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TELEGRAM

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 NSC-01 ARA-16  
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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2060  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
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AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
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AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
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DIA WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

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PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

EO 12065: RDS-1,2 4/13/02 (ORTIZ, FRANK V) OR-M  
TAGS: PINS PINT PTER SNAR SHUM MILI PE CU  
SUBJECT: (U) PERUVIAN TERRORISM: THE NATURE OF THE THREAT

1. (C) SUMMARY. THIS IS THE FIRST OF TWO MESSAGES ANALYZING THE PERUVIAN TERRORIST PHENOMENON. THE COUNTRY TEAM CONSIDERS THAT MAOIST "SENDERO LUMINOSO," WITH ITS STRONGHOLD IN THE HIGHLANDS DEPARTMENT OF AYACUCHO, IS THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT TERRORIST ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN PERU. PRESENTLY AVAILABLE EVIDENCE DOES NOT SUBSTANTIATE GOP CLAIMS THAT BIG TIME NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE, NOR CONFIRM ITS SUSPICIONS OF SIGNIFICANT INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES OR FIGURES FROM THE  
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PRECEDING LEFTIST MILITARY GOVERNMENT. BEYOND AYACHUCHO.

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United States Department of State  
Office of FOI, Privacy, & Classification Review  
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SENDERO'S NETWORK OF UNDERGROUND CELLS IS REASONABLY WELL-ESTABLISHED IN LIMA AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ELSEWHERE, BUT ONLY IN AYACUCHO AND ITS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS IS THERE A PROSPECT--STILL NOT CONFIRMED--OF A NASCENT GUERRILLA THREAT. RENEGADE PROFESSOR ABIMAEI GUZMAN PLAYS THE ROLE OF SENDERO'S MAO: THE PRINCIPAL TACTICAL INNOVATION SEEMS TO BE ITS ANONYMOUS URBAN SABOTAGE CAMPAIGN, "PETARDISMO." A SECOND MESSAGE WILL EVALUATE HOW THE GOP IS DEALING THE THE THREAT. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) IN HIS MARCH 7 PRESS CONFERENCE (LIMA 2414), PRESIDENT BELAUNDE COINED A NEW TERM, "NARCOTERRORISM." THERE MAY BE GOOD POLITICAL REASONS TO DEPICT WHAT THE GOVERNMENT THUS FAR SEEMS UNABLE TO FIGHT EFFECTIVELY AS A VIGOROUS HYBRID OF TWO BANEFUL FORCES, BUT THE COUNTRY TEAM CANNOT SUBSTANTIATE AN ORGANIZATIONAL LINK BETWEEN THE TERRORISTS AND THE BIG TIME DRUG DEALS.

3. (S) [REDACTED] CONFIRMS WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT TERRORISTS ARE SHAKING DOWN DRUG TRAFFICKERS ALONG WITH OTHERS ON THE AYACUCHO AREA, TO OBTAIN OPERATING FUNDS. [REDACTED] INDICATED THAT SENDERO LUMINOSO HAD A MECHANISM IN LIMA TO LAUNDER MONEY OBTAINED FROM SMALL SCALE DRUG TRAFFICKING. AND IN A WIDER SENSE, THE GROWING COCAINE INDUSTRY WEAKENS THE GOP'S INSTITUTIONAL ABILITY TO COPE WITH TERRORISM, BOTH BY DIVERSION OF POLICE RESOURCES, AND BY PERVERSIVE CORRUPTION OF BOTH CONSTABULARY AND JUDICIARY. BUT ALL THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE "NARCOTERRORISM."

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4. (C) ANOTHER WIDESPREAD CLAIM, BOTH IN OFFICIAL AND MEDIA CIRCLES, IS THAT PERUVIAN TERRORISTS ARE

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RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES. CUBA IS MOST PROMINENTLY HINTED AT, BUT OFFICIALS DECLINE TO BE SPECIFIC IN PUBLIC, AND IN PRIVATE ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE. IN FACT, PERU'S TERRORISTS SHOW FEW SIGNS OF BEING PARTICULARLY WELL-EQUIPPED, LAVISHLY-FINANCED, OR WIDELY TRAVELLED. TO DATE, ALL ARMS CAPTURED ARE IDENTIFIED AS PURCHASED IN-COUNTRY OR STOLEN FROM PERUVIAN POLICE, AND DOMESTIC DYNAMITE THEFTS ARE QUITE ADEQUATE TO ACCOUNT FOR EXPLOSIVES USED IN BOMBINGS AND ATTACKS. (NOR IS THERE ANY PROOF

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THAT TERRORISTS ARE GETTING MONEY FROM KIDNAPPINGS OR BANK ROBBERIES.)

5. (C) ALTHOUGH HAVANA'S OWN DENIAL (LIMA 3180) IS OF COURSE WORTHLESS, CUBA WILL LIKELY HESITATE TO TAKE DISCOVERABLE SUBVERSIVE ACTIONS WHICH COULD JEOPARDIZE THE PRIVILEGED POSITION THE SOVIETS ENJOY IN PERU THANKS TO THE MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. NOR IS THERE EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT CURRENT LINKS BETWEEN LOCAL TERRORISTS AND OTHER COMMUNIST OR RADICAL COUNTRIES. THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION HAS AN OVERT OFFICE IN LIMA [REDACTED] BUT PLO REP ISAIAS BESSEM DENIES ANY CONNECTION WITH THE LOCAL TERRORISTS.

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6. (C) OUR CONSIDERED EVALUATION REMAINS THAT THE PRINCIPAL AGENT OF WOULD-BE INSURRECTIONARY VIOLENCE IN PERU IS THE SELF-PROCLAIMED MAOIST GROUP "SENDERO LUMINOSO." IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE MUCH SMALLER MAOIST GROUP "PUKA LLACTA" IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME ACTIVITY, AND THERE MAY BE OTHER SPLINTER GROUPS THAT BROKE OFF FROM THE LINES OF REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD (VR) AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF THE LEFT (MIR) WHEN THE MAINSTREAM OF THOSE GROUPS WENT "LEGITIMATE."

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[REDACTED]

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7. (C) MOREOVER, INDIVIDUALS PREVIOUSLY AFFILIATED WITH SUCH GROUPS MAY BE INVOLVED IN TERRORISM. ONE EXAMPLE IS JULIO CESAR MEZICH EZAGUIRRE, A FORMER VR MILITANT WHO LED RADICAL PEASANT MOVEMENTS DURING THE 1970S.

[REDACTED] HE NOW OCCUPIES A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SENDERO LUMINOSO. FOR NOW, HOWEVER, THE UNITED LEFT (IU)-- THE COALITION WHICH ENCOMPASSES ALMOST ALL OF THE SIGNIFICANT FAR LEFT GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, INCLUDING MAOISTS, TROTSKYITES, ERSTWHILE VELASQUISTAS, AND MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNISTS-- CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN THAT CONDITIONS ARE NOT RIGHT  
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FOR REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE, AND THAT SENDERO LUMINO'S ACTIVITIES ARE THEREFORE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

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(LIMA 287B.) AT THE SAME TIME, SENDERO'S WILLINGNESS TO ACT ON ITS REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES EXERTS A FASCINATION TO WHICH FEW IN THE IU ARE FULLY IMMUNE.

8. (LOU) TOP GOP OFFICIALS--MOST NOTABLE PRIME MINISTER ULLOA, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT ALVA, AND WAR MINISTER CISNEROS--RECENTLY SUGGESTED THAT FORMER MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MORE RADICAL "FIRST PHASE" OF THE 1968-80 MILITARY GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN TERRORISM. FOR INSTANCE, ALVA IN EARLY APRIL ASSERTED THAT FIGURES FROM SINAMOS (A NATIONWIDE VELASCO-ERA ORGANIZATION DESIGNED TO PROMOTE A REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE) COULD BE RESPONSIBLE, ALTHOUGH HE SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED THE TOP LEADERSHIP (SUCH AS CURRENT PSR PRESIDENT LEONIDAS RODRIGUEZ) AND ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NO HARD EVIDENCE. INTERIOR MINISTER GAGLIARDI SAID APRIL 6 THAT HE KNEW OF NO EVIDENCE AT ALL FOR SUCH A CLAIM.

9. (U) ALVA ALSO ACCUSED ANOTHER FIGURE ASSOCIATED WITH SINAMOS, HECTOR BEJAR, OF BEING ACTIVE IN SENDERO LUMINOSO. BEJAR, A MID-60S GUERRILLA LEADER WHO NOW CHARACTERIZES HIMSELF AS A "SOCIAL DEMOCRAT OF THE LEFT," DENIED THE CHARGE, WHICH ALVA SUBSEQUENTLY REFORMULATED AS A STATEMENT THAT GIVEN BEJAR'S BACKGROUND, POLICE OUGHT TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER HE MIGHT BE INVOLVED. IN A RECENT MAGAZINE INTERVIEW, BEJAR EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR SENDERO LUMINOSO, AND SAID: "I DO NOT CONDEMN GUERRILLA ACTIONS, BUT I DO CONDEMN TERRORISM, FROM THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT."

10. (C) THE PERUVIAN PRESS FOLLOWED UP THE IDEA OF EX-SECRET  
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MILIATRY PARTICIPATION IN TERRORISM WITH THE REDISCOVERY OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS AS RETIRED MAJOR JOSE FERNANDEZ SALVATECCI, AND ANOTHER EX-OFFICER, ELOY VILLACREZ, WHO BOTH EXPRESSED PHILOSOPHICAL ADMIRATION FOR SENDERO LUMINOSO BUT DENIED ANY ACTIVE ROLE. FERNANDEZ WAS AMONG THE LEGIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN LEFTISTS WHO CONVERGED ON NICARAGUA IN THE FINAL DAYS OF SOMOZA, BUT HAS NO CURRENT TIES TO THE SANDINISTAS THAT WE CAN DISCOVER. OUR DOUBTS ABOUT A SELF-SERVING COMMUNIQUE IN IU MOUTHPIECE "MARKA" IMPLICATING A PURPORTED "NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY" (ELN) ARE BEING

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(LIMA 2878.) AT THE SAME TIME, SENDERO'S WILLINGNESS TO ACT ON ITS REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES EXERTS A FASCINATION TO WHICH FEW IN THE IU ARE FULLY IMMUNE.

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REPORTED SEPTEL:

11. (S) CAPTURED DOCUMENTS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] WHICH THE POLICE SELECTIVELY SHARE WITH THE PRESS COMBINE TO PRESENT A CONSISTENT PICTURE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH MAOIST ANALYSIS, SENDERO LUMINOSO SEES PERU AS A "SEMI-FEUDAL" AND "SEMI-COLONIAL" COUNTRY IN A "PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION." WHILE THE BELAUNDE GOVERNMENT IS PARTICULARLY OBJECTIONABLE DUE TO ITS LINKS TO THE "FEUDAL LANDLORDS" AND THE "CAPITALISTIC BOURGEOISIE," NOT TO MENTION ITS TIES TO "YANKEE IMPERIALISM," ANY GOVERNMENT NOT THE RESULT OF A "PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION" VIA ARMED STRUGGLE IS UNSATISFACTORY.

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12. (S) BY ALL ACCOUNTS SENDERO'S "MAXIMUM LEADER" IS ABIMAEI GUZMAN REYNOSO ("COMRADE GONZALO"), AUTHOR OF A DOCTRINE KNOWN AS "GONZALISMO." THERE IS SOME QUESTION AS TO HOW ACTIVE GUZMAN'S LEADERSHIP IS; [REDACTED] REPORTED THAT, DUE TO DEBILITATING HEALTH PROBLEMS, GUZMAN MAY HAVE CEDED DAILY DIRECTION OF OPERATIONS TO MAXIMILIANO DURANO ARAUJO. (DURANO HIMSELF REPORTEDLY SPENT THE LAST TWO MONTHS UNDERGOING MEDICAL TREATMENT IN LIMA.)

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AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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13. (C) SENDERO'S UNDERGROUND STRUCTURE CONSISTS OF SMALL HERMETIC CELLS, WELL ESTABLISHED IN AYACUCHO, BUT ALSO PRESENT IN LIMA AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ELSEWHERE. THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES AS SUBVERSION, PENETRATION, INTIMIDATION, TERROR, PROPAGANDA, AND SABOTAGE. THEY SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE RECRUITS, SUPPLIES, AND INTELLIGENCE TO SUPPORTED GUERRILLA UNITS, IF AND WHEN THE "PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION" PASSES FROM ITS INITIAL STAGE TO THAT OF GUERRILLA WARFARE, ITSELF A PRELUDE TO THE FINAL STAGE, THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE.

14. (C) "GONZALISMO" ADAPTS MAOIST PRECEPTS TO  
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PERUVIAN PRACTICE, MOST EFFECTIVELY IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF "PETARDISMO" AS A MODUS OPERANDI FOR THE FIRST STAGE.

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THE TERM ITSELF DERIVES FROM "PETARDO" (A SMALL STICK OR CHARGE OF DYNAMITE). PRIOR TO ITS RECENT BOUT OF "GUERRILLA CHIC," THE IU USED "PETARDISMO" AS A SCOURNFUL LOCUTION TO DISMISS SENDERO LUMINOSO'S ACTIVITIES AS PUERILE. SOME GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN ALSO EMPLOYED THE TERM TO DENIGRATE THE TERRORIST THREAT. SENDERO LUMINOSO'S TERM FOR THOSE ACTIVITIES WAS "SABOTAGE CAMPAIGN." AT LEAST SINCE THE MAY 1980 ELECTIONS MIDNIGHT BOMBINGS OF SYMBOLS OF AUTHORITY BROUGHT HEADLINES AND ENHANCED THE PERCEPTION OF A SERIOUS THREAT, WITHOUT REQUIRING OF THE PERPETRATORS A MAJOR RESOURCE COMMITMENT OR A DANGEROUSLY HIGH PROFILE.

15. (LOU) SUCH LOW-OVERHEAD OPERATIONS AS THE AUGUST 1981 BOMBING OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY OR THE MARCH 1982 BOMBING OF THE PALACE OF GOVERNMENT (LIMA 2569) MUST BE AMONG THE BIGGEST PUBLICITY BANGS FOR A BUCK IN THE HISTORY OF TERRORIST MOVEMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DECISION TO "GO ANONYMOUS" (I.E., TO MAKE NO PHONE CALLS TO CLAIM CREDIT, AND TO DISTRIBUTE NO PROPAGANDIZING LEAFLETS) HEIGHTENED THE MYSTERY, AND PRODUCED A SITUATION IN WHICH ALMOST ANY UNTOWARD EVENT WAS SEEN AS A POSSIBLE TERRORIST INCIDENT. THE CONSEQUENT PHENOMENALLY INFLATED INCIDENT RATE (SEE 81 LIMA 4781) GREATLY ENHANCED THE PERCEIVED MENACE AND DISCREDITED THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAIMS THAT IT HAD THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. THE BOMBING OF HIGH-TENSION TOWERS, AND THE USE OF ENSUING BLACKOUTS AS COVER FOR OTHER OPERATIONS, SHOWED INCREASED SOPHISTICATION.

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16. (C) IN MAOIST PRACTICE, GUERRILLAS ARE THE NEXT STEP, ONCE THE CELLS ARE IN PLACE, AND THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO CARRY OUT THE KIND OF ACTIONS (RAIDS ON POLICE STATIONS, HARRASSING ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT UNITS) WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, CHIEFLY IN AYACUCHO. ASSESSMENTS REMAIN DIVIDED ON WHETHER THE PERPETRATORS OF THESE INCIDENTS ACTUALLY BELONG TO PERMANENTLY MOBILIZED UNITS BASED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND UNTIL IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE SO ORGANIZED, USE OF THE TERM "GUERRILLA" STILL SEEMS PREMATURE. NONETHELESS, THE POTENTIAL FOR GENUINE

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GUERRILLA WARFARE--ALBEIT LIMITED TO AYACUCHO AND  
PORTIONS OF ADJOINING DEPARTMENTS--DOES EXIST.  
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