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[Redacted]

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27 October 1995

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Possible Threats by Aum Shinrikyo to US Interests [Redacted]

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Articles in the Japanese press have speculated that Aum Shinrikyo was planning to assassinate President Clinton and/or to attack US interests in Japan [Redacted]

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Aum fugitives who may have stashes of chemical agents pose a continued danger--potentially to participants of the APEC Conference, but more likely to the Japanese population. [Redacted]

Aum Shinrikyo was formed by its leader, Shoko Asahara, to enable him to attain his lifelong ambition to achieve political power in Japan. [Redacted]

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Aum's preaching of Armageddon, nuclear and chemical weapons holocausts, and the coming of a Third World War had more to do with Asahara's political aspirations than with actual world events. Asahara and his followers apparently believed that in the wake of this violent destruction the Japanese public would turn to him for leadership and salvation. The cult's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction were, in our judgment, part of Asahara's plan to make his doomsday "prophecies" self-fulfilling. [Redacted]

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Aum's portrayal of the US as an enemy of the Japanese people served to reinforce Asahara's prediction of a nuclear holocaust. The fact that the US had already dropped two atomic bombs on Japan in World War II presumably helped to make Asahara's scenario believable. Asahara claimed that he and his people were already the victims of gas attacks by US military aircraft to not only reinforce the assertion that the US was an enemy but also to draw attention--relating to gas leaks--away from Aum's own sarin lab. [Redacted]

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Japanese press stories of threats by Aum Shinrikyo to US facilities or President Clinton are speculation and do not appear to be supported by hard information. For example, an article in *Shukan Gendai* claims that "the cult reportedly had secretly put together a plan to assassinate US President Clinton come what may." Among the "evidence" cited to support this claim is a reference to security countermeasures in Washington, with the inference being made that US agencies believed Aum followers were planning to assassinate the President using sarin. The article also cites a passage in the cult's periodical *Vajrayana Sacca* in January 1995 that "it would not be strange" if Clinton were assassinated. The article asserts that the Japanese police interpreted this passage as an "assassination notice."

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Shukan Gendai article also raises the possibility of Aum "linking up" with other anti-American groups to "carry out the deed."

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[Redacted] Until the five Aum fugitives are captured, the threat

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of a retaliatory attack cannot be ruled out, although Japanese rather than Americans would be the most likely targets. The attention and extra security focused on the APEC summit in Osaka may provide an opportunity for surviving Aum members to attempt an attack in Tokyo similar to the subway gassing.

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