

# Return of the *caudillo*: autocratic democracy in Peru

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The resounding defeat of the former secretary general of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, by President Alberto Fujimori in the 1995 elections confirmed the latter's extraordinary popularity. Fujimori won re-election with over 64% of the valid vote and, until mid-1997, his approval ratings have rarely dipped below 50% in most public opinion polls. Fujimori's popularity and re-election were largely the result of his administration's success in ending hyperinflation and sharply reducing the levels of political violence predominant during the late 1980s. Nonetheless, these successes have come at a high price for the country's democratic institutions and norms. In 1992 Fujimori suspended the constitution and closed the Congress, claiming that such measures were required in order to combat the Maoist insurgency of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Although elections for a constituent assembly and a new constitution took place within a year, centralisation, personalism and the weakening of civil society raise serious questions about democracy in Peru.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the pattern of governmental decision making and institutional prerogatives during the Fujimori administration and their implications for democracy. Centralisation of decision making by the executive has been accompanied by a more visible role for technocrats in the policy process. Both trends, which have been evident throughout Latin America during the last decade, have been crucial to the successful implementation of neoliberal economic reforms. Fujimori's highly personalist style of governance has further exacerbated centralisation. Viewed from the historical perspective of Latin America's long experience with *caudillo* (strongman) rule, the personalism and semi-authoritarianism of the Fujimori administration is not unusual. Yet, even though this pattern of governance and leadership style have historical precedents in the region, Fujimori has also been astute in incorporating new elements into this traditional pattern, especially polling data, focus groups, image consultants and television. Clever media campaigns directed by the government at largely sympathetic media companies, have had a powerful impact in shaping issues and perceptions of Fujimori.<sup>1</sup>

As decision making has been increasingly centralised in the executive, the Fujimori administration has relied upon two groups in the government to formulate and implement policies. First, a growing cadre of technocrats, many trained in foreign universities, who implement government decisions within the state bureaucracy and who have overseen the most significant

overhaul of the state apparatus in recent Peruvian history. Complementing this group, however, has been an informal network of loyalists, connected through personal, familial or social ties with the president. Without a traditional political party of his own, Fujimori has come to rely on these dual networks of supporters—personal loyalists and technocrats—to shape government policy. At the same time, demands from various social groups have been held in check by a series of policies that purposefully limit political mobilisation, as well as through outright repression of opposition groups.

Unlike Latin America's populists, such as Argentina's Juan Perón or Peru's own Alán García, the Fujimori administration has been uninterested in political mobilisation among lower class sectors.<sup>2</sup> Government officials assiduously cultivate public approval in opinion polls and in elections, yet nonetheless have avoided creating pro-government organisations to foster or channel popular participation in support of their policies.<sup>3</sup> Fujimori has specifically attacked political parties and, as we shall see below, his government has openly discouraged lower class organisation. Moreover, the government has not adopted the redistributive policies typical of populist regimes in the region. Avoiding class-orientated rhetoric or attacks on economic elites, the government has preferred to distribute goods among the poor through programmes organised by technocrats in the executive branch, rather than challenging the power of privileged sectors by redistributing wealth.

Fujimori's appeal has been based largely on a promise of technology, efficiency and 'practical' solutions to everyday problems.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, Fujimori's Japanese ancestry plays a critical role, as he holds out the promise of access to Japan's technological know-how.<sup>5</sup> Fujimori has travelled extensively in East Asia, visiting Japan more than any other country as president. His administration has promoted increased economic links with the region, successfully pushing for admission into the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC) and expressing open admiration for the political and economic systems of such countries as Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. The attractiveness of a 'technocratic' problem-solving administration led by a Japanese engineer-president had a particular appeal for Peruvians after a decade of ineffective populist governments that left behind a legacy of hyperinflation, a large foreign debt, recession, declining productivity and political violence.

In order to understand the implications from these trends for democracy in Peru, the first part of this article examines the 'self-coup' of 1992. Both the personalism and the authoritarian tendencies of Fujimori were most clearly displayed in the events leading up to the democratic rupture. The second section analyses the growing centralisation of Peru's institutional framework in the aftermath of the 1992 coup. It will be argued that the regime followed a purposeful effort to weaken democratic institutions and accountability while further centralising decision making. The important role played by technocrats and personal networks is examined in the next two sections, where it is argued that these have been used by the executive to increase the autonomy of the state and reduce democratic accountability.

### Autogolpe and transition: 1992–96

The suspension of constitutional rule announced by President Alberto Fujimori on 5 April 1992 brought to a close Peru's 12-year experiment with democratisation. From 1980 until 1992 Peru experienced two peaceful transfers of power and lively multiparty competition. Nonetheless, the period also witnessed a prolonged guerrilla war with the Maoist Sendero Luminoso and a persistent economic crisis. The election of the unknown Alberto Fujimori in 1990 on an independent ticket was as much a repudiation of established political elites as it was an endorsement of his vague platform.<sup>6</sup> Once in office, Fujimori adopted a radical neoliberal agenda that sharply reduced inflation but induced a deep recession as well. In the political arena Fujimori spent the first two years in office carefully fashioning a support base in the business community, the military command and the international financial community.<sup>7</sup>

The precise reasons for the 1992 *autogolpe* remain unclear.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, Fujimori had demonstrated a virtual contempt for most of the political institutions in the country during his first two years in office, attacking the parties, Congress and the judicial system for corruption and inefficiency. Such attacks were extremely popular because most people saw an element of truth in them. Moreover, many regime allies believed that neoliberal reforms could be more effectively carried out through authoritarian methods. Although Peru's Congress had passed almost all Fujimori's legislative agenda, as well as ceding special legislative powers to him during the administration's first two years, increased opposition by late 1991 raised the spectre of new difficulties for neoliberal reforms in the Congress. In what was viewed as a significant threat, former president Alán García Pérez began to position himself as the leader of the opposition using his populist party, the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) to mobilise opposition to neoliberal reforms.

In the immediate aftermath of the *autogolpe* it appeared as if the government had little interest in re-establishing democratic institutions. Fujimori proposed ruling by decree with periodic plebiscites on his actions. The regime's confidence was boosted by overwhelming support in the polls for Fujimori's actions.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the *autogolpe* was criticised internationally and pressure was quickly applied to Peru to move towards democratic rule. The USA suspended its assistance to Peru, debt renegotiations with the International Monetary Fund were put on hold and several Latin American countries recalled their ambassadors for consultation. More ominously, a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) was called in the Bahamas to review the Peruvian situation, holding out the possibility of further international actions, including possible economic sanctions. In the face of this unexpectedly harsh international reaction, President Fujimori personally travelled to the Bahamas meeting of the OAS to defend his actions, but also to offer a promise that new elections would be held for a constituent assembly that would write a new constitution, thus paving the way for a return of civilian institutions.

On 13 November 1992, just two weeks before the assembly elections were held, a conspiracy involving retired and active duty officers to remove Fujimori from office and restore the 1979 constitution was discovered.

The conspiracy was an indication of deeper unrest in the military. Conspiracies and secret societies within the armed forces were the result of an increasing unease among retired and active duty officers over the military command's close links to Fujimori and reforms that threatened its perceived institutional prerogatives.<sup>10</sup> Such discontent was kept in check by careful surveillance of officer loyalty and improvements in living standards for the high command. More importantly, the capture of Shining Path's leader, Abimael Guzmán, in October 1992 and the adoption of counterinsurgency measures the military had long advocated muted much of the dissatisfaction with the government.<sup>11</sup>

The assembly elections produced an overwhelming victory for the government party, Cambio 90-Nueva Mayoría, which controlled almost two-thirds of the 80-member assembly seats. Following nearly a year of acrimonious debate, the constituent assembly approved the constitution and submitted it to a referendum in October 1993. The political opposition to Fujimori, which had remained fragmented since the *autogolpe* of 1992, coordinated their campaigns against the constitution. Opposition parties capitalised on public discomfort with the centralising features of the new constitution, discussed below, and argued that its adoption would consolidate the dictatorship. With a largely sympathetic press and widely publicised polling data that suggested an overwhelming government victory, officials appeared confident. It was thus seen as a significant setback when the constitution was approved by the narrowest of margins (52%). That vote, along with better than expected opposition showings in the November 1993 municipal elections, indicated the steady erosion of support the regime had been suffering during the year.

After three years of continuous economic adjustments there were few signs that economic reforms were going to improve the lives of Peru's lower classes any time soon, as poverty increased and wages continued their downward spiral.<sup>12</sup> Although Fujimori initially discussed the need for a social assistance programme to ease the pain caused by reforms, there had been virtually no social initiatives undertaken. The referendum results were a clear warning signal to the regime that, unless the needs of Peru's poor were addressed, it would face difficulties at the polls in the 1995 presidential elections.

Beginning in 1993 the Fujimori administration gave renewed attention to social welfare programmes. Large sums of money were poured into previously moribund agencies and new social programmes, including the National Development and Social Compensation Fund (FONCODES), the National Housing Fund (FONAVI) and the National Nutritional Assistance Programme (PRONAA). The major task of these organisations was to provide for the basic needs of Peru's poor, in both the shantytowns of Lima and the impoverished villages of the Andean region. Funding for the programmes came from privatisations and improved revenues and had the support of international lending institutions, which had previously lamented the lack of a social safety net during the implementation of adjustment programmes.<sup>13</sup>

As the pace of social spending and public works projects picked up, Fujimori astutely travelled the country in an attempt to link himself with these improvements, a tactic that became central to his re-election campaign. An improving economic situation also contributed to Fujimori's prospects. With inflation under

control and much of its foreign debt being renegotiated, Peru experienced a 12% increase in its GNP in 1994. Increased foreign investment, a rising stock market and the successful sale of a number of state companies—including the Peruvian Telephone Company (CPT) for the unexpectedly large sum of US\$2 billion—contributed to growing optimism among the public about the direction of the country.

Fujimori's popularity was also aided by the continued difficulties faced by the opposition. Although most opposition parties demonstrated a surprising degree of unity in backing the candidacy of Javier Pérez de Cuellar for the presidency, they still faced a number of serious obstacles. Pérez de Cuellar's lacklust speaking style and the formality of his presence contrasted sharply with Fujimori's tendency to dress up in a traditional poncho and press into crowds of supporters to kiss babies and shake hands. Even military clashes along disputed areas of the Ecuador–Peru border in January 1995, which saw greater losses for the Peruvian side, did not seem to affect Fujimori's popularity. In April 1995 Fujimori was re-elected with 64% of the valid vote, far above the 51% needed to avoid a second round run-off election.

Fujimori's re-election victory represented not only the consolidation of his personalistic style of governance, but also the new political institutions which were carefully crafted by his government in the aftermath of the 1992 *autogolpe*. Although many opposition figures had initially argued for the need to overturn the 1993 constitution, in the aftermath of the 1995 elections most leading opposition politicians conceded that it would be difficult to change the post-1992 rules and norms, and focused rather on incremental reforms.<sup>14</sup> But the concentration of power, and the willingness of Fujimori's supporters to change rules and institutions to meet his needs, made even incremental change difficult. Only a year after winning re-election, Peru's Congress adopted a resolution reinterpreting the constitution to allow Fujimori to be re-elected in 2000. When the Constitutional Tribunal objected to this action in June 1997, its members were removed in an unconstitutional action by the Congress.

### **Technocracy and bureaucratic reforms**

The Fujimori administration has been one of the most active in recent Peruvian history in redesigning the country's institutional structures. A first set of reforms has been aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of state bureaucratic structures through privatisations, streamlining and new training and resources for public agencies. The overall effect has been to increase the capacity of the state sector to establish and realise policy goals after a long period in which the Peruvian state was virtually paralysed by corruption and inefficiency.

The effort to reform Peru's administrative structure was undertaken almost as soon as Fujimori took office in 1990. Political appointees from the previous regime were removed throughout the country's bureaucratic structure in a veritable purge. As resource needs were assessed, it became apparent that little could be done without improving revenue collection, which had declined precipitously during the 1980s. The tax collection agency (Superintendencia

Nacional Tributaria, SUNAT) thus received priority attention during the first months of the new administration and its efforts quickly paid off. Tax revenue dramatically increased, rising from just under 5% of GDP in 1989 to 10% in 1992. In several major operations involving the police and the military, the Fujimori administration sent tax collectors and other administrators into the streets and marketplaces of major cities to enforce the tax code among pavement vendors.

By far the boldest measures undertaken to reform the state involved privatisations. Peru had one of the largest public sectors in Latin America, a result of the expansion of the public enterprise sector during the reformist military government of General Velasco (1968–75).<sup>15</sup> Previous efforts to privatise state companies during the Belaúnde administration (1980–85) foundered on internal political disputes within the governing party. By contrast, the Fujimori administration viewed privatisation as an integral part of reforming Peru's state structure from the start. Within a year of taking office the administration had enacted a new privatisation law and set up a special agency, the Comisión de Privatización (COPRI) to oversee the privatisation process. Although few firms were initially sold, the pace of sales rose dramatically in the aftermath of the *autogolpe*. COPRI officials viewed the suspension of democratic rules as an opportunity to accelerate the privatisation process, and took advantage of the suspension of Congress by expanding their own power and autonomy.<sup>16</sup> As with the SUNAT, the COPRI staff is composed of highly trained professionals, predominately lawyers and economists, who have been active and creative in planning the sale of state companies. Following privatisation models elsewhere, especially in Chile, COPRI restructures companies, organises the financing and coordinates activities with other state agencies to ensure successful privatisations.

Perhaps the most successful privatisation effort involved the sale of the state telephone companies, ENTEL and CPT, to Spain's Telefonica Internacional for around \$2 billion. As with other privatisations, an internal privatisation committee (CEPRI) was designated within each company. The committee was composed of technocrats appointed by COPRI's director, at that time Jaime Yoshiyama, an important confidant of President Fujimori. CEPRI in turn contracted several private foreign companies to provide legal and technical assistance, including the New York-based accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand and the Chicago-based law firm of Mackenzie & Baker. After conducting several staff 'workshops' to assess ENTEL's and CPT's assets and organisation, CEPRI coordinated with the Ministry of Transport and Communication to change Peru's communication laws, the purpose of which was to make the companies more attractive to foreign investors. These included laws guaranteeing a five-year period in which the companies would continue to enjoy their monopoly in Peru's telecommunication industry. In February 1994, nearly two years after the start of the process, the state telephone companies were officially put on sale.

The privatisation process highlights the central role that technocrats have had in reorganising the state's administrative structure. In addition to providing vital technical advice on financing, operations and the drafting of new rules and regulations, they have also played a key role in forging links between government politicians, international financial institutions or companies and the dom-

estic business sector. These efforts in turn have provided the government with the ideas and support it has needed for the success of its restructuring programme. Technocrats are found at all levels and in all areas of the Fujimori government, from the Oxford-trained Minister of Economy between 1991 and 1993, Carlos Boloña, who previously worked in private international banks and the World Bank, to directors of new agencies, such as Beatriz Boza, president of PromPerú (the government's promotional agency), who had worked at a major law firm in New York on privatisation issues.<sup>17</sup> International connections among advisors, even if not new, have become more apparent under the Fujimori government. Moreover, the administration has been less concerned about possible conflicts of interest than on the ability of technocrats with international experience and connections to facilitate its dealings with financial actors.<sup>18</sup>

Although most of the reforming technocrats are Peruvian, external advisors have played a key role. Much of the funding, and in some cases the personnel themselves, have come from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Private think-tanks, business associations and universities have also played an important role in providing the government with a cadre of trained technocrats. Of particular importance has been the Instituto de Libertad y Democracia (ILD), a free-market think-tank whose director, Hernando De Soto, played a crucial role in introducing a newly elected Fujimori in 1990 to leaders of international financial institutions and the country's largest creditors. The ILD has continued to play an important part in advising the government on subjects ranging from revisions in electoral laws and the tax code to anti-drug policies and land reform.

### Political centralisation

Reforms to improve the efficiency of the state apparatus and ease Peru's integration into the increasingly competitive global marketplace were accompanied by another set of reforms that centralised political power and decision making in the executive. Government officials argued that the need to reform the state required a high level of centralisation if efforts to revamp the bureaucracy were to avoid being impeded by special interests. Many recent analyses of neoliberal reform efforts in Latin America have also pointed to the fact that such reforms have been state-directed and involved strong centralisation, suggesting that their success is predicated on a high level of centralisation of authority within the executive, producing a sort of 'Market-Leninism'.<sup>19</sup> Centralisation also re-enforces the personalist control of the executive over governmental affairs and reduces the president's institutional accountability. As O'Donnell notes, the president and his technocratic advisors are thus shielded from the pressures, opinions and demands of society between elections as reforms are being implemented.<sup>20</sup>

The 1993 constitution significantly weakens the powers of the Peruvian Congress *vis-à-vis* the president. The most apparent change regarding the Congress is the shift from a bicameral legislature with 240 members to a unicameral legislature with a mere 120 members. As several analysts have

pointed out, this has had the practical effect of severely restricting political representation, reducing both the number of parties and of provinces that have elected legislators.<sup>21</sup> Aside from being much reduced in size, the Congress has far fewer powers than under previous constitutions. The president no longer requires legislative approval for international treaties, ambassadorial appointments or high-level appointments in the armed forces.

Moreover, the executive is given extraordinary legislative powers, extending a practice that existed under the 1979 constitution which allowed the Congress to cede decree powers to the president on specific issues for a limited period of time.<sup>22</sup> In practice, during most of the 1980s, legislatures controlled by the president's party were all too willing to cede powers to the executive when presidents requested it. The 1993 constitution allows the president to exercise legislative decree powers without having to request them beforehand. In a particularly egregious limit on congressional authority, decrees which are declared 'urgent' by the executive cannot even be revised or changed by the Congress. Between July 1995 and June 1996 Congress passed 99 decree laws, while the executive issued 119 legislative decrees, of which 76 were listed as decrees of urgency.<sup>23</sup>

The power acquired by the Ministry of the Presidency, created in 1992 and charged with overseeing the executive branch bureaucracy, highlights the degree to which centralisation has occurred under Fujimori. The ministry's budget increased nine-fold between 1990 and 1995, reflecting its growing control over new and old programmes. All the new social programmes discussed above (PRONAA, FOCODES, FONAVI) were managed by the ministry, as was most of the government's spending on infrastructure, such as road-building and school construction. At such construction sites, bright orange billboards proclaim that the project is financed by the Ministry of the Presidency.<sup>24</sup> By coincidence, orange is also the colour of Fujimori's party, Cambio 90. Many of the programmes administered by the ministry had previously been overseen by local or regional governments, including the popular Glass of Milk programme, which was started in the mid-1980s by the leftist-controlled Lima city council and quickly spread to municipalities around the country. The programme, which provides a glass of milk to all needy children, was an important source of local autonomy and grassroots organisation, especially for parties of the left.<sup>25</sup> In 1996 an executive decree transferred the programme to the Ministry of the Presidency, in part because it had provided an important focal point for local politicians to oppose government policies.

The fate of the Glass of Milk programme also reflects the stunning loss of local governing autonomy during the early 1990s. In the first six years of the Fujimori administration no fewer than 49 decrees or laws were issued limiting the prerogatives of municipal governments.<sup>26</sup> These decrees included suspending local authority to issue taxes, regulate markets or designate bus routes. By far the greatest setback for decentralisation was the suspension of regional governments after the 1992 *autogolpe*. Although these governments had been set up only in the 1980s, they had underscored a commitment by all political parties in Peru to increase local self-government. Under the 1993 constitution, however, the president has the right to appoint the governors of Peru's designated regions,



who are largely limited to supervising the implementation of the central government's programmes.

As with the legislature and regional authorities, Peru's judiciary has also lost power and autonomy to the executive. Following the 1992 *autogolpe* the members of the country's Supreme Court and other judges were dismissed. The judicial system had been pilloried by critics, including President Fujimori, for being corrupt and inefficient, an opinion widely shared by the public. Many of the reforms instituted by the 1993 constitution attempt to restore public confidence in the judicial system by requiring judges to pass a written exam and by establishing locally elected justices of the peace. Nonetheless, the promise of a more efficient judiciary was soon overshadowed by repeated executive efforts to limit judicial independence.

In a number of high profile cases of corruption or malfeasance involving government officials, the executive has pressured judges and the state prosecutor to end their investigations or to offer inconclusive findings.<sup>27</sup> A veiled threat has continued to hang over the judiciary in the form of successive 'reorganisation' plans. In 1993 and again in 1996, ostensibly independent consultative committees were formed to evaluate judges and dismiss those deemed incompetent. The 1996 committee was led by a retired admiral with little experience in the civilian judicial system and close ties to the Fujimori administration. Even more disturbing have been government efforts to limit investigations into human rights abuses committed by security forces. In 1995, in the wake of conclusive evidence that secret paramilitary forces had been involved in the assassination of students at the University of La Cantuta, the Congress, at the behest of the executive, passed a blanket amnesty for military officials involved in human rights abuses and rejected calls for further investigations into the matter.<sup>28</sup>

Since 1992 trials for terrorism have been carried out by military tribunals over which the civilian courts, including the Supreme Court, have no jurisdiction. Critics of the military's anti-terrorism strategy and the government's poor human rights record have been systematically harassed. In November 1996, when a retired army general released information regarding the continued operation of paramilitary organisations in Peru, he was violently detained by the intelligence service (SIN) and held incommunicado for several days. The impunity enjoyed by the military demonstrated the consolidation of its power under the Fujimori government, which has relied on the armed forces not only in its counter-subversive campaign, but also to intimidate opponents.

### Personalist networks

The centralisation of power in the presidency and the increased role of technocrats in the policy-making process have been accompanied by the development of an extensive network of officials with personal, familial or social ties to Fujimori who occupy both official and unofficial positions in the government. This network provides the president with the sort of loyal following within the state bureaucracy that is often associated with a political party. Yet, unlike party leaders, these officials do not have a power base of their own and are dependent for their position on the person of the president.

Lacking a formal political party, Fujimori early on turned to a network of friends and supporters to staff his new administration. Although many were competent technocrats in their own right, others appeared to have little more than their ties to Fujimori. Some, such as Victor Joy Way, a Chinese–Peruvian businessman from the Andean department of Huanuco, had been part of Fujimori’s long-shot 1990 presidential campaign. Of particular interest is the administration’s recruitment among the Japanese–Peruvian community, which had previously not been politically mobilised.<sup>29</sup> Several high-level appointments at both the ministerial and vice-ministerial level have come from the Japanese–Peruvian community.<sup>30</sup> By far the most prominent figure has been Jaime Yoshiyama who, first as Minister of Energy and Mines and later as director of the Ministry of the Presidency, oversaw many of the efforts to restructure Peru’s bureaucracy. Often mentioned as a possible successor to Fujimori, Yoshiyama was the government’s candidate for mayor of Lima in November 1995, but narrowly lost. Yoshiyama’s ambitions and efforts to build an independent political base may account for his summary dismissal from office in late 1996. Fujimori also turned to members of his own family, especially his brother Santiago Fujimori, who during the first six years of the administration acted as an informal chief of staff, overseeing staff and cabinet appointments.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most controversial and powerful of the administration’s informal advisors has been Vladimiro Montesinos. Although he occupies no formal position in the government, he has effectively overseen the SIN and the security forces since 1990. Originally an attorney for the Fujimori campaign during the final phase of the 1990 presidential campaign, Montesinos was a key figure in introducing Fujimori to members of the high command in the armed forces. A shadowy figure, who had been dismissed from the army for espionage in the 1970s and who has made no formal public appearance, Montesinos has overseen the restructuring of Peru’s security forces. Military promotions and counter-subversive strategies in both the SIN and the armed forces have been strongly influenced by Montesinos, whose power is both respected and resented within the security forces. Repeated revelations concerning Montesinos’ connections with drug traffickers have not affected his influence, either within Peru’s security forces or with the US government, which has had close contacts with Montesinos.<sup>32</sup>

Changes introduced regarding promotion and training in Peru’s armed forces underscore the growing power of personalist networks under the Fujimori administration. Before 1990 promotion in the armed forces was strictly regulated by institutional criteria in place since the 1950s. The highest ranking officers in the army, the Commander Generals, served a single one-year term and, as with other high ranking officers—including the Chief of Staff and regional commanders—were drawn from the top 5% of their graduating class at the army’s graduate school, the Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG). A series of laws and norms issued by the executive in late 1991 and early 1992 significantly changed the military’s internal institutional regulations. Promotions are no longer tied to ESG rankings or even prior experience. In practice this has increased the importance of political ties and beliefs over abilities and performance. Legislative Decree Law #752 promulgated in November 1991 allowed the Commander Generals of the different service branches to remain in their positions

indefinitely, serving at the pleasure of the president. The law was passed at the behest of Fujimori's ally in the army, General Nicolás de Bari Hermoza Rios who, as Commander General of the Army and President of the Joint Command, has been the most powerful person in the armed forces since 1991.

### Conclusions

Events in Peru in the aftermath of the 1992 democratic rupture have demonstrated the continued fragility of democratic norms and institutions in the country. Elections and separation of powers exist; however, their ability to provide democratic accountability has been lessened by the centralisation of power in the executive and the persistence of personalism. Human rights violations have continued and, despite several reform efforts, the judiciary remains far from being an independent body. The extraordinary formal powers acquired by the president since 1992 have been accentuated by the influence of technocrats and personalist networks in the administration who owe and express loyalty solely to the president.

The semi-authoritarianism of Peru's post-1992 political system has a strong precedent in the country's long experience with *caudillo* personalism, centralisation of power and heavy-handed presidentialism. Moreover, although Peru was a civilian democracy in the 12 years leading up to the 1992 breakdown, its human rights record was one of the worst in the western hemisphere, largely the result of the emergency powers enjoyed by the military in its efforts to curb terrorism. Democratic institutions and norms were weak and often ineffective. Nonetheless, the outright reversal of democratisation in 1992 and the growing consolidation of autocratic control by the president since then suggest a dangerous new level of semi-authoritarianism, that if left unchecked, could provide the basis for future instability. The zeal with which Fujimori and his supporters pursued changes in the law allowing for his re-election in 2000 suggests the fundamental dilemma facing the administration. With no apparent successor and an opposition that still rejects many of the institutional changes wrought by Fujimori as illegitimate, his supporters, particularly in the security forces, view the person of Fujimori as fundamental to the maintenance of Peru's post-1992 political system. Without a strong institutional and normative base, Peru's democracy has become contingent on the decisions, ideas and plans of Alberto Fujimori.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the role of the media in the Fujimori era, see C Conaghan, *Public Life in the Time of Alberto Fujimori* (Working Paper #219), Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, June 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Some have suggested that the Fujimori administration itself is a 'populist' regime. However, this would be an extreme case of concept stretching. For the populist interpretation, see K Roberts, 'Neoliberalism and the transformation of populism in Latin America: the Peruvian case', *World Politics*, 48(4), October 1995, pp 82-116; and B Kay, "'Fujipopulism' and the liberal state in Peru, 1990-1995", *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 38(4), Winter 1996, pp 55-98.

<sup>3</sup> The ability, or at least desire, to channel popular mobilisation into some institutional mechanism has been

- a defining aspect of Latin America's populist movements. See R B Collier & D Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- <sup>4</sup> Fujimori's 1990 campaign slogan was 'Honesty, technology and work' and he clearly capitalised on the reputation of Japanese-Peruvians as hard workers, as well as on Japan's reputation as a world leader in technology. Moreover, Fujimori is often fond of pointing out that, as an engineer, he is interested in finding solutions that work rather than talking or 'politicking'. On the 1990 campaign, see G Schmidt, 'Fujimori's 1990 upset victory in Peru: electoral rules, contingencies and adaptive strategies', *Comparative Politics*, 28(3), April 1996, pp 321–354.
- <sup>5</sup> The importance of Fujimori's Japanese ancestry in his formation as a politician is emphasised in Luis Jochamovitz, *Ciudadano Fujimori: La Construcción de un Politicao* Lima: PEISA, 1993.
- <sup>6</sup> See especially the discussion in MA Cameron, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Peru: Political Coalitions and Social Change*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1994.
- <sup>7</sup> See P Mauერი, 'State reform, coalitions and the neo-liberal autogolpe in Peru', *Latin American Research Review*, 30(1), 1995, pp 7–37.
- <sup>8</sup> See F Tuesta Soldevilla, *Los Enigmas del Poder: Fujimori, 1990–1996*, Lima: Friedrich Ebert, 1996. See also MA Cameron, 'Political and economic origins of regime change in Peru: the eighteenth brumaire of Alberto Fujimori' in MA Cameron & P Mauერი (eds) *The Peruvian Labyrinth: Polity, Economy and Society*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1997, pp 37–69.
- <sup>9</sup> Most polls showed that over 70% of the public approved Fujimori's actions. However, as Conaghan has noted, that support appeared to be conditional on the ability of Fujimori to 'reform' government institutions rather than create an outright dictatorship. C Conaghan, 'Polls, political discourse and the public sphere: the spin on Peru's Fuji-golpe', in Peter H Smith (ed), *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995, pp 227–255.
- <sup>10</sup> Among these groups were León Dormido and COMACA, whose members largely included junior officers. Insight into the motivation for military discontent was provided by one of the leaders of the 13 November movement. Interview with General Jaime Salinas Sedó, in Lima, 20 August 1996. General Salinas was imprisoned by the Fujimori regime in the aftermath of 13 November in a process that violated many of the military's own institutional norms.
- <sup>11</sup> This assessment is based on a series of interviews carried out by the author with retired military officers during August 1996 in Lima.
- <sup>12</sup> The ability of Fujimori to maintain high personal approval ratings even as support for the government's programme was foundering is discussed by S Stokes, 'Economic reform and public opinion in Peru, 1990–1995', *Comparative Political Studies*, 29(5), 1996, pp 544–565.
- <sup>13</sup> Peru was one of the slowest countries in Latin America to set up a social compensation fund during the period of neoliberal reforms. For a comparative perspective on this theme see C Graham, *Safety Nets, Politics and the Poor: Transitions to Market Economies*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994.
- <sup>14</sup> These debates were especially prominent in the remnants of Pérez de Cuellar's coalition, Unión por Perú (UPP). These insights were provided in an interview with UPP Congressman Carlos Chipoco, in Lima, 13 August 1996.
- <sup>15</sup> See EVK Fitzgerald, 'State capitalism in Peru', in C McClintock & A Lowenthal (eds), *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp 65–93.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with former COPRI official, 26 July 1996.
- <sup>17</sup> See in particular their written works, C Boloña Behr, *Cambio de Rumbo*, Lima: Instituto de Economía de Libre Mercado, 1996; and B Boza, *Doing Business in Peru: The New Legal Framework*, New York, 1994.
- <sup>18</sup> Often the line between government advisor and representative of an international financial company can become blurred. Such is the apparent case with Susanna de la Puente, a close confidante of President Fujimori and his economic advisors who is also a vice-president of investment banking at the Wall Street firm of JP Morgan. See F Matos, 'Nuestra mujer en Wall Street', *La República: Dominical* (Lima), 21 July 1996, pp 6–7.
- <sup>19</sup> See for example the discussion regarding Mexico by MA Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994, pp 34–37.
- <sup>20</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, 'Delegative democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, 5(1), 1994, pp 55–69.
- <sup>21</sup> This point is made especially by F Tuesta, 'El sistema electoral peruano: sus efectos en el sistema político', in F Tuesta (ed.), *Simpósio Sobre Reforma Electoral*, Lima: IFES, pp 125–162.
- <sup>22</sup> A detailed examination of changes in legislative authority are found in E Bernaldes, 'Estructura del estado y modelo político en la constitución de 1993', in *La Constitución de 1993: Análisis y Comentarios I* Lima: Comisión Andina de Juristas, 1995, pp 97–108. An important historical overview of presidential power in Peru is found in C McClintock, 'Presidents, messiahs and constitutional breakdowns in Peru', in J Linz & A Valenzuela (eds), *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: The Case of Latin America*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, pp 286–321.
- <sup>23</sup> J de la Puente, 'Los palaciegos', *La República: Dominical*, 21 July 1996, p 9.
- <sup>24</sup> See, M Rubio, 'Ministerio del presidencialismo', *Cuestión de Estado*, 1(2), 1993, p 23.

- <sup>25</sup> See, P Mauceri, *State Under Siege: Development and Policy Making in Peru*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996, pp 108–111.
- <sup>26</sup> ‘En suma, muchas restas’, *Caretas*, 16 January 1997, p 58.
- <sup>27</sup> Angel Paez, ‘La orden: archívese’, *La República: Dominical*, 28 July 1996, p 10.
- <sup>28</sup> M Rubio, ‘Ley Cantuta o cómo fabricar una sentencia’, *QueHacer* 87(1), 1994, pp 4–7. See also SA Yupanqui, ‘Cuando la Amnistia se convierte en impunidad’, *QueHacer*, 95(3), 1995, pp 19–23.
- <sup>29</sup> An interesting insight into this community and the shaping of Alberto Fujimori is found in L Jochamovitz, *Ciudadano Fujimori*.
- <sup>30</sup> These have included Alejandro Afuso Higa, director of the social programme FONCODES; Victor Kobashigawa, Vice-Minister of Education; Ana Kanashiro, director of the food and health agency INABIF; and Daniel Hokama, Minister of Energy and Mines.
- <sup>31</sup> ‘La partida secreta’, *Caretas*, 25 April 1996, pp 16–19.
- <sup>32</sup> The latest revelations are discussed in ‘Acusación: la denuncia de Vaticano’, *Caretas*, 22 August 1996, pp 16–19. In the midst of serious evidence regarding Montesinos’ connections to drug trafficking, US anti-drug czar, retired General Barry McCaffrey, lauded Montesinos on a brief visit to Lima in late 1996.

# The Round Table

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