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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MEMORANDUM

DEC 31 1982

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TO: The Act 72-1230-18346 82 DEC 30 P6:46

FROM: AIA Robert Ryan, Acting

SUBJECT: ~~Peru's Internal Security Situation~~
Counter-terrorist Fight

In accordance with his constitutional authority, President Belaunde December 29 directed his armed forces to maintain "internal order" in seven mountain provinces in the Ayacucho region where the troublesome home grown Maoist guerrilla group, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), has become increasingly active. The President's action follows the expiration of the deadline he had set three days earlier for the terrorists to surrender to the police.

~~The President's decision in the Government's efforts to combat the growing terrorist problem. Belaunde had previously asserted that the terrorists were criminals to be dealt with by the police and would not give the military more than a supporting support role. However, the civil authorities that he has been relatively ineffective against Sendero Luminoso. In the past three weeks, the Sendero group has carried out their activities, including the assassination of several government officials in the Ayacucho region, the bombing of the capital's electrical system, and the attack on metropolitan Lima for the second time in four months. The Sendero group has caused the death of at least 16 policemen and 75 civilians this year.~~

The Peruvian public, much of the media and elements of Belaunde's own party have been pushing for greater direct military involvement all year. Belaunde had resisted until now for fear the military, once engaged, could demand increased authority to deal with the problem. The President has been reluctant to military involvement in counter-terrorist operations during Belaunde's first presidency since 1962. The military has been active against him in 1962. Belaunde is also concerned about the human rights abuses that could occur as part of the military's campaign.

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