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Case Number: S200200010

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	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00	DOEE-00
	DOTE-00	ANHR-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	EAP-01	EB-00	EUR-01
	OIGO-01	FAAE-00	H-01	IMMC-01	INRD-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	IO-00	L-01	MCO-01	ADS-00	MFLO-03	MMP-00
	M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OIS-01
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 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//J3/J5/IMMEDIATE
 USMISSION GENEVA

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WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/01

TAGS: ASEC PTER CASC PE

SUBJECT: TFPE01: TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT:
 BACK FROM THE DEAD

1. CLASSIFIED BY JAMES MACK, DCM, EMBASSY LIMA, REASON: 1.5 (D).

2. SUMMARY. THE TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MRTA), PREVIOUSLY ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION, GRABBED CENTER STAGE BY TAKING OVER 400 SENIOR PERUVIAN OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATS, AND BUSINESSMEN HOSTAGE DECEMBER 18 AT THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. DESPERATE TO REBUILD ITS ORGANIZATION, MRTA WILL EXPLOIT ITS HOSTAGE TAKING SIEGE TO PRESS ITS DEMANDS FOR THE

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 RELEASE OF ITS IMPRISONED LEADERS, SOMETHING WE BELIEVE PRESIDENT FUJIMORI WILL NEVER CONCEDE. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, MRTA HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED PUTTING ITSELF BACK ON PERU'S COMPETITIVE TERRORISM MAP AND SCUTTLED THE GOP'S PREMATURE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT THE FUJIMORI GOVERNMENT HAS DEFEATED TERRORIST MOVEMENTS.
 END SUMMARY.

 MRTA: CLIMBING BACK FROM OBLIVION

3. THE TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT'S (MRTA) DECEMBER 18 STORMING OF THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IS THE GROUP'S MOST IMPORTANT TERRORIST ACT IN ITS 13-YEAR HISTORY. THE GROUP'S SURPRISING SUCCESS IN SEIZING SEVERAL HUNDRED HOSTAGES, INCLUDING THE PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, THE PERUVIAN POLICE'S COUNTERTERRORISM CHIEF, SIX CONGRESSMEN, 15 AMBASSADORS AND SIX EMBASSY LIMA OFFICIALS, CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE SORRY STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION IN RECENT YEARS. THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESS IN RECENT YEARS IN ARRESTING MRTA LEADERS, INCLUDING MRTA

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CHIEF VICTOR POLAY AND THE GROUP'S SECOND-RANKING LEADER, MIGUEL RINCON RINCON, HAD DECIMATED THE TERRORIST GROUP. UNTIL THE DECEMBER 18 ATTACK, MRTA WAS ONLY ACTIVE IN THE JUNGLE REGIONS OF EASTERN JUNIN AND PASCO DEPARTMENTS AND HAD NOT STRUCK IN LIMA AT ALL IN 1996.

4. [REDACTED] THE MRTA IS A MARXIST-LENINIST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT THAT SEEKS TO OVERTHROW THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT AND SET UP A SOCIALIST CUBAN-STYLE STATE. THE MRTA, HOWEVER, HAS NEVER BEEN A REAL POLITICAL THREAT TO THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT AND HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO REMAIN RELEVANT. MRTA HAS ALMOST ALWAYS BEEN

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OVERSHADOWED BY SENDERO LUMINOSO (SHINING PATH - SL), WHICH HAS WAGED PERU'S MOST VIOLENT INSURGENCY SINCE 1980. SENDERO LUMINOSO ATTACKS, PARTICULARLY IN THE COCA-GROWING UPPER HUALLAGA AND APURIMAC VALLEYS, FAR OUTNUMBERED THE MRTA'S ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR. WITH ITS RANKS REDUCED OVER THE LAST DECADE TO A FEW HUNDRED ARMED CADRES, MRTA'S MOST PRESSING PRIORITY IS TO GAIN THE RELEASE OF ITS SEVERAL HUNDRED JAILED ACTIVISTS.

MRTA FRUSTRATED ONE YEAR AGO

5. [REDACTED] MRTA PLANNED TO SEIZE PERU'S UNICAMERAL CONGRESS LAST DECEMBER WITH THE SAME PURPOSE AS THE STORMING OF THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE -- TO EXCHANGE HOSTAGES FOR IMPRISONED MRTA MEMBERS. THE PERUVIAN POLICE CAPTURED THE MRTA'S STAGING HOUSE AND A NUMBER OF ITS CADRES ON DECEMBER 1, 1995, FOLLOWING A VIOLENT SHOOTOUT. ONE DAY PRIOR TO THE SHOOTOUT, THE PERUVIAN POLICE ARRESTED AMCIT LORI BERENSON AND SUBSEQUENTLY ACCUSED HER OF PARTICIPATING IN THE MRTA CONSPIRACY TO ATTACK CONGRESS. SHE WAS CONVICTED OF TREASON BY A MILITARY COURT, BUT IS APPEALING HER CONVICTION AND SENTENCE. MRTA'S ACTING CHIEF NESTOR CERPA

NOTE: NOT PASSED TO ABOVE ADDRESSEE(S)

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CARTOLINI RELEASED A VIDEO TAPE TO THE PRESS IN FEBRUARY 1996 IN WHICH HE PRESENTED IN DETAIL (COMPLETE WITH MAPS AND PHOTOS) MRTA'S FRUSTRATED PLANS TO SEIZE THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH.

 MRTA: POLITICS AND GUNS

6. [REDACTED] UNLIKE THE TRADITIONALLY BLOODTHIRSTY SENDERO LUMINOSO,
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 MRTA IS MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MAKING POLITICAL APPEALS TO THE PERUVIAN PUBLIC. IN NESTOR CERPA'S FEBRUARY VIDEO, HE POINTEDLY EMPHASIZES THAT MRTA RESPECTS GENEVA CONVENTIONS REGULATING THE CONDUCT OF WAR. MRTA'S CONDUCT SO FAR IN THE HOSTAGE CRISIS, RELEASING FEMALE, SENIOR CITIZEN, WAITERS, AND AILING HOSTAGES, USING THE ICRC AS AN INTERMEDIARY, ALLOWING HOSTAGES TO PHONE THEIR RELATIVES, IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MRTA'S INTEREST IN BOOSTING ITS IMAGE AS "HONORABLE GUERRILLAS" AND AT THE SAME TIME IN "JUSTIFYING" ITS TERRORIST ACTIONS.

7. [REDACTED] NEVERTHELESS, MRTA HAS BEEN A DEADLY, EXTREMELY VIOLENT TERRORIST GROUP SINCE ITS INCEPTION. WE BELIEVE THE MRTA MILITANTS WOULD BE WILLING TO KILL THE HOSTAGES IT NOW HOLDS, PARTICULARLY IF THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT MAKES A RESCUE ATTEMPT. IF MRTA HAD ANY TROUBLE IDENTIFYING THE APPROXIMATELY 460 HOSTAGES IT CURRENTLY HOLDS, THE PERUVIAN MEDIA HAVE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB OF FILLING IN ANY POSSIBLE GAPS. THE MRTA CURRENTLY HOLDS CAPTIVE A NUMBER OF PROMINENT GOP OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN PERU'S ONGOING STRUGGLE AGAINST MRTA AND SENDERO LUMINOSO. THE MRTA AT THIS TIME REPORTEDLY HOLDS CURRENT AND PAST POLICE COUNTERTERRORISM CHIEFS, THE JUSTICE MINISTER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT PLUS FIVE OTHER SUPREME COURT JUSTICES, FIVE CONGRESSMAN FROM THE RULING PARTY, AND AT LEAST FOUR ACTIVE AND TWO RETIRED POLICE OFFICIALS.

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MRTA'S ANTI-AMERICAN ROOTS

8. (U) MRTA ALSO HAS A LONG HISTORY OF ATTACKING U.S. INSTITUTIONS IN PERU, ALTHOUGH IT DID NOT ATTACK U.S. BUILDINGS OR PERSONNEL IN 1994 AND 1995. IN OCTOBER 1992, MRTA LAUNCHED THREE
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MORTARS AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, DAMAGING THE EXTERIOR WALL. IN JANUARY 1991, MRTA LAUNCHED MORTARS AGAINST THE CHANCERY, DAMAGING THE COMMISSARY ROOF. IN 1986 AND 1990 MRTA BOMBED THE EMBASSY WAREHOUSE. MRTA ATTACKS AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS HAVE RESULTED IN TWO DEATHS AND THIRTY INJURIES. OVER THE LAST 12 YEARS, MRTA HAS BOMBED U.S. BINATIONAL CENTERS IN LIMA, TRUJILLO, HUANCAYO, CUSCO, AND CHICLAYO, AS WELL AS CITIBANK, SEARS, IBM, KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN, COCA-COLA, AND ITT FACILITIES IN PERU.

COMMENT

9. [REDACTED] DESPITE MRTA'S SURPRISING SUCCESS IN TAKING THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE ORGANIZATION IS CAPABLE OR READY TO LAUNCH SUSTAINED ATTACKS ELSEWHERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE MRTA LEADERS WILL ACHIEVE THE RELEASE OF ITS IMPRISONED MRTA MEMBERS, MRTA LEADERS MUST BE PROUD THAT AFTER BEING VIRTUALLY WRITTEN OFF BY THE PERUVIAN PUBLIC, THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION GRABBED WORLDWIDE ATTENTION AND HAS DEEPLY EMBARRASSED THE FUJIMORI GOVERNMENT.
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DOTE-00 ANHR-01 SRPP-00 DS-00 EAP-01 EB-00 EUR-01
OIGO-01 FAAE-00 H-01 IMMC-01 INRD-00 TEDE-00 INR-00

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M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OIS-01
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