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SUBJECT: BRINGING THE MRTA IN FROM THE COLD

REF: STATE 64348

1. ~~SECRET~~ OFORN - ENTIRE TEXT
2. INTRODUCTION: EMBASSY WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW ISSUE OF DRAWING THE MRTA GUERRILLA MOVEMENT INTO THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PROCESS IN PERU. DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND COLOMBIA OFFER ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS OF HOW SERIOUS GOVERNMENT/GUERRILLA NEGOTIATIONS CAN END YEARS OF DESTRUCTIVE AND POINTLESS VIOLENCE. ALL RELEVANT EMBASSY ELEMENTS HAVE JOINED IN REVIEW OF THIS ISSUE AND THIS MESSAGE REPRESENTS OUR JOINT VIEW.
3. SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE GOP WILL SOON ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS TO INTEGRATE THE MRTA INTO THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PROCESS. PRESIDENT FUJIMORI HAS MADE HIS POSITION CLEAR ON THE

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ISSUE: THE MRTA MUST CEASE ITS VIOLENT ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE SUCH A PROCESS CAN BEGIN. ON THE MRTA SIDE, THERE MAY BE SOME LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS THAT WOULD WELCOME A MOVE INTO THE PEACEFUL POLITICAL PROCESS, BUT THE MOVEMENT IS AT PRESENT SO RIVEN BY INTERNAL CONFLICT THAT NO EFFECTIVE -- AND SUSTAINABLE -- MRTA NEGOTIATING COUNTERPART COULD BE IDENTIFIED.

4. BEYOND THESE SUPERFICIAL FACTORS, THE "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS" IN PERU RUN STRONGLY COUNTER TO A GOP/MRTA DEAL.

-- FIRST, THE MRTA IS ONLY A SIDE SHOW IN PERU, WITH SENDERO LUMINOSO AS THE MAIN EVENT. BRINGING MRTA IN FROM THE COLD WILL HAVE ONLY MARGINAL IMPACT ON THE SUBVERSION PROBLEM.

-- SECOND, MRTA IS AS MUCH AT WAR WITH SENDERO AS IT IS WITH THE GOP. IF IT WERE TO CEASE ITS VIOLENT STRUGGLE, IT WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING SENDERO AS WELL. THE GOP COULD NO MORE PROTECT MRTA FROM SENDERO THAN IT CAN PROTECT ITSELF; SENDERO WOULD QUICKLY WIPE MRTA OUT.

-- THIRD, THE GOP IS NOT DEALING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH AND THUS IS NOT LIKELY TO WALK INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH AN ARMED OPPONENT -- EVEN ONE AS RELATIVELY WEAK AS MRTA.

-- FOURTH, MRTA'S SCHISMS ARE AS MUCH CAUSED BY DIVIDING UP THE TAKE FROM THE DRUG TRADE AS IDEOLOGICAL OR TACTICAL DIFFERENCES. THIS FACT DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR MEANINGFUL GOP/MRTA NEGOTIATIONS ON JOINING THE POLITICAL PROCESS -- UNLESS, OF COURSE, EVERYONE AGREES THAT THE PERUVIAN POLITICAL PROCESS NEEDS A PLAYER THAT WIELDS MILLIONS IN PERU'S ILLICIT DRUGS INCOME.

5. ENDING POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN PERU IS A HIGHLY DESIREABLE GOAL AND ONE THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT. IN THE CASE OF GOP/MRTA ACCOMMODATION, HOWEVER, IT IS A GOAL WHICH WE CAN BEST SUPPORT FROM THE WINGS. SHOULD RESPECTED PERUVIAN FIGURES INITIATE AND DEVELOP MOMENTUM FOR SUCH A PROCESS, WE CAN QUITE PROPERLY GIVE IT OUR MORAL SUPPORT. A MORE OVERT U.S. ROLE WOULD ASSERT OURSELVES IN A ISSUE WHICH WE HAVE SO FAR STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED AND WHERE WE HAVE FEW CHIPS TO PLAY. END SUMMARY

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6. FOLLOWING IS BEST INFORMATION WE HAVE CONCERNING THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN REFTEL ON MRTA AND ON GOP POSITION ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORIST GROUPS.

-- OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE INSIDE WORKINGS OF THE MRTA IS IMPROVING, BUT STILL FAR FROM ADEQUATE. IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER "THE MRTA IS SERIOUS ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE 1995 ELECTIONS." THE ANSWER DEPENDS ON "WHICH MRTA" ONE IS TALKING ABOUT AND WHEN- IN ALL PROBABILITY MRTA LEADERS OF DIFFERENT PERSUASIONS THEMSELVES HAVE NOT DECIDED ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS, BUT ARE DEVELOPING THEIR OPTIONS. THOSE FARTHEST REMOVED FROM CONTROL OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AND DRUG PROFITS IN THE UHV (E.G., ASSASSINATED PATRIOTIC LIBERATION FRONT (FPL) LEADER ANDRES SOSA CHANAME OR UDP LEADER CECILIA OVIEDO HUAPAYA) APPEAR MOST ANXIOUS TO STRIKE A DEAL. OTHERS SUCH AS THE VICTOR POLAY/NESTOR SERPA CARTOLINI MAINLINE FACTION, OR SISTERO GARCIA'S SPLINTER COLUMN IN THE CENTRAL HUALLAGA, WITH BOTH GUNS AND NARCOPROFITS ALREADY AT HAND, ARE MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT PLAYING THAT CARD PRECIPITOUSLY. THIS DOES NOT EVEN ADDRESS THE "EXCOMMUNICATED" MRTA SPLINTER FACTION OF THE POPULAR GUERRILLA FORCES (FGP), LED BY LUIS DAVILA TORRES, AROUND HUACHO, FOR WHICH THE MAINLINERS HAVE PUT OUT A CONTRACT.

-- MRTA FACTIONALISM SEEMS TO BE A FUNCTION OF THREE MAJOR FACTORS: MOST IMPORTANT IS THE STRUGGLE OVER THE DIVISION OF SPOILS FROM THE VALLEY. THE POLAY/SERPA BUNCH HAVE ENGENDERED THE SUSPICION OF THE REST BY TRYING TO HOG THE ACTION. SECONDLY, ANECDOTAL REPORTS SUGGEST THAT POLAY DEEPLY ALIENATED SISTERO GARCIA AND OTHERS WITH THE WONTON SACKING OF JUANJUI IN DECEMBER 1991. HEAVY HANDED BRIGANDAGE OF THIS TYPE SUGGESTS A BREAKDOWN OF EARLIER TIGHT DISCIPLINE TO KEEP THE MRTA SQUARELY "ON THE SIDE OF THE PEOPLE." LASTLY, MRTA IS A SYNTHETIC OUTFIT COBBLED TOGETHER OUT OF APRA REBELDE, UNIR/MIR AND OTHER FACTIONS IN THE MID-80'S. SPLITS AND FACTIONS ARE IN THE NATURE OF THE BEAST.

-- OUR CURRENT REPORTS OFFER A BETTER GLIMPSE OF MRTA FACTIONALISM THAN IN THE PAST, WHEN POLAY AND SERPA WERE OFTEN CHARACTERIZED AS BEING AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER, BOTH AT VARIOUS TIMES BEING CHARACTERIZED AS THE HEAD OF THE LIMA VS. VALLEY FACTION. CURRENT INFORMATION APPEARS BETTER THAN IN THE PAST, BUT THIS MAY BE AN EPHEMERAL BREAK IN THE HAZE AND CLOUD COVER

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WHICH TRADITIONALLY HAS OBSCURED MRTA'S INNER WORKINGS. WE CAN NOT PRETEND TO ANY CLAIRVOYANT OR PERMANENT CAT SCAN INTO THE MRTA.

-- THE GOP COULD PROBABLY IDENTIFY ANY NUMBER OF POSSIBLE INTERLOCUTORS WITH THE MRTA -- IF IT WANTED TO. THE FORMER HEAD OF DIRCOTE CONFIRMED THAT IN THE FALL OF 1990 FUJIMORI HAD REJECTED AN MRTA OFFER TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL DIALOGUE. FINDING AN MRTA INTERLOCUTOR SHOULD BE EASY FOR THE GOP, BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL MRTA LEADER COULD DELIVER THE ORGANIZATION AT THIS POINT. OUTSIDE ADVICE WOULD NOT BE WELCOMED. MUCH LIKE MATTERS OF THE HEART, THIS IS A QUESTION OF CHEMISTRY WHERE ONLY TWO CAN PLAY.

-- CONTRARY TO THE HOPE WHICH INSPIRED REFTTEL, FUJIMORI PUBLICLY SLAMMED THE DOOR ON ANY TALKS WITH THE MRTA AS RECENTLY AS HIS FEB 21 INTERVIEW WITH BOLIVIAN TV.

"Q. DOES THIS MEAN THAT VIOLENCE IN PERU CAN ONLY BE ERADICATED BY WIPING OUT TERRORISM WITHOUT NEGOTIATIONS?

(FUJIMORI) NATURALLY. WHEN IT REFERS TO TERRORISM SUCH AS THE TYPE PRACTICED BY THE SHINING PATH OR RADICAL GROUPS OF THE MRTA, THERE IS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE BUT FOR THE SOCIETY TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THESE GROUPS...DIALOGUE, IN THIS CASE IS UNFEASIBLE. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CRIMINAL ACTS BEING PERPETRATED BY THESE TWO GROUPS, ONE COULD HARDLY DIALOGUE WITH THEM."

FUJIMORI MAY HAVE LEFT A BIT OF A CRACK FOR NEGOTIATION, BUT ONLY UNDER THE TIMING AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS OWN CHOOSING. NOTHING THE U.S. SAYS OR DOES IS LIKELY TO INFLUENCE HIM, NOR SHOULD IT, GIVEN OUR OWN RELATIVE IGNORANCE ON THE SUBJECT.

-- AT SOME POINT ELEMENTS OF THE MRTA MIGHT SETTLE FOR A GENERAL AMNESTY, BUT THEIR OPENING POSITION WOULD INCLUDE A RUPTURE WITH THE IFT'S WHOSE ONEROUS REPAYMENT SCHEDULES THEY PERCEIVE AS CRUSHING THE PEOPLE. THIS IS ALAN GARCIA'S POSITION AND WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT ANYTHING LESS OF VICTOR POLAY, GARCIA'S FORMER ROOMMATE IN EXILE. THE EVENTUAL TERMS ARE LIKELY TO FAVOR THE SIDE WHICH BLINKS LAST. AT THIS POINT, FUJIMORI'S GAZE IS UNWAVERING.

-- LASTLY, WE DOUBT THAT A SETTLEMENT WOULD

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SERIOUSLY IMPROVE THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE VALLEY. BRINGING MRTA FORCES IN FROM THE COLD AT THIS TIME WOULD, IRONICALLY, REMOVE A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO SENDERO'S HEGEMONY IN THE VALLEY. NEITHER THE MILITARY NOR THE POLICE ARE POSITIONED (NOW AND IN THE MEDIUM TERM) TO FILL THE VACUUM THAT WOULD BE LEFT BEHIND SHOULD MRTA FORCES LAY DOWN THEIR WEAPONS; SL WOULD LIKELY ROLL IN BEHIND MRTA AND TAKE OVER FORMER MRTA TURF.

STRATEGIC PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN: APPARENT PUFFERY

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7. THE EXISTENCE OF A STRATEGIC PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST MRTA BY THE "GOP AND THE LOCAL MEDIA, AS WELL AS THE LEGAL LEFT" IS UNLIKELY. THERE IS LITTLE LOVE LOST BETWEEN THE GOP AND THE LEGAL LEFT. UNITED LEFT (IU), SOCIALIST LEFT (IS), AND UNITED MARIATEGUIST PARTY (PUM) LEADERS ARE HARDLY INCLINED TO WORK WITH THE SECURITY FORCES AGAINST MRTA. AS FOR THE MEDIA, RECENT ARTICLES IN THE LEFT-LEANING NEWSPAPERS CRITICAL OF THE MRTA ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE REFLECTIVE OF INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN THE LEFT THAN PART OF A GOP DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN. MRTA'S LEGAL MOUTHPIECE "CAMBIO" DID NOT TRY TO DOWNPLAY THE SOSA ASSASSINATION. TO THE CONTRARY, CAMBIO HIGHLIGHTED THE MURDER AND CARRIED THE MRTA'S OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE REGARDING SOSA'S EXECUTION. RIGHT-LEANING MEDIA, HOWEVER, MIGHT UNSURPRISINGLY KEEP TRUE TO THEIR EDITORIAL LINE AND HYPE DISCORD WITHIN THE MRTA. IN SHORT, WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY GOP "STRATEGIC ACTIONS" CAUSING DISSENSATION WITHIN MRTA AND ARE HIGHLY SKEPTICAL OF GENERAL ALCANTARA'S CLAIMS ABOUT THIS AND FURTHER GOP "FOLLOW UP" ACTIONS.

EXTRADITING POLAY AND GUZMAN: POLITICAL GRANDSTANDING

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8. FUJIMORI'S RECENT COMMENTS ABOUT EXTRADITING MRTA'S POLAY AND SL'S GUZMAN TO THE U.S. IS LITTLE MORE THAN POLITICAL GRANDSTANDING AT THIS POINT IN TIME. BARRING LUCK, THE GOP IS NOT CLOSING IN ON THE MRTA OR SL LEADERSHIP. NEVERTHELESS, FUJIMORI WOULD PROBABLY BE RELIEVED AND ACCEPT A U.S. EXTRADITION REQUEST SHOULD THE GOP CAPTURE GUZMAN OR POLAY, IF ONLY TO AVOID THE SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS WITHIN HIS OWN JUDICIAL/ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM. WHETHER FUJIMORI WOULD LIKE TO SEE LOWER ECHELON SL OR MRTA CADRE EXTRADITED TO THE U.S. IS NOT KNOWN.

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BRAYSHAW

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE



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