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DIA FOR IR BRACH
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E.C. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PE
SUBJECT: UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS KILL MAYOR OF HUANCAYO

REF 83 LIMA 12039 ✓

1. (U) UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS SHOT AND KILLED MARXIST "UNITED LEFT" (UL) MAYOR SAUL MUNOZ MENACHO OF CENTRAL SIERRA CITY OF HUANCAYO IN EARLY MORNING, JULY 24 ASSAILANTS INTERCEPTED MAYOR WHILE HE WAS ENGAGED IN DAILY EXERCISE ROUTING (JOGGING) IN PUBLIC STREET.

2. (U) DETAILS OF ASSASSINATION PUBLISHED IN LIMA PRESS JULY 25 CONFLICT. "EXPRESSO" ATTRIBUTED KILLING TO "TWO YOUNG PEOPLE, PRESUMABLY MEMBERS OF SENDERO LUMINOSO "REPUBLICA" CONFIDENTIAL
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ASSASSINATED ASSASSINS AS "THREE ADULTS BETWEEN 40 AND 50

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YEARS OLD." SAME NEWSPAPER SPECULATED THAT KILLERS USED GUN WITH SILENCER. "EXPRESO" STORY INCLUDED DEAIL THAT NEIGHBORS WHO HASTENED TO SITE OF KILLINGS WERE "ALARMED BY GUNSHOTS."

3. (LOU) INITIAL CONCLUSIONS AS TO KILLERS' IDENTITY SIMILARLY VARY. PRESS HEADLINES ATTRIBUTED ASSASSINATION TO SENDERO LUMINOSO TERRORISTS. SOME OF DEAD MAYORS PARTY CONFRES ACCUSE "RIGHTIST FORCES" (SENATOR CARLOS MALPICA) OF RESPONSIBILITY. MOSCOW- LINING COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP), IN PAID AD PUBLISHED JULY 25, ACCUSED " REACTIONARY FORCES" THAT ARE CARRYING OUT IN PERU "A POLICY OF ANTI-COMMUNIST TERROR PURSUED BY IMPERIALSIM ON A WORLD LEVEL." IU'S "NATIONAL DIRECTIVE COMMITTEE" (TOP POLICY ORGAN), HOWEVER, SIMPLY CONDEMNED ASSASSINATION WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO LEAP TO CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY.

4. (U) GOP AUTHORITIES QUICKLY CONDEMNED KILLING, WITH PRESIDENT BELAUNDE SENDING PERSONAL CONDOLENCES TO LIMA MAYOR/IU PRESIDENT ALFONSO BARRANTES. INTERIOR MINISTER PERCOVICH DENIED ANY ROLE IN KILLINGS BY "RIGHTISH PARAMILITARIES" BUT, AT SAME TIME, DECLINED TO SAY THAT SENDERO IS QUILTY. HE ASSURED THAT POLICE WILL INVESTIGATE EVENT FULLY.

5. (C) COMMENT: KILLING COULD BE WORK OF SENDERO. SENDERO'S DISLIKE OF LEGAL MARXISTS, WHO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN DEMOCRATIC "ELECTORALIST" POLITICS, IS WELL KNOWN. KILLING ALSO WOULD FIT INTO PATTERN OF PREVIOUS TERRORIST ASSASSINATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (E.G., NOVEMBER 8 SLAYING OF MAYOR OF CERROR DE PASCO-RETEL). AT SAME TIME HOWEVER, ALTERNATIVE
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EXPLANATIONS CANNOT YET BE RULED OUT. EMBASSY WILL REPORT RESULTS OF GOP INVESTIGATION, WHEN KNOWN.
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