

Peru Ex-Spy Chief Says Candidate for President Aided His Escape

THE NEW YORK TIMES
MAY 21, 2006

LIMA, [Peru](#), May 20 (AP) — The disgraced former spy chief, [Vladimiro Montesinos](#), told a court on Friday that Ollanta Humala, a presidential candidate in next month's runoff, helped him escape from the country six years ago by staging a fake military rebellion.

Mr. Montesinos, the intelligence chief under former President [Alberto Fujimori](#), made the statement in court during one of his many corruption trials. He is serving a prison sentence outside of Lima.

An audio tape of his statement was replayed on nightly television and radio newscasts.

Mr. Humala, a retired army lieutenant colonel, burst onto the political scene when he led a short-lived military uprising in Oct. 29, 2000, against Mr. Fujimori, whose government collapsed a month later engulfed by corruption scandals centered on Mr. Montesinos.

Mr. Humala has repeatedly denied suggestions that his bloodless rebellion was a diversion to cover Mr. Montesinos's escape from Peru on a private yacht.

Mr. Montesinos, who controlled the military during much of his decade as Mr. Fujimori's security chief, was captured eight months later in Venezuela.

Mr. Montesinos called Mr. Humala's uprising a "farce, an operation of deception and manipulation" designed to "facilitate my exit from the country on the sailboat Karisma. That is the reality of those events."

Mr. Humala, a populist in the mold of Venezuela's leftist President [Hugo Chávez](#), trails former President Alan García in the polls ahead of a June 4 runoff vote.

Mr. Humala responded by angrily accusing Mr. Montesinos late Friday of making a deal with Mr. García's center-left Aprista Party to undermine his candidacy. The candidates are scheduled to face off in a nationally televised debate Sunday night.

"I want to declare my indignation at the statements," Mr. Humala told reporters. "Who benefits from the declarations that stain the honor of Ollanta Humala? Evidently they benefit Alan García," Mr. Humala added. "I ask Mr. Alan García, what's the deal? What

is this about? Everyone knows Montesinos wants and is fighting for his liberty. I won't give it to him."

Jorge del Castillo, Aprista's secretary general, called Mr. Humala's suggestion that Mr. García was behind Mr. Montesinos's statement "nonsense."

Already serving a 15-year sentence on various corruption convictions, Mr. Montesinos still faces dozens of charges including extortion, arms smuggling and directing a paramilitary death squad.

Mr. Humala's uprising began when he and more than 50 followers took over a mine in Toquepala in southern Peru, commandeered food and fuel, and then disappeared into the mountains taking an army general hostage.

That same day, Mr. Montesinos, who had been in hiding for weeks, boarded the yacht Karisma in Lima's port of Callao and sailed to Ecuador's Galápagos Islands.

Before Mr. Montesinos left, investigators have said, he made several calls on his satellite telephone to the Locumba army base, where Mr. Humala was stationed, raising suspicions that the security chief orchestrated the mutiny.

Mr. Humala's candidacy has tapped into a powerful vein of discontent among Peru's poor majority.

An admirer of Peru's 1968-75 left-wing military dictator, Gen. Juan Velasco, he promises heavy state intervention in Peru's free-market economy, which most Peruvians view as benefiting only the rich.