

## Ecuador Halts New Arms Buys

- [Arms Control Today](#)

Speaking on February 5 before the Organization of American States' (OAS) Permanent Council, Ecuadoran President Jamil Mahuad pledged not to spend "one cent" on weapons purchases while in office (August 1998 to January 2003). He also said that one-quarter of the military would be tasked with fighting crime. On the same day, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori—who reportedly suspended the purchase of "sophisticated armaments" last November—stated that the two countries are no longer engaged in an arms race, but rather a disarmament race. Both men were visiting Washington to celebrate their October 26, 1998 peace agreement, which ended the two countries' 56-year border conflict.

Prior to the peace agreement, however, Peru and Ecuador reportedly concluded major arms buys. According to data supplied by Belarus to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, Peru imported 18 MiG-29 fighters and 18 Su-25 ground attack aircraft from Minsk during 1996 and 1997. Ecuador, having tried unsuccessfully to obtain F-16 fighters from the United States and Kfir fighters from Israel, reportedly signed deals with Russia in early 1998 for 18 MiG-29 fighters and 7 Mi-17 transport helicopters. Mahuad's February 5 pledge would not affect these buys, since they preceded his term.

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