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Case Number: S200200010

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 H-01
NSC-01 NSAE-00 SY-06 HA-08 L-03 PM-09 PA-01
MCT-02 ANAE-00 USSS-00 SYE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01
SPRS-01 /072 W

-----266106 021852Z /44

P R 021818Z FEB 83
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6931
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
DIA WASHDC

RELEASED IN FULL

[REDACTED] LIMA 1131

PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

E O 12356 NA
TAGS: PTER, PINR, SHUM, PINS, PE
SUBJ: (U) MURDERED PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS BURIED

REF: LIMA 1019

1. FUNERAL OF PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS KILLED IN RURAL AYACUCHO
(REF A) TOOK PLACE FEBRUARY 1. AMBASSADOR ORTIZ AND THREE
USIS OFFICERS EXPRESSED THE EMBASSY'S CONDOLENCES AT WAKES
FOR THE VARIOUS VICTIMS. USIS OFFICERS VISITED HEADQUARTERS
OF MARXIST "EL DIARIO DE MARKA" WHERE THEY WERE VERY WELL-
RECEIVED AND SPOKE WITH EDITOR JOSE MARIA SALCEDO AT SOME

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LENGTH.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: WILLIAM E. LANDFAIR
DATE/CASE ID: 26 JUL 2002 S200200010

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2. THE LARGE CROWD INCLUDED CONTINGENTS FROM VARIOUS LEFTIST PARTIES, STRIKING MINERS AND TEACHERS UNION MEMBERS, WHICH ADDED A POLITICAL DIMENSION ADVERSELY COMMENTED UPON BY SOME FAMILY MEMBERS AND MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS. PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS IS FOCUSING ON THIS UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOR AND, IN THE PROCESS, ATTEMPTING TO SHIFT PUBLIC'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE MASSACRE ITSELF.

3. PRESIDENT BELAUNDE APPROVED THE FORMATION OF A SPECIAL, INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATING COMMISSION, AS CALLED FOR BY PRESS AND PERUVIAN CONGRESS' PERMANENT COMMISSION. AGREEING UPON ITS COMPOSITION IS PROVING DIFFICULT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UNITED LEFT (IU) INSIST THAT THE INVESTIGATIVE BODY NOT INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

4. DETAILS ON GORY MASSACRE ARE NOT WHOLLY CONSISTENT OR LOGICAL. OF EIGHT DEAD JOURNALISTS, SEVEN WERE ASSOCIATED WITH OPPOSITION PRESS. CONSERVATIVE "LA PRENSA" FEBRUARY 2 CLAIMED ILL-FATED EXPEDITION HAD BEEN ORGANIZED BY A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF MARXIST DAILY "EL DIARIO MARKA"--A PAPER WHICH NUMBERED THREE OF ITS REPORTERS AMONG THE EIGHT DEAD. EXACT PURPOSE FOR WHICH THIS GROUP TRAVELLED INTO A REGION KNOWN TO BE DANGEROUS--AND FOR WHICH ARMY PROTECTION WAS NOT SOUGHT--REMAINS UNCLEAR. SOME LIMA RUMORS CLAIM GROUP WAS INTERESTED IN DISPROVING GOVERNMENT CLAIMS OF SPONTANEOUS ANTI-TERRORIST "FRONTIER JUSTICE" ACTIONS BY RURAL PEASANTRY. OTHER RUMORS ALLEGE GROUP HOPED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH LOCAL SENDERO LEADERS--AN OBJECTIVE

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IMPLICIT IN GENERAL NOEL'S ASSERTION (DENIED BY THE OPPOSITION) THAT A RED FLAG WAS FOUND AMONG JOURNALISTS' EFFECTS.

5. THE DEGREE TO WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN INSTIGATING MASSACRE ALSO REMAINS UNCLEAR. ALL GOP OFFICIALS, FROM PRESIDENT DOWN, STATE THAT THE CULPRITS WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. HUAYCHAC LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR FORTUNATO GAVILANO (MASSACRE SITE, UCHURACCAY, LIES IN HIS DISTRICT)

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WAS ARRESTED AFTER, ALLEGEDLY, BLOOD STAINED WEAPONS AND ROLLS OF FILM TAKEN FROM SLAIN JOURNALISTS WERE FOUND IN HIS RESIDENCE. OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS ALSO REPORTEDLY WERE DETAINED.

6. WHATEVER THE DIRECT COMPLICITY OF LOW LEVEL PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THE ATTACK, ANOTHER ISSUE IS WHAT ROLE THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE IN INCITING AND CONDONING SUCH FRONTIER JUSTICE. THE GOVERNMENT'S LAUDATORY WELCOME TO A RECENT CASE OF ANTI-SL VIGILANTEISM BY VILLAGERS IN THE REGION WOULD CERTAINLY LEAD TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST STRANGERS WOULD BE ENDORSED PARTICULARLY BY THE CONTROVERSIAL FRONT LINE ANTI-TERRORIST UNITS KNOWN AS "SINCHIS".
ORTIZ

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