PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PINS, PE

SUBJ: (LOU) PERUVIAN TERRORISM TURNS BLOODIER, BUT NOT NECESSARILY ACCORDING TO PLAN

REFS: A) LIMA 1913; B) LIMA 2197 (NOTAL); C) LIMA 2356

1. (U) PERU'S BLOODIEST TERRORIST MASSACRES YET LEFT AN ESTIMATED 50-100 DEAD IN WEEKEND VIOLENCE. INFORMATION FILTERING OUT OF THE ISOLATED CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IDENTIFIES AT LEAST THREE SEPARATE INCIDENTS IN OR NEAR THE EMERGENCY ZONE IN WHICH ARMED SENDERO LUMINOSO (SL) BANDS ENTERED UNDEFENDED VILLAGES AND, AFTER SUMMARY "PEOPLE'S JUSTICE" TRIALS, PUBLICLY EXECUTED A BROAD RANGE OF VICTIMS. THREE
DIED ON APRIL 2, ATTACK ON A SMALL VILLAGE OF CALCA (HUANCAYO PROVINCE, DEPARTMENT OF JUNIN). DEPENDING ON WHOM 
ACCOUNT YC. BELIEVE, SOME 45, 80, OR UPWARDS OF 100 
VILLAGERS WERE KILLED ON APRIL 3 INCIDENTS IN SANTIAGO 
DE LUCANAMARCA AND HUANCASANCOS, BOTH IN VICTOR FAJARDO 
PROVINCE (DEPARTMENT OF AYACUCHO).

2. (U) REASONS FOR THIS RENEWED SPATE OF SL KILLINGS, 
WHICH WERE MARKED BY UNACCUSTOMED BRUTALITY, DIFFER. 
MARXIST LIMA DAILY "EL DIARIO", NOTED FOR ITS PRO-SL 
SLANT, ACKNOWLEDGES POSSIBILITY THAT SOME "INNOCENT" 
PERSONS DIED BUT ATTRIBUTES MASSACRES TO SL VENGEANCE 
ON VILLAGERS WHO HAD COOPERATED WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHOR-
ITIES AND TURNED IN TERRORISTS. OTHER ACCOUNTS SPEAK 
OF BALKED SL RECRUITMENT EFFORTS: WHEN VILLAGERS REFUSED 
TO JOIN THE "ARMED STRUGGLE," INFURIATED TERRORISTS 
KILLED ALL.

3. (S) COMMENT: AS ALWAYS, NEWS ON EMERGENCY 
ZONE DEVELOPMENTS IS NOT EASY TO COME BY AND HARD TO DECIPHER. 
BUT AMONG THE RUMORS, EXAGGERATIONS, AND DENIALS, SOME 
TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS EMERGE THAT, UNTIL HARDER DATA 
DISPLACES THEM, SEEM PROBABLE:
A. THE SL HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM THE ROMANTIC 
DAYS OF 1980. THE IMAGE OF SHERWOOD FOREST TENDED TO 
LINGER, EVEN AFTER DEVELOPMENTS TOOK A BLOODY TURN IN 
LATE 1981. BUT EVEN THE REPLACEMENT IMAGE OF METHODOICAL 
RUTHLESSNESS SERVED SENDERRO'S PURPOSES. WITH GOVERNMENT 
FORCES ON THE RUN, SENDERRO'S EFFICIENT ASSASSINATIONS 
AND WIDENING SPHERE OF OPERATION PRODUCED A PUBLIC 
IMPRESSION OF INEXORABLE MANACE THAT, AMONG OTHER 
EFFECTS, INTRIGUED SOME ELEMENTS OF THE (LEGAL) 
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RADICAL LEFT. WHEN GOVERNMENT FORCES COUNTERATTACKED 
IN FEBRUARY AND AMETH (REFS A AND B), THEY DESTROYED 
THAT IMPRESSION. NOW, IT WOULD SEEM, SENDERRO IS RAISING 
THE PRICE OF OPPOSITION.
B. WE ASSUME THAT ADDITIONAL FACTORS ARE AT PLAY 
ALSO. THE REPORTED INDISCRIMINATE VICTIMIZATION POINTS 
TO CRIMES BASED ON AROUSED PASSION AS MUCH AS IDEOLOGICAL 
DEDICATION. THE UCHURUCAY INVESTIGATING COMMISSION'S 
REPORT AND PREVIOUS EMBASSY CABLES (REFS A AND C) REFER 
TO TRADITIONAL RIVALRIES IN THE HIGHLANDS, TO "FRONTIER
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JUSTICE", AND TO THE AGGRAVATION OF PRE-EXISTING TENSIONS CAUSED BY THE EBB AND FLOW OF FORCES "OF ORDER". IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-TERRORIST OFFENSIVE MUST BE AFFECTING SL COMMUNICATIONS COMMAND AND CONTROL--A PROBLEM UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES FOR A CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION SPREAD OUT IN TORTUOUS TERRAIN. THUS WE SURMISE LOWER ECHELON LIEUTENANTS AND SUB-LIEUTENANTS--SOME LITTLE MORE THAN TEENAGERS, SWAYED ONLY IN PART BY IDEOLOGY AND MUCH BY EMOTION, OPPORTUNISM, AND FEAR--CAN MOBILIZE SUPPORT GROUPS AND ENGAGE IN ACTIONS WITHOUT DIRECT CONTROL BY SENDERO'S TOP LEADERSHIP.

C. THE GOP STANDS TO BENEFIT INTERMS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS. LEFTIST CRITICS HAVE KEPT THE GOVERNMENT OFF BALANCE WITH CHARGES THAT SECURITY FORCES HAVE NOT RESPECTED HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EMERGENCY ZONE. IN THE WAKE OF THESE MASSACRES, SO CLEARLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO SL, FOREIGN AND THE DOMESTIC LEFT WILL FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT NOT TO RECOGNIZE SL'S ATROCITIES. THEN TOO, THOSE IN THE HIGHLANDS MAY NOT REGARD SOLDIERS AND POLICE IN THEIR MIDST AS FRIENDS, BUT GARRISONED TOWNS OFFER GUARANTEES OF SECURITY FRIGHTENINGLY ABSENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

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