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RELEASED IN PART

Case Number: 200102877

B1, 1.5(B), 1.5(D)

PTQ3539

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO LOG-00 CCOE-00 SAS-00 /000W
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O 131948Z NOV 00
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7368

SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 006719

DEPT PASS NSC WASHDC

NODIS DECAPTIONED

DEPT FOR WHA A/S ROMERO;
NSC FOR VALENZUELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2009

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PE

SUBJECT: FUJIMORI HOLD ON OFFICE INCREASINGLY IN DOUBT

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY JOHN R. HAMILTON, CHIEF OF MISSION.

REASON: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

2. (S) SUMMARY: PERU'S ONGOING POLITICAL CRISIS ENTERED A MORE ACUTE PHASE WITH THE REVELATION NOVEMBER 2 OF MONTESINOS' FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS, BECAUSE IT ADDED THE EMOTIONALLY POWERFUL DIMENSION OF PERSONAL VENALITY AND GREED TO WHAT HAD BEEN A CRISIS (MERELY) OF POLITICAL

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CORRUPTION. FUJIMORI AS A RESULT HAS BEEN GREATLY WEAKENED. TWO NEW DEVELOPMENTS NOW MAKE HIS SITUATION EVEN MORE DIRE: THE PRESIDENT'S SEIZURE AND RETENTION OF MONTESINOS' VIDEOS AND DOCUMENTS OUTSIDE PROPER LEGAL PROCESSES; AND ALLEGATIONS FROM THE BROTHER OF PABLO ESCOBAR THAT PABLO GAVE FUJIMORI'S 1990 CAMPAIGN \$1 MILLION. WE NOW BELIEVE IT IS MORE LIKELY THAN NOT THAT PRESIDENT FUJIMORI WILL NOT SURVIVE UNTIL NEXT JULY. SHOULD FUJIMORI AT SOME POINT RESIGN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT TUDEJA WOULD LIKELY BECOME PRESIDENT. WE SAY "LIKELY" BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH TUDELA RESIGNED THE VICE PRESIDENCY, HIS RESIGNATION WAS NOT

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AFFIRMATIVELY ACCEPTED BY THE PERUVIAN CONGRESS AND MOST EXPERTS BELIEVE HE REMAINS FIRST IN THE LINE OF SUCCESSION.
END SUMMARY.

3. (S) UNTIL RECENTLY, WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY COMPELLING REASON WHY PRESIDENT FUJIMORI SHOULD NOT AND WOULD NOT REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT IS INSTALLED NEXT JULY. IN OUR VIEW, FUJIMORI HAD RECOUPED A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF AUTHORITY BY THE DECISIONS HE ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 16. ALTHOUGH THE TWO MONTHS SINCE THEN HAVE BEEN TURBULENT EVEN BY PERUVIAN STANDARDS, CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS TOWARD NEW ELECTIONS UNDER ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS HAS BEEN MADE. LAST FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, FUJIMORI PUBLISHED THE SUPREME DECREE OFFICIALLY CONVOKING ELECTIONS FOR APRIL 8, AS AGREED. THEY WILL TAKE PLACE UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS BOARD AND IN THE BODY (ONPE) THAT ACTUALLY ADMINISTERS THE ELECTIONS. PERU HAS A NEW, RESPECTED ATTORNEY GENERAL, AMONG OTHER CHANGES THAT AUGUR WELL FOR SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY OF ELECTIONS THIS TIME AROUND.

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4. (S) PRESSURE ON FUJIMORI TO STEP DOWN, HOWEVER, HAD INCREASED EVEN BEFORE THESE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. THE REASONS ARE VARIED AND NUMEROUS, BUT LARGELY REFLECT PERUVIAN UNWILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE THAT FUJIMORI WAS UNAWARE OF THE POLITICAL ABUSES COMMITTED BY FORMER SECURITY ADVISER MONTESINOS. INITIALLY, MOST PERUVIANS REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT FUJIMORI WAS TRULY BREAKING WITH MONTESINOS. THEIR PROCLIVITY FOR CYNICAL INTERPRETATIONS GAVE RISE TO BELIEFS THAT FUJIMORI'S PERSONAL SEARCH FOR MONTESINOS WAS A CHARADE, POSSIBLY TO CREATE A JUSTIFICATION FOR HIS BEING GRANTED ASYLUM SOMEWHERE ABROAD.

5. (S) WITH THE SEARCH AND SEIZURE OF MONTESINOS' APARTMENT LAST WEEK, EVEN THE CYNICS ARE ACCEPTING THAT THE BREAK IS REAL. BUT THE DENUNCIATION BY THE NEW ATTORNEY GENERAL, NELLY CALDERON, THAT THE SEARCH AND SEIZURE WERE, IN EFFECT, ILLEGAL AND THAT THE NATIONAL PALACE (FUJIMORI) HAS NO RIGHTFUL CLAIM TO THE MATERIAL SEIZED HAS ADDED TO THE CRISIS A NEW AND TROUBLING ELEMENT. FOR IT INCREASINGLY APPEARS THAT THE SEARCH FOR MONTESINOS HAS BEEN DRIVEN BY A DESIRE TO RECOVER THE REPUTED THOUSANDS OF VIDEOS AND OTHER DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS THAT COULD INCRIMINATE ALMOST ANYONE. THUS, ALTHOUGH THE BREAK BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND MONTESINOS IS

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REAL, THE MOTIVES MAY BE LESS THAN PURE.

6. (S) LATE SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, A COLOMBIAN NEWS ITEM SOURCED TO ROBERTO ESCOBAR, BROTHER OF DECEASED DRUG KINGPIN PABLO ESCOBAR, ASSERTS THAT PABLO ESCOBAR CONTRIBUTED \$1 MILLION TO THE 1990 FUJIMORI PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN-- THROUGH MONTESINOS. ACCORDING TO THIS STORY, FUJIMORI ON

SECRET

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ONE OCCASION SPOKE TO PABLO ESCOBAR BY PHONE. THIS REPORT MADE HEADLINES IN MOST LIMA DAILIES NOVEMBER 12. ANALYSTS ARE ALREADY POINTING OUT THAT MONTESINOS DID NOT EVEN MEET FUJIMORI UNTIL AFTER THE FIRST ROUND OF VOTING IN APRIL 1990. BUT ONE FORMER FUJIMORI ADVISER RECALLS THAT THERE WAS A MYSTERIOUS INFLUX OF CASH INTO THE CAMPAIGN ABOUT THAT TIME. WE MAKE NO JUDGMENT ABOUT THE VERACITY OF THE ACCUSATION (A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR IS BEING APPOINTED) BUT BELIEVE, WHATEVER ITS VALIDITY AND COMING ON TOP OF THE APPEARANCE IF NOT THE FACT OF FUJIMORI CONDUCTING HIS OWN INVESTIGATION, ITS IMPACT ON HIS CAPACITY TO GOVERN COULD BE SEVERE.

7. (S) QUESTIONS WILL QUICKLY ARISE AS TO WHETHER WE "CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FUJIMORI" (AS OUR POLICY IS PERCEIVED) IN LIGHT OF THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. ACTUALLY, OUR POSTURE ALL ALONG HAS BEEN FORMULATED IN TERMS OF SUPPORTING THE DECISIONS HE ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 16. WE HAVE SAID THAT IT

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IS FOR THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE TO DECIDE WHETHER HE REMAINS IN
OFFICE UNTIL NEXT JULY. WE SHOULD IN OUR VIEW HUE TO THAT
LINE, BUT WILL NEED TO STRESS EVEN MORE CLEARLY THAT IT
REALLY IS UP TO THE PERUVIANS TO DECIDE ON FUJIMORI'S
TENURE.

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9. (S) SHOULD FUJIMORI STEP DOWN, HE WOULD IN ALL
LIKELIHOOD BE SUCCEEDED BY FRANCISCO TUDELA, WHO WAS ELECTED
AS FIRST VICE PRESIDENT. THIS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT TUDELA
"RESIGNED" THE VICE PRESIDENT OCTOBER 23. ACCORDING TO
VARIOUS EXPERTS, TUDELA REMAINS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL LINE
OF SUCCESSION BECAUSE THE PERUVIAN CONGRESS DID NOT
AFFIRMATIVELY ACCEPT HIS RESIGNATION. WE HAVE NOT SPOKEN TO
TUDELA IN RECENT DAYS. BUT

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/ HAS, AND TOLD THE AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER 12 THAT
TUDELA SAID HE WOULD SET ASIDE HIS OWN PRESIDENTIAL
AMBITIONS (I.E., FOR THE PERIOD 2001-2006) TO SERVE OUT THE
FUJIMORI TERM, IF THAT WERE NECESSARY. THE PERUVIAN
MILITARY HAS NO LOVE LOST FOR TUDELA, BUT WOULD NOT LIKELY
BALK AND TUDELA WOULD OTHERWISE PROVE TO BE A CREDIBLE
TRANSITION LEADER.

HAMILTON

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