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TERRORIST THREAT IN PERU

Q. 44) Does the hostage taking incident in Lima, Peru represent a resurgence of what had been viewed as a declining terrorism threat? This attack was directed against a Japanese diplomatic facility, but Americans are usually a more inviting target. Have we taken steps to assess whether US facilities in Lima and elsewhere in Latin America need enhanced security? Can we achieve adequate security in urban environments?

A. THE DECEMBER 17, 1996 TAKEOVER OF THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE BY MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT TUPAC AMARU (MRTA) WAS CLEARLY A SETBACK FOR PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY, BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE INCIDENT PORTENDS A RESURGENCE OF TERRORISM IN PERU. BOTH MRTA AND PERU'S LARGER TERRORIST GROUP, THE SHINING PATH, ARE MUCH WEAKER OVERALL THAN THEY WERE SEVERAL YEARS AGO. YES, A REVIEW OF SECURITY IN ARA EMBASSIES HAS TAKEN PLACE. TOTAL SECURITY IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT OUR NEW EMBASSIES, BOTH IN LIMA AND BOGOTA, PROVIDE ENHANCED SAFEGUARDS AND ARE BOTH ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITALS TO PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION.

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