



National
Foreign
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Center



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[REDACTED]

LATIN AMERICA REVIEW [REDACTED]

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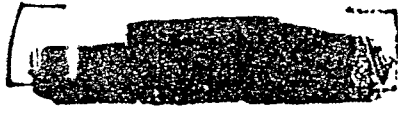


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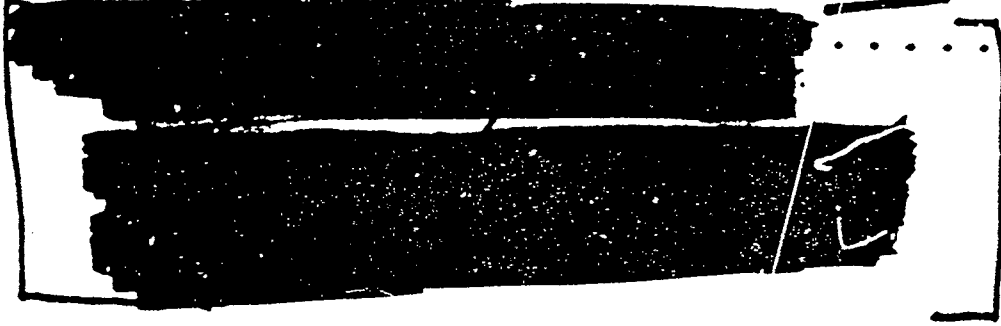
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[REDACTED]



Peru: Keeping Terrorism in Check 15



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PERU: KEEPING TERRORISM IN CHECK [REDACTED]

A recent increase in terrorist activities, primarily in the central highlands, does not signal an imminent return to the intensive insurgency of 1965. The present incidents not only differ in scope and intensity, but President Belaunde is unlikely to overreact and set off a chain of events similar to those that led to his ouster in 1968. [REDACTED]

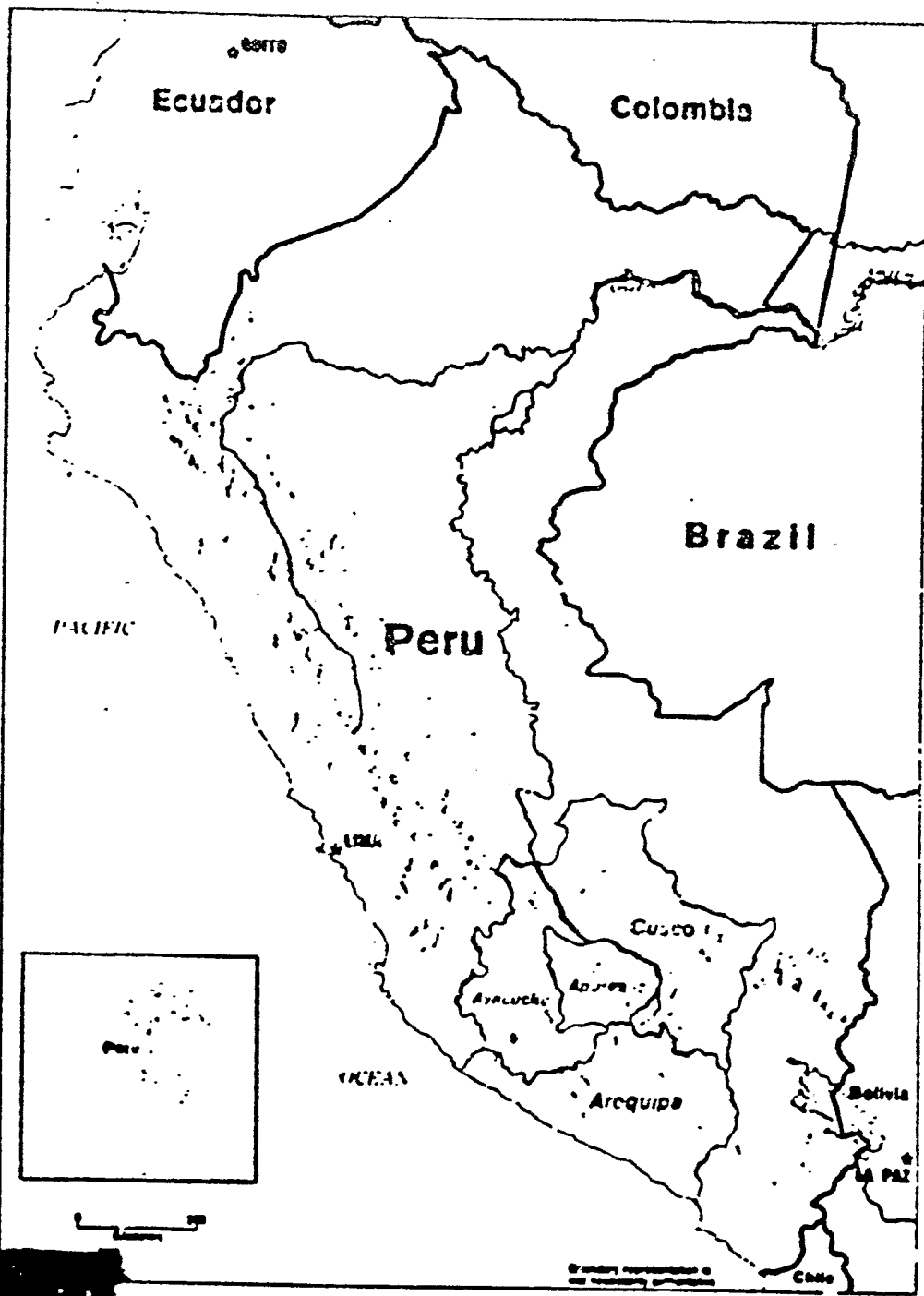
In 1965, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) was able to field some 1,000 men, mostly Cuban trained and supplied, who carried out large-scale attacks against security forces. In addition to foreign support, MIR then had around 3,000 sympathizers, including peasants in the central highlands and the eastern coastal area, who took part in MIR-inspired land invasions. [REDACTED]

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In contrast, the recent incidents are not part of a concerted campaign. Some result from violence traditionally associated with the isolated central highlands; others are the acts of small, fanatical, extreme-left groups that rarely cooperate and have limited, if any, foreign support. The most active of these, known as the Shining Path, is a Maoist splinter faction of the Peruvian Communist Party. [REDACTED]

The Shining Path operates primarily in the departments of Ayacucho, Cusco, Apurimac, and Arequipa and may have contacts with student groups at the University of Ayacucho. Unlike the 1965 insurgents, Shining Path members have encountered hostility from peasant communities, which refuse to feed or shelter them. Despite its announced intention to wage widespread guerrilla warfare, the group so far has confined its activities primarily to attacking isolated police stations, electricity towers, and waterworks. The Shining Path reportedly is establishing training camps to improve its capabilities, but

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[REDACTED]

it continues to rely heavily on dynamite--which is readily available in Peru's mining regions--rather than weapons. The police have arrested many of the group's cadre, further hindering the group's efforts to expand operations. [REDACTED]

Despite the limited scope of the terrorism, it has had a strong psychological and political impact. The public initially exaggerated the seriousness of the assaults because they took place against a backdrop of unrelated labor unrest and hunger strikes by leftist politicians. Moreover, the press, now free from the former military regime's restrictions, provided widespread and often sensationalist coverage that portrayed the incidents as a new phenomenon rather than a continuing low-level problem. [REDACTED]

The Belaunde administration responded with calming statements, a police crackdown, and a new antiterrorism decree. Rightist parties and the press applauded the measures, but the opposition has protested, citing the arrest of a few members of a leftist political alliance as proof that the government intends to use the antiterrorism decree to intimidate the legitimate left. [REDACTED]

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