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ES-00	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	COME-00	HA-09	L-03		
TRSE-00	PM-10	PA-01	OMS-01	SIL-01	INM-07	INRE-00		
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R 052240Z APR 89
 FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7331
 INFO AMEMBASSY SGOA
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
 AMEMBASSY QUITO
 USAF SO HOWARD AFB PH
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PH
 AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 LIMA 05035

DIA FOR OA-5/OS-1D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PTER, ASEC PE
 SUBJECT: TENSIONS HIGH IN PUCALLPA AS TERRORISM INCREASES

REF: LIMA 586

1. SUMMARY: CONOFF VISITED PUCALLPA 17-19 MARCH 89 AND NOTED A MARKED DETERIORATION IN THE SECURITY SITUATION SINCE HIS PREVIOUS VISIT IN DECEMBER, 1988. THE TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MRTA) IS NOW VERY ACTIVE IN THE CITY AND ENVIRONS, SETTING OFF BOMBS AND SHAKING DOWN MERCHANTS FOR PROTECTION MONEY. GOP SECURITY FORCES
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ARE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO CHALLENGE MRTA

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IS/FPC/CDR *RJS* Date: *5/4/94*

MR Cases Only: _____
 EO Citations: _____

CLASSIFY as _____ TS authority to
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GROWTH IN THE AREA. AMCITS WORKING IN THE AREA, AS WELL AS LOCAL CITIZENS, FEEL INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AND VULNERABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. CONGFF VISITED PUCALLPA (EAST CENTRAL PERU), THE SECOND-LARGEST CITY IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON JUNGLE REGION, TO ATTEND GRADUATION CEREMONIES FOR A GROUP OF PERUVIAN INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHER GRADUATES OF THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS (ILV). ALSO GUESTS OF THE ILV FOR THE EVENT WERE ABOUT 15 GOP OFFICIALS AND CULTURAL FIGURES, INCLUDING TWO SENATORS, AN EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL (THE MINISTER HERSELF CANCELLED OUT AT THE VERY LAST MINUTE), AND A COLONEL FROM THE PERUVIAN JOINT MILITARY COMMAND. ALL THE GUESTS ARRIVED AS A GROUP ABOARD A REGULARLY SCHEDULED NATIONAL AIRLINE FLIGHT.

3. TRAVEL BY CONVOY INDICATES SECURITY JITTERS:

THE 20 MINUTE TRIP FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE ILV ENCAMPMENT REVEALED INCREASED SECURITY CONCERNS AMONG PUCALLPA RESIDENTS. THE VISITORS WERE LOADED INTO EIGHT ILV VEHICLES, ESCORTED BY THREE PICKUP TRUCKS, EACH WITH FOUR OR FIVE HEAVILY ARMED GUARDS IN BACK, ALONG WITH A TROOP CARRIER WITH 15-20 EQUALLY HEAVILY ARMED PERUVIAN
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SOLDIERS. THIS SECURITY FORCE APPARENTLY REMAINED ON THE ILV COMPOUND THE ENTIRE TIME THE GUESTS FROM LIMA WERE PRESENT.

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BECAUSE THE VISIT OCCURRED ON A WEEKEND AND WAS MOSTLY DEVOTED TO SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE GRADUATION, THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH LOCAL GOP OFFICIALS; HOWEVER, ILV'S CONTACTS WITH THOSE OFFICIALS ARE CLOSE AND WELL-CULTIVATED. COMOFF WAS AGAIN CONVINCED THAT THE ILV OFFICIALS ARE WELL-INFORMED AND OFFER A FAIRLY ACCURATE READING OF THE LOCAL SITUATION. PUCALLPA IS AN ISOLATED AREA WHERE RUMORS RUN RAMPANT, AND WHERE IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE FACT FROM ALARMISM.

5. COMMENT: FOLLOWING OUR FIRST VISIT, OTHER ENBOFFS HAD CONTACTED ILV OFFICIALS FOR CONFIRMATION OF RUMORS OF THREATS TO OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONARY GROUPS. THESE RUMORS TURNED OUT TO BE LARGELY TRUE; ONE AMERICAN GROUP OF ADVENTISTS DECIDED TO PULL OUT OF PUCALLPA DUE TO THESE THREATS. DURING THESE CONTACTS, ENBOFFS NOTED A CERTAIN EVASIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE ILV CONTACTS WHO INVARIABLY

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R 052240Z APR 89
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7332
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 LIMA 05035

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TRIED TO DISMISS ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE SITUATION WAS GETTING SERIOUS IN PUCALLPA. ILY OFFICIALS SEEMED CONCERNED THAT THE EMBASSY WOULD BECOME ALARMED AND SOMEHOW ORDER THEM TO LEAVE PERU. THE ILY PEOPLE ARE HIGHLY DEVOTED TO THEIR WORK AND WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO LEAVE.

6. DURING THIS VISIT, HOWEVER, CONOFF NOTED NO RELUCTANCE TO TALK ABOUT THE
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GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE RESERVOIR OF TRUST AND

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GOOD-WILL BUILT UP DURING PREVIOUS VISIT. MORE LIKELY, THE SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT ILV OFFICIALS ARE GENUINELY WORRIED ABOUT THEIR SITUATION AND REALIZED THE BENEFITS OF KEEPING EMBASSY WELL-INFORMED. END COMMENT.

7. CONOFF CAME AWAY IMPRESSED WITH HOW QUICKLY AND DRAMATICALLY THE LOCAL SECURITY SITUATION HAD DETERIORATED SINCE PREVIOUS VISIT ONLY THREE MONTHS BEFORE IN DECEMBER 82. PUCALLPA SEEMED A THRIVING JUNGLE BOOM TOWN THAT HAD, DESPITE AN OCCASIONAL BOMB, LARGELY ESCAPED THE SUBVERSIVE VIOLENCE WRACKING MOST OF THE REST OF PERU. IN THE INTERVENING TIME, PUCALLPA HAD BEEN CONVULSED BY WHAT SOME PERUVIANS TERMED A "MASSACRE" OF PROTESTING FARMERS BY POLICE IN WHICH EIGHT DIED. (LIMA 2590). MOST ILV CONTACTS CITED THE RIOT AS THE CATALYST THAT HAD MARKED THE RAPID GROWTH OF MRTA ACTIVITY IN PUCALLPA.

8. SENDERO VERSUS MRTA. THE WEEK BEFORE THE

VISIT, PRESUMED SENDERO LUMINOSO (SL) GUERRILLAS HAD TAKEN OVER THE SMALL TOWN OF CAMPO VERDE (LIMA 4202) 34 KILOMETERS WEST OF PUCALLPA ON THE ROAD TO TINGO MARIA. CONTACTS REPORTED THEY HAD HEARD THAT AT
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LEAST THREE POLICEMEN HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY WOUNDED DURING THE ATTACK. THE ILV OFFICIAL WHO HAD ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT IN PUCALLPA AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK NOTED THAT HER VEHICLE HAD BEEN FORCED TO PULL OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD DURING THE TRIP TO THE ILV ENCAMPMENT WHILE SEVERAL AMBULANCES RUSHED BY ON THE WAY TO CAMPO VERDE.

A LOCAL NEWSPAPER HAD REPORTED THAT KILOMETER 34 AT CAMPO VERDE MARKED THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SL ACTIVITY TO THE

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WEST, AND MRTA COUNTRY TO THE EAST.

9. WHILE THE ACCURACY OF THAT REPORT WAS NOT EVALUATED, THE IMPLICATION THAT PUCALLPA IS MRTA STOMPING GROUND IS CERTAINLY ACCURATE. MRTA SEEMS ABLE TO CARRY ON ITS ACTIVITIES IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING CHALLENGED BY GOP SECURITY FORCES. THE LOCAL PERUVIAN INVESTIGATIVE POLICE (PIP) REPORTEDLY DO NOT HAVE A SINGLE VEHICLE IN WORKING ORDER. THEY ARE THE FORCE CHARGED WITH CONFRONTING SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN PUCALLPA, SO THIS JOB DOESN'T GET DONE. ILY OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEIR CONTACTS INSIDE LOCAL MILITARY UNITS CLAIM THEY KNOW WHERE MRTA IS, BUT THAT THEY ARE UNWILLING AND UNABLE TO ACT UNTIL THE GOP DECLARES THE AREA AN EMERGENCY ZONE.

10. THE MOST VISIBLE (OR AUDIBLE) MANIFESTATIONS OF MRTA ACTIVITIES ARE NIGHTTIME BOMBINGS, AND THE "CUPOS", REVOLUTIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS EXTORTED FROM LOCAL MERCHANTS.

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R 052240Z APR 89
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 LIMA 05035

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MANY OF THE BOMBS TARGET MERCHANTS PREVIOUSLY CONTACTED FOR CUPOS. MOST OF THE MERCHANTS IN TOWN WITH WHICH THE ILV DOES BUSINESS HAVE INDICATED THEY HAVE BEEN APPROACHED FOR CUPOS. SINCE MRTA HAS KILLED AT LEAST ONE MERCHANT WHO REFUSED TO PAY, THREATENED MERCHANTS EITHER PAY, CLOSE DOWN THEIR BUSINESS AND LEAVE THE AREA PERMANENTLY, OR TAKE A VACATION TO LIMA FOR A MONTH OR TWO. ONE MERCHANT TOLD THE ILV HE HAD DECIDED

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TO CHALLENGE THE LEVY WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT HE WAS WELL-KNOWN IN TOWN AS AN HONEST

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PERSON WHO DID MUCH TO HELP LOCAL PEOPLE. HE CLAIMED HE HAD FOUND OUT WHERE THE LOCAL MRTA OFFICE WAS, HAD GONE THERE TO PLEAD HIS CASE, HAD BEEN REBUFFED, AND SO HAD DECIDED TO LEAVE TOWN.

11. ILV HAD RELIABLE REPORTS THAT MRTA HAD THREATENED WORKERS AND OFFICIALS WITH PETRO-PERU (THE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY) TO CLOSE DOWN AND LEAVE AN OIL FIELD FACILITY ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS OUTSIDE OF PUCALLPA. THE WORKERS WERE GIVEN ONE WEEK TO COMPLY, AND DID SO.

12. ILV HAS RECEIVED UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS THAT SEVERAL VILLAGES ACROSS THE LAKE FROM THE ILV ENCAMPMENT HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER AND CAN NOW BE REGARDED AS "MRTA VILLAGES". THE ILV PEOPLE NO LONGER VISIT THE INDIAN VILLAGE OF SAN FRANCISCO, A PICTURESQUE PLACE PREVIOUSLY CHOSEN TO SHOW VISITORS (INCLUDING CONOFF'S WIFE AND CHILDREN DURING PREVIOUS VISIT). MANY OF THESE VILLAGES ARE MAINLY ACCESSIBLE ONLY BY "PEQUEPEQUE", THE FAVORED MEANS OF RIVERBOAT TRANSPORTATION IN THE AREA.

13. WHY ARE AMERICANS SPARED? AT LEAST

ONE U.S. MISSIONARY GROUP HAS SHUT DOWN ITS PUCALLPA OPERATIONS IN RESPONSE TO
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TERRORIST THREATS. [REDACTED]
LEADERS OF ANOTHER, FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY MEN WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS MRTA REPRESENTATIVES. THEY TOLD THE AMERICANS THAT THEY HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED AND HAD BEEN JUDGED TO BE AN AID TO LOCAL PEOPLE, SO MRTA WOULD NOT ACT AGAINST THEM. HOWEVER, THE MRTA REPRESENTATIVES REPORTEDLY WARNED, "THERE ARE OTHERS WHO DON'T THINK AS WE DO". [REDACTED] THE AMERICANS PRESUMED

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THEY WERE REFERRING TO SL.

14. [REDACTED] THE ILV HAS NOT YET RECEIVED
A THREAT OR BEEN APPROACHED TO PAY A CUPO -
ALTHOUGH UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS HAVE
APPROACHED PERUVIAN WORKERS AND GUARDS AT THE
ILV GATE TO INQUIRE ABOUT LABOR RELATIONS.
COPE ADDED THAT WHILE THE ILV HAS A STANDING
WORLDWIDE POLICY TO NOT GIVE IN TO SUCH
TERRORIST DEMANDS, THIS POLICY WOULD BE
IMMEDIATELY RE-EVALUATED IF AND WHEN THE
THREAT BECOMES A REALITY. [REDACTED]
ILV OFFICIALS EXPECT TO BE APPROACHED FOR
CUPOS, AND SEEMED A BIT PUZZLED WHY THEY HAD
BEEN SPARED SO FAR.

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15. AGGRAVATING THE SECURITY SITUATION
FURTHER IS THE FACT THAT LOCAL CRIMINALS
AND HOODLUNS ARE ATTEMPTING TO PASS
THEMSELVES OFF AS MRTA TO GIVE THEIR THREATS
MORE CLOUT (AND PERHAPS TO DISCOURAGE PIP
INTEREST). [REDACTED] ONE OF ILV'S
CONTACTS HAD CLAIMED HE HAD SHOWN TO MRTA
REPRESENTATIVES AN EXTORTION LETTER.

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PURPORTING TO BE FROM MRTA. THE REPRESENTATIVES PRONOUNCED IT A FORGERY AND PROMISED TO DEAL WITH THE CULPRITS. SEVERAL TAXI-DRIVERS HAVE BEEN ROBBED AND MURDERED IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS. ONE SUCH MURDER OCCURRED ABOUT 200 YARDS OUTSIDE THE MAIN ILV GATE. CONSEQUENTLY, ILV MEMBERS AVOID LOCAL TAXIS, BUT ADD THAT THE DRIVERS WOULD PROBABLY REFUSE TO CARRY ANYONE OUT TO THEIR COMPOUND NOW ANYWAY. THE FAMILY WITH
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WHOM CONOFF STAYED SAID THAT ILV MEMBERS EARLIER NEVER HAD QUALMS ABOUT ALLOWING

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THEIR TEEN-AGED CHILDREN TO GO INTO PUCALLPA FOR ENTERTAINMENT OR ON ERRANDS. NOW, THEY ADDED, THEY WOULD NEVER ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO VENTURE INTO PUCALLPA ALONE.

16. DAY OF PRAYER SHOWS COMMUNITY ALARM.

ONE INDICATION OF THE LEVEL OF CONCERN AMONG THE LOCAL POPULATION OVER THE SUDDEN DETERIORATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IS REFLECTED IN THE FACT THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE LOCAL EVANGELICAL CHURCHES, THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE LION'S CLUB AND SEVERAL OTHER CIVIC GROUPS UNITED TO DESIGNATE GOOD FRIDAY (MARCH 24) AS A COMMUNITY DAY OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR PEACE.

17. WHILE ILY PERSONNEL ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION, CONOFF NOTED NO FLAGGING IN THEIR DETERMINATION TO STICK IT OUT AND CARRY ON THEIR WORK. NONETHELESS, THE LOCAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY (AND, IF THEIR EVALUATIONS ARE TO BE CREDITED, THE LOCAL PERUVIAN COMMUNITY AS WELL) LIVE IN A CLIMATE OF INCREASING FEAR AND APPREHENSION. RUMORS AND THE LACK OF RELIABLE INFORMATION NO DOUBT AGGRAVATE THE SENSE OF ALARM. YET THE REALITY OF MRTA PRESENCE IS GENUINE CAUSE FOR GRAVE CONCERN.

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