



Department of State

EXCISE TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-16

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PANAMA FOR ADS

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E.O. 12356: DECL: 6 YEARS
TAGS: PTER, PINS, ASEC, PE
SUBJ: (U) PERUVIAN TERRORISTS INCREASE PRESSURE

REF: A) LIMA 7674; B) LIMA 7741

1. (C) SUMMARY: PERUVIAN TERRORISTS ARE MAINTAINING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT, WITH FOLLOW-UP ATTACKS IN THE LIMA AREA AND A "GENERAL STRIKE" IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL HIGHLANDS EMERGENCY ZONE. (

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END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) LIMA DAMAGE ASSESSMENT. THE BLACKOUT IN METROPOLITAN

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LIMA PRODUCED BY SENDERO LUMINOSO (SL) TERRORISTS ON JULY 21 (REF A) AFFECTED BOTH THE ECONOMY AND THE DAILY LIVES OF MOST PEOPLE IN THE CITY.

--INDUSTRIES DEPENDENT ON THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY SUPPLY CLOSED DOWN COMPLETELY ON FRIDAY, JULY 22, AND RESUMED ONLY SPORADICALLY ON THE 23RD;

--SOME ZONES IN CITY REMAINED WITHOUT POWER 24 HOURS AFTER THE BLACKOUT BEGAN, WHILE OTHERS EXPERIENCED TEMPORARY SHUTOFFS AS TECHNICIANS EFFECTED REPAIRS TO THE NETWORK;

--ALONG WITH LIGHTS, WATER WENT OFF IN MANY AREAS (AS PUMPS COULD NOT OPERATE) AND LONG LINES FORMED AT GAS STATIONS WHEREVER POWER WAS RESTORED.

3. (U) DIRECT LOSSES IN TERMS OF COST OF REPAIR OF SOME TEN TRANSMISSION TOWERS DOWNED OR DAMAGED AND LOST SALES OF ELECTRICAL POWER ARE STATED AS 600 MILLION SOLES (APPROX. \$350,000); LOST PRODUCTION AND COMMERCE IN CALLAO ALONE IS SAID TO BE ONE BILLION SOLES (SOME \$590,000).

4. (U) SL KEEPS UP THE PRESSURE ON LIMA, WHILE GRADUALLY RECOVERING FROM THE BLACKOUT'S AFTEREFFECTS, LIMENOS WERE KEPT NERVOUS BY SL ATTACKS IN LIMA'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LATE AT NIGHT ON JULY 24 AND AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THE CITY ITSELF THE FOLLOWING DAY (REPORTED SEPTEL).

5. (U) SL DECLEARES CURFEW AND GENERAL STRIKE IN AYACUCHO. SENDERO FOLLOWED-UP ITS JULY 21 ATTACKS IN CITY OF AYACUCHO WITH A CALL FOR A "CURFEW" AND GENERAL STRIKE ON JULY 25-26 THROUGHOUT THE NINE PROVINCE SOUTH-CENTRAL HIGHLANDS "EMERGENCY ZONE." ON JULY 24 AND 25 RESPECTIVELY SL SEIZED PREMISES OF THREE

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LOCAL RADIO STATIONS IN AYACUCHO AND HUANTA. IN EACH CASE, SL'S OCCUPATION WAS BRIEF, BUT LONG ENOUGH TO BROADCAST MESSAGES DEMANDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE STRIKE ON PAIN OF DEATH. OTHER SL PREPARATIONS INCLUDED SENDING OF "EMISSARIES" TO THREE SECONDARY SCHOOLS (WHERE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WERE ROUNDED UP AND URGED TO JOIN ARMED STRUGGLE), DISTRIBUTION OF LEAFLETS (IN CHURCHES, THEATERS, MARKETS, STREETS, AND AYACUCHO'S MAIN SQUARE), MESSAGES IN SPANISH AND QUECHUA BROADCAST BY LOUDSPEAKERS, AND PROPAGANDA BALLOONS LAUNCHED INSIDE AYACUCHO ON THE MORNING OF JULY 25.

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6. (U) ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE HAD LITTLE IMPACT IN THE SPARSELY POPULATED REGIONS OF HUANCVELICA AND APURIMAC, OBSERVANCE WAS ALMOST TOTAL IN HUANTA AND AYACUCHO. BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS STAYED CLOSED, AND FLIGHTS INTO AND OUT OF THE CITY WERE SUSPENDED. ARMY TROOPS PATROLLED AYACUCHO'S STREETS, WHILE MARINES DID SIMILAR DUTY IN HUANTA.

7. (C) OTHER SL ACTION. SENDERO MADE ITS PRESENCE FELT ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, MOST NOTABLY AT LA RAYA, IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CUSCO (REF B). IN THE CITY OF HUANCVELICA (CAPITAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SAME NAME BUT WHICH, HOWEVER, IS OUTSIDE THE FORMAL EMERGENCY ZONE), DOGS WERE HUNG FROM LAMPPOSTS IN THE CENTER OF TOWN A MANNER REMINISCENT OF A SIMILAR MACABRE SL DISPLAY IN LIMA IN DECEMBER 1980.

8. (C) GOP RESPONSE. GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES RESPONDED TO SL'S BLOWS OF THE 21ST BY:

--ADVISING PUBLIC TO HEED WARNINGS WHEN APPROACHING MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, SINCE GUARDS ARE UNDER ORDERS TO SHOOT AT THOSE WHO DISOBEY;

--DECLARING AREAS CONTAINING ELECTRICAL SUBSTATIONS,

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TRANSMISSION TOWERS, GENERATING STATIONS, ANTENNAS, ETC. TO BE "RESERVED ZONES" WHICH WILL BE PLACED UNDER ARMED GUARD.

9. (C) COMMENT: POLICE CONTINUE GRINDSTONE WORK OF ROUNDING UP SUSPECTS (SOME 300 NEWLY DETAINED IN WAKE OF LATEST LIMA INCIDENTS) AND CHECKING OUT LEADS. A PATTERN ESTABLISHED AFTER EARLIER INCIDENTS OF MAY 27 (BLACKOUT) AND JULY 11 (ATTACK AT GOVERNING ACCION POPULAR HEADQUARTERS). ALTHOUGH THESE POLICE EFFORTS COULD LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OVER TIME, GOP IS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO SL'S CHALLENGE AND TO DO SO RAPIDLY.
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