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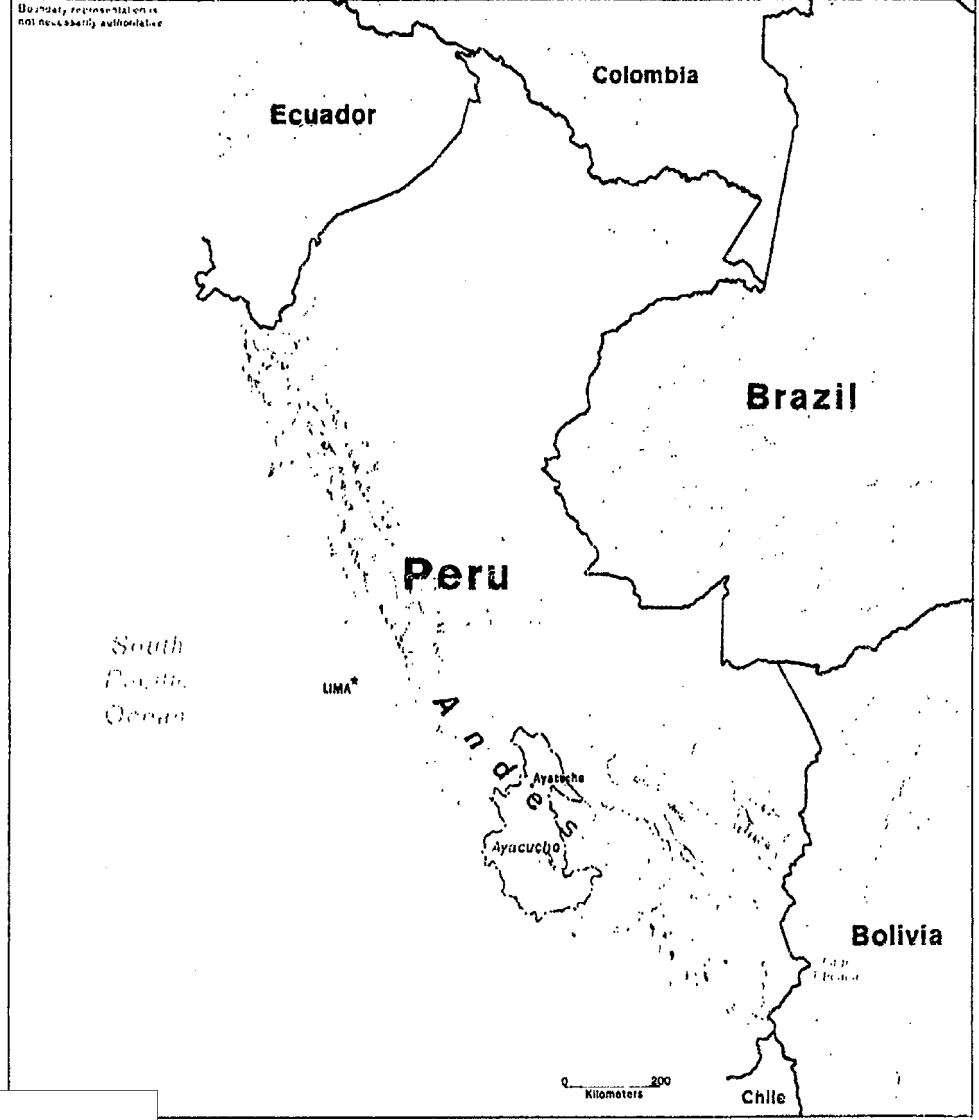
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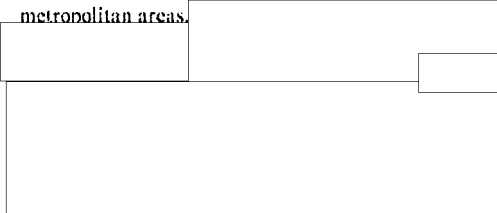
Articles

**Peru: Counterterrorist Capabilities
of Civilian Security Forces**

Peru's civilian security forces are hampered in their struggle against the Maoist terrorist group Sendero Luminoso by aged or inadequate equipment, inter-agency rivalry, and problems of intelligence organization and dissemination. These deficiencies—unlikely to be overcome in the short term—have contributed to the apparent success of Sendero Luminoso and have made the terrorist threat appear more serious than it probably is. President Belaunde may have to call in the Army to neutralize the terrorists, although he apparently hopes to put off the decision at least until next year.

Background

We estimate that Sendero Luminoso has approximately 500 active members, although it can probably call on three to four times that number for support activities and occasional acts of violence. The group is concentrated in the rural Andean department of Ayacucho, where it enjoys most of its popular support, but there are also small cells in Lima and other metropolitan areas.



electrical towers, public buildings, and police posts. Within the last year, however, operations have become more aggressive, and have included an increasing number of assassinations of local officials and suspected police informants.

The memory of his ouster in 1968 by the military, which had been politicized during an earlier counter-insurgency campaign, has led Belaunde to rely almost exclusively on civilian security forces to contain the threat. To date, the results have been mixed. In recent months, a number of midlevel members of the group have been arrested or killed. Nevertheless, repeated attacks on isolated police posts in Ayacucho have forced the overextended civilian security forces to pull back and consolidate in larger garrisons. Incidents such as Sendero Luminoso's attack on Ayacucho prison in March, which freed many imprisoned terrorists, have highlighted police weaknesses and increased pressure on Belaunde to sanction the direct involvement of the armed forces.



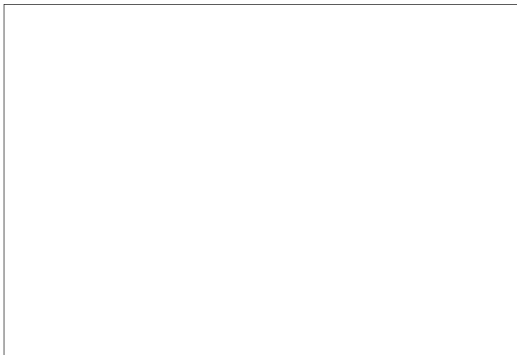
Following Belaunde's inauguration in 1980, the group embarked on a campaign of low-risk, high-profile terrorist attacks consisting primarily of dynamiting

¹ For further information see ALA LAR 82-017, 13 September 1982, *Peru: Sendero Luminoso*.

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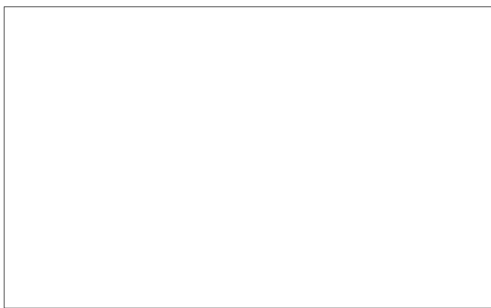
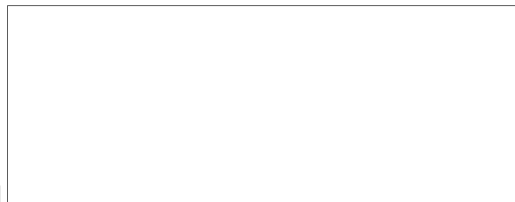
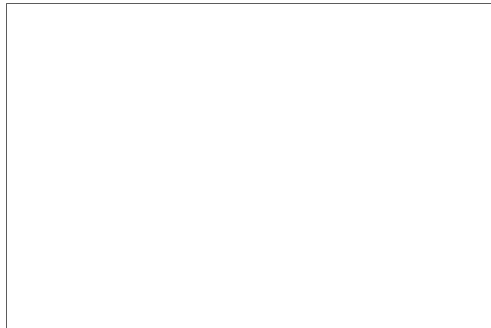
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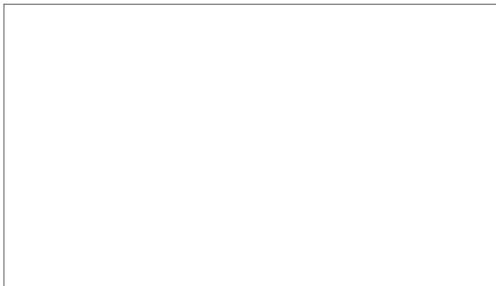
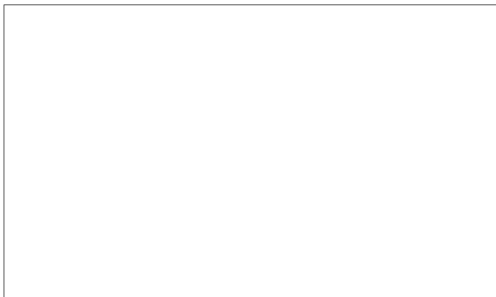
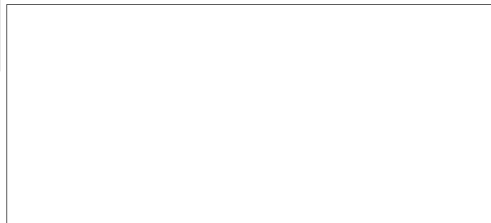
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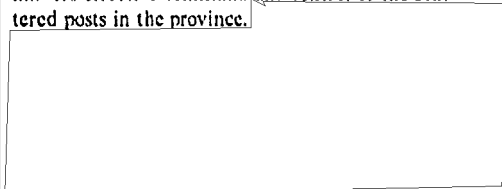


Equipment and Training Deficiencies

Other factors limiting police effectiveness include insufficient funds, aged or ineffective equipment, often widely scattered deployments, and poor training. The Civil Guard in particular suffers from these deficiencies, which severely restrict its ability to operate in remote rural departments such as Ayacucho.



Obsolete Civil Guard communications equipment hinders effective command and control of the scattered posts in the province.



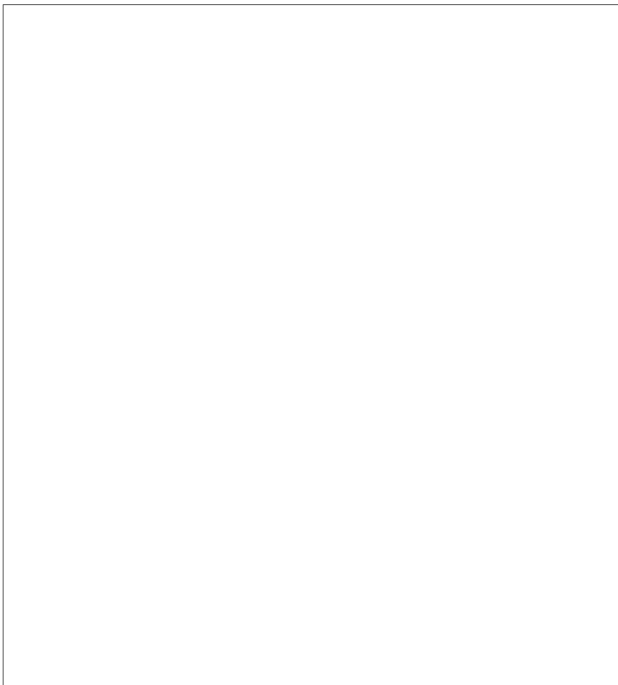


Latin America
Review

29 October 1982

	<i>Page</i>
Articles	
Peru: Counterterrorist Capabilities of Civilian Security Forces	1

Peru's civilian security forces are hampered in the struggle against the Sendero Luminoso terrorist group by aged or inadequate equipment, interagency rivalry, poor training, and lack of coordination in gathering and sharing intelligence on subversive activities.



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Latin America Review



29 October 1982

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
12-May-2009

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ALA LAR 82-019
29 October 1982

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The police forces have no aircraft of their own, and even modern vehicles are in short supply. [redacted]

The poor training and equipment, together with the belief that the government will not quickly rectify the situation, have adversely affected morale. Rural personnel are sometimes reluctant to engage the terrorists aggressively. [redacted]

The Civil Guard's Sinchi counterterrorist force remains a potent unit, however, despite the fact it suffers from many of the same equipment deficiencies as regular police units. The Sinchis have a standing unit of approximately 300 men and as many as 2,000 personnel may have received Sinchi training. Sinchi training and morale are far superior to the average Peruvian police unit, as demonstrated by the stout resistance offered by 10 Sinchis when they were attacked by an estimated 40 to 80 terrorists in the village of "Vikashuaman" last August. [redacted]

Outlook

Modernization of police training and equipment, combined with improved coordination and centralization of intelligence activities, would probably give the civilian services all they need to cripple the Sendero Luminoso. We believe the police will probably receive some new equipment and more effective training, but Belaunde could face opposition from the armed forces if allocations for police modernization impinge upon military procurement plans. The current uncertain state of the Peruvian economy could also delay any improvement in police equipment and training. In addition, at least over the short term, the civilian services probably will fail to overcome their chronic rivalries. Thus, unless tentative plans to establish a new interagency unit eventually produce an effective joint command, the Peruvian antiterrorist effort will continue to lack coordinated direction and, as a result, will probably continue to prove inadequate. [redacted]

A thorough overhaul of intelligence collection, evaluation, and dissemination is essential if the civilian security forces are to achieve lasting success against the Sendero Luminoso. Without a coordinated intelligence effort capable of achieving and exploiting penetrations of the terrorist group, potential gains resulting from improvement in equipment and training would not be realized. [redacted]

Military intervention remains a possibility if the police cannot control the situation. The armed forces' reluctance to support the police is probably motivated by a belief that the civilian agencies are corrupt and incompetent, but may also stem from a desire to see the police fail, thereby forcing Belaunde to turn to the military. Belaunde, on the other hand, hopes to avoid an escalation of civil-military tensions and will probably try to delay calling in the Army as long as