



Directorate of Intelligence

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Terrorism Review

21 February 1991

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Attacks against US interests in Latin America hit a new high in 1990. Nearly a third of the protest attacks during the initial weeks of Operation Desert Storm occurred there, most of them carried out by indigenous groups with a record of hitting US targets. We expect the threat to remain high, given the unsettled political, economic, and social conditions in the region.	
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21 February 1991

Anti-US Terrorism in Latin America

Terrorism has become an established political tool for subversive organizations in Latin America and is increasingly directed against US interests. International terrorist incidents in Latin America reached an all-time high in 1990, and anti-US incidents rose nearly 30 percent over 1989. Attacks against US targets have been more violent since October—especially in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. Among nearly all of the leftist indigenous groups, the Gulf war has become a rationale to attack US interests, probably in part to exploit the current media focus on international terrorism.

The Regional Terrorist Picture

Anti-US terrorist incidents increased substantially in number and severity during 1990 in both Chile and Peru and, since the beginning of the Gulf war, have continued to mount. Colombia's anti-US attacks decreased substantially in 1990, but this decline was more than offset by attacks in Chile. Colombian insurgents began a terrorist campaign early this year, however, and many of the attacks have been directed at the partially US-owned oil industry. Bolivia had close to the same number of anti-US terrorist attacks (fewer than 10) in 1990 as in 1989, but the most recent—the attack on the US Marine guard residence on 10 October—was also the most lethal, killing one Bolivian guard and seriously injuring another.

The threat to US interests remains high in Central America, especially from Honduras's two small, well-equipped terrorist organizations. Some of the Caribbean nations, especially Haiti and the Dominican Republic, also have weak terrorist organizations that would probably attempt low-level attacks against US interests if they could obtain the weapons and funds to finance terrorist activities. Several small, previously unknown terrorist organizations began operations in 1990, attacking US interests six times last year.

Gulf-Related Terrorism in Latin America

More than 30 percent of the over 200 anticoalition terrorist incidents that have occurred since the beginning of the Gulf war have occurred in Latin America. All of them appear to have been carried out by indigenous groups, partly attempting to exploit the current public attention on the Gulf crisis for their own agendas. Terrorism against US interests has climbed steadily since the beginning of the war, and several of the incidents in Peru and Chile have been serious, resulting in four deaths and numerous injuries. No Americans have yet been killed, but the threat to US citizens is growing, especially in Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Honduras.

Chile

Chile had the greatest number of terrorist attacks against US targets in the world in 1990. Most of these attacks were low-level bombings, probably meant more to intimidate than to injure. In November, however, the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front/Dis-sidents (FPMR/D) launched two attacks that demonstrated more lethal anti-US terrorist tactics—a bomb at a restaurant that injured eight people, three of them US sailors, and a bomb concealed in a softball bat that killed one Canadian and injured two US Embassy officials. On 16 February 1991, the same group attacked a US Embassy Marine security guard armored van with an antitank rocket and automatic weapons fire, seriously injuring one Marine. In claiming responsibility, the FPMR/D said it will continue to target US and Chilean interests until it "achieves victory or dies."

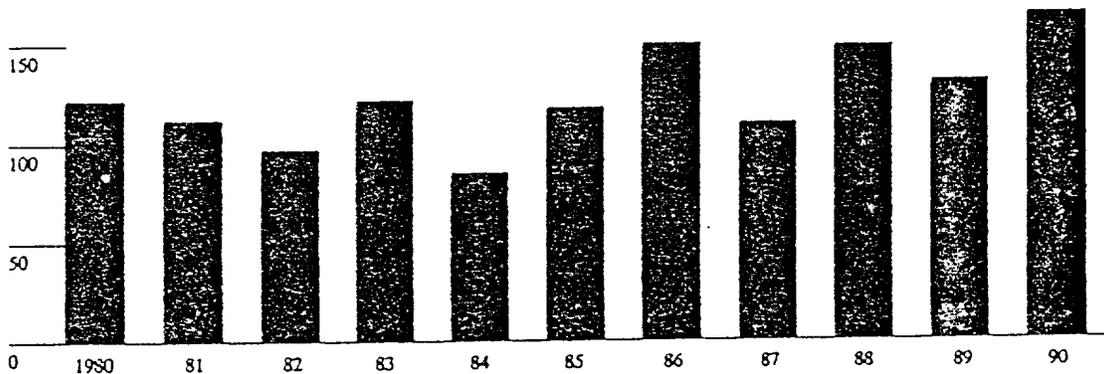
In all, US interests were attacked nearly 70 times in Chile in 1990—up from 23 in 1989 and 17 in 1988. Targets have included Mormon churches, US-connected banks and other US commercial interests, binational centers, and official US Government interests.

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Figure 2
International Incidents in Latin America, 1980-90

Number of Incidents

200



Note: Anti-US attacks in 1990=130

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The government's effectiveness at combating future terrorism—domestic or international—depends largely on its ability to build up the counterterrorism capabilities of the police force in the wake of the incorporation of Chile's central intelligence agency, the National Information Center (CNI), into Army Intelligence. Of the numerous security forces President Aylwin inherited from the Pinochet regime, the former CNI had the most effective counterterrorism intelligence capability.

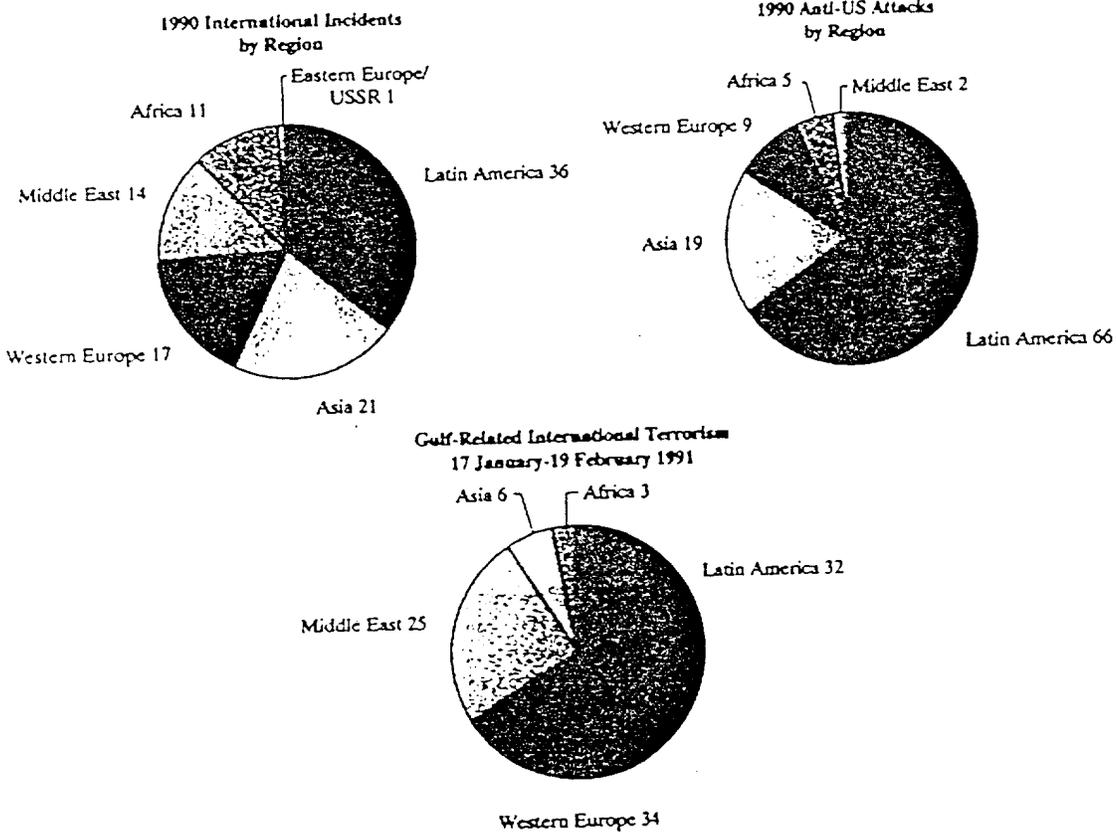
transition, Pinochet placed CNI personnel and resources under Army auspices in order to enhance his control of internal security functions through his position as Army chief.

President Aylwin, since coming to office in March 1990, has reduced Army involvement in domestic security, granting greater counterterrorism responsibilities to the National Police Force (Carabineros de Chile). Although the National Police has an excellent reputation as a traditional law enforcement entity, the service will be unable to provide meaningful intelligence until it becomes more proficient at penetrating terrorist cells and analyzing the intelligence it acquires. The escape on 1 January 1989, before Aylwin's inauguration, of 40 convicted terrorists, some of whom have claimed responsibility for the most spectacular and violent terrorist attacks in recent Chilean history, has further complicated the government's ability to control terrorism.

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Figure 3
Latin American International Terrorism

Percent



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Chile: The Radical Left

Chile has four main leftist groups that engage in terrorism as a part of their political strategy. All have been known to target US interests.

Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR)

- *Founded in 1983 with Communist Party of Chile support.*
- *Classic Marxist-Leninist Communist revolutionary organization; operates primarily in urban, environment.*
- *About 920 hardcore members in 1989; may have declined in recent months.*
- *Received Cuban arms and training.*
- *Split in July 1987.*

Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front Dissidents (FPMR/D)

- *Split from FPMR in 1987.*
- *Between 1,000 and 1,500 hardcore members.*
- *Received extensive training and arms from Cuba.*
- *Responsible for most of the terrorist attacks during the past few years.*

Lautaro Youth Movement (MJL)

- *Largely leftist but includes criminal elements; advocates overthrow of Chilean Government and is violently anti-US.*
- *Became active in late 1980s.*
- *Probably very small—fewer than 100 hardcore members.*
- *Finances activities through crime.*

Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR)

- *Founded in 1965 at the University of Concepcion.*
 - *Estimated strength of more than 200.*
 - *Hard-hitting government countermeasures in early 1980s and internal friction caused it to become relatively inactive in past few years. Nevertheless, Chilean security forces consider it capable of terrorist operations.*
 - *Has received training and weapons from Cuba and Libya.*
-

Peru

International terrorist incidents in Peru have increased steadily over the past several years and are likely to remain high during 1991. In 1990, Sendero Luminoso and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), the two primary Peruvian terrorist organizations, more than doubled the number of anti-US attacks over 1989.

Middle East-related terrorist incidents have occurred more frequently in Peru than elsewhere in Latin America almost exclusively at the hands of MRTA, which declared "war" on the United States in mid-January because of its Gulf activities. Between 17 January and 19 February, coalition interests were attacked 17 times. MRTA has probably been responsible for 16 of those attacks. †

For the most part, MRTA's earlier anti-US attacks appeared designed to avoid casualties—carried out at night or on the weekend, for example, or kept to a very low level of violence. In recent months, however, they have been conducted with the express intention to kill or maim US citizens and with little regard for collateral casualties. On 7 November, MRTA exploded a bomb close to the US Ambassador's house and sprayed his home with automatic weapons fire, barely missing a window of the dining room in which the Ambassador was hosting a dinner party. Police defused a second bomb at the same site. Since then, MRTA has included the US Embassy, the US Ambassador's home, Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants, the Peruvian/US Binational Center, and the Jorge Chavez International Airport in significant attacks that have left at least four Peruvians dead and many others injured →

The increased publicity MRTA actions have generated appears to be leading rival Sendero Luminoso insurgents to seek equal notoriety. *

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Peru: The Shining Path and Tupac Amaru (MRTA)

The Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) terrorist organization and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) are both engaged in an armed struggle that employs terrorism as a primary tool. Both have been known to attack US citizens and facilities.

Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)

- Founded in the late 1960s by Abimael Guzman and began operations in 1980. Believes in an unusual mixture of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-Guzman ideology that is so extreme that it considers Soviets, Red Chinese, and nearly all other Latin American groups too far to the right.
- Strength estimates range from 1,500 to 5,000 hardcore members with numbers of part-time and coerced supporters.
- Supports itself by extortion from companies, bank robberies, and ties to the drug trade.
- Probably receives no outside state support, although there are a number of Sendero support organizations in Europe, the United States, and other parts of Latin America.

Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)

- Founded in 1982 and began operations two years later; is a classic Marxist-Leninist group that idolizes Che Guevarra.
- Chiefly an urban group.
- About 1,000 combatants are members.
- Supports itself with extortion, kidnapping, and bank robberies.
- Has received external support from Cuba, Libya, and Nicaragua.

Sendero does not have the urban capabilities that MRTA has, however, and has not traditionally targeted US interests as extensively as has the MRTA.

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Bolivia: The CNPZ, the Zarate Willka

Armed Liberation Forces Zarate Willka

- Formed in 1987, probably at the University of San Andres in La Paz.
- Urban based.
- More than half its attacks since it began operations have been against US targets.
- Probably no more than 200 members.

The Nestor Paz Zamora Committee (CNPZ)

- First action in October 1990.
- Espouses classic Marxist-Leninist revolutionary philosophy.
- Associates itself with the defunct National Liberation Army of Bolivia.
- Recent information indicates that CNPZ receives aid from Tupac Amaru (MRTA) in Peru.
- Strongly anti-United States.
- Strength unknown.

Resource constraints, intelligence limitations, rampant corruption, and interservice rivalry limit the government's counterterrorism effectiveness. The government has yet to approve this year's defense budget, and a judicial reform proposal that President Fujimori promised since his election—which could help stop the "revolving door" terrorists use to avoid long prison stays—has yet to be implemented.

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Bolivia

Anti-US terrorism in Bolivia is sporadic but hard hitting and will probably increase over the next few years as factors such as continued economic stagnation and the US-backed counternarcotics program come into play. After a few low-level incidents during the first part of 1990, the 10 October 1990 attack against the US Marine residence and the John F. Kennedy memorial in La Paz by the Nestor Paz Zamora Commission—unknown until this attack—underscored the continuing threat to US interests.

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Colombian Insurgent Groups

National Liberation Army (ELN)

- Began operations in 1963.
- Rural-based Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group.
- Extremely anti-US and opposed to foreign companies involved in resource development, especially oil.
- Anti-US attacks are mostly against oil facilities and personnel.
- Has received arms and training from Cuba and Nicaragua.
- Estimated combat strength: 2,000.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

- Established in 1966 as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party.
- Ties to Cuba.
- Ties to drug traffickers.
- Has engaged in kidnapping of foreigners for ransom and isolated bombings of US businesses.
- The largest guerrilla group in Colombia—estimated at 4,500 combatants.

Although La Paz has captured and killed ^{(b)(1)s} some Com-
mission leaders,
the
group remains active.

El Salvador

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)

- Formed in 1980.
- Cuban backed with close ties to Nicaraguan Sandinistas.
- An umbrella organization composed of five leftist groups:
 - Central American Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRTC).
 - People's Revolutionary Army (ERP).
 - Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL).
 - Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN).
 - Communist Party of El Salvador's Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL).
- Terrorist activities include bombings, assassinations, economic sabotage, and arson.
- Estimated strength—6,000 to 7,000 combatants.

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