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TAGS: PTER, PE, SHUM
SUBJ: (U) SPECIAL COMMISSION PRESENTS REPORT ON DEATH OF EIGHT
PERUVIAN NEWSMEN

REFS: (A) LIMA 1018^{N/R} (NOTAL); (B) LIMA 2197^{N/R} (NOTAL).

1. THE SPECIAL COMMISSION NAMED BY PRESIDENT BELAUNDE TO
INVESTIGATE THE DEATH OF EIGHT PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS KILLED
IN LATE JANUARY IN THE EMERGENCY ZONE PRESENTED ITS REPORT
ON MARCH 5. A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT'S MAIN CONCLUSIONS
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FOLLOWS (FULL TEXT IS: BEING POUCHED). - EMBASSY COMMENTS.

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2. MAIN FINDINGS

A. THE MASSACRE WAS THE DIRECT ACTION OF THE "COMUNEROS" (VILLAGERS) OF UCHURACCAY, WHO BELIEVED THEY WERE DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST TERRORISTS. THE PEOPLE OF UCHURACCAY AND NEIGHBORING ZONES BALANCE BETWEEN SURVIVAL AND STARVATION, SUBSISTING ON POTATOES AND BEANS, THEIR LIVES TOUCHED BY WESTERNIZED OUTSIDERS INTENT ONLY ON EXPLOITATION. INTO THIS CONTEXT, SENDERO INTRODUCED IN 1981-82 THE CONFISCATION OF FOOD AND LIVESTOCK, PROHIBITIONS AGAINST SELLING ALREADY MEAGER CROPS IN NEARBY CITIES, AND BEATINGS AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS OF THOSE SUSPECTED OF COOPERATING WITH THE AUTHORITIES. SENDERO'S THREATS LED TO REGIASSEMBLIES HELD IN MID-JANUARY, WHERE THE VILLAGERS RESOLVED TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. THE NEWSMENS' VISIT CAME ON THE HEELS OF ONE SUCH INCIDENT OF COMMUNAL SELF-DEFENSE WHEN THE VILLAGERS LIVED IN DREAD OF AN SL RETALIATORY ATTACK. ANOTHER ASSEMBLY WAS IN PROCESS AT UCHURACCAY WHEN THE EIGHT STRANGERS (ACCOMPANIED BY A GUIDE THOUGHT BY VILLAGERS TO BE A SENDERISTA SYMPATHIZER) WERE SIGHTED. THE VILLAGERS, MOTIVATED BY FURY AND FEAR, ATTACKED MASSIVELY AND PROBABLY WITHOUT FIRST ENTERING INTO A DIALOGUE TO DETERMINE THE STRANGERS' IDENTITY.

B. POLICE POLICY DID NOT ENCOURAGE FRONTIER JUSTICE, BUT THE UCHURACCAY COMUNEROS THOUGHT THEY ACTED WITH POLICE SANCTION. THE COMMISSION FELT "CERTAIN" THAT THE "SINCHIS" (POLICE ANTI-TERRORIST SQUADS) DID NOT SYSTEMATICALLY INSTIGATE VILLAGERS TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, EITHER IN REPRISAL OR IN SELF-DEFENSE. (BUT THE COMMISSION ALSO THOUGHT POLICE UNCLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

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MAY HAVE DONE SO ON OCCASION.) THE COMMISSION DID FEEL "CERTAIN" THAT, IN THE CASE AT HAND, THE VILLAGERS OF UCHURACCAY ACTED IN THE BELIEF THAT THE SINCHIS PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED THEM TO KILL SENDERISTAS--THE PRODUCT PERHAPS, OF A LOUJELY PHRASED CHARGE FROM A VISITING POLICE UNIT TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND KILL ANY SENDERISTAS WHO CAME THEIR WAY.

C. THE SL PHENOMENON IS OF PERUVIAN ORIGIN AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE. THE COMMISSION FOUND NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SENDERISTAS ARE SUPPORTED BY

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ELEMENTS FOREIGN TO PERU. THE COMMISSION CHARACTERIZED THE SL AS A MAOIST OFFSHOOT OF THE PERUVIAN COMMUNIST PARTY THAT TOOK ROOT, FOR PARTICULAR HISTORICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL REASONS, IN THE HIGHLY RADICALIZED ENVIRONMENT OF AYACUCHO.

D. THE GOVERNMENT SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SENDERO'S EXPANSION. ALTHOUGH STATED WITH TACT, THE REPORT ASSERTS THAT IN 1981 AND 1982 WHEN, FACED WITH SENDERO'S WIDENING DEPREDACTIONS, THE GOVET RESPONDED WITH "INDIFFERENCE". INSTEAD OF REINFORCING ZONES SUBJECT TO TERRORIST ATTACK, CIVIL AND POLICE AUTHORITIES ABANDONED THEM. THE CIVIL GUARD (MAIN POLICE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR

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