

Tarazona-Sevillano, Gabriela. *Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism*. The Washington Papers 144. Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, and New York: Praeger, 1990.

Professor Tarazona-Sevillano, a Peruvian lawyer who served as a government prosecutor in the Justice Ministry in the mid-1980s, has written an arresting monograph on Peru's Shining Path (Sendero or SL) guerrilla movement. She provides the reader with a brief historical background of the movement and its leader, Abimael Guzman Reynoso; with its organizational structure and operational dynamics; with the Peruvian government's response, especially the anti-terrorism laws and dispositions; and with a case study of guerrilla activities in the Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV), source of about 60 percent of all the coca leaf used in the manufacture of the world's cocaine supply.

Dr. Tarazona-Sevillano advances two central theses in her study: first, that Sendero is winning the guerrilla struggle against the Peruvian government; and second, that Sendero and the "cocaine syndicate" have "combined forces to form a powerful and destructive alliance." (p. xvi) Much useful information not heretofore widely available in English, particularly regarding SL's organization and operational principles, is presented to make her case. However, in the judgment of this reviewer, one of the two dozen or so "senderologists" who, like the author, have labored to understand the Sendero phenomenon, both theses are mistaken.

The author appears to equate doctrinal and organizational rigor with operational success and to underestimate the capacity of the Peruvian authorities to "muddle through" or even to score some dramatic successes. She also equates erroneously a temporary intersection of otherwise divergent interests between guerrillas and drug traffickers in the UHV with alliance or partnership. Her overly lugubrious assessment derives in large measure, as this reviewer sees it, from the time frame of her study. She went to press as the government was reeling from several spectacular Shining Path initiatives in both the UHV and along the communications life lines which connect Peru's capital, Lima, with its hinterland. Since the late 1988, early 1989 reverses, authorities have recorded some dramatic successes of their own, including the recapture of most of the UHV and the raiding of a number of SL safe houses with confiscation of many extremely sensitive Sendero documents. As we learn more about Shining Path we are less swayed by analyses emphasizing its organizational and operational unity and capacity. Desertions, captures, and annihilation of crack SL armed columns are now also part of the reality of Sendero's continued presence in Peru.

The evidence against SL's alliance with the drug traffickers is less conclusive, but includes killings of drug intermediaries by the guerrillas and violent pressuring of local "syndicate" representatives for higher prices for the coca growers. At root the objectives of the traffickers and the guerrillas are diametrically opposed; the former want stability and the status quo, the latter, instability and system overthrow. The case that they join forces fleetingly and

only when it is in each other's distinctively derived interest in doing so is more compelling than the "narcoterrorist" thesis advanced by the author. The key question not addressed by the monograph is what Sendero does with the massive resources it is believed to have gained from the "protection money" paid by the mostly Colombian intermediaries to continue to do business in the UHV (estimated at \$10-\$30 million a year).

As one window into the complex reality of Sendero Luminoso and Peru in the 1980s, Dr. Tarazona-Sevillano has illuminated a significant portion of that totally unexpected phenomenon. This alone makes her work successful. A definitive analysis, however, has yet to be written, and may not even be possible for some time to come.

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Kimball, Jeffrey P. *To Reason Why: The Debate about the Causes of U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1990.

Berman, Larry. *Lyndon Johnson's War*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.

*To Reason Why* is very misleadingly named: it is not a debate but a lynching. A few numbers will swiftly illustrate what we have here.

In this collection of excerpts, Senator Fulbright (after, of course, his eyes had been opened and he saw "All Things Clearly") gets fifteen pages, Daniel Ellsberg (also "after") thirteen pages, Frances Fitzgerald twelve, assorted official North Vietnamese eleven, and so on. And the other sides in this "debate"? Norman Podhoretz is allowed four pages. There is not one single inclusion from Dean Rusk, not one from Guenter Lewy, nor from any South Vietnamese. And — in a 350-page volume — we have from Presidents Truman and Kennedy combined exactly 6 pages. But why should we waste any time on *them* after Professor Kimball has revealed to us that "most academics would probably maintain that the official argument is on the whole false and not worthy of serious consideration"? The need for a decent reader on the origins of American involvement in Vietnam remains.

The volume by Larry Berman is of course a sequel to his *Planning a Tragedy: the Americanization of the War in Viet Nam* (1982). Several recent studies of the Viet Nam conflict have sought to encompass the international scene and the historical precedents for US involvement from Roosevelt to Kennedy. These include R.B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, A.J. Rotter, *The Path to Vietnam*, L.C. Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam*, and Charles Parker, *Vietnam: Strategy for a Stalemate*.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Berman's well-researched and nicely written book focuses very intensely on the little