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JOINT STAFF  
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D6

PRIORITY  
P 221608Z AUG 91  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0730  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7738  
AMEMBASSY QUITO 6779  
DIAHQ WASHDC

ZYUW RUEHPEA1377 2341609  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 0240  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1527  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

THAT AND SUBSEQUENT SKIRMISHES APPROXIMATELY 67  
TERRORISTS AND AT LEAST THREE MILITARY DIED. THIS  
CABLE WILL DESCRIBE IN SOME DETAIL THE EVENTS WHICH  
TRANSPIRED IN THE MARAMON VALLEY OF DOS DE MAYO AND  
HUAMALIES PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD JULY 24 TO  
AUGUST 4. THE FACTS REPORTED HEREIN ARE BASED ON  
CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO EYE WITNESSES; A FOREIGN  
DIPLOMAT BRIEFLY DETAINED BY SL TERRORISTS IN THE  
AREA, AN AMCIT.

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 LIMA 11377

P 6125+9

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PTER, ASEC, PHUM, PGOV, PE  
SUBJECT: AMCIT SURVIVES ENCOUNTER WITH 500 TERRORISTS

AND THESE TWO MEN'S REPORTS OF TESTIMONY  
WHICH THEY GATHERED FROM OTHER LOCAL EYE-WITNESSES  
AS WELL AS PRESS REPORTS AND OFFICIAL ARMY  
COMMUNIQUE ON WHAT WE WILL CALL THE INCIDENT AT  
TANTAMAYO.

REF: LIMA 10531

EXCISE

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

AN AMCIT STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

2. SUMMARY. POLOFFS HAVE INTERVIEWED A SECOND EYE  
WITNESS TO A MASSIVE SENDERO LUMINOSO (SL)  
MOBILIZATION IN THE UPPER MARAMON VALLEY BETWEEN JULY  
24 AND AUGUST 1. (SEE REFTEL FOR AN EARLIER EYE  
WITNESS ACCOUNT BY A FOREIGN DIPLOMAT.) AN AMCIT

COUNTED AS MANY AS 500 WELL ARMED TERRORISTS IN THAT  
PERIOD. ALL WERE MOVED AT NIGHT FROM POINTS SOUTH  
TOWARD TANTAMAYO WHERE THE ROAD ENDS. THE FIFTH DAY  
OF THE MOBILIZATION, SL LEARNED THAT THE AMCIT AND  
HIS FAMILY WERE LIVING IN THE VALLEY AND CAME AFTER  
THEM. THEY SPENT A NIGHT HIDING IN THE ROCKS OF THE  
MOUNTAIN OVERLOOKING THEIR VILLAGE WHILE THE  
TERRORISTS COMBED THE ROAD AND VALLEY BELOW. THE  
ARMY FINALLY LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON AUGUST 2. AS MANY  
AS 67 TERRORISTS WERE KILLED IN AN OPERATION DEVOID  
OF ANY ACCUSATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THERE  
ARE BOTH HOPEFUL AND ALARMING IMPLICATIONS FROM THIS  
INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

3. ON JULY 24 SENDERO LUMINOSO BEGAN A MASSIVE  
MOBILIZATION OF ARMED CADRE THROUGH THE UPPER REACHES  
OF THE MARAMON VALLEY OF HUAMUCO DEPARTMENT. THE  
PERUVIAN ARMY WAS ABLE TO LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE  
OPERATION AGAINST THE TERRORISTS ON AUGUST 2. IN

5. THE OWNER OF THE LOCAL CAFE WAS  
AN SL SYMPATHIZER. THIS FORTY YEAR OLD WOMAN'S  
MOTHER WAS THE TOWN'S UNOFFICIAL MAYOR. BUT  
DEVELOPED AN EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. HE LIVED IN TOWN WITH HIS  
PERUVIAN WIFE AND CHILD. HE EMPLOYED 35 OF THE  
VILLAGERS, PROVIDING A DESPERATELY NEEDED CASH BOOST  
TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY. HE PLAYED SOCCER WITH THE  
LOCALS AND LOANED COMPANY EQUIPMENT FOR COMMUNITY  
EVENTS. TWO YOUNG GIRLS FROM THE COMMUNITY COOKED  
FOR HIM AND HIS MEN.

SL MOVES ITS TROOPS

6. THE EVENING OF JULY 24, NEAR MIDNIGHT, HE AND HIS  
FAMILY WERE AWAKENED BY THE SOUNDS OF A NUMBER OF  
VEHICLES PASSING THROUGH TOWN. RESIDENTS TOLD HIM IT  
WAS SL IN A TRUCK BEING PURSUED BY POLICE OR  
MILITARY, THE LATTER IN A COMMANDEERED BUS. THE  
POLICE WERE GIVING CHASE AFTER SL ATTEMPTED TO BLOW A

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BRIDGE ON THE ROAD FROM HUAMUCO. THE NEXT NIGHT  
ROSE TO OBSERVE TWO LARGE OPEN BED TRUCKS AND AT  
LEAST TWO PICK-UPS PASSING

IN THE DIRECTION OF  
TANTAMAYO, THE END OF THE ROAD. THE BACKS OF ALL THE  
VEHICLES WERE CRAMMED FULL OF ARMED MEN AND WOMEN.

HE JUDGED THAT 70 OR 80 TERRORISTS  
WERE IN THE CONVOY. ALL WERE YOUNG, BUT MANY  
APPEARED GAUNT AND TIRED AS IF THEY HAD HIKED A LONG  
DISTANCE. ALL PORTED ARMS WHICH APPEARED TO BE IN  
GOOD CONDITION. NONE WERE UNIFORMED. HE SAW WHAT  
APPEARED TO BE A NUMBER OF FIELD RADIOS.

NONE WERE UNWILLING CONSCRIPTS OR FORCE  
MULTIPLIERS.

7. A SIMILAR MOBILIZATION OCCURRED EACH OF THE  
SUBSEQUENT EVENINGS FROM JULY 26 TO 29. ALL THE  
TERRORISTS WERE TRAVELING NORTH FROM THE DIRECTION OF

JOINT STAFF

ACTION (U,6,7,8)

INFO CJCS(1) DJS(1) DIRM-J(1) DIRM:SCD(1)  
J3:NMCC(1) DIRM:ISOB-J(1) J3(4) WIDS(1) J4(7) J5(2)  
J5:SAB-J(1) J5:POLICY-J(1) USSOCOM(1)  
USDEL IADB(1) SECDEF-W(1) MHS:DPS(1) USDA:AE(1)  
ASD:PA(1) USDP:IA(1) USDP:DSAA(1) USDP:CIS(1)  
USDP:EP(1) USDP:IEEA(1) USDP:SO-LIC(1) USDP:MA(1)  
DR(1) DO(1) SEA(1) CS-1(1) OSC-ZD(1) MMS(1) DAT-5(1)  
VP(1) DB-3C(1) DIO-LA(1) CCG/CCC(D)

+OCSA WASHINGTON DC  
+CND WASHINGTON DC  
+CSAF WASHINGTON DC  
+STOC  
+PTC WASH DC  
+USEUCOM AIDES VAHINGEN GE  
+USDP-CCC WASHINGTON DC  
+USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PH  
+CIA WASHINGTON DC  
+COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC  
+COMJSOC FT BRAGG NC//J2//  
+NATS NRRC PENTAGON WASH DC  
+USCINCSOC INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
+MAC INTEL CEN SCOTT AFB IL//IN//  
+CORPSYOP 6P FT BRAGG NC//ASOF-POG-SB//  
+CINCSNAVEUR LONDON UK//N2/N24//  
+COMUSCOM WASHINGTON DC//NAVATAC//  
+CORUSAITAC WASHINGTON DC//KT//  
+CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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~~TERRORISTS WERE TRAVELING NORTH FROM THE DIRECTION OF~~  
HUANUCO. [ AT LEAST 300 TO 500  
TERRORISTS WERE MOVED. [ QUESTIONED THE SL REP IN  
TOWN. SHE STATED THERE WAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT,  
THE "COMPANEROS" WOULD NOT HARM [ AMCIT  
ENGINEERS. SHE DID STATE THAT THE

b1  
b1  
b1  
b1  
b1

ON JULY 28, TWO DAYS AFTER  
NEIGHBOR PREDICTED IT. REFTEL DESCRIBES  
ENCOUNTER WITH THE SL COLUMN ON JULY 28  
AND THE

NOTWITHSTANDING THE WOMAN'S ASSURANCES,  
ORDERED HIS TWO COLLEAGUES TO MOVE OUT OF THE  
HOSTAL WHERE THEY WERE STAYING AND INTO HIS HOME.

-----  
SL HUNTS FOR THE GRINGOS  
-----

8. ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 28,  
TOOK ONE OF THEIR VEHICLES AND DROVE TO LA UNION TO  
BUY SUPPLIES. THE TWO AMERICAN ENGINEERS STAYED  
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BEHIND. [ NEAR SUNSET TO  
LEARN THAT SEVERAL OF THE TERRORISTS HAD COME INTO  
TOWN DURING THE DAY LOOKING FOR THE TWO ENGINEERS.  
THE TWO NORTH AMERICANS DESCRIBED WATCHING FROM THE  
SECRECY [ AS THE TERRORISTS SEARCHED THE  
HOSTAL FOR THEM. THE TERRORISTS GAVE UP AND LEFT  
TOWN (AGAIN NORTHWARD TOWARD [ ALMOST  
EXACTLY AN HOUR BEFORE [

b1  
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b1  
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ACCORDING TO TOWN'S PEOPLE INTERVIEWED THAT  
AFTERNOON, THE TERRORISTS HAD ASKED ABOUT THE  
FOREIGNERS. THE VILLAGERS ADMITTED THE TWO GRINGOS  
LIVED IN TOWN, BUT LIED THAT THEY WERE TEMPORARILY  
GONE.

9. NEAR MIDNIGHT [ AWAKENED BY A FRANTIC  
POUNING ON HIS DOOR. IT WAS [ AND HIS  
TWO COMPANIONS WHO HAD JUST STUMBLER INTO TOWN FROM

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b1

THE SAME

b1

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STORY HE TOLD POLCOUNS UPON HIS RETURN TO LIMA  
(REFTEL). PUT THE THREE MEN UP FOR THE NIGHT.  
THEY LEFT AT FIRST LIGHT, CATCHING A BUS TO LA UNION.

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HIDING IN THE MOUNTAINS  
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10. NOTWITHSTANDING THE EFFORTS OF THE TERRORISTS TO  
FIND HIS EMPLOYEES ON SUNDAY, MONDAY MORNING  
CHOSE NOT TO LEAVE TOWN. IN THE LATE AFTERNOON A  
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CHILD FROM THE VILLAGE CAME RUNNING UP TO HIM, "THE  
TERRORISTS ARE COMING FOR YOU." TO HIS  
HOME, GATHERED THE TWO AMERICANS,  
SLEEPING BAG AND SOME SUPPLIES AND AS DARKNESS FELL,  
LEFT TOWN. THEY HEADED TOWARD HUANUCO. ON  
FOOT. USING A FLASHLIGHT THEY FOLLOWED THE ROAD FOR  
A TIME, ALTERNATELY WALKING AND JOGGING. AFTER 45  
MINUTES LEAVE THE ROAD AND HEAD UP  
THE SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAIN. THEY CLIMBED FOR AN HOUR  
WHEN THEY SAW THE FIRST SIGNS OF THE PURSUIT BELOW.

11. DESCRIBED TO POLOFFS WITH CONSIDERABLE

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AMAD-01 CA-02 CIAE-00 SJK-01 DODE-00  
DS-00 HA-09 INRE-00 INR-01 L-03 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
OCS-06 PM-01 P-01 SCT-03 SP-01 SS-01 /031W  
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P 221608Z AUG 91  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0732  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
DIAHQ WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 LIMA 11377

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DISPASSION WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIFYING MOMENTS AS  
THE FIVE HID AMONG THE ROCKS AND WATCHED 30 TERRORIST  
COMBING THE ROAD AND RIVER BANK BELOW LOOKING FOR  
THEM OR SOME SIGN OF THEIR TRAIL. *b1*

THE TERRORISTS WERE ABLE TO FOLLOW THEM AS FAR  
AS THEY HAD BECAUSE OF CIGARETTES WHICH KEPT BUMPING  
OUT OF ONE OF HIS ENGINEER'S POCKETS AS THEY RAN DOWN  
THE ROAD. AFTER AN HOUR OF LOOKING IN THE AREA WHERE  
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THE REFUGEES HAD LEFT THE ROAD, THE GROUP OF SL GAVE  
UP AND RETURNED FROM THE HILLSIDE *b1*  
THE GRINGOS OBSERVED AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF SL ROAD  
WATCHERS POSTED ON NEIGHBORING HEIGHTS WHO USED  
FLASHLIGHTS AND A MORSE CODE TYPE SIGNAL SYSTEM TO  
WARN OF APPROACHING GOVERNMENT TROOPS.

12. SLEPT ON THE MOUNTAIN THAT NIGHT. NEAR *b1*  
MIDNIGHT THEY ONCE AGAIN WITNESSED THE MOBILIZATION

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OF PERHAPS SIXTY OR SEVENTY TERRORISTS FROM THE SOUTH TOWARD THE NORTH. SHORTLY AFTER DAWN, OBSERVING THAT THE OCCASIONAL VEHICULAR TRAFFIC ON THE ROAD BELOW HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL, THE FIVE CLIMBED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN AND WALKED BACK INTO TOWN. THEY GATHERED EVERYTHING THEY COULD PUT IN A VEHICLE AND HEADED OUT OF TOWN FOR LA UNION WHERE THEY ARRIVED WITHOUT INCIDENT.

13. IT WAS IN LA UNION THREE DAYS LATER THAT THEY LEARNED THAT THE ARMY HAD FINALLY LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE TERRORISTS. DESPITE THE HIGH BODY COUNT (67 DEAD TERRORISTS ACCORDING TO THE MILITARY) THERE WAS NO TALK IN ANY OF THE TOWNS OF ANY NON-COMBATANT DEATHS. ONE OF HIS PERUVIAN ENGINEERS WHO REMAINED BEHIND DESCRIBED A SINGLE ARMY HELICOPTER RUNNING FORAYS AGAINST THE TERRORISTS FURTHER NORTH. THIS PERUVIAN SOURCE STATED THAT A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS FROM LA UNION HAD ARRIVED HAD SET UP CAMP IN TOWN IN APPARENT ANTICIPATION OF A TERRORIST RETREAT BACK SOUTH ALONG THE ROAD; A

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RETREAT WHICH NEVER CAME. THIS WITNESS STATED THAT THE OCCUPYING TROOPS WERE PERFECTLY BEHAVED AND WITHDREW SHORTLY BEFORE DARK.

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SL'S NUMBERS AND PLANS  
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14. SL WAS MOBILIZING ITS CADRE FROM POINTS SOUTH BY VEHICLE TO TANTAMAYO WHERE THEY WERE GATHERING AND THEN MARCHING BY NIGHT OVER THE PASS AND DOWN INTO THE MONSON VALLEY, A TRIBUTARY OF THE HUALLAGA. ALL OF HIS CONTACTS ASSUMED THAT SL CAME FROM JUNIN, HUANCVELICA AND AYACUCHO, AS FAR AS 500 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF TANTAMAYO. THE TERRORISTS APPARENTLY DEBOARDED VEHICLES SOUTH OF HUANUCO CITY TO AVOID MILITARY CHECK-POINTS, AND CROSSED THE PUNA TO BE PICKED UP AGAIN ON THE ROAD

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15. HE GUESSED, IN PART BASED ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ARMY LTC IN LA UNION, THAT THE ARMY SURPRISED THE SL COLUMN BEFORE ALL HAD MADE THE NIGHT TREK ACROSS THE PASS AND DOWN INTO THE SAFETY OF THE JUNGLE.

ESTIMATED THAT THREE TO FIVE HUNDRED TERRORISTS WERE MOVED BY VEHICLE

THE WEEK OF THE MOBILIZATION. ONE OF PERUVIAN ENGINEERS WHO WAS FORCED TO DRIVE AN SL GROUP NORTH IN HIS TRUCK REPORTED HAVING SEEN "HUNDREDS" OF SL MASSED FURTHER UP THE VALLEY.

ACCORDING TO THE ARMY THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 200

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TERRORISTS OUTSIDE TANTAMAYO WHEN THE CLASH OCCURRED ON AUGUST 2. WE ASSUME THAT THE ARMY FIGURE IS SLIGHTLY INFLATED, NEVERTHELESS, IT IS PLAIN THAT EVEN THOUGH IT TOOK THE MILITARY A WEEK TO MOBILIZE. THEY WERE ABLE TO TRAP A LARGE SL FORCE THAT HAD NOT YET MADE THE CROSSING IN A CUL DE SAC WITH VERY LITTLE COVER. NEITHER NOR WE KNOW HOW THE ARMY JUMPED THE SL COLUMN. IN MAY BE THAT THE CASUALTIES WERE LARGELY INFLICTED BY HELICOPTER STRIKES.

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EMBASSY COMMENT

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EMBASSY COMMENT

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TAGS: PTER, ASEC, PHUM, PGOV, PE

16. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THESE SL TROOPS WERE BEING REDEPLOYED TO THE UPPER HUALLAGA VALLEY FROM THE CENTRAL SIERRA WHERE THEY HAD BEEN CONDUCTING MILITARY OPERATIONS. THE MONTH OF JUNE AND THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF JULY HAD BEEN THE BLOODIEST OF THE WAR SINCE 1984, MOST OF THE ATTACKS OCCURRING IN JUNIN, AYACUCHO, HUANCANELICA, AND NORTHERN LIMA. SOMETIME IN MID-JULY THE REDPLOYMENT BEGAN; THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF JULY THE INCIDENTS IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTH SIERRA TAPERED OFF SHARPLY. THE SAME TROOPS IN TANTAMAYO THEN CROSSED DOWN INTO THE UPPER HUALLAGA, BROKE UP INTO OPERATING COLUMNS, AND CONDUCTED A SERIES OF AMBUSHES AGAINST MILITARY AND POLICE PATROLS BEGINNING THE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST. AT LEAST 30 TROOPS DIED IN THESE ATTACKS. ACCORDING TO THE THESE TWO WEEKS OF AUGUST HAVE PRODUCED MORE SECURITY FORCES VICTIMS THAN IN ANY ONE MONTH PERIOD SINCE 1980. MOST WERE IN THE UHV. IN BETWEEN THESE TWO OFFENSIVES IN DISTANT PARTS OF PERU, SL MOVED AS MANY AS 500 ARMED CADRE NORTHWARD ALONG THE ONE ROAD ON WHICH THERE IS VERY LITTLE POLICE OR MILITARY PRESENCE.

17. EMBASSY IS AWARE OF NO PREVIOUS CASE WHERE SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF SL WAS POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED IN ONE AREA AT ONE TIME. THERE ARE ACCOUNTS OF ATTACKING GROUPS OF 200 TO 300 TERRORISTS, BUT THESE HAVE ALWAYS INCLUDED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CIVILIAN FORCE MULTIPLIERS. THERE IS NO QUESTION FROM THE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE WITNESSES, THAT THE SL PRESENCE IN UPPER MARAMON WAS ENTIRELY ARMED AND HARDENED TROOPS. IT IS DISTURBING THAT SL COULD TRANSFER UP TO 500 TROOPS UNIMPEDED FROM THE SOUTHERN SIERRA SEVERAL HUNDRED KILOMETERS DISTANT. ALMOST CERTAINLY THEY TRAVELED MOST OF THE DISTANCE UNARMED. TRAVELING UNARMED, THE TERRORISTS WERE JUST 500 PASSENGERS SPREAD OUT OVER THE SIERRA BUS SYSTEM. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT WHAT POINT THE TERRORISTS GATHERED THEIR WEAPONS.

18. THERE ARE SEVERAL ENCOURAGING DETAILS IN ALL OF THIS. FIRST WAS THE ARMY'S "CORRECT" BEHAVIOR TOWARD LOCAL CIVILIANS IN THE OFFENSIVE, INCLUDING TAKING ALONG FILM CREWS FROM LIMA TV STATIONS THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS OF THE ARMY OFFENSIVE. TV CREWS CAUGHT IMAGES OF THOSE KILLED IN DAY ONE (AUGUST 2) AND ADDITIONAL FOOTAGE OF ARMY PATROLS TREKKING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS SUPPORTED BY AT LEAST THREE HELICOPTERS, INCLUDING THE ONE CARRYING THE PRESS. IN ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY NO ONE REPORTED ANY HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. FIND SUCH KILLINGS OR DISAPPEARANCES OCCURRED HE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE HEARD IT THROUGH THE LOCAL GRAPEVINE. SECOND, THOUGH THE NUMBER OF SL IS DISTURBING, THE NEED TO MOBILIZE THESE NUMBERS SUGGESTS THAT SL DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH PERMANENT, TRAINED CADRE IN EITHER THE SIERRA OR THE JUNGLE TO LAUNCH MAJOR OFFENSIVES WITHOUT MOVING SOLDIERS FROM ONE AREA TO SUPPORT THE OTHER. THIS WOULD TEND TO CONFIRM THAT SL NUMBERS ARE LOWER THAN SOME OF THE MORE GRIM ESTIMATES. THIRD, SL'S BASING STRATEGY REMAINS A RISK FOR THE TERRORISTS. SO LONG AS THE CENTRAL BATTLE FRONT IS IN THE SIERRA WHILE THE PRINCIPAL TRAINING AND PERMANENT CAMPS ARE IN THE JUNGLE, SL WILL FIND ITSELF IN A VULNERABLE POSITION AS IT MOBILIZES TROOPS OVER RELATIVELY LARGE DISTANCES OVER OPEN, TREELESS SPACES.

19. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ARMY KNEW OF SOME SL MOVEMENT FROM THE FIRST DAY; ONE SL COLUMN WAS CHASED BY TROOPS IN A CIVILIAN BUS ON JULY 24. HAD THE ARMY THE RESOURCES OR THE COMMAND STRUCTURE TO HAVE LAUNCHED AN EARLIER OR A MORE MASSIVE ATTACK (THE ARMY USED ONE HELICOPTER ON THE FIRST AND MOST CRITICAL DAY OF THE ATTACK), SL LOSSES COULD HAVE BEEN STAGGERING. NONETHELESS, THE RESULTS ARE A SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS FOR THE ARMY WHOSE MORALE HAS CLEARLY BEEN BOOSTED BY THE ENCOUNTER.  
QUINTON  
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