

Rubio in Lima: Peru joins Trump's “Shield of the Americas”

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On Thursday, September 10, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Peru's far-right President Keiko Fujimori, concluding a three-day tour to further integrate Colombia, Ecuador and Peru into Washington's so-called “Shield of the Americas.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, Fujimori and Rubio proclaimed the “success” of their talks. Fujimori said Peru was pleased to be admitted to the Shield, a paramilitary alliance of governments launched by Trump on March 7, 2026, that now includes 14 countries. Its orientation, while nominally aimed at drug cartels, is that the governments of the hemisphere must use their militaries to stop any challenge to US hegemony and corporate interests across the Americas.

It amounts to the implementation of Trump's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine: America—the two continents—for the Americans, meaning US capitalism. Its purpose is to expel Chinese influence from the continent, which Washington regards as an economic and military threat, not so much to Latin American countries as to US imperialism.

Rubio declared that “America must discover its own destiny” and called for strengthening “the bonds of prosperity, order and peace” between the two countries. He cynically invoked the historical ties uniting both nations since their beginnings, as though two centuries of relations between the United States and Latin America had been characterized by mutual benefit rather than the plundering of oppressed peoples by US imperialism, working through their own bourgeoisies and landed oligarchies.

Rubio added that there are “criminal terrorist networks” and told Fujimori that “the people elected her” to put an end to them.

This is fraud. Fujimori received barely 17 percent of the vote in the first round, and won the runoff by a margin of only 50,000 votes, out of 18 million cast, and amid an intense campaign by the Peruvian bourgeoisie and its allies in Washington favoring her candidacy. Her victory reflected not popular enthusiasm but the exhaustion of the alternatives on offer.

The road to the far right's rise to power in Peru and elsewhere in Latin America was paved by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Stalinist and Social Democratic mass parties and a globalized capitalist economy's destruction of the material basis for left nationalism in the former colonial world. This was followed by the bankruptcy of the bourgeois nationalist populism associated with the discredited “Pink Tide” of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, Bolivia's Evo Morales and similar governments.

Fujimori, for her part, declared: “We have had to confront terrorism,” a reference to the two-decade dirty war waged by the Peruvian security forces against the Maoist guerrilla movement Shining Path. She did not mention that the great majority of the nearly 70,000 dead were impoverished peasants and workers of the Andean highlands, nor that her father's regime carried out massacres at Barrios Altos and La Cantuta, for which he was convicted of crimes against humanity.

Rubio was accompanied by the US ambassador Bernie Navarro, who had announced the US would closely monitor the second-round vote count in June, a clear example of election interference.

Shortly before Rubio and Fujimori met, a gang opened fire on a public bus carrying passengers in Trujillo. Though no one was injured, several drivers returned to work after the attack because they had to feed their families.

According to Peru's National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), 40 percent of the population earns less than the minimum wage and 60 percent less than the cost of the total family basket.

Barely six weeks into the new administration, the Chamber of Deputies moved to question Interior Minister César Astudillo over alleged irregular appointments and his “supposed lack of leadership in confronting citizen insecurity,” according to *RPP*. Juntos por el Perú deputy Analí Márquez said 207 murders had occurred during the government's first weeks, an average of 4.6 per day.

Rubio, however, made clear that the insecurity confronting Peruvians is not his concern. Two days before meeting Fujimori, he told *El Comercio* that projects backed “by the Chinese Communist Party bypass Peru's legal frameworks and threaten transparency and data security.” He attacked “foreign state-owned companies” that supposedly “take control” and “leave behind debt, surveillance, labor exploitation and weakened sovereignty.”

A crusade against China's influence in Latin America

His mission in Latin America is to intimidate the governments of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru into reducing Chinese influence.

Answering Rubio's accusations, the Chinese Embassy in Peru posted on X that China has been Peru's largest trading partner for 12 consecutive years and that Peru is the third-largest Latin American exporter to China, on a basis of mutual benefit. In another post, the embassy stated that Chinese investment in Peru exceeds \$30 billion and has created “opportunities for development, employment, tax revenues, trade surpluses and international reserves, without generating a single cent of debt.”

The disparity in economic weight is stark. US foreign direct investment in Peru amounts to approximately \$6.7 billion, compared with \$30 billion to \$38 billion from China — 4.5 to 5.7 times as much. Chinese investment in Peru as a percentage of GDP far exceeds that in any other South American country. Beyond mining and infrastructure, China plans an industrial park near the Chancay megaport—the largest Pacific port on the South American coast—to manufacture electric vehicles and other consumer goods, integrating Peru more deeply into Chinese supply chains.

A central aim of Washington is to wrest control of Chancay from China. Given China's economic importance to Peru and the country's strategic role in Beijing's regional plans, the private discussions between Rubio and Fujimori can hardly have been as tranquil as their public statements

suggest.

With the economic gap between China and the United States in Peru widening, Fujimori appears to be betting on renewed subordination to Peru's historic imperialist patron. Foreign Minister Carlos Espá marked Rubio's visit by awarding him the Order of the Sun, one of the Americas' oldest decorations.

To justify Peru's entry into the Shield of the Americas, Fujimori cited the recent capture in Bolivia of a member of the criminal gang "Los Pulpos," saying information supplied by the FBI had allowed Bolivian and Peruvian police to act jointly.

She remained silent on the mass opposition in Bolivia to the IMF-dictated measures of President Rodrigo Paz Pereira, himself a member of the Shield, following weeks of strikes, demonstrations, highway blockades and street battles amid shortages of fuel and food. It is the repression of working-class unrest driven by deteriorating living conditions, not the capture of gang members, that will be the principal use of the Shield.

Concealing poverty, social inequality and mounting working-class struggles throughout South America, Fujimori insisted:

[/blockquote] That is why it is so important to belong to and be part of the Shield of the Americas...we have the firm determination to confront them. And with these tools and with this information and coordination among all the countries, we will be able to act more rapidly and achieve concrete results. [/blockquote]

Peru's incorporation has been backed by Presidents Milei, Kast, Paz Pereira, Noboa and Espriella, forming a bloc of far-right governments. Last January, Peru was also designated a major non-NATO ally.

On a television talk show, Fujimori reaffirmed her campaign pledge to construct four mega-prisons and another smaller one modeled on those of El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele. Her government is consulting Ecuadorian officials interested in constructing similar prisons.

Since taking office she has sought to expand the military's role in internal security, using "states of emergency" as legal cover for deploying elite troops backed by armored vehicles. The former head of the National Police (PNP), Gen. Óscar Arriola, opposed the plan, arguing that soldiers were not trained for police work and calling instead for more resources for the PNP. His replacement by Gen. Fredy López Mendoza removes that obstacle. López Mendoza's background in criminal investigation, anti-corruption work and major police operations points to a PNP leadership focused on intelligence operations alongside an expanded military presence in the streets.

Trump has stated the orientation openly in his speech launching the Shield of the Americas: "You have to use your military ... and you have a great police force. ... But they threaten your police. They scare your police. You have to use your military."

Significantly, Fujimori announced Peru's entry into the Shield from Mazamari in the jungle highlands, dressed in military fatigues while touring the VRAEM, the center of the country's drug-trafficking activity. The militarized display is backed by a major rearmament program: Peru has purchased 12 Lockheed Martin F-16 fighter jets, with plans for 24 at a total cost of about \$3.5 billion.

Only six weeks into her presidency and lacking a popular mandate, Fujimori is aligning her government with pro-Trump forces throughout the hemisphere while assembling her own administration along the same lines. She selected Carlos Espá as foreign minister; Espá has more than 15 years of experience at the US Embassy in Peru and was the presidential candidate of the tiny far-right Sí Creo party. She named Álvaro Vargas Llosa ambassador to the United State. The son of the late novelist and right-wing politician, Mario Vargas Llosa, he is a political chameleon who has successively backed presidents of differing political stripes, including Alejandro Toledo, Ollanta Humala, Martín Vizcarra and, finally, Keiko Fujimori.

While Rubio met Fujimori inside the Government Palace, hundreds

demonstrated nearby against US intervention in Peru.

A banner carried by CONALREP—the Plurinational Convention of the Regions of Peru—demanded the expulsion of the "Shield of the Americas" from Peruvian territory. Other protesters carried signs reading, "Yankees out of Latin America!" and "Narco Rubio out of Peru! USA out!"

One older demonstrator said: "We are here to express our repudiation of Marco Rubio's presence. He represents the most terrible things known today. One only has to remember Palestine and the war with Iran."

Another woman declared: "Today, Marco Rubio, a US official, has arrived in Peru to seize our natural resources. The United States has no good intentions. It is not a friend of Peru."

These are not isolated sentiments. They express a growing understanding among Peruvian workers and youth that the struggle against US intervention in South America is inseparable from the struggle against US imperialist aggression worldwide.

The militarization proclaimed by the Shield of the Americas is aimed at setting the stage for military dictatorship. Its most direct precedent is Operation Condor, secretly established in 1975 with CIA support to crush opposition to South America's military dictatorships. These dictatorships disappeared between 35,000 and 60,000 people, while the broader toll of those who suffered political and labor repression, imprisonment, torture and exile between 1964 and 1983 numbers in the hundreds of thousands, overwhelmingly workers and youth.

This time the carnage threatens to be far greater, because the military buildup is directed against a vastly larger and more concentrated working class confronting an increasingly explosive social crisis. The same globalization of production that Washington is attempting to fracture has united workers in Peru, across South America and in the United States itself into a single class with common interests against a common enemy.

The opposition to imperialism expressed by the demonstrators outside the Government Palace must be given a conscious political form. That requires building sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Peru and throughout the Americas, to arm the working class with a revolutionary socialist and internationalist program.



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