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John Neagle

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Peru: Police Capture Rebel Leader

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 4, police reported that they had captured Rolando Polay Campos, the founder and leader of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). Polay was arrested at a hotel in the city of Huancayo, 200 km. east of Lima, said police. News reports in Lima said a female student, enrolled at Catholic University, was also arrested. Police said they seized two automatic pistols, hand grenades, 600 rounds of ammunition and MRTA literature from the two suspects. According to police, Polay and friend were preparing to kill Prime Minister Armando Villanueva, who was to visit Huancayo and stay in the same hotel. Polay, a physician by training, was a student leader for the ruling APRA party, and a personal friend of President Alan Garcia during the 1970s when both men were studying in Paris. After breaking with the APRA, Polay joined the Revolutionary Leftist Movement (MTR) -and forged an electoral alliance with Popular Democratic Unit in 1978. Polay reportedly helped to organize the MRTA into an urban guerrilla movement which operated primarily in Lima. In November 1987, Polay announced that the MRTA was establishing commando units to begin fighting in Peru's Amazonian region. (Basic data from AFP, 02/04/89)

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