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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00
	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-01	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	DOTE-00	WHA-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	UTED-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	JUSE-00
	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NRCE-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/018W					

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P 272148Z APR 99
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8317
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS LIMA 002544

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A
TAGS: PTER, CASC, PGOV, PINR, PE
SUBJECT: FUJIMORI REITERATES AMCIT BERENSON WAS ON MRTA'S
SHORT LIST

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REF: 97 LIMA 2643

1. (U) PRESIDENT ALBERTO FUJIMORI AND DE FACTO NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) CHIEF VLADAMIRO MONTESINOS WERE INTERVIEWED ON A POPULAR SUNDAY NIGHT TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAM APRIL 25 TO COMMEMORATE THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUCCESSFUL HOSTAGE RESCUE AT THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. THE SHOW GAINED A HUGE AUDIENCE, IN NO SMALL PART, BECAUSE IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THE RECLUSIVE MONTESINOS HAD EVER BEEN INTERVIEWED ON TELEVISION. DURING THE INTERVIEW, FUJIMORI SAID THAT DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS PRIOR TO THE

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E. SINN
DATE/CASE ID: 13 JUN 2002 200102877

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HOSTAGE RESCUE, MRTA TERRORIST LEADER NESTOR CERPA HAD LOWERED HIS DEMAND FROM THE RELEASE OF ALL 400 PLUS MRTA PRISONERS TO A SHORT LIST OF 20 PERSONS, INCLUDING AMCIT PRISONER LORI BERENSON. PRESIDENT FUJIMORI MADE THE SAME ASSERTION TO A MUCH SMALLER AUDIENCE IN A DECEMBER 1997 INTERVIEW WITH THE STRAIGHTFORWARD, RESPECTED DAILY EL COMERCIO (REFTEL). HE ALSO SAID THE SAME THING IN A RECENT USA TODAY INTERVIEW.

2. (U) SPECIFICALLY, FUJIMORI NOTED ON TELEVISION THAT "I REMEMBER A PROPOSAL TO LIBERATE ALL (THE MRTA TERRORISTS) IN PRISON; LATER THEY PROPOSED 400, THEN 200, AND THEN THEY WERE DECREASED TO THE NUMBER 70. WHEN I DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE MONSIGNOR (CIPRIANI), WE THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY.

THEN THEY REDUCED THE NUMBER TO 20. SO WE HAD TO EXHAUST THIS POSSIBILITY, AND WE BEGAN TO SHUFFLE SOME NAMES. THEN I THOUGHT WE WERE GETTING TO THE END, UNTIL THE DIALOGUE WAS BROKEN OFF WHEN CERPA DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THEY HAD TO LEAVE WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT GIVING IN TO THEIR DEMANDS TO LIBERATE NANCY GILVONIO, THE CHILEANS, AND LORI BERENSON, THAT

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IS TO SAY, FIVE FOREIGNERS AND A PERUVIAN NATIONAL."

3. (U) IN ADDITION, THE UNCRITICAL, PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY EL SOL RECENTLY RAN A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT COMMEMORATING THE HOSTAGE RESCUE WHICH INCLUDED A PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S NOTES FROM APRIL 19, 1997. THE NOTES CONTAIN THE NAMES ON CERPA'S SHORT LIST OF MRTA PRISONERS AND INCLUDE LORI BERENSON AS THE THIRD ON THE LIST. LAST YEAR, A JAPANESE TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY SHOWED A COPY OF THE NOTE CIPRIANI TOOK REGARDING CERPA'S SHORT LIST, WHICH ALSO CONTAINED THE NAME OF LORI BERENSON.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: FUJIMORI'S ASSERTION THAT LORI BERENSON WAS ON CERPA'S SHORT LIST IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT TWO FORMER HOSTAGES AND A PERSON CLOSE TO THE HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE ALL INDEPENDENTLY TOLD US. ALL THREE SAY THEY HAD ASKED CERPA WHY, WHEN HE HAD DROPPED HIS DEMANDS FOR THOSE TO BE RELEASED FROM OVER 400 TO ABOUT 20, LORI BERENSON MADE THE SHORT LIST.

ALL THREE SAID CERPA ANSWERED THAT HE KEPT HER ON THE LIST BECAUSE HE FELT GUILTY ABOUT HAVING INVOLVED HER IN INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION. WHILE FUJIMORI'S ASSERTION IN NOT NEW, THE FACT THAT HE REITERATED IT TO A WIDE TELEVISION AUDIENCE UNDERSCORES THE IMPROBABILITY THAT HE WILL SHOW ANY FLEXIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO BERENSON. POLLS CONSISTENTLY SHOW THAT AMONG THOSE WHO APPROVE OF FUJIMORI, THE SINGLE REASON

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MOST FREQUENTLY CITED IS HIS VICTORY OVER TERRORISM. GIVEN THAT FUJIMORI IS USING THE SUCCESSFUL HOSTAGE RESCUE AS A PRE-CAMPAIGN CENTERPIECE TO BOLSTER HIS RE-REELECTION CHANCES, ANY PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE, IF EVER ACHIEVED, WON'T BE BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NEXT YEAR.

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