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	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	L-01	MCO-01
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2006
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PINR, PTER, PE
SUBJECT: GENERAL ROBLES DETAINED AFTER CLAIMING MILITARY
DEATH SQUAD STILL ACTIVE

1. [REDACTED] CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JETT. REASON 1.5 (B) AND (D).
2. (C) SUMMARY: ON NOVEMBER 26, RETIRED GENERAL RODOLFO ROBLES,

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SAM A. MOSKOWITZ
DATE/CASE ID: 15 JUN 2001 200101053

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WHO IS WELL-KNOWN FOR HAVING REVEALED IN 1993 THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE "COLINA" MILITARY DEATH SQUAD IN THE LA CANTUTA MASSACRE, AND WHO THEN TOOK REFUGE IN THE U.S. EMBASSY FOR TWO DAYS DUE TO CONCERNS ABOUT HIS SAFETY, WAS ARRESTED NEAR HIS HOME IN A MANNER WHICH INITIALLY LED HIS FAMILY TO BELIEVE HE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED. ROBLES RECENTLY HAD BEEN MAKING STATEMENTS ASSERTING THAT THE COLINA MILITARY DEATH SQUAD WAS STILL ACTIVE AND PLAYED A ROLE IN THE BOMBING OF AN OPPOSITION TV STATION IN PUNO OCTOBER 17. FEW IN PERU HAD PAID ATTENTION TO ROBLES'S CHARGES UNTIL HIS ARREST, AND NOW EVEN A COLUMN IN A PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER HAS TAKEN ISSUE WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH ROBLES WAS DETAINED. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE RAISED THEIR CONCERN FOR ROBLES'S PHYSICAL SAFETY WITH SEVERAL SENIOR PERUVIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE HEAD OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. EMBASSY WILL BE WATCHING THIS CASE CLOSELY. END SUMMARY.

GENERAL ROBLES ARRESTED

3. (SBU) RETIRED GENERAL RODOLFO ROBLES, WHO RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE MILITARY DEATH SQUAD, THE COLINA GROUP, WAS STILL ACTIVE, WAS DETAINED NOVEMBER 26 AT 10:15 A.M. NEAR HIS HOME IN LIMA BY

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 EIGHT ARMED MEN IN TWO VEHICLES WITH TINTED WINDOWS. PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THAT ROBLES WAS SPRAYED IN THE FACE WITH A KNOCKOUT SUBSTANCE AND PUNCHED IN THE STOMACH BY THOSE DETAINING HIM. ROBLES'S FAMILY INITIALLY BELIEVED HE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED. AT 11:00 AM EMBASSY WAS INFORMED OF ROBLES'S "ABDUCTION" BY A PHONE CALL FROM A WASHINGTON-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION. SHORTLY BEFORE NOON, THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, CARLOS TORRES Y TORRES LARA, IN THE FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT FROM THE GOP, ANNOUNCED THAT ROBLES HAD BEEN DETAINED ON ORDERS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF MILITARY JUSTICE ON CHARGES RELATING TO INSUBORDINATION TO HIS SUPERIORS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ROBLES WAS ABLE TO PHONE HIS FAMILY AROUND NOON TO TELL THEM HE WAS FINE AND UNDER DETENTION AT "REAL FELIPE" MILITARY FACILITY IN CALLAO. ROBLES'S FAMILY WAS ABLE TO VISIT HIM DURING THE AFTERNOON.

ROBLES'S PAST RECORD REVEALING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

4. (C) ROBLES FIRST GAINED NOTORIETY WHEN HE REVEALED IN 1993 THAT THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD COMPOSED OF MILITARY OFFICERS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 1992 LA CANTUTA MASSACRE. AS A RESULT, ROBLES AND SIX FAMILY MEMBERS TOOK REFUGE IN THE U.S. EMBASSY ON MAY 5,

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1993, DUE TO CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR PHYSICAL SAFETY. TWO DAYS LATER, EMBASSY PERSONNEL ACCOMPANIED ROBLES AND HIS FAMILY TO THE AIRPORT WHERE HE BOARDED A PRIVATE PLANE SENT BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK HIM TO EXILE IN BUENOS AIRES. ROBLES REMAINED IN BUENOS AIRES UNTIL JUNE 1995, WHEN HE WAS INFORMED BY THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES THAT A GENERAL AMNESTY GRANTED TO MILITARY OFFICERS WHO HAD ATTEMPTED A COUP AGAINST FUJIMORI AND TO SECURITY PERSONNEL WHO HAD COMMITTED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DURING THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM, ALSO APPLIED TO HIM.

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5. (U) SINCE HIS RETURN FROM ARGENTINA, ROBLES HAS BEEN ACTIVE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN OPPOSING THE AMNESTY AGAINST THOSE WHO COMMITTED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. HIS BOOK, "CRIME AND IMPUNITY: THE COLINA GROUP AND POWER," WAS PUBLISHED EARLIER THIS YEAR BY THE PERUVIAN NGO "THE PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION" (APRODEH).

ROBLES'S LATEST REVELATIONS

6. (U) ON A PROMINENT LIMA TELEVISION PROGRAM LAST WEEK, ROBLES CLAIMED THAT ONE OF THE THREE MILITARY OFFICERS ARRESTED FOR THE OCTOBER 17 BOMBING OF A TELEVISION STATION IN PUNO WAS A MEMBER OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD. AMONG ROBLES'S OTHER STATEMENTS WAS THE ASSERTION THAT THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD WAS STILL OPERATING UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DE FACTO NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) CHIEF VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS.

EMBASSY RAISES USG CONCERN WITH PERUVIAN OFFICIALS

7. (C) UPON LEARNING OF ROBLES'S ARREST, POLCOUNS PHONED THE FORMER HEAD OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE, CONGRESSWOMAN LUZ SALGADO, WHO ARRANGED FOR HIM TO SPEAK WITH THE HEAD OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF MILITARY JUSTICE, GENERAL GUIDO GUEVARA GUERRA. GUEVARA TOLD POLCOUNS THAT ROBLES WAS BEING CHARGED WITH DEFAMING THE MILITARY AND FALSIFYING THE TRUTH,

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DISOBEDIENCE, AND INSULTING A MILITARY OFFICER (I.E., THE HEAD OF THE ARMED FORCES JOINT COMMAND, GENERAL NICOLAS HERMOZA RIOS). GUEVARA EMPHASIZED THAT THE MILITARY CODE OF JUSTICE IN PERU APPLIES TO RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS. GUEVARA WAS NOT SURE HOW LONG ROBLES WOULD BE DETAINED OR IF BAIL WAS POSSIBLE, SAYING THIS WOULD DEPEND ON THE JUDGE.

8. (C) POLCOUNS THEN SPOKE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, JORGE SANTISTEVAN, WHO SAID HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GET THROUGH TO GUEVARA, WHOM HE HAD TRIED TO REACH BY PHONE. SANTISTEVAN LATER TOLD

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OFFICERS REGARDING MILITARY WEAPONS PURCHASES. POLOFF HAS A MEETING AT SOBERON'S OFFICE NOVEMBER 29 TO DISCUSS THIS. MRS. ROBLES MAY ALSO BE PRESENT AT THAT MEETING.

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OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF CONGRESS UPSET WITH ROBLES'S ARREST

12. (U) AS SOON AS THEY LEARNED OF ROBLES'S ARREST, OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FROM MANY DIFFERENT PARTIES ANGRILY CRITICIZED HIS DETENTION AND CALLED FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, ALBERTO PANDOLFI, INTERIOR MINISTER JUAN BRIONES, AND DEFENSE MINISTER TOMAS CASTILLO MEZA, BEFORE CONGRESS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND EXPLAIN WHY ROBLES WAS ARRESTED. HENRY PEASE OF THE UNION FOR PERU (UPP) STRONGLY DENOUNCED THE MANNER IN WHICH ROBLES WAS DETAINED, ASSERTING THAT CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE ARRESTED IN A MANNER RESEMBLING A KIDNAPPING. CARLOS CHIPOCO, ALSO OF THE UPP, CRITICIZED THE FACT THAT ROBLES HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM BEFORE HIS ARREST.

13. (U) IN RESPONSE TO THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE OPPOSITION, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS VICTOR JOY WAY STATED THAT ROBLES WOULD BE WELL TREATED AND THAT HE HAD BEEN DETAINED IN A LEGAL FASHION. JOY WAY DENIED THAT ROBLES WAS DETAINED BY AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN). JOY WAY ADDED THAT CONGRESS WOULD DEBATE ON NOVEMBER 28 THE MOTION REQUESTING THE PRESENCE OF PANDOLFI, BRIONES AND CASTILLO TO EXPLAIN ROBLES'S DETENTION.

PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS SAYS ARREST HAS MADE ROBLES A "HERO"

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14. (U) GENERALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT "EXPRESO'S" ASSISTANT EDITOR JAIME DE ALTHAUS IN A COMMENTARY NOVEMBER 27 TOOK ISSUE WITH ROBLES'S DETENTION. NOTING THAT FEW HAD PAID ATTENTION TO ROBLES'S CLAIMS OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD'S REEMERGENCE, DE ALTHAUS SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT DETAINING ROBLES HAD NOW MADE HIM A HERO. IN ADDITION, DE ALTHAUS EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THE MILITARY'S RIGHT TO TRY A RETIRED OFFICER FOR EXPRESSING OPINION. AND IN VERY STRONG TERMS, DE ALTHAUS DEFENDED PERUVIANS' FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

COMMENT

15. (C) IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THOSE WHO ORDERED ROBLES'S ARREST STAND TO GAIN BY HIS DETENTION. THE MANNER OF HIS ARREST HAS ONLY BROUGHT ATTENTION TO CHARGES ABOUT THE REEMERGENCE OF THE COLINA GROUP. AS A RESULT OF HIS ARREST, ROBLES'S ALLEGATIONS HAVE NOW BEEN REPEATED IN ALL THE LIMA PRESS, SOME OF WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY

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IGNORED HIS CLAIMS. IF THOSE WHO ORDERED HIS ARREST WERE HOPING TO PREVENT ROBLES FROM RELEASING OTHER EMBARRASSING INFORMATION, THEY MAY HAVE FAILED SINCE HIS FAMILY MEMBERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THEY STILL PLAN TO REVEAL WHATEVER EMBARRASSING INFORMATION ROBLES HAD ABOUT THE MILITARY. THIS COULD VERY WELL BE ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF FUJIMORI REGIME STUMBLES WHICH HAS AGAIN UNIFIED THE OPPOSITION.

16. (C) THE MANNER IN WHICH ROBLES WAS DETAINED IS CLEARLY
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WORRISOME AND EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE OUR CONCERNS KNOWN TO APPROPRIATE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO ENSURE THAT ROBLES IS TRIED AS TRANSPARENTLY AS IS POSSIBLE.
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