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<ORIG> AT5-INC  
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DIA WASHDC  
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*Peru*  
*MRTA*  
*US/PAN*

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DIA FOR OA-5/OS-1D/DB-6D2/JS1-4B/DB-3C1  
E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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SUBJECT: THE MRTA ATTACKS THE MORMONS  
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REF: (A) LIMA 19072; (B) LIMA 19109

1. (C) SUMMARY. ON DECEMBER 25 THE MRTA BOMBED TWO MORMON CHURCHES IN CHICLAYO (550 MILES NORTH OF LIMA). THERE WERE NO INJURIES. THESE AND TWO OTHER MRTA BOMBING ATTACKS AGAINST U.S. BINATIONAL CENTERS ON DECEMBER 23 AND 25 (REFTELS) WERE THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT MRTA ACTIVITIES SINCE EARLY OCTOBER. ALL WERE IN APPARENT REACTION AGAINST U.S. ACTIVITIES IN

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PAGE 02 LIMA 19267 290054Z  
PANAMA.

2. THE MRTA ATTACKS THE MORMONS:  
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(U) THE TUMAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MRTA) HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBING ATTACKS AGAINST TWO MORMON CHURCH BUILDINGS, BOTH IN THE COASTAL CITY OF CHICLAYO (800 KMS NORTH OF LIMA). THE ATTACKS OCCURRED AFTER DARK, DECEMBER 25, THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY DAMAGE TO BOTH CHURCHES, BUT NO PERSONAL INJURIES, THOUGH ONE OF THE CHAPELS WAS OCCUPIED AT THE TIME OF THE BLAST.

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3. (U) LEAFLETS LEFT AT BOTH BUILDINGS ARE TYPICAL MRTA PROPAGANDA. BOTH PAMPHLETS UNDERScore U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN PANAMA AS JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ATTACK. A HANDWRITTEN NOTE WAS ADDED TO THE TYPEWRITTEN AND PHOTOCOPIED ONE-PAGE FLYER. THE MARGINAL COMMENTARY CITES THE MORMON CHURCH AS AN "AGENT OF NORTH AMERICAN IMPERIALISM."

4. (C) WE HAD PREVIOUSLY ADVISED MORMON OFFICIALS OF RECENT MRTA INTEREST IN THE CHURCH'S ACTIVITIES IN PERU. THE SEPTEMBER 28 ISSUE OF THE MRTA WEEKLY, "CAMBIO", CARRIED AN ARTICLE ON THE MORMON CHURCH ENTITLED, "SATANIC PREACHINGS." THE ARTICLE FOCUSED ON ALLEGED CIA AND U.S. CORPORATE TIES TO THE MORMONS. IN RESPONSE TO THIS PERCEIVED THREAT, CHURCH OFFICIALS IN SALT LAKE ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO LOCAL LEADERS TO "TONE DOWN" NORMAL CHURCH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING TURNING OFF THE BRILLIANT NIGHTTIME ILLUMINATION OF THE LIMA MORMON TEMPLE.

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PAGE 03 LIMA 19267 290054Z  
THE TEMPLE, A VERY VISIBLE STRUCTURE IN THE UPPER CLASS SUBURB OF SANTA PATRICIA, WAS MENTIONED IN THE "CAMBIO" ARTICLE.

5. (C) WE BELIEVE THESE TWO BOMBINGS ARE NOT REPEAT NOT RELATED TO A RECENT INCREASE IN SENDERO LUMINOSO ACTIVITY AGAINST CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT INTERESTS IN PERU (LIMA 18910). RATHER, THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE MORMONS ARE TIED TO THE TWO BOMBINGS OF USIS-AFFILIATED BINATIONAL CENTERS IN AREQUIPA AND CHICLAYO (REFTELS). ALL FOUR MRTA INCIDENTS DECEMBER 23 AND 25 ARE A MANIFESTATION OF ITS EFFORTS TO SHOW LATIN SOLIDARITY AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION, EVEN WHEN IT IS AGGRESSION AGAINST THE "REACTIONARY" REGIME OF NORIEGA.

6. (C) THE FOUR BOMBINGS HAVE BROKEN A TWO MONTH HIATUS IN SIGNIFICANT MRTA URBAN ACTIVITY. THE TUPAC AMARUS HAVE BEEN LARGELY OUT OF THE NEWS SINCE THE (STILL UNRESOLVED) OCTOBER 4 KIDNAPPING OF HECTOR DELGADO PARKER. THE PERUVIAN MILITARY CLAIMS TO HAVE SCORED SEVERAL IMPORTANT STRIKES AGAINST THE MRTA, INCLUDING A DECEMBER 17 CLASH IN PASCO DEPARTMENT IN WHICH 43 MRTA TERRORISTS REPORTEDLY DIED. THOUGH THE DECEMBER 23 AND 25 BOMBINGS WERE NEWSWORTHY, THEY WERE RATHER FEEBLE ATTEMPTS AGAINST SOFT TARGETS IN TWO CITIES HITHERTO RELATIVELY FREE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND THUS WITH A RELATIVELY LOW LOCAL SECURITY PRESENCE. NEVERTHELESS, MRTA IS SEEKING TO PIGGYBACK ON EVENTS IN PANAMA TO GET BACK ON THE PUBLICITY SCORE BOARD.

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