



Department of State

EXCISE

6

TELEGRAM

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AM: DB30073-0266

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 H-01
NSC-01 NSAE-00 SY-06 HA-08 L-03 PM-09 PA-01
MCT-02 ANAE-00 USSS-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SMP-01 SPRS-01
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R 081640Z FEB 83
FM ANEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7034
INFO ANEMBASSY BOGOTA
ANEMBASSY LA PAZ
ANEMBASSY PANAMA
ANEMBASSY QUITO
ANEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM
DIA WASHDC

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by Pugh DATE OCT 3 1988
() RELEASE () DECLASSIFY
(X) EXCISE (X) DECLASSIFY in PART
() DENY () Non-responsive info.
() FOL, EO or PA exemptions (b)(1)
TS authority to:
() CLASSIFY as _____, OADR
() DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C, OADR

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 1329

PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

E O 12356 DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, SHUM, PINS, PE
SUBJ: (U) INVESTIGATIONS BEGIN INTO PERUVIAN REPORTERS' MURDER

REF: LIMA 1131 ✓

1. (LOU) PRESIDENT BELAUMDE'S REGULAR SUNDAY PRESS
CONFERENCE TOOK ON CONFRONTATIONAL TONE ON FEB 6. BELAUMDE
REACTED VIOIOUSLY TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS WHICH SUGGESTED
HE ENCOURAGED INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS TO TAKE THE LAW INTO
THEIR OWN HANDS AND THAT HE BLAMED THE EDITORS FOR SENDING
THEIR REPORTERS TO A DANGEROUS ZONE WITHOUT FIRST HAVING
ATTEMPTED TO SECURE MILITARY PROTECTION PRESIDENT BELAUMDE

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TESTILY REPLIED THAT HIS REMARKS WERE A MATTER OF PUBLIC

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RECORD AND HE WAS TIRED OF HAVING THE PRESS PUT WORDS IN HIS MOUTH.

2. (LOU) ASKED TO COMMENT ON "FOREIGN NEWS ANALYSTS" SPECULATION THAT A COUP WAS AN INCREASING POSSIBILITY, THE PRESIDENT LASHED OUT AT THOSE HE CALLED "CLERKS" ("ESCRIBIENTES") RATHER THAN ANALYSTS. THE PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT PERU'S STABILITY WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED, EITHER BY THE SENDERO LUMINOSO (S) TERRORISTS THEMSELVES OR BY OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WHO HOPE TO SEE UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS POSTPONED BECAUSE OF FEAR THEY WILL LOSE THEM.

3. (U) AT THE SAME TIME, PRESIDENT BELAUNDE REAFFIRMED HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND DENIED ANY CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO CURTAILMENT OF SUNDAY PRESS CONFERENCES, TO CLOSURE OF AN OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER (READ MARXIST "EL DIARIO"), OR TO INVOCATION OF LAW CONCERNING DISRESPECT TOWARD PUBLIC OFFICIALS.

4. (C) THE SPECIAL COMMISSION NAMED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE THE TRAGEDY BEGAN TAKING TESTIMONY FEBRUARY 7. ALTHOUGH BELAUNDE MET ONE OPPOSITION DEMAND BY NOT NAMING ANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO THE COMMISSION, HE REFUSED A SUGGESTION TO EXPAND IT BEYOND THREE MEMBERS: AUTHOR MARIO YARGAS LLOSA, PENOLOGIST ABRAHAM GUZMAN, AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION, MARIO CASTRO ARENAS. YARGAS LLOSA, WHOSE WRITINGS GIVE HIM INTERNATIONAL STATUS, ALREADY MADE CLEAR HIS INTEREST IN PREVENTING THE MURDERS FROM DAMAGING PERU'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. GUZMAN, IN HIS 80'S AND REPORTEDLY DYING OF CANCER,
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HAS A REPUTATION FOR RECTITUDE BUT MAY NOT PHYSICALLY BE ABLE TO STAND THE PACE.

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5. (LOU) THE OPPOSITION ARGUES THAT THE GOV. BEARS BASIC

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEWSMEN'S DEATHS BECUASE IT GLORIFIED THE PEASANTS' VIGILANTEISM. ONE OF THE MOST TELLING REBUTTALS APPEARED IN A COMENTARY BY PATRICIO RICKETTS. RICKETTS CONTENDED THAT THE EIGHT WERE HARDLY THE FIRST TO FALL IN THE TERRORIST WAR--THAT THE SL SO FAR BEARS RESPONSIBILITY FOR KILLING 89 CIVILIANS AND 39 POLICE SINCE 1980.

6. (C) COMMENT: BELAUNDE MAKES THE POINT THAT THE EMERGENCY AREA ENCOMPASSES LESS THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF PERU AND CONTRIBUTES JUST OVER ONE PERCENT OF ITS GDP. HIS ARGUMENT AT ONE LEVEL IS THAT WHATEVER GOES ON IN AYACUCHO IS PERIPHERAL TO THE REST OF THE NATION; HIS SECONDARY POINT IS THAT AYACUCHO'S PERCENTAGE OF THE GDP ERODED FROM 1.4 PERCENT IN 1968 (WHEN THE ARMY OUSTED BELAUNDE) TO 1.1 PERCENT IN 1980, WHEN HE RETURNED TO OFFICE AFTER THE VELASCO REVOLUTION. THIS TRADITIONAL POVERTY IS NOW BEING AGGRAVATED BY SL DEMANDS THAT LOCAL POPULATIONS PRODUCE ONLY ENOUGH FOOD TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS, LEAVING NOTHING TO BE SOLD IN TOWN MARKETS IN THE REGION. WE DOUBT THAT SENDERO WILL SUCCEED IN STARVING OUT THE TOWNS. BUT THE SL'S EFFORT TO DENY CONTROL OF THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE GOVERNMENT MAY PRODUCE ITS OWN BACKLASH, LEAVING AYACUCHO PEASANTS IN A STATE OF YET HARSHER ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AND HARDSHIP AND LESS DISPOSED TO BE GRATEFUL

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TO SENDERO FOR IT.
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