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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-02
MCT-02 USSS-00 SYE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 PRS-01
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P R 081831Z MAR 83
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7529
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBSSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
DIA WASHDC
USUN NEW YORK 1317

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 2356

PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

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TAGS: PTER, PE, SHUM

SUBJ: (U) SPECIAL COMMISSION PRESENTS REPORT ON DEATH OF EIGHT
PERUVIAN NEWSMEN

REFS: (A) LIMA 1018 (NOTAL); (B) LIMA 2197 (NOTAL).

1. THE SPECIAL COMMISSION NAMED BY PRESIDENT BELAUNDE TO
INVESTIGATE THE DEATH OF EIGHT PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS KILLED
IN LATE JANUARY IN THE EMERGENCY ZONE PRESENTED ITS REPORT
ON MARCH 5. A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT'S MAIN CONCLUSIONS
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FOLLOWS (FULL TEXT IS BEING POUCHED). EMBASSY COMMENTS

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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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CONTAINED SEPTEL.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

A. THE MASSACRE WAS THE DIRECT ACTION OF THE "COMUNEROS" (VILLAGERS) OF UCHURACCAY, WHO BELIEVED THEY WERE DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST TERRORISTS. THE PEOPLE OF UCHURACCAY AND NEIGHBORING ZONES BALANCE BETWEEN SURVIVAL AND STARVATION, SUBSISTING ON POTATOES AND BEANS, THEIR LIVES TOUCHED BY WESTERNIZED OUTSIDERS INTENT ONLY ON EXPLOITATION. INTO THIS CONTEXT, SENDERO INTRODUCED IN 1981-82 THE CONFISCATION OF FOOD AND LIVESTOCK, PROHIBITIONS AGAINST SELLING ALREADY MEAGER CROPS IN NEARBY CITIES, AND BEATINGS AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS OF THOSE SUSPECTED OF COOPERATING WITH THE AUTHORITIES. SENDERO'S THREATS LED TO REGIASSEMBLIES HELD IN MID-JANUARY, WHERE THE VILLAGERS RESOLVED TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. THE NEWSMENS' VISIT CAME ON THE HEELS OF ONE SUCH INCIDENT OF COMMUNAL SELF-DEFENSE WHEN THE VILLAGERS LIVED IN DREAD OF AN SL RETALIATORY ATTACK. ANOTHER ASSEMBLY WAS IN PROCESS AT UCHURACCAY WHEN THE EIGHT STRANGERS (ACCOMPANIED BY A GUIDE THOUGHT BY VILLAGERS TO BE A SENDERISTA SYMPATHIZER) WERE SIGHTED. THE VILLAGERS, MOTIVATED BY FURY AND FEAR, ATTACKED MASSIVELY AND PROBABLY WITHOUT FIRST ENTERING INTO A DIALOGUE TO DETERMINE THE STRANGERS' IDENTITY.

B. POLICE POLICY DID NOT ENCOURAGE FRONTIER JUSTICE, BUT THE UCHURACCAY COMUNEROS THOUGHT THEY ACTED WITH POLICE SANCTION. THE COMMISSION FELT "CERTAIN" THAT THE "SINCHIS" (POLICE ANTI-TERRORIST SQUADS) DID NOT SYSTEMATICALLY INSTIGATE VILLAGERS TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, EITHER IN REPRISAL OR IN SELF-DEFENSE. (BUT THE COMMISSION ALSO THOUGHT POLICE

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MAY HAVE DONE SO ON OCCASION.) THE COMMISSION DID FEEL "CERTAIN" THAT, IN THE CASE AT HAND, THE VILLAGERS OF UCHURACCAY ACTED IN THE BELIEF THAT THE SINCHIS PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED THEM TO KILL SENDERISTAS--THE PRODUCT PERHAPS, OF A LOOSELY PHRASED CHARGE FROM A VISITING POLICE UNIT TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND KILL ANY SENDERISTAS WHO CAME THEIR WAY.

C. THE SL PHENOMENON IS OF PERUVIAN ORIGIN AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE. THE COMMISSION

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FOUND NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SENDERISTAS ARE SUPPORTED BY ELEMENTS FOREIGN TO PERU. THE COMMISSION CHARACTERIZED THE SL AS A MAOIST OFFSHOOT OF THE PERUVIAN COMMUNIST PARTY THAT TOOK ROOT, FOR PARTICULAR HISTORICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL REASONS, IN THE HIGHLY RADICALIZED ENVIRONMENT OF AYACUCHO.

D. THE GOVERNMENT SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SENDERO'S EXPANSION. ALTHOUGH STATED WITH TACT, THE REPORT ASSERTS THAT IN 1981 AND 1982 WHEN, FACED WITH SENDERO'S WIDENING DEPREDATIONS, THE GOVET RESPONDED WITH "INDIFFERENCE". INSTEAD OF REINFORCING ZONES SUBJECT TO TERRORIST ATTACK, CIVIL AND POLICE AUTHORITIES ABANDONED THEM. THE CIVIL GUARD (MAIN POLICE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR

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INTERNAL SECURITY) CLOSED DOWN EXPOSED STATIONS, AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES FLED FROM THE HIGHLANDS. CIVIL AUTHORITY IN THE REGION "CAME TO ALMOST COMPLETE COLLAPSE." GIVEN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AN UNPROTECTED POPULATION "HAD NO ALTERNATIVE THAN TO ACCOMMODATE ITSELF TO THE DE FACTO POWER (OF THE TERRORISTS)." IRONICALLY, THE SENDERISTAS THEMSELVES DID LITTLE IN 1981-82 TO PROPAGATE THEIR CAUSE, THE COMMISSION QUALIFYING SL EFFORTS TO THIS END AS "WEAK AND SPORADIC."

E. SECURITY FORCES COMMITTED ERRORS AND ABUSES BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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DID NOT SYSTEMATICALLY VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS. THE COMMISSION REJECTED WIDESPREAD CHARGES FROM THE FAR LEFT THAT THE SINCHIS ARE EMPLOYING ILLEGAL AND ABUSIVE MEASURES IN THE ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT "THE CATALOGUE OF COMPLAINTS IS LARGE AND PAINFUL," THE COMMISSION FOUND THAT POLICE BEHAVIOR IMPROVED SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ARMED FORCES INTO THE EMERGENCY ZONE IN JANUARY.

3. STATISTICAL BALANCE

THE COMMISSION INCLUDED IN ITS REPORT A SUMMARY OF REPORTED CASUALTIES INCURRED IN THE COURSE OF SENDERO'S "ARMED STRUGGLE" (AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1

29 CIVIL GUARDS
2 PIP (INVESTIGATIVE POLICE)
6 REPUBLICAN GUARDS
1 SOLDIER
9 CIVIL AUTHORITIES
71 CIVILIANS
48 SENDERISTAS

THE COMMISSION NOTED THAT THE TOLL HAS FALLEN MOST HEAVILY ON "INNOCENTS," FOR THE MOST PART POOR VILLAGERS WHOSE MISFORTUNE IT WAS TO LIVE IN A ZONE CAUGHT UP IN A FIGHT BETWEEN THE TERRORISTS AND SECURITY FORCES. SINCE 1982 THE PACE HAS QUICKENED, AND CIVILIAN DEATHS NOW ARE WELL OVER 100. (COMMISSION MEMBER VARGAS LLOSA ADDED, IN A MARCH 6 INTERVIEW, THAT HE BELIEVES THE

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OFFICIALLY REPORTED TOLL UNDERSTATES THE TRUE EXTENT
OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. INCIDENTS ARE
OCCURRING IN REMOTE VILLAGES WHERE NO OFFICIAL PRESENCE
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IS FELT, AND GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE NO WAY OF GUAGING
THE EXTENT OF THIS UNREPORTED VIOLENCE.)
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