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Directorate of Intelligence
28 March 1991

Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement: Growing Threat to US Interests in Peru [Redacted]

Summary

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) in Peru has sharply increased its anti-US attacks and has used more lethal tactics since the beginning of the year, making it one of the greatest terrorist threats to US interests in South America. Its declaration of "war" on the United States and other members of the Persian Gulf coalition in mid-January, which was followed by an RPG attack against the US Embassy in Lima, underscored its strong anti-US agenda. The MRTA's more than 1,000 hard-core members are highly trained and well armed, and they are capable of carrying out well-planned and sophisticated attacks. The Peruvian Government is unlikely to stem the growing terrorist threat from the MRTA and the equally dangerous Sendero Luminoso organization in the near term, as resource constraints, poor intelligence, interservice rivalry, and rampant corruption among the security forces pose major obstacles to counterterrorist programs. [Redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [Redacted] with a contribution by [Redacted]. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Counterterrorism Center, [Redacted]

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Organizational Structure

The MRTA is a Marxist-Leninist organization determined to seize power to rid Peru of "imperialist" presence, specifically US influence. It first surfaced in November 1983, when it bombed the US Marine security guard residence in Lima.* The group is highly trained, well armed, employs sophisticated and disciplined tactics and methods, and specializes in urban terrorism. Its well-educated leaders come largely from the middle and upper-middle classes. Members include students, professors and other intellectuals, labor leaders, lawyers, and reporters. The rural columns of MRTA also recruit from the peasantry for their military units. [redacted]

MRTA has a Cuban-style command structure similar to other Marxist-Leninist insurgency and pre-insurgency groups in Latin America, such as the National Liberation Armies (ELN) in Colombia and Bolivia. [redacted]

[redacted] the group is directed by a National Executive Committee, which controls the military forces in conjunction with a High Command. The High Command supervises military operations and is composed of five committees--Political, known as the Popular Democratic Union; Intelligence and Security; Support and Logistics; Communications; and Military. Members work their way up from political activities to military operations as they are trained and prove their abilities. Security measures are well planned and strict, both within the cells and on an individual level. [redacted]

We believe MRTA has about 1,000 hard-core members, with another several thousand supporters and sympathizers. Many MRTA members are full-time professional combatants who receive a salary from the organization; some have participated in the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) insurgency in El Salvador and the National Liberation Army in Colombia, [redacted]

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Financing MRTA Subversive Activities

MRTA supports its activities largely through bank robberies, kidnappings, and extortion. [redacted] MRTA carried out several bank robberies in 1990, and its kidnapping and extortion activities have stepped up in recent months. Directors of the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant chain in Lima received "almost daily" demands from the MRTA during January and February for "war taxes," [redacted] and one director has left the country to avoid being kidnapped. The MRTA

*MRTA celebrates the anniversary of 4 November 1780, when Tupac Amaru II, a blood heir to the Inca throne, initiated a bloody and futile rebellion against the Spaniards. [redacted]

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usually demands between \$50,000 and \$100,000 from businesses in extortion schemes, [REDACTED]

The MRTA also has received help from Cuba and Libya. Havana has provided training, a small supply of arms, and some funding to the group in the past, [REDACTED] but its assistance to the group appears to be at a low ebb because of Cuba's decision to back the legal Marxist United Left Coalition in Peru. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Libya also has given MRTA some support, at least in the form of training and travel, as late as mid-1989. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The organization reportedly was "no longer" receiving firm support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, or Nicaragua; had not received enough "taxes" from the narcotics traffickers to cover MRTA's expenses; and had experienced further hardship from Fujimori's economic shock program. [REDACTED]

In late fall the Lima cell demonstrated an apparent improvement in its finances, [REDACTED] that the group began buying cars and trucks similar to police and diplomatic vehicles, which would not have been possible under a severely constrained budget. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We believe the improvement in financing may be, in part, the result of the groups' increased kidnapping and extortion activities in recent months. Given Libya's past support of the group, Tripoli may have recently provided limited funding. [REDACTED]

Shifts and Splits

MRTA attacks since last November appear to depart from the practice of trying to minimize casualties and collateral damage. The group probably calculates that international attention to the Gulf crisis provides an unparalleled propaganda opportunity, outweighing the risk of damage to its popular support that might result from civilian deaths and injuries. Several recent MRTA attacks, including car bombings, have taken place during the day and when passersby were within range. In an afternoon bombing in January against the offices of the Interior Ministry, for example, two people were killed, as many as 100 others were injured, and property damage occurred over a six-block

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area. Most past MRTA actions in Lima have used less-destructive ordnance and generally have been at night or after the group had first warned civilians to clear the area. [redacted]

MRTA's recent bolder actions may also reflect a growing dominance of hardliners within its leadership. [redacted]

[redacted] we believe that the faction aligned with Polay was discredited internally by his "peace" overtures. It was shortly after the dispute that MRTA's central committee directed the current military offensive, [redacted]

External Contacts

The MRTA has links to several other South American terrorist/insurgent organizations that hold similar ideologies and command structures. It also has support groups in Western Europe.

- The Nestor Paz Zamora Commission/National Liberation Army (CNPZ/ELN) terrorist group, which attacked the US Embassy's Marine guard residence in La Paz, Bolivia in October 1990, is receiving operational support--including on-the-scene advisors--from MRTA.

[redacted] kidnapped by the CNPZ/ELN were positively identified as Peruvian MRTA members. [redacted] the Tupac Amaru group is providing training, funding, and logistical support to the CNPZ/ELN organization.

- The National Liberation Army (ELN) of Colombia sent six of its members to Peru in late May 1990 to provide training and work with the MRTA until November 1990. [redacted]

- [redacted] Argentine subversives--possibly members of the Che Guevara Brigade--had entered Peru in mid-July 1990 through Brazil in order to contact one of the principal Peruvian groups. MRTA is probably the group contacted because it is much closer ideologically to the Che Guevara Brigade than is the Sendero Luminoso, which views nearly all other Latin American Marxist-Leninist groups as revisionists.

- [redacted] the MRTA organization has well-established support groups in both Sweden and France. These groups

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provide money, medicine, clothing, and political support
 [redacted]

The Current Scene--The United States As A Target

Like most Latin American Marxist-Leninist subversive groups, the MRTA is strongly opposed to US official and commercial presence in the region. Since it began terrorist operations in 1983, the organization has hit US targets over 100 times. US official facilities and personnel, Mormon churches, and US commercial establishments and their customers--both Peruvian and foreign--have been attacked most frequently. [redacted]

The MRTA declared "war" on the United States in mid-January 1991 and labeled all US installations, personnel, and economic enterprises in Peru as legitimate targets, [redacted] Since the beginning of the year, the MRTA has mentioned some aspect of the Middle East crisis in nearly every claim it has made for attacks against US interests. It carried out at least 25 attacks against US interests between 23 January and 15 March, causing 5 Peruvian deaths and over 20 injuries. Some of the more significant attacks include:

- 25 January: An RPG-7 and automatic weapons were fired at the US Embassy by the MRTA, causing extensive property damage. Small-arms fire was exchanged between the Peruvian police and the attackers.
- 25 January A car bomb exploded in the parking lot at the Jorge Chavez International Airport, killing two persons and injuring ten others.
- 30 January The MRTA hurled bombs over the wall of the US/Peruvian Bi-National Center in Miraflores and at the US Embassy warehouse. It also dynamited a bust of President Kennedy--injuring two persons--and planted an explosive charge outside the Italian Embassy.
- 31 January The MRTA fired three mortar rounds at the US Embassy's commissary, causing substantial damage, but no injuries.
- 2 February A Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant was totally destroyed in a bombing. Four persons were injured, one seriously.
- 2 February MRTA sprayed the US Ambassador's residence with automatic weapons fire, causing no injuries and little damage.

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- 9 February MRTA used explosives and machine guns to attack the Peruvian security company that provides security guards for the US Embassy. Two persons were killed and seven wounded.
- 16 February MRTA bombed three Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants simultaneously. Six persons were injured. [redacted]

[redacted] the MRTA believes the US-led coalition in the Persian Gulf used the pretext of the liberation of Kuwait to gain control over the world's oil supply. As US oil companies continue to develop Peru's potentially substantial oil reserves, MRTA probably will elaborate on this same theme to justify further anti-US attacks. [redacted]

The Sendero Luminoso's Challenge

The increased publicity of MRTA actions appears to be leading rival Sendero Luminoso insurgents to seek equal notoriety for their attacks. [redacted] Sendero Luminoso has linked its own anti-Western and anti-government actions, including the recent bombing of the Japanese Embassy and numerous Peruvian banks, to events in the Gulf. In late January, Sendero declared Saddam Hussein the fifth great world hero after Marx, Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, and Sendero Luminoso founder, Abimael Guzman. Early in February, the group threatened to assassinate the Peruvian-born Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his handling of Gulf issues. [redacted]

Sendero's upswing in armed actions, especially in Lima, is probably motivated chiefly by its desire not to be outdone by the smaller MRTA. Sendero may be attempting to exploit weaknesses in the security system that it believes have been exposed by recent MRTA actions. Six Sendero Luminoso members were arrested in mid-January carrying information on plans to attack numerous US official and commercial interests, primarily in the greater Lima area. [redacted] Targets included the US Embassy, residences of US officials, and offices of Goodyear, Coca Cola, Union Carbide, Mobile Oil, Occidental Petroleum and Schering. [redacted] In our view, such ambitious operations would be difficult for the Senderos, who lack much of the urban capabilities of MRTA. [redacted]

Peru's Ineffective Counterterrorism Program

The government appears to be increasing its counterterrorist efforts, but resource constraints, poor intelligence, rampant corruption, and interservice

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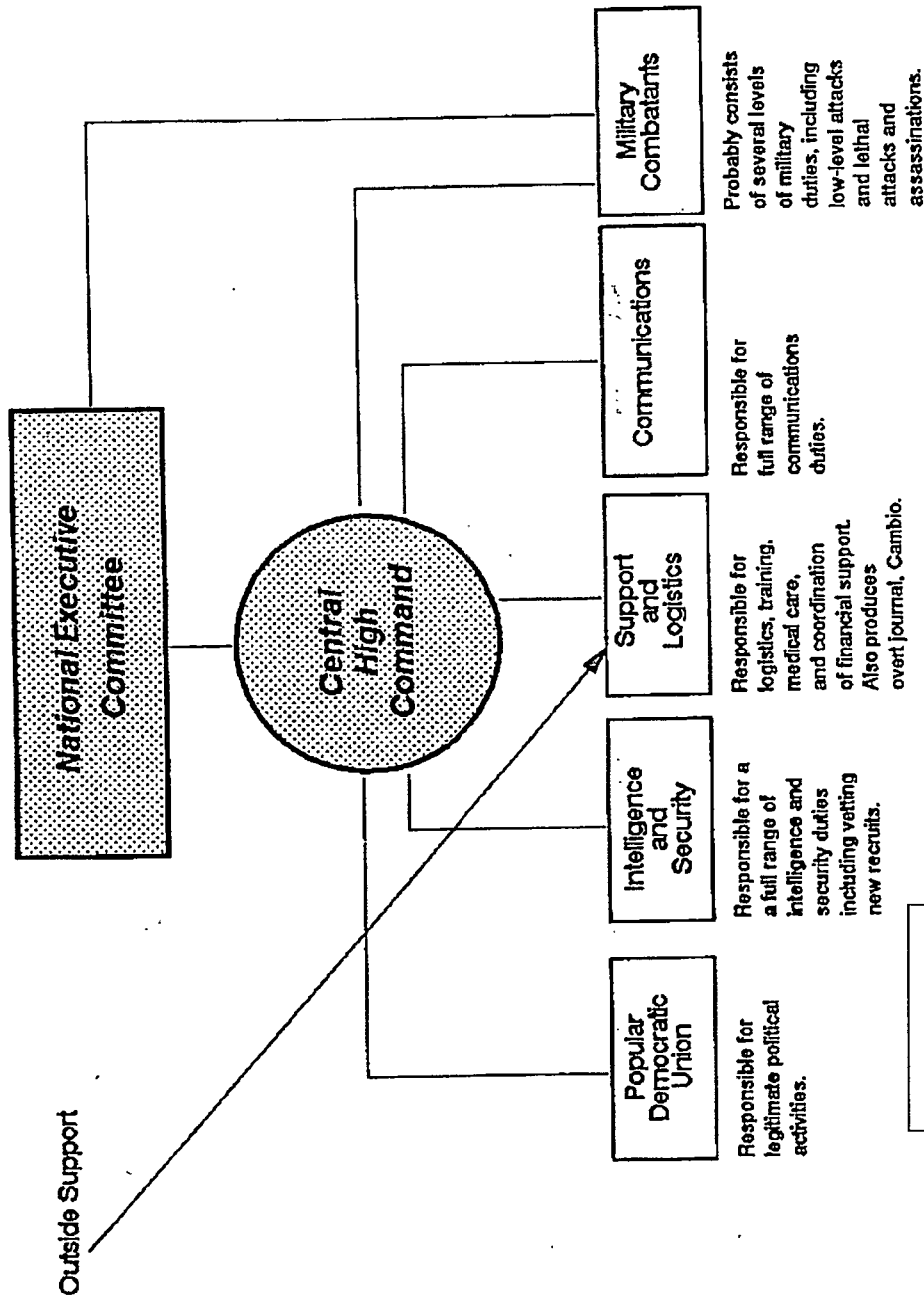
rivalry limit its effectiveness. [] the police and military rarely coordinate their efforts and often fail to share vital intelligence. [] [] the government has yet to approve this year's defense budget, enlarging resource problems that plague the security services. Moreover, a judicial reform proposal that would make it easier to prosecute terrorist crimes, promised by President Fujimori, has yet to be implemented. []

Outlook

The MRTA poses one of the most serious terrorist threats to US interests in Latin America today—a threat that may extend beyond the borders of Peru as a result of the group's ties with other Latin American terrorist groups. MRTA is likely to continue its terrorism campaign against US interests because purging Peru of foreign influence is central to the group's political agenda. In addition, MRTA attacks during the Gulf Crisis have brought the group increased political notoriety, which probably has encouraged the leadership to continue its more violent tack. In an effort to balance the short-term propaganda benefits of major attacks with long-term goals of toppling the government and removing US presence, the group probably will try to keep Peruvian civilian casualties to a minimum, focusing on Peruvian government and US targets. []

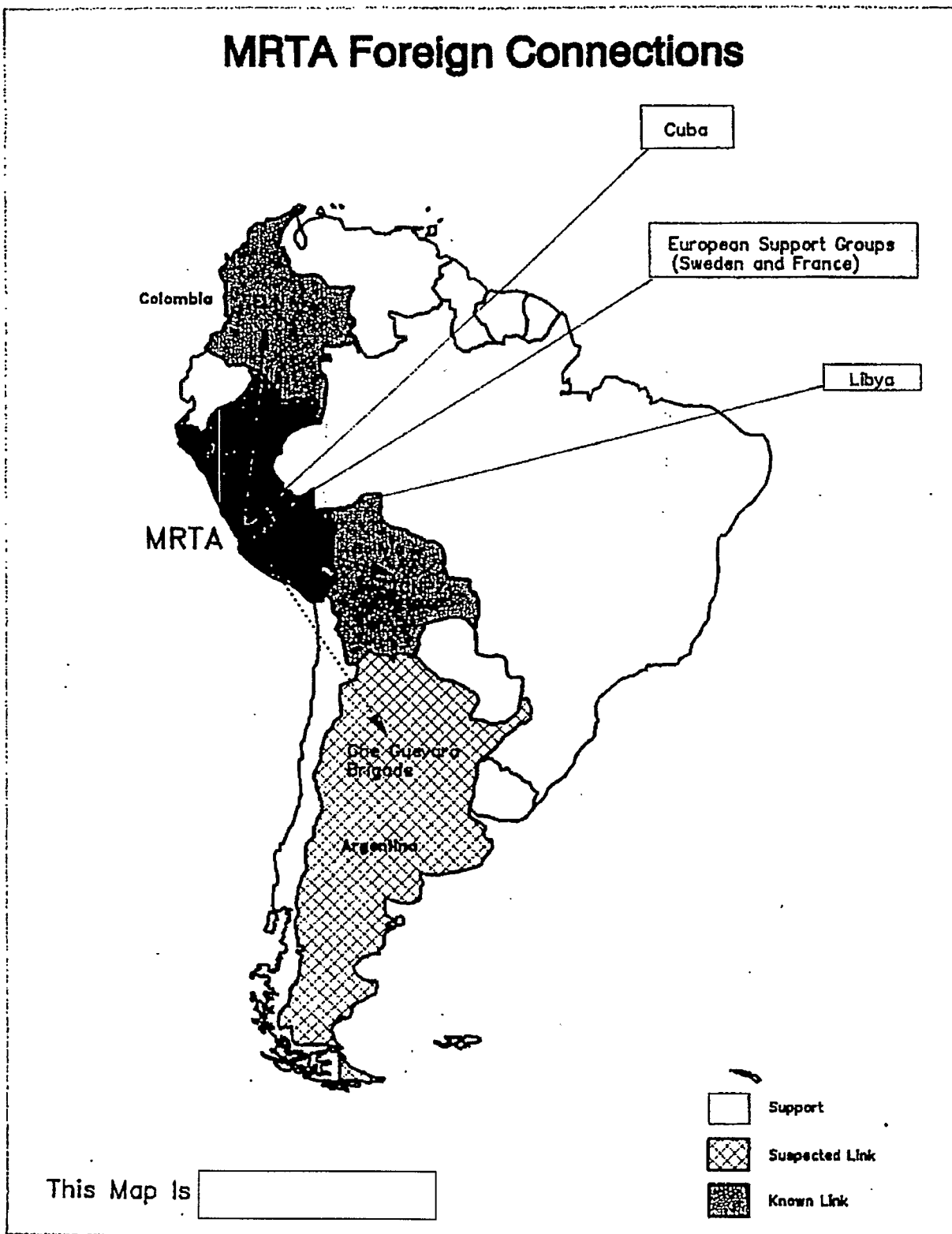
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MRTA Command Structure



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MRTA Foreign Connections



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Tupac Amaru (MRTA)--The Threat To US Interests In Peru

In mid-January the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) declared "war" on the United States because of US intervention in the Persian Gulf. [redacted]

the group believes the coalition is using the liberation of Kuwait as a pretext to garner control of the world's oil supply in the Middle East. Since war broke out, MRTA has carried out at least [redacted] attacks against US interests--embassy facilities, commercial interests, and cultural and religious buildings--causing three deaths (all Peruvians) and numerous injuries. MRTA's increasing use of sophisticated tactics and methods makes it a greater threat to US interests in Peru than the more infamous Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Prior to the Gulf war, MRTA carried out attacks against US interests: it bombed the US Embassy Marine Guard residence in 1983 and exploded a car bomb outside the US Ambassador's residence in 1986. [redacted]

MRTA was founded in 1982 and launched its first terrorist operation a year later. The Marxist-Leninist organization supports its activities largely through bank robberies, kidnappings, and extortion. As of [redacted] 1990, MRTA had approximately seventy hardcore militants in the capital, [redacted]

but total membership probably numbers in the hundreds. MRTA's command structure is highly centralized and operations are tightly compartmented. MRTA officials are well educated and come largely from higher social classes; membership includes professors, other intellectuals [redacted]

The group maintains international links, and we believe it has received support and training from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya. [redacted]

the group is providing training and financial support to the Bolivian Nestor Paz Zamora Committee, which attacked the US Marine guard residence in La Paz last October. [redacted]

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