

1 January 1997

B6

SUBJECT: Terrorism Threat Assessment for Peru (U)

1. (U) Purpose: To provide the CINC an assessment of the terrorist threat in Peru

Summary: The terrorist threat level for Peru is HIGH. Peru's two insurgent groups, the Sendero Luminoso (SL) and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) pose the greatest terrorist threat to US personnel and interests in Peru. Both groups have targeted US interests in the past.

3. (U) Discussion.

Sendero Luminoso. SL is a Maoist revolutionary group that has been seeking to destroy the Peruvian state since 1980. Its goal is to rid Peru of all non-Indian influence and establish a communist utopia. SL follows a dual political and military strategy. It attempts to overwhelm the Peruvian state by patiently building political support and organizations in the countryside and gradually surrounding the cities. In tandem, it attacks institutions and leaders to weaken the state and make its political goals easier to achieve. Although SL operated extensively throughout Peru for much of the 1980s and early 1990s, the 1992 capture of SL founder Abimael Guzman and the Government of Peru's (GOP) counterinsurgency campaign have considerably weakened it.



B1



B1

Significantly, SL is more discriminating now in its use of violence, apparently having learned the political cost of its terror campaign of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Sep 96, for example, a column of 60 guerrillas temporarily seized the Huallaga Valley town of Aucayacu, but refrained from executing the town's leaders as it would have five years ago. The last attack against an official US facility was a 28 Feb 95 bomb in a park across the street from the U.S. embassy. The last SL attack in which US personnel was present was the 24 May 95 carbombing of the Maria Angola Hotel in Lima. No Americans were injured and there were no indications Americans were the attack's targets.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. The MRTA is a Cuban-inspired, Marxist-Leninist group whose goal is to overthrow the Peruvian government. It emerged in 1982 after several Marxist-Leninist groups united.



B1

UNCLASSIFIED

B1
B1

[REDACTED]

It is now estimated to have less than 300 members. In Dec 95, the MRTA planned an attack on Peru's Congress, but police raided their safehouse and arrested the responsible cell. On 17 Dec 96, the MRTA seized the Japanese Ambassador's residence and approximately 500 hostages, many of whom were foreign diplomats and senior Peruvian officials, including the foreign minister. Seven Americans were also held. The audacious attack reflected considerable planning, but may prove to be the climax for MRTA, which appears to want to become a legitimate political group.

4. (U) Assessment.

[REDACTED] Both groups remain capable of terrorism, despite their setbacks. Despite MRTA's seizure of the Japanese Ambassador's residence, Sendero Luminoso continues to present the more dangerous threat. It remains bigger and more fanatical than MRTA. Both groups oppose US involvement in Peru and continue to pose a threat to US facilities and personnel.

[REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED