coup of April 5, 1992, when he dissolved Congress, suspended the constitution and ruled by decree with the backing of the Armed Forces. His daughter is reaching for the same instruments of repression.

The VRAEM operation was carried out for maximum political impact, while international delegations, including several representatives of the South American far right and the Trump administration—the largest delegation in attendance with six officials—were still on Peruvian soil for the inauguration.

The military occupation now being prepared will not center on the jungle. It will center on the working class districts of the major cities, where the extortion gangs and hitmen operate. It is also where the majority of Peru’s Venezuelan immigrants live, prime targets to be used as scapegoats for military repression.

States of emergency have been the norm in Peru over the last 10 years

Fujimori’s proposal to place internal security in the hands of the Armed Forces and police under a state of emergency amounts to declaring her government a de facto military regime.

Peruvian governments have issued some 650 declarations of a state of emergency since 2000. Originally an exceptional measure, it has become a routine tool of political management. The main categories are: (1) citizen security—the most frequent, deploying the military in urban areas to compensate for the structural deficiencies of the National Police; (2) natural disasters, notably Supreme Decree No. 097-2026-PCM, which placed 796 districts in 22 regions under emergency; (3) the COVID-19 pandemic, governed by a national state of emergency from March 2020 and renewed monthly for over two and a half years; and (4) social conflicts—applied against strikes and protests, as in the Southern Mining Corridor and during the political crisis of 2022–2023.

A report by School of Government of the Universidad Católica (PUCP) specialists last year warned that the state of emergency has ceased to be exceptional. Suspended under it are the inviolability of the home, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement and personal liberty and security.

What Fujimori proposes is not just the continuation of this practice, but its qualitative extension: the permanent subordination of civilian government to the military command.

A continental realignment of the far right

Fujimori’s announcement was reported by the corporate media across the world within hours and understood for what it is. The Bolivian daily *La Razón* described her handing of “internal control” to the military as the first measure of a promised iron-fist government modeled on her father’s. Turkey’s state-run Anadolu Agency reported her declaration of war on criminal organizations, drug traffickers and illegal mining, and her announcement that the Armed Forces would temporarily take the lead during states of

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emergency.

Her inauguration consolidates a continental realignment. Chile's *La Tercera* noted that the swearing-in of the Fuerza Popular leader strengthens a scenario in South America favorable to governments of the far right, with President José Antonio Kast travelling to Colombia next week for the handover to the fascist lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella after attending Fujimori's inauguration.

Ecuador's Daniel Noboa met Fujimori on July 28 and agreed, according to *El Comercio* of Quito, to deepen bilateral cooperation against transnational organized crime. Fujimori is eager to learn from Ecuador's experiment of building mega-prisons and inviting US military forces to ostensibly combat narco-trafficking.

In Bolivia, Rodrigo Paz Pereira has already leaned on the regional far-right alliance to confront the country's economic crisis, militarize the country and prevent a new mass uprising of revolutionary proportions. Peru and Bolivia share a high-volume trade border. The Aymara people, a majority in the Bolivian Andes, also populate vast regions of the Peruvian border department of Puno and have expanded into Arequipa and Moquegua.

In Brazil, Trump is actively promoting Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving a sentence of 27 years and three months for the plot to prevent Lula da Silva from taking office after the 2022 election. Elections are set for October 4.

A network of military bases under imperialist control will line South America's west coast

In preparation for war against China, a network of US military bases is taking shape across South America. Noboa agreed to the construction of two in Ecuador, including one at Manta, with a base on the Galápagos Islands also under consideration. But the Ecuadorian people oppose the move: on November 16, 2025, a referendum rejected lifting the constitutional ban on foreign military bases.

The US has offered Peru $1.5 billion to upgrade the dilapidated Callao naval base, 73 kilometers south of China's Chancay megaport and positioned to intercept Chinese vessels.

Argentina has been building an integrated naval base at Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, since 2022, to project military power into the South Atlantic and Antarctica. US Southern Command officials have visited and voiced concern over alleged Chinese ambitions there.

Under US pressure, Panama moved against the Balboa and Cristóbal port concessions held by a Hong Kong-based subsidiary of CK Hutchison. In Peru, Chinese-based COSCO still owns and operates the Chancay megaport, but regulatory oversight has been transferred to a Peruvian government body.

Keiko Fujimori at the service of the Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine

The chief architect of a joint South American bloc to impose the burden of the crisis onto the working class, the peasantry and the youth is the fascistic Trump administration. Its aim is to methodically expel Chinese commercial influence and foreign direct investment from South America under the false pretext of defending sovereignty.

The stakes are considerable. Chinese foreign direct investment in Peru totals $35–38 billion, followed by Chile with $20 billion; the US trails far behind at under $7 billion. While China sent a two-person delegation to Fujimori's inauguration, the US arrived with six officials.

Beijing has signaled that it will not retreat, however. The right-wing Peruvian daily *Expreso*, in an article headlined "China Rules," attacked China for approving Decree No. 835, claiming it seeks to impose Chinese law beyond its borders and that Chinese companies could defy Peruvian authorities.

In reality, Decrees 834 and 835 constitute the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Counteracting Unjustified Extraterritorial Jurisdiction by Foreign Countries, aimed at protecting Chinese citizens and companies from foreign sanctions. A "Malicious Entities List" will identify foreign persons or organizations involved in improper extraterritorial actions, while "Prohibition Orders" bar Chinese entities from assisting such measures, with severe penalties for violators.

China is setting new rules in the face of an American administration that is attacking it with prohibitive tariffs, while making enemies of nearly every country on earth.

Taken together—the national security agenda, the consultations on prison construction, Fujimori's pledge to place internal security in the hands of the Armed Forces and PNP and the killing of a Shining Path commander 24 hours after taking office—the direction is unmistakable. Across the continent, a bloc of far-right governments is preparing military rule to force the working class to bear the cost of the crisis and to subordinate South America to US imperialism in its confrontation with China.

Peru sits at the epicenter of that confrontation, economic today and potentially military tomorrow, between a United States seeking to reclaim South America as its exclusive backyard and a China that has invested five times more. Should a third world war erupt, South America will not be spared.

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