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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4224
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INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LIMA 00537

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

DEPARTMENT: ALSO FOR AID; USCINCSO: ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356 DECL:OADR
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, KJUS, PE
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CALLS ON ARMY COMMANDING GENERAL
HERMOZA, PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COMMAND.

1. (C) SUMMARY: ARMY COMMANDING GENERAL AND PRESIDENT
OF THE PERUVIAN JOINT COMMAND, GENERAL OF THE ARMY
NICOLAS DE BARI HERMOZA RIOS, HIGHLIGHTED THE TERRORIST
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SITUATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR AND ATTRIBUTED THE
IMPROVED SITUATION TO THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT ALBERTO
FUJIMORI. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED CHANGES IN STRATEGY
THAT MAY HELP CONTINUE THE PROGRESS WITHIN THE
ESTABLISHED NORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE COMPLAINING
ABOUT THE PRESS, WHICH IN THE PAST FAVORED SENDERO
LUMINOSO'S IMAGE AND NEGATIVELY DISTORTED THE IMAGE OF
THE ARMY AND THE NATION, GENERAL HERMOZA CONCURRED IN
THE VALUE OF RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS, INDICATING THE
ARMY WAS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS MADE TO
DATE IN REDUCING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. THE AMBASSADOR

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THEN RAISED THE USG'S CONCERNS OVER THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM GIVEN THE SEEMINGLY LIGHT PUNISHMENT HANDED OUT IN THE TELMO HURTADO CASE. WHILE CLAIMING TO HAVE LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE CASE GIVEN THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM, THE GENERAL THOUGHT THAT CAPT. HURTADO WAS PROBABLY CREDITED WITH TIME SERVED. SIMILARLY, THE GENERAL CLAIMED UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE NUMBER OF DETAINEES IN THE LA CANTUTA CASE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ON 13 JANUARY, THE AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND THE CHIEF OF THE MAAG, PAID AN OFFICIAL CALL ON THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY AND PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COMMAND, GENERAL OF THE ARMY NICOLAS DE BARI HERMOZA RIOS WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MAJOR GENERAL VICTORIO, THE CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION. DURING THE HALF-HOUR-LONG MEETING, THE GENERAL WELCOMED THE AMBASSADOR TO PERU. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS SINCERE CONDOLENCES FOR THE LOSS THE DAY BEFORE OF GENERAL PICON ALCALDE AND TWELVE

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OTHERS IN A HELICOPTER CRASH.

3. (U) THE GENERAL THEN HIGHLIGHTED FOR THE AMBASSADOR, THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING TERRORISM IN PERU. HE RECALLED HOW LIMA WAS VIRTUALLY IN A STATE OF SEIGE AS A RESULT OF SENDERO LUMINOSO'S THREE-PHASE STRATEGY AND THE INACTION OF THE POLITICIANS. BY ACHIEVING THE GOALS SET BY PRESIDENT FUJIMORI, THE SITUATION HAS BEEN IMPROVING STEP BY STEP. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE GENERAL STATED THAT DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THIS CONFLICT, 5,430 TERRORISTS WERE CAPTURED, BUT MOST OF THESE WERE RELEASED BECAUSE OF THE CORRUPT JUSTICE SYSTEM. THERE WAS NO REPENTANCE LAW. IN 1993 ALONE, THERE HAVE BEEN OVER 6,500 TERRORISTS ARRESTED, VERY FEW OF WHICH HAVE BEEN RELEASED, AND OVER 1,200 PERSONS AVAILING THEMSELVES OF THE REPENTANCE LAW, INCLUDING SIX TO SEVEN HUNDRED MEMBERS OF SENDERO. THE GENERAL FELT THAT THE COUNTRY COULD ACHIEVE THE PRESIDENTS GOAL OF TOTAL PACIFICATION BY 1995.

4. (U) THE PACIFICATION PROCESS, ALONG WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM HAS PRODUCED A VERY POSITIVE INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN PERU. HE STATED THAT THE PEOPLE ARE RESPONDING TO THE LOWERING OF

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INFLATION AND THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SHANTY TOWNS (PUEBLOS JOVENES) AND THIS WAS REFLECTED IN THE RESULTS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM. GENERAL HERMOZA LAUDED THE PRESIDENT'S STRATEGY OF INFUSING MONEY INTO THE LESS ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WITH SUCH PROGRAMS AS REBUILDING THE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND USING THE ARMY'S

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ENGINEERING BATTALIONS FOR PUBLIC WORK PROJECTS. THESE PROJECTS ARE TOTALLY FUNDED BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION, BUT BY USING THE ARMY ENGINEERING BATTALIONS, THE COST IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM COMPARED TO THE COST WHEN THE TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY AWARDS CONTRACTS TO CIVILIAN COMPANIES. THIS HAS THE DOUBLE BENEFIT THAT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION COMES TO VIEW THE ARMY AS A FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE. THESE EFFORTS, ALONG WITH THE CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY EACH ARMY UNIT IN THE PUEBLOS JOVENES AND OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, RESULT IN BETTER RELATIONS, AND THE PREDISPOSITION OF THE CIVILIANS TO COOPERATE WITH THE MILITARY IN THE CAPTURE OF TERRORISTS. THE GENERAL SAID THAT THE NEXT STRATEGY ENVISIONED BY THE PRESIDENT

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

DEPARTMENT: ALSO FOR AID; USCINCSO: ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356 DECL:OADR
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, KJUS, PE
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CALLS ON ARMY COMMANDING GENERAL

WAS HIS NEWLY ANNOUNCED WAR ON POVERTY IN WHICH THE
ARMY IS HEAVILY INVOLVED SUPPORTING AREA DEVELOPMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION AND CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS.

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5. (U) THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT IT WAS ALWAYS A GOOD
STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE THE INCENTIVES, SUCH AS POVERTY,
FOR PEOPLE TO JOIN TERRORIST GROUPS. THESE INCENTIVES
ARE USUALLY LESS IDEOLOGICAL THAN A RESULT OF A
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, SUCH AS ABUSE OF AUTHORITY, HUMAN
RIGHTS ABUSE, WHICH MAY CAUSE A PERSON TO JOIN SENDERO.

6. (U) THE GENERAL STATED THAT THIS WAS OF CONCERN TO
THE ARMY, AND THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED MANY CHANGES. THEY
NOW HAVE A SYSTEM OF TRAINING FOR OFFICERS, NCO'S AND
TROOPS. WE KNOW THAT IF THE OFFICER AND NCO'S DO NOT
RESPECT THE CITIZEN, THEY WILL HAVE A HARDER TIME.
ALSO, WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED A DETAINEE REGISTRY SYSTEM
SHOWING A CHAIN OF CUSTODY FOR ALL DETAINEES. THE
GENERAL STATED THAT AS A RESULT OF THESE CHANGES, THE
STATISTICS HAVE SHOWN A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT, AND THAT
HE IS VERY SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS. GENERAL
HERMOZA SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY HAS HAD OVER 100
OFFICERS ARRESTED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. BUT
THIS MATTER WAS HANDLED INTERNAL TO THE ARMY. THE
NAMES WOULD NEVER BE REVEALED BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE
PRESS OF PERU. THEY ARE SENSATIONALISTS, AND WORK ONLY
IN THE PRESENT. THEY SPECULATE ABOUT EVERYTHING AND
ARE INACCURATE AND MALEVOLENT IN THEIR REPORTING. THE
GENERAL INDICATED THAT THESE GENERALIZATIONS DID NOT
APPLY TO ALL THE PRESS, SOME OF WHICH HE RESPECTED.
ALSO, REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME OF THE NGO'S HAVE VISITED
THIS HEADQUARTERS, AND AFTER SEEING OUR STATISTICS AND
OUR SIDE OF THE STORY, ARE BEGINNING TO SEE THE REAL
SITUATION IN PERU.

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7. (C) THE AMBASSADOR THEN RAISED THE CASE OF THE ACOMARCA MASSACRES FOR WHICH THEN LIEUTENANT TELMO HURTADO WAS CHARGED AND SENTENCED, EXPRESSING USG'S CONCERN THAT THERE WAS APPARENTLY VERY LITTLE PUNISHMENT, IF ANY, METED OUT.

8. (C) GENERAL HERMOZA WAS VAGUE ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE CASE, RECALLING THAT AT THE TIME HE WAS A MAJOR GENERAL. HE SEEMINGLY REMEMBERED THAT THE TRIAL, PUNISHMENT AND TIME SERVED WERE WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED LEGAL LIMITS WHICH ALLOW FOR PAROLE AFTER SERVING TWO-THIRDS OF THE SENTENCE AND ALSO ALLOWS CREDIT FOR PRE-TRIAL CONFINEMENT. THE AMBASSADOR REQUESTED FUTURE CLARIFICATION OF THE DETAILS OF THE CASE SINCE IN LIGHT OF THE LA CANTUTA INVESTIGATION, THE ACOMARCA CASE RAISES CREDIBILITY ISSUES AND IN GENERAL IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO IMPROVING USG-GOP RELATIONS. GENERAL VICTORIO EMPHASIZED THAT UNDER THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF MILITARY JUSTICE, THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM IS SEPARATE. GENERAL HERMOZA SUGGESTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR ARRANGE FOR A BRIEFING WITH NEWLY APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF MILITARY JUSTICE, LIEUTENANT GENERAL GUEVARRA, TO OBTAIN THE CORRECT DETAILS ON THE CASE. HE ADDED THAT THEY ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE COST OF THE NEGATIVE PUBLICITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, BUT THAT THIS IS THE RESULT OF MUCH DISINFORMATION. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE STATED THAT UP TO LAST YEAR, SENDERO LUMINOSO ENJOYED AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AS A BONA FIDE POLITICAL GROUP THAT WAS BEING UNJUSTLY SUPPRESSED. NOT UNTIL THE REAL STORY BEGAN APPEARING IN THE PRESS DID THIS IMAGE CHANGE.

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SIMILARLY, NOT UNTIL PRESIDENT FUJIMORI HIMSELF TRAVELED TO NEW YORK, MET WITH THE REPORTERS OF THE MAJOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS AND CLARIFIED THE FACT THAT PERU HAD HELD MAJOR ELECTIONS DID THE MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT PERU BEGIN TO CHANGE. AS A RESULT OF THIS MORE POSITIVE IMAGE, TOURISM IS RETURNING FROM NEAR ZERO LAST YEAR TO NEARLY SEVENTY PERCENT OF ITS LEVEL PRIOR TO SENDERO.

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9. (U) THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT HE HOPED THAT DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT, A/S WATSON WOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE THIS IMPROVEMENT BOTH IN PERU'S SITUATION AND IN THE MILITARY'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THIS WAS CRITICAL TO OUR RELATIONSHIP.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 LIMA 00537

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

DEPARTMENT: ALSO FOR AID; USCINCSO: ALSO FOR POLAD

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10. (U) THE GENERAL STATED THAT THEY WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING A/S WATSON AT JOINT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, EMPHASIZING THAT USG-GOP RELATIONS WERE VERY IMPORTANT TO HIM. HE RECALLED HOW USG-GOP HAVE

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ALWAYS MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS EVEN DURING THE PAST MILITARY GOVERNMENT, AND RECALLING HIS PLEASANT SOJOURN

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AT THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE. EVEN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH U.S. ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL SULLIVAN AT THE RECENT CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ARMIES IN BRAZIL WERE CORDIAL AND FOUNDED ON A LONG FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

11. (C) AS A FINAL POINT, THE AMBASSADOR INQUIRED AS TO HOW MANY PERSONS WERE DETAINED IN THE MILITARY'S INVESTIGATION OF THE LA CANTUTA CASE. AGAIN, GENERAL HERMOZA STATED THAT HE WAS VAGUE ON THE DETAILS RECALLING ONLY THAT IN HIS SPEECH ACCEPTING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF MILITARY JUSTICE, GENERAL GUEVARRA HAD INDICATED THAT THERE WERE EIGHT DETAINEES INCLUDING ONE GENERAL AND ONE COLONEL.

12. (U) IN CONCLUDING THE VISIT, THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED AN INTEREST POSSIBLY IN VISITING SOME MILITARY UNITS DURING HIS TOUR IN PERU. GENERAL HERMOZA ASSURED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THIS WOULD ABSOLUTELY HAPPEN AND NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE TRANSPORTATION (I.E. THE HELOS).

13. (C) COMMENT. AS IN THE VISIT WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE (REF CABLE), GENERAL HERMOZA EMPHASIZED THE INDEPENDENCE OF MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM. THE VAGUENESS ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CASES INDICATES THAT THEY ARE PURPOSELY GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM. ALTHOUGH HERMOZA IS SAYING ALL THE RIGHT WORDS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS, THIS
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ROLE PLAYING, COUPLED WITH THE PREVAILING NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT THE PRESS, LEAVES ONE WITH THE FEELING THAT, ASIDE FROM THE TRAINING AND THE DETAINEE REGISTRY, THE MILITARY IS NOW DEALING WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA AS MORE OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN THAN A TOTAL COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS. NONETHELESS, TIME WILL TELL AS THE LA CANTUTA CASE DRAGS ON TOWARD EVENTUAL CONCLUSION. ADAMS.

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