

CONFIDENTIAL UNCLASSIFIED P b1, 1.5(d)

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ACTION ARA-00

EXCISE

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	PA-01	FAAE-00	CCO-00	INM-07	INRE-00	CA-02	USSS-00
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 FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4035
 INFO USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM
 AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
 USINT HAVANA
 DEAHQS WASHDC
 DIA WASHDC
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 DEAEPIC EL PASO TX

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR B Date: 9/11/97
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 EXCISE DECLASSIFY EO Citations 1.5 (d)
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FOIA Exemptions b1 _____ TS authority to
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 DOWNGRADE TS to S or C

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DEPT FOR INM, ARA/AND
 STATE PASS TO AID/LAC
 DEA FOR AO, DO, OC, OISL, OIOC AND OF - CRAIG CHRETIEN
 DIA FOR OA/5/OS-1D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1
 DEA FOR OF, PS, OC, OI
 USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PTER, PGOV, ASEC, SNAR, ALOW, PE
 SUBJECT: MRTA NOVEMBER 6 ATTACK ON JUANJUI

REF: LIMA 13947

1. ENTIRE TEXT.

[REDACTED]

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2. SUMMARY: A WELL ARMED, UNIFORMED AND
 DISCIPLINED MRTA CONTINGENT OF APPROXIMATELY
 80 TO 100 MEN ATTACKED JUANJUI, SAN MARTIN

DEPARTMENT, NOVEMBER 6 AT 0440 HOURS AND HELD IT UNOPPOSED UNTIL AFTER 0900 HOURS THAT DAY. A NEARLY EQUAL NUMBER OF DEFENDERS WERE QUICKLY ROUTED, WITH ONE DEAD, SIX WOUNDED, AND LOSING A LARGE QUANTITY OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION TO THE ATTACKERS.

[] COMPOUNDED BY POOR WEATHER PREVENTED FRIENDLY FORCES FROM REENTERING TOWN UNTIL AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 7. EYE-WITNESS REPORTS INDICATE ATTACKERS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY A MAN AND A WOMAN TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS, PERHAPS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. YOUNG ATTACKERS MAY HAVE BEEN LED BY SOMEONE WITH "CENTRAL AMERICAN OR CUBAN" ACCENT. AN ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATION WAS PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER 8. END SUMMARY.

3. ON NOVEMBER 7, POLOFF AND DEA A/SAIC ACCOMPANIED GUARDIA CIVIL GENERAL JUAN ZARATE ON AN INSPECTION TRIP TO JUANJUI (POP: 12,000-15,000) AND TO PALMA DE ESPINO AND TARAPOTO, ALL IN SAN MARTIN DEPARTMENT. EYEWITNESS REPORTS OF ATTACK ON JUANJUI REPORTED REFTEL VARIED CONSIDERABLY FROM INITIAL PRESS REPORTS AND FROM OFFICIAL VERSION. FOLLOWING ARE EMBOFF'S IMPRESSIONS OF THIS TRIP.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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4. THE ATTACK

JUANJUI'S DEFENSIVE FORCE (APPROXIMATELY 100 GUARDIA CIVIL (GC), GUARDIA REPUBLICANA (GR) AND PIP HAD NO REAL PREVIOUS WARNING OF THE ATTACK. A GC SERGEANT (NFI) WHO ARRIVED IN TOWN NEARLY SIX MONTHS AGO TOLD US THAT RUMORS OF AN IMMIMENT ATTACK HAD CIRCULATED FOR MONTHS AND KEPT THE TOWN'S

DEFENSIVE FORCE UNDER GREAT PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS. GEN. ZARATE, TOO, HAD TOLD HIS MEN TO EXPECT AN ATTACK AND TO KEEP THEIR WEAPONS HANDY TO REPEL IT WHENEVER IT CAME, PARTICULARLY AFTER OCTOBER INCURSIONS INTO TABALOSOS AND SORITOR BY AN ALLEGED MRTA UNIT. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN THE ATTACK COMMENCED AT 0440 HOURS NOVEMBER 6, ONLY A SMALL FORCE WAS ARMED AND ON HAND. SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS WERE UNLEASHED BY BETWEEN 80 AND 100 HEAVILY ARMED MEN ON THE HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER NEARBY GOP OFFICES IN TOWN -- E.G., TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, MUNICIPALITY, ETC. THE CASUALTIES AMONG THE DEFENDERS (ONE DEAD AND SIX WOUNDED) OCCURRED EARLY IN THE - 50-MINUTE FIREFIGHT AND BEFORE THE OUT GUNNED AND OUTNUMBERED DEFENDERS WERE FORCED TO FLEE. THERE

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
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INFO USAF SO HOWARD AFB PM
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
USINT HAVANA
DEAHQS WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
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ARE NO REPORTS OF CASUALTIES AMONG
THE ATTACKERS.

5. THE BULK OF THE FORCE ASSIGNED TO

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JUANJUI STAYED OUT OF THE INITIAL
FIGHT AND OFFERED NO RESISTANCE WHILE
THE ATTACKERS WERE IN TOWN. THEY HAD
BEEN SURPRISED BY THE ATTACK WHILE
SLEEPING UNARMED AT THE HOMES OF WIVES AND
CONCUBINES. AS
A RESULT, THE ATTACKERS CONTROLLED THE
TOWN BEFORE 0530 HOURS; CAPTURED A
LARGE NUMBER OF WEAPONS, INCLUDING
NEARLY 100 PISTOLS AND AUTOMATIC
RIFLES, MORE THAN 50 HAND GRENADES,
A LARGE QUANTITY OF TEAR GAS PROJECTILES,
AND THE DEFENDERS' ENTIRE AMMUNITION
SUPPLY; AND TOOK WITH THEM AVAILABLE
GOP COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.

6. THE ATTACKERS TORCHED SEVERAL POLICE VEHICLES, AND DESTROYED ALL CIVILIAN AND POLICE RECORDS. THIRTY-TWO PERSONS UNDER DETENTION FOR DRUG CHARGES ESCAPED OR WERE RELEASED. ATTACKERS LEFT JUANJUI SHORTLY AFTER 0900 HOURS IN AN ORDERLY AND UNHURRIED MANNER ABOARD SEVEN TO NINE PICKUP TRUCKS. LANDINGS AND TAKEOFFS FROM THE TOWN'S 4,000 FOOT DIRT RUNWAY WERE DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 7. DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF THREE BURNT VEHICLES DESTROYED 500 FT. FROM ONE END OF THE LANDING STRIP. INJURED DEFENDERS, HOWEVER, WERE FLOWN OUT BY PRIVATE AIRCRAFT TO TARAPOTO. PERUVIAN AUTHORITIES REFUSED TO ALLOW AN ANTONOV AND A LARGE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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HELICOPTER STATIONED IN TARAPOTO TO TAKE TROOPS INTO JUANJUI UNTIL AREA WAS UNDER COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE POLICE FORCES.

7. THE ATTACKERS

EVERY SIGN POINTS TO MRTA AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK. NOT ONLY DID THEY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS SUCH WHEN THEY URGED DEFENDERS TO SURRENDER, BUT LATER THEY CONDUCTED A "POPULAR TRIAL" OF THREE CAPTURED POLICEMEN IN THE TOWN'S PLAZA IN THE NAME OF THAT ORGANIZATION. ALSO, A LARGE NUMBER OF ANTI-GOP AND ANTI-APRA SLOGANS PAINTED IN RED ON CAPTURED BUILDINGS, ON VARIOUS WALLS AROUND TOWN, AND AT THE AIRPORT (ON WALLS AND ON SMALL AIRCRAFT PARKED THERE) WERE SIGNED BY MRTA. EMBOFFS SAW ONLY ONE SIGN ALLUDING TO UNITED STATES ("YANKEES OUT OF OUR COUNTRY"),

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BUT THERE WERE MANY OTHERS NOTING THAT ATTACK
HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT TO HONOR THE 20TH
ANNIVERSARY OF CHE GUEVARA'S DEATH.

8. CONTRARY TO OFFICIAL GC REPORT
HANDLED TO GEN. ZARATE AT THE SCENE AND
TO REPORTS IN LIMA DAILIES INDICATING THAT
ATTACKERS NUMBERED 300 TO 500 MEN,
EYEWITNESS TOLD US ATTACKING FORCE
WAS NO LARGER THAN 80 TO 100 MEN. A

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 FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
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 INFO USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM
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DEPT FOR INM, ARA/AND
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SUBJECT: MRTA NOVEMBER 6 ATTACK ON JUANJUI

[REDACTED] NOW
SERVING IN JUANJUI, [REDACTED] TOLD
US THAT ALL BUT THREE OF THE ATTACKERS

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WORE OLIVE GREEN FATIGUES, WERE HEAVILY ARMED (E.G., AUTOMATIC RIFLES, HEAVIER CALIBER AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, BAZOOKAS, GRENADES, ETC.) AND SOME HAD COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PINNED TO THE LAPELS OF THEIR UNIFORMS. THE GROUP OF YOUNG "CHOLOS" (MESTIZO MEN BETWEEN 15 AND 18 YEARS OF AGE) WERE LED BY THREE OLDER, MUCH TALLER AND LIGHTER SKINNED MEN, AT LEAST ONE OF WHOM SPOKE WITH A "CENTRAL AMERICAN OR CUBAN" ACCENT. A YOUNG "GRINGA" WITH SHOULDER-LENGTH LIGHT BROWN OR BLONDISH HAIR ACCOMPANIED THE ATTACKERS TAKING STILL PHOTOGRAPHS WHILE A MAN WITH HIS FACE COVERED BY A HANDKERCHIEF FILMED THE ATTACK AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

9. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF A SIMILAR STORY. HE DESCRIBED THE ATTACKERS, THEIR WEAPONS, AND FELLOW TRAVELERS IN ALMOST IDENTICAL TERMS AS [REDACTED] HE HEARD ABOUT THE ACCENT OF ONE OF THE LEADERS BUT DID NOT HEAR THE MAN IN QUESTION SPEAK. AS FOR THE "GRINGA" WOMAN, HE DESCRIBED HER AS AMERICAN AND BELIEVES TO HAVE SEEN HER BEFORE IN TARAPOTO ACTING AS A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT. THE ATTACKERS WERE MOSTLY YOUNG MEN WITH OBVIOUS MILITARY TRAINING. SOME WOMEN

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GUERRILLAS WERE OBSERVED OUTSIDE THE TOWN CONTROLLING ACCESS TO THE ROAD. INSURGENTS BEHAVED IN A DISCIPLINED MANNER DURING THE ATTACK AND DURING THEIR DEPARTURE FROM TOWN. "SEVERAL TRUCKS (SEVEN OR NINE) WERE LINED UP AT THE PLAZA, AND THE MEN WENT TO THEM IN GROUPS OF NINE -- TWO IN THE CABIN, SEVEN IN THE BACK," SAID THE PRIEST. THEY ALSO KNEW HOW TO HANDLE THEIR WEAPONS. A BAZOOKA ("FIRE COMING OUT OF THE FRONT AND BACK OF A SHOULDER-HELD TUBE") FIRED FROM THE PLAZA AGAINST GC HEAD-QUARTERS HIT THE BUILDING BELOW THE WINDOW AND MISSED THE PARISH HOUSE NEXT DOOR. THE SAME HAPPENED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE AND GRENADES DIRECTED AGAINST THE BUILDING; ONLY ONE STRAY BULLET HIT THE PARISH HOUSE.

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10. THE TOWN'S REACTION

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A BETAMAX VIDEOTAPE OF THE ATTACK AND OCCUPATION TAKEN BY A TOWN RESIDENT -- AND REQUISITIONED BY GEN. ZARATE AT OUR REQUEST -- VERIFIES THAT ATTACKERS WERE NO RAGTAG GROUP AND SHOWS THEM INTERACTING IN A FRIENDLY FASHION WITH A CROSS SECTION OF THE TOWN'S RESIDENTS. SOME OF THE LATTER APPEAR ON THE TAPE CONVERSING WITH THE ATTACKERS, LOOTING CAPTURED GOP

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BUILDINGS AND BURNING TOWN RECORDS.
 PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE SPOKE EXPLAINED
 THAT TOWNSFOLK -- WHO DEPEND MOSTLY
 ON THE DRUG TRADE FOR INCOME -- ARE

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NOT WELL DISPOSED TOWARD LOCAL
 AUTHORITIES OR TOWARD THE GOP. THEY
 BELIEVE ATTACKERS MAY HAVE BEEN AIDED
 BY SOME TOWNSFOLK. REQUISITIONED
 VIDEOTAPE ALSO SHOWS A LARGE NUMBER
 OF TOWNFOLK ON HAND AT ATTACKERS'
 DEPARTURE WAVING THEM OFF AND REPEATING
 SLOGANS YELLED BY ATTACKERS.

11. DESPITE THE TOWNSFOLKS' SYMPATHIES FOR THE ATTACKERS AND ANIMOSITY TOWARD AUTHORITIES, [REDACTED] REPORTED THAT THEY ABSOLVED THREE CAPTURED POLICEMEN TRIED BY MRTA IN A "POPULAR TRIAL" AT THE MAIN PLAZA. THE THREE SOBBING MEN WERE TURNED OVER TO THE PRIEST WITH INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO RELEASE THEM UNTIL THE ATTACKERS HAD LEFT JUANJUI.

12. GEN. ZARATE KEPT REQUISITIONED VIDEO-TAPE TO SHOW IT TO PRESIDENT GARCIA, INTERIOR MINISTER BARSALLO AND VICE MINISTER MANTILLA. AS HE PREPARED TO LEAVE HIS SAN ISIDRO HEADQUARTERS IN LIMA, HE PROMISED TO GIVE EMBOFFS A COPY. AS SOON AS WE RECEIVE IT, WE WILL SEND COPIES TO APPROPRIATE U.S. AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON.

MISSION IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN COPY OF VIDEO SHOWN ON LOCAL TELEVISION EVENING OF NOVEMBER 8 DEPICTING GUERRILLAS IN VILLAGE OF SAN JOSE DE SISA (NORTHEAST OF JUANJUI ON [REDACTED] [REDACTED])

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MAIN ROAD), WHERE THEY WERE KNOWN TO BE NOVEMBER 7.

13. GOP REACTION TO ATTACK

[REDACTED] GEN. ZARATE TOLD EMBOFFS HE KNEW OF THE ATTACK BY 0700 HOURS NOVEMBER 6 AND ISSUED ORDERS TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS IMMEDIATELY TO REPEL WHAT APPEARED TO BE A "NARCO-TERRORIST" ATTACK. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- AND POOR WEATHER IN

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THE ZONE AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 6 AND MORNING NOVEMBER 7 PREVENTED FRIENDLY FORCES FROM ENTERING THE TOWN UNTIL AFTER 1400 HOURS NOVEMBER 7. U.S. CONTRACT HELICOPTERS, HOWEVER, STOOD READY TO SUPPORT WHAT WAS THEN BELIEVED TO BE AN ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATION.

14. ON NOVEMBER 7, EMBOFFS VISITING TARAPOTO ON THEIR WAY TO JUANJUI FOUND OUT THAT ARMY TROOPS STATIONED IN TARAPOTO DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ATTACKERS, EVEN THOUGH THEIR WHEREABOUTS WERE KNOWN, OR TO PROVIDE LOGISTICAL

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SUPPORT TO RETAKE JUANJUI. TO THEM,
IT WAS A POLICE, NOT AN ARMED FORCES,
OPERATION. (NOTE: THE MILITARY
CANNOT ENGAGE IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

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OPERATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A DECLARATION
OF STATE OF EMERGENCY. THERE ARE
UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THE GOP HAS SINCE
REMEDIED THIS.) FEARS OF POSSIBLE
DAMAGE TO AIR ASSETS AVAILABLE (AN
ANTONOV AND A LARGE TRANSPORT
HELICOPTER) REPORTEDLY WERE THE REAL
REASON. NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO SEND
A UNIT DOWN THE ROAD FROM TARAPOTO
TO BELLAVISTA OR SAN JOSE DE SISA
WHERE THE ATTACKERS HAD BEEN SEEN
AFTER LEAVING JUANJUI. POLICE FORCES
IN THE AREA WERE SPREAD TOO THIN AFTER
RECENT MRTA INCURSIONS INTO NEARBY
TABALOSOS AND SORITOR VILLAGES TO BE
USED EFFECTIVELY AND IN A TIMELY
FASHION IN SUPPORT OF THE JUANJUI
GARRISON.

15. WHILE EMBOFFS WERE AT TARAPOTO
AIRPORT AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 7, ARMY
GEN. TRELLES MONTES ARRIVED FROM LIMA
TO ASSUME COMMAND OF COUNTERINSURGENCY
OPERATION PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER 8,
TWO DAYS AFTER THE ATTACK ON JUANJUI.

16. GEN. ZARATE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE
WAS PLEASED BY DECISION REPORTEDLY TAKEN
BY GOP NOVEMBER 7 TO DECLARE AREA NORTH OF JUANJUI AN
EMERGENCY ZONE UNDER MILITARY -- NOT
POLICE -- AUTHORITY. HE NOW SAW

RECENT ATTACKS ON TABALOSOS, SORITOR
AND JUANJUI AS UNRELATED TO DRUGS AND
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AS A PROBLEM THAT PROPERLY BELONGED TO
THE MILITARY.

17. COMMENT: FROM WHAT WE SAW, WE
BELIEVE THE GOP HAS A SERIOUS
INSURGENCY PROBLEM ON ITS HANDS IN
SAN MARTIN DEPARTMENT

THIS MRTA
GROUP HAS BEEN OPERATING IN THE AREA
WITH APPARENT IMPUNITY FOR AT LEAST
A MONTH. THAT THEY LAUNCHED THE
OPERATION AT NIGHT SUGGESTS A FAIRLY
SOPHISTICATED LEVEL OF TRAINING AND
CONFIDENCE. THEIR WEAPONS AND
EQUIPMENT (PARTICULARLY THEIR
WALKIE-TALKIES), AS WELL AS THE FACT
THAT THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY PEOPLE
FILMING THE ATTACK, HINT AT FOREIGN
CONNECTIONS AND CONCERN TO MAKE AN
IMPACT ABROAD. THE ALLEGED PRESENCE
OF A LEADER WHO SPOKE WITH A NON-
PERUVIAN ACCENT IS ALSO DISTURBING.
BUT THIS REPORT NEEDS TO BE FURTHER
SUBSTANTIATED BEFORE IT CAN BE TAKEN
AS FACT.

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18. FOR THEIR PART, THE ATTACKERS WERE
 CONFIDENT THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE MOLESTED

[REDACTED]

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AFTER THEY ROUTED THE TOWN'S FORCES.
 THE REQUISITIONED VIDEOTAPE SHOWS THEM
 WITH WEAPONS SLUNG OVER THEIR SHOULDERS

WHILE LOADING THEIR TRUCKS AND MINGLING WITH THE CROWD. THE FACT THEY LEFT IN VEHICLES BY THE AREA'S ONLY MAIN ROAD ALSO SHOWS THAT THEY FELT NO IMMEDIATE DANGER FROM THE GOP.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification ***