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MRTA-DE

R 181912Z DEC 95
FM FEIS RESTON VA

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CAN=403-060407

>>> R C U T I N E <<<

RUMEGA/AFOSI DET 214 HOWARD AFB PM//CC//
RUMEGA/USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM//IN//
RHFJPSV/USCCMSGLANT
RHLBAAF/CDR470MIBDE COROZAL PM//IAGPP-EAC-A//
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA
RUMEGA/CDR 1-228 AVN REG FT KOEBE PM//R2//
RUEAIIIS/STORAGE CENTER FBIS RESTON VA
ACCT FBWA-EWDK
ET
UNCLAS /6R

SERIAL: 96SMGC27A
PASS: COPY TO LAD

COUNTRY: PERU
SUBJ: APPEAL OF MRTA IN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES NOTED

SOURCE: 96SM0027A LIMA CARETAS IN SPANISH 7 DEC 95
TEXT:

[ARTICLE BY FERNANDO ROSPIGLIOSI FROM THE "CONTROVERSIES" COLUMN:
"THE RESURRECTION OF THE MRTA"; RECEIVED VIA INTERNET]

[FBIS TRANSLATED TEXT] ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING FACTS ABOUT THE SURPRISING REAPPEARANCE OF THE MRTA [TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT] IS HOW YOUNG MOST OF ITS MEMBERS ARE. AT A TIME WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT SEEM INTERESTED IN POLITICS AND THE SO-CALLED TRADITIONAL PARTIES ARE UNABLE TO ATTRACT NEW ACTIVISTS TO THEIR RANKS, IT TURNS OUT THAT A SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION THAT WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ERADICATED IS CAPABLE OF RECRUITING NEW "COMBATANTS."

SEVERAL EXPERTS HASTENED TO CERTIFY THE DEMISE OF THE MRTA AFTER MIGUEL RINCON WAS CAPTURED. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE TERRORIST GROUP HAS BEEN DECLARED DEAD SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE YEARS. AND YET IT IS STILL AROUND.

ONE VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHINING PATH [SL] AND THE MRTA IS THAT THE LATTER HAS HAD LEADERS, NOT DEMIGODS.

TO HIS FOLLOWERS, ABIMAEEL GUZMAN WAS THE "FOURTH SWORD OF MARXISM," THE DIRECT SUCCESSOR OF MARX, LENIN, AND MAO -- IN OTHER WORDS, THE INCARNATION OF GOD ON EARTH. THAT GAVE SL THE ADVANTAGE OF ABSOLUTE UNITY OF COMMAND AND WARD OFF THE CANCER OF BREAKAWAY FACTIONS, WHICH HAS ALWAYS EATEN AWAY AT LEFT-WING GROUPS BOTH LEGAL

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AND SUBVERSIVE.

BUT IT ENTAILED THIS RISK: IF THE LEADER WAS CAPTURED OR DIED, THE ORGANIZATION COLLAPSED, AS HAPPENED IN EFFECT AS OF 12 SEPTEMBER 1992.

THE MRTA, IN CONTRAST, NEVER HAD UNTOUCHABLE LEADERS IN ITS STRUCTURE. VICTOR POLAY AND OTHER RINGLEADERS WERE SUBJECT TO ONGOING CRITICISM AND FOUGHT AMONG THEMSELVES. THE RESULT WAS SEVERAL RIFTS AND CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN FACTIONS, WHICH OFTEN LED TO A TOLL OF DEAD AND WOUNDED. THIS UNQUESTIONABLY WEAKENED THE MRTA, SO MUCH SO THAT AS FAR BACK AS 1991-92 IT WAS REGARDED AS LIQUIDATED, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, AFTER THE ARREST OF POLAY, PETER CARDENAS, AND OTHERS. YET IT IS STILL ALIVE. THE CONCLUSION IS OBVIOUS: THE MRTA IS A MANY-HEADED HYDRA AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED EXTINCT EVERY TIME A LEADER FALLS.

MOREOVER, ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE RECENTLY CAPTURED GROUP IS ONLY ONE OF SIX "GRADUATING CLASSES" FROM THE SUBVERSIVE CADRES SCHOOL THAT OPERATED IN LIMA. THUS, IT IS PREMATURE TO TALK ABOUT THE FINAL LIQUIDATION OF THE MRTA.

SMUGNESS ASIDE, WHAT REQUIRES ANALYSIS IS WHY A SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION STILL HOLDS AN ATTRACTION FOR SEVERAL DOZEN YOUNG PEOPLE -- PERHAPS HUNDREDS OF THEM -- TODAY, AT A TIME WHEN COMMUNISM IS NO LONGER AN OPTION IN THE WORLD, IN AN ERA OF IDEOLOGY-FREE PRAGMATISM, AFTER TERRORIST GROUPS HAVE SUFFERED CRUSHING DEFEATS, AND WITH THE EXAMPLE OF MANY SUCH ACTIVISTS DEAD OR SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON UNDER VERY HARSH CONDITIONS.

THE THEORY THAT SUBVERSION IS AN IMPORT SPONSORED BY THE COMMUNIST POWERS NO LONGER STANDS UP TO ANALYSIS. SANDINIST NICARAGUA HAS DISAPPEARED, AND THE LONG-LIVED CUBAN DICTATOR IS STRUGGLING DESPERATELY TO SURVIVE, WITHOUT BOTHERING TO FOMENT REVOLUTION IN OTHER NATIONS. THE UNIVERSITIES HAVE, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, CEASED TO DISSEMINATE MARXIST IDEOLOGY. AND IN SPITE OF ALL THIS, SUBVERSIVE GROUPS CONTINUE TO BREED. NOT ON THE SCALE THEY USED TO DURING THE PAST DECADE, TO BE SURE, BUT THEIR VERY EXISTENCE IS A FACT THAT OUGHT TO CONCERN US, BECAUSE TODAY'S SOCIAL CALM AND POLITICAL STABILITY ARE FRAGILE AND FLIMSY.

THERE ARE NO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS THAT CAN CHANNEL THE ASPIRATIONS OF CITIZENS AND REPRESENT THEM. CIVIL SOCIETY IS PARALYZED. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES HAVE INTENSIFIED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS. AND AT LEAST HALF OF THE POPULATION LIVES IN POVERTY.

ALL OF THIS DOES NOT POSE A DIRECT THREAT TO ORDER AND STABILITY.

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BUT IT IS WISHFUL THINKING TO ASSUME THAT THIS WILL LAST INDEFINITELY. GROUPS LIKE THE MRTA ARE SEEKING TO SURVIVE TODAY, LYING IN WAIT, HOPING THAT SOME UPHEAVAL WILL JOLT SOCIETY SO THAT THEY CAN EMERGE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DESPAIR.

THE DANGER IS THAT THERE ARE ALMOST NO OPTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. ALL OF THEM HAVE BEEN DESTROYED OR ARE ON THEIR DEATHBED IN THE MIDST OF INTERNAL CRISES, AND NO ONE IS INTERESTED IN REPLACING OR REBUILDING THEM.

THE BLOODY REEMERGENCE OF THE MRTA OUGHT TO PROMPT US TO REFLECT ON PERU'S POSSIBILITIES IN THE MEDIUM TERM, ABOVE AND BEYOND THE SELF-COMPLACENCY THAT PREVAILS IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES.

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