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Case Number: 200102877

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ACTION ARA-01

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	INR-00	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	/020W

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P 232114Z DEC 97
 FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0917
 INFO USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY
 NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
 SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
 DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/07
TAGS: PGOV, PBTS, PINS, PE
SUBJECT: PERUVIAN TRIUMVIRATE WEATHERS ITS OWN STORM

REF: LIMA 5660

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY HEATHER HODGES, DCM, EMBASSY LIMA.
REASON: 1.5 (D).

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2. (C) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S RECENT, UNEXPLAINED PUBLIC CLASH WITH GENERAL HERMOZA RIOS MAY HAVE STEMMED FROM INTERNAL HAGGLING OVER REASSIGNMENTS OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS. THE OPPOSITION INSISTS THAT FUJIMORI TRIED AND FAILED TO DISMISS HERMOZA RIOS, WHILE THE GOP ASSERTS THAT THE WEEKEND-LONG POLITICAL CRISIS WAS A MERE MEDIA INVENTION. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF PUBLIC CIVIL-MILITARY FEUDING, THE GOP REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED: FUJIMORI REMAINS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF; HERMOZA RIOS REMAINS IN THE MILITARY'S TOP JOB, AND PRESIDENTIAL INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR MONTESINOS CONTINUES TO EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL INFLUENCE BEHIND THE SCENES. THE POLITICAL FLAP HAS HAD NO DISCERNIBLE EFFECT ON GOP HANDLING OF THE PERU-ECUADOR BORDER DISPUTE. THE FUJIMORI-HERMOZA RIOS DUSTUP, HOWEVER, HIGHLIGHTED THE INHERENT WEAKNESS OF A REGIME BASED ON STRONG PERSONALITIES AND WEAK INSTITUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

 TEMPORARY TROUBLE IN THE TRIUMVIRATE

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3. (U) PRESIDENT FUJIMORI TOUCHED OFF A POLITICAL MAELSTROM LATE LAST WEEK WHEN HE DOWNPLAYED PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COMMAND NICOLAS HERMOZA RIOS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE PLANNING OF THE APRIL 22 HOSTAGE RESCUE AT THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AND LATER HINTED THAT HE MIGHT MAKE CHANGES IN THE ARMED FORCES JOINT COMMAND. FUJIMORI SAID HE, DE FACTO NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) CHIEF VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS, AND THREE COLONELS DESIGNED THE TREMENDOUSLY SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATION WHILE PRESIDENT OF THE ARMED FORCES JOINT COMMAND GENERAL HERMOZA RIOS WAS MERELY RESPONSIBLE FOR PRACTICING AND STAGING THE RESCUE. ASKED IF HE HAD READ HERMOZA RIOS' BOOK, IN WHICH THE GENERAL HIGHLIGHTED HIS AND MONTESINOS' PLANNING OF THE RESCUE AND MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCES TO THE PERUVIAN PRESIDENT, FUJIMORI RESPONDED SHARPLY, "NO. WHAT FOR?"

4. (U) TWO DAYS AFTER FUJIMORI'S INTERVIEW WAS PUBLISHED IN LIMA'S LEADING DAILY, THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS OF PERU'S ARMED FORCES AND NATIONAL POLICE, ALONG WITH MONTESINOS, PAID HOMAGE TO HERMOZA RIOS IN A CAREFULLY STAGED BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR THE JOINT COMMAND PRESIDENT. WHILE SUCH LARGE

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR HERMOZA RIOS ARE NOT NEW, VIDEOTAPES OF THE "PRIVATE" CEREMONY WERE SENT TO THE LOCAL MEDIA. DURING THE CELEBRATION, THE COMMANDER OF THE UNITS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE HOSTAGE RESCUE PRESENTED HERMOZA RIOS WITH THE COMMANDOS' COMMEMORATIVE STANDARD. GENERAL CARLOS BERGAMINO CRUZ, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE FIRST MILITARY REGION IN PIURA, MADE POINTED REMARKS NOTING THAT "ANY ATTEMPT TO DOWNPLAY THE ACHIEVEMENTS YOU (HERMOZA RIOS) MADE ...IS AN INSULT THAT ADVERSELY AFFECTS OUR ENTIRE INSTITUTION..."

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5. (U) THE IMPLIED INSUBORDINATION OF HERMOZA RIOS'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION SPURRED A MEDIA FRENZY AND A WEEKEND-LONG POLITICAL "CRISIS." FUJIMORI HUDDLED WITH SELECTED CABINET MEMBERS AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS FOR MARATHON MEETINGS WHILE HERMOZA RIOS WAITED WITH THE SIX MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS AT HIS RESIDENCE IN THE CHORRILLOS MILITARY BASE IN LIMA. ON DECEMBER 20 FUJIMORI DISPATCHED DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL CESAR SAUCEDO TO HERMOZA RIOS' RESIDENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ORDER TO SEND THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS BACK TO THEIR BASES. FUJIMORI SIMULTANEOUSLY RELEASED HIS ORDER TO THE PRESS. BY THE NEXT DAY, ALL THE REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS HAD RETURNED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE BASES, AND HERMOZA RIOS RELEASED TO THE MEDIA A COPY OF HIS LETTER TO SAUCEDO NOTING THAT HE HAD COMPLIED WITH FUJIMORI'S REQUEST. ON DECEMBER 22 FUJIMORI TOLD REPORTERS THAT HERMOZA RIOS WOULD REMAIN AS PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COMMAND.

SEARCHING FOR THE CAUSE

6. (C) DETECTING THE OCCASIONAL SYMPTOMS OF DIFFERENCES

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AMONG FUJIMORI, HERMOZA RIOS, AND MONTESINOS IS EASIER TO DO
 THAN IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES. AS LONG AS ALL THREE REMAIN IN
 POWER, WE PROBABLY WILL NEVER REALLY LEARN WHAT CAUSED THE
 LATEST SPAT BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND HERMOZA RIOS.
 NEVERTHELESS, THE DISPUTE ALMOST CERTAINLY GOES DEEPER THAN
 THE RUSH TO CLAIM CREDIT FOR THE SUCCESSFUL HOSTAGE RESCUE.
 MILITARY PROMOTIONS WERE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED IN DECEMBER AND

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REASSIGNMENTS ARE NORMALLY MADE BY JANUARY 1. THE ASSIGNMENTS PROCESS FOR KEY POSITIONS REPORTEDLY LEADS TO JOCKEYING BETWEEN MONTESINOS AND HERMOZA RIOS WHO BOTH TRY TO INFLUENCE THE PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF MILITARY OFFICIALS THEY FAVOR. INTERNAL DISPUTES OVER ASSIGNMENTS TO KEY POSITIONS, SUCH AS COMMAND OF THE SECOND MILITARY DIVISION BASED IN LIMA, MAY HAVE SPURRED THE RECENT FLAP.

7. (C) EXPLOITING THE RARE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF POLITICAL-MILITARY FISSURES IN THE FUJIMORI GOVERNMENT, THE OPPOSITION IS ACTIVELY PROMOTING THE THEORY THAT FUJIMORI TRIED AND FAILED TO DISMISS HERMOZA RIOS AFTER SIX YEARS OF SERVICE AT THE MILITARY'S HIGHEST POSITION. JOINT COMMAND PRESIDENTS NORMALLY SERVE ONLY ONE YEAR (REPTTEL). SEVERAL OPPOSITION CONGRESSPERSONS PUBLICLY CALLED FOR HERMOZA RIOS' RESIGNATION ON THE SAME DAY FUJIMORI ANNOUNCED THAT THE

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JOINT COMMAND PRESIDENT WOULD REMAIN IN HIS POSITION. INTERESTINGLY AND TO ITS CREDIT, THE CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION CLOSED RANKS WITH FUJIMORI DURING THE WEEKEND TENSIONS. PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS CARLOS TORRES Y TORRES LARA DULY THANKED HIS POLITICAL ADVERSARIES FOR THEIR TIMELY SUPPORT AND MADE EFFORTS TO KEEP THEM INFORMED OF EVENTS.

8. (SBU) WITH THE DISPUTE WITH HERMOZA RIOS APPARENTLY BEHIND HIM, FUJIMORI AND OTHER PRO-GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE NOW ASSERTING THAT THE LOCAL MEDIA INVENTED A POLITICAL CRISIS WHERE NONE EXISTED. EMPHASIZING THE FACT THAT HERMOZA RIOS COMPLIED WITH THE ORDER TO SEND THE REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS BACK TO THEIR BASES, GOP OFFICIALS INSIST THAT FUJIMORI REMAINS FIRMLY IN CHARGE AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. SPEAKING TO REPORTERS DURING A DECEMBER 22 TRIP TO PUNO, FUJIMORI EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN THE WORK OF THE ARMED FORCES AND NATIONAL POLICE. THE PERUVIAN PRESIDENT HINTED THAT THERE WILL LIKELY BE CHANGES IN HIS CABINET, BUT ANNOUNCED THAT ALL THE MILITARY BRANCH CHIEFS, INCLUDING HERMOZA RIOS, WOULD REMAIN IN THEIR JOBS "FOR THE MOMENT." (COMMENT: PREDICTABLY, FUJIMORI STILL ASSERTED HIS PREROGATIVE TO REPLACE MILITARY LEADERS AS HE SEES FIT. END COMMENT.)

EVERYBODY LOST

n/a
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9. (C) EVERYONE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PERU'S MOST RECENT POLITICAL SPARRING LOST POLITICALLY. DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE THE RECENT INTERNAL CIVIL-MILITARY

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UPHEAVAL, PRESIDENT FUJIMORI APPEARED WEAK IN THE FACE OF MILITARY PRESSURE. IF HE HAD HOPED TO BRING HERMOZA RIOS DOWN A NOTCH WITH HIS PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT PLANNING THE HOSTAGE RESCUE, FUJIMORI SUCCEEDED ONLY IN ALIENATING ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL WHO CONTINUE TO TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATION. HERMOZA RIOS, FOR HIS PART, APPEARED IN THE PRESS TO BE THREATENING THE PRESIDENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. PUBLIC MISTRUST OF MONTESINOS WAS ONLY EXACERBATED BY HIS SHADOWY ROLE IN THE PUBLIC TUSSLE BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND HERMOZA RIOS.

NO EFFECT ON PERU-ECUADOR TALKS

10. (C) NONE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS HAS SUGGESTED TO US THAT POLICY DIFFERENCES OVER HANDLING THE PERU-ECUADOR BORDER DISPUTE WAS A CAUSE OF THE TEMPORARY TUFF BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND HERMOZA RIOS, AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE RECENT ROW WILL HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON GOP HANDLING OF THE DISPUTE. THE PERUVIAN MILITARY'S DESIRE TO AVENGE PERU'S POOR SHOWING IN THE 1995 CENEPa CONFLICT DOES NOT BEGIN AND END WITH HERMOZA RIOS, BUT RATHER PERVADES PERU'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP. FUJIMORI GAVE THE MILITARY A WIDE BERTH TO PREPARE FOR CONTINGENCIES PRIOR TO THE RECENT INTERNAL

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OASY-00 DOEE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 FBIE-00 H-01 TEDE-00

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INR-00	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01
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T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	/020W
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POLITICAL FEUD, AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO NOW THAT HE HAS CONFIRMED THAT HERMOZA RIOS WILL CONTINUE IN HIS POSITION. NEVERTHELESS, WE STILL BELIEVE THE BUCK STOPS WITH THE MICROMANAGING PERUVIAN PRESIDENT AND THAT FUJIMORI STILL PREFERS TO PURSUE A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION OVER A MILITARY ONE.

COMMENT

11. (C) WE BELIEVE THE GOVERNING ALLIANCE BETWEEN

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PRESIDENT FUJIMORI, INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR MONTESINOS, AND JOINT COMMAND PRESIDENT HERMOZA RIOS REMAINS A STRONG ONE, DESPITE THE RECENT SIGNS OF INTERNAL TENSION. IN THE END, ALL THREE DEPEND ON ONE ANOTHER AND HAVE ENJOYED SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL SUCCESS BY WORKING TOGETHER. THE OPPOSITION, FOR ITS PART, HAS NOT PRESENTED ANY CONVINCING ARGUMENT AS TO WHY FUJIMORI, AFTER WORKING IN CLOSE CONCERT WITH HERMOZA RIOS FOR SIX YEARS, WOULD NOW DECIDE TO DISMISS HIM. PERU'S TRIUMVIRATE IS SO MONOLITHIC AND OPAQUE THAT DIFFERENCES ARE USUALLY ONLY REFLECTED SUBTLY AT PUBLIC CEREMONIES. THE MOST RECENT FLAP BETWEEN FUJIMORI AND HERMOZA RIOS WAS NEW AND SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE BOTH SOUGHT OUT THE MEDIA TO SCORE

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POINTS. WHATEVER THE SOURCE OF THE CONFLICT, HOWEVER, THE TRIUMVIRATE ONCE AGAIN FOUND GREATER INTEREST IN CLOSING RANKS THAN IN FURTHER BICKERING. END COMMENT.
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