

n/a Case Number: S200200010

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INFO OCT-00 **IO-15**

COPY-01 ADS-00 NSC-01

INR-10 NSAE-00 SY-06 SS-10 HA-08 CIAE-00 L-03

PM-09

PA-01

MCT-02

USSS-00 SYE-00

USIE-00 SP-02

SNP-01

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PRS-01

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P R 091750Z MAR 83

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7552

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

DIA WASHDC

USUN NEW YORK 1319

USMISSION GENEVA

RELEASED IN FULL

LIMA 2418

PANAMA FOR ADS

DIA FOR IR BRANCH

E O 12356 DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, SHUM, PE, PINS

SUBJ: (U) REPORT ON DEATH OF EIGHT PERUVIAN NEWSMEN: EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: LIMA 2356

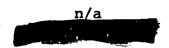
THE DEATH OF EIGHT PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS IN LATE JANUARY PRESENTED THE BELAUNDE GOVERNMENT WITH A POTENTIAL SCANDAL THAT HAD BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS. INTERNAL CRITICS RANGING FROM THE CENTER-LEFT APRA TO



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COMMUNISTS AND THE FAR LEFT WERE ABLE TO UNITE IN DEMANDING



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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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AN EXPLANATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT. CRITICISM OF PERU'S "HUMAN RIGHTS" RECORD IN "LE MONDE" AND CERTAIN US PUBLICATIONS STUNG.

- PRESIDENT BELAUNDE NAMED A THREE-MAN SPECIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE TRAGEDY. THIS WAS AN AD HOC RESPONSE WITHOUT CLEAR CONSTITUTIONAL ANTECEDENTS. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE COMMISSION'S PRIMARY MANDATE WAS POLITICAL: TO DISPEL THE CLOUD OF DOUBT WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE NEWSMENS' DEATHHS HAD PLACED OVER THE GOVERNMENT AND, POTENTIALLY, THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME ITSELF.
- 3. THE ONLY GUIDELINES COMMISSION MEMBERS HAD TO GO BY WERE THOSE THEY ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES. MARIO CASTRO ARENAS, A POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS APRISTA JUST CHOSEN HEAD OF THE JOURNALISTS GUILD, WAS A VOCAL CRITIC. AGING, INFORM, BUT WIDELY RESPECTED, DR. ABRAHAM GUZMAN FIGUEROA ADDED A JURISTS RIGOROUS LOGIC. IN THE PERSON OF MARIO VARGAS LLOSA, BELAUNDE SELECTED A MAN OF LETTERS WHOSE INTERNATIONAL STATURE GAVE THE COMMISSION AN AIR OF CREDIBILITY.
- THE COMMISSION DELIVERED ITS REPORT TO PRESIDENT BELAUNDE ON MARCH 4, SIMULTANEOUSLY RELEASING IT TO THE PUBLIC. NATIONAL TELEVISION CARRIED VARGAS LLOSA'S ORAL DELIVERY OF THE REPORT, ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE BACKGROUND FOOTAGE, ON MARCH 5 AND 6. DELINEATING BETWEEN FINDINGS REGARDED AS "ABSOLUTELY" CERTAIN AND OTHERS THAT ARE LESS SO, THE REPORT PROPOSES ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES TO ACCOUNT FOR THE MOST DOUBTFUL EVENTS. BOTH IN ITS SEPARATE ELEMENTS AND ITS ENTIRETY, THE REPORT HAS A RING OF TRUTH THAT, COMPLEMENTED BY

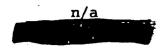


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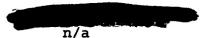
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VARGAS LLOSA'S SKILLED HAND, IMPARTS TO WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A SOMBER POLITICAL DOCUMENT THE GRACE OF A WORK OF ART. THE TEXT IS REMARKABLY LUCID, COGENT, AND AT TIMES POIGNANT AS IT PLACES THE UCHURACCAY TRAGEDY IN ITS WIDER PERUVIAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

5. (U) THE REPORT MAKES NO PRETENSE AT BEING A LEGAL INDICTMENT. TO THE CONTRARY, IT ACCUSES NO INDIVIDUALS AND LEAVES FOR THE LEGAL PROCESS TO TAKE ITS DUE OF THOSE



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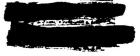
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EVENTUALLY IDENTIFIED AS THE JOURNALISTS' KILLERS. IT DESCRIBES THE EXISTENCE IN ONE COUNTRY OF TWO SOCIETIES--AN "OFFICIAL" WESTERNIZED ONE GOVERNED BY A CONSTITUTION AND LAWS, AND A SECOND THAT IS INDIGENOUS, CHARACTERIZED BY MISERY AND HUNGER, AND WHOSE TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS ANTEDATE THE FOUNDING OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE CONQUISTADORES.

GIVEN THE POLITICAL NATURE OF ITS MANDATE,
THE COMMISSION PERFORMED WELL. THE COMMISSION TOOK INTO
ACCOUNT THE CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES OF CULPABILITY
MADE BY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS AND OPPOSITION AND ADDRESSED
EACH. THE RESULT IS A DOCUMENT WHOSE CONCLUSIONS OFFER
SOME VINDICATION FOR ALL. OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN POINT
TO CRITICISM OF POLICE CONDUCT AND TO REJECTION OF THE
CHARGE THAT THE NEWSMENS PURPOSE WAS SUSPECT. GOVERNMENT
SUPPORTERS CONCENTRATE ON THE REPORT'S DISMISSAL OF
"SYSTEMATIC" POLICE MISCONDUCT. THEY ALSO STRESS THE
FINDING THAT SENDERO'S DEPREDATIONS IN THE EMERGENCY
ZONE WAS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE CLIMATE OF FEAR AMONG
RURAL VILLAGERS THAT LED TO THE NEWSMENS' LYNCHING.

7. CRITICISMS COME PRINCIPALLY FROM THE COMMUNISTS AND FAR LEFT, WHICH SAY THE COMMISSION FAILED TO ACT AS A JUDICIAL BODY. SEVERAL REGIONAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS PROTESTED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO APPOINT A BODY WHICH HAD NO PRECISE CONSTITUTIONAL SANCTION. THE

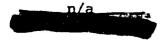


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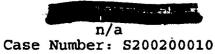
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LEFTIST PRESS IS NOW ELICITING CRITICISM FROM NATIONALLY PROMINENT JURISTS OF THE REPORT' USE OF LEGALLY IMPRECISE TERMINOLOGY. BUT THE ONLY ARGUMENT THAT CARRIES WEIGHT IS THE CHARGE, TRUE IN ITSELF, THAT THE REPORT FAILS TO POINT AN ACCUSING FINGER AT SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS.

8. WITH UNINTENTIONAL IRONY, PRO COMMUNIST DAILY
"MARKA" TURNED MARXISM UPSIDE DOWN. "MARKA'S" WORDS "THOSE
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIME ARE NOT INDIVIDUALS BUT
RATHER SOCIAL RELATIONS AND COLLECTIVITIES, AND THE MASSACRE
DID NOT TAKE PLACE AT A GIVEN TIME AND PLACE, WITH PRECISE
MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUARL AUTHORS, BUT RATHER WAS THE
PRODUCT OF A COMPLEX PROCESS OF IMMENSE DURATION...INDIVIDUAL



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(RESPONSIBILITY) DISAPPEARS AND FALLS INTO THE MOST BLIND



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