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[REDACTED]

n/a

Case Number: S200200010

[REDACTED]

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO	OCT-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-10	CIAE-00	H-01
	IO-15	NSC-01	NSAE-00	SY-06	HA-08	L-03	PM-09
	PA-01	MCT-02	USSS-00	SYE-00	USIE-00	SP-02	SNP-01
	PRS-01	/087 W					

-----274015 091837Z /46

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

[REDACTED] 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

1. [REDACTED] 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
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

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COMMUNISTS AND THE FAR LEFT WERE ABLE TO UNITE IN DEMANDING

n/a

[REDACTED]

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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.

2. [REDACTED] 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' DEATHS HAD PLACED OVER THE GOVERNMENT AND, POTENTIALLY, THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME ITSELF.

3. [REDACTED] 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.

4. [REDACTED] 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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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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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.

6. [REDACTED] 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. [REDACTED] 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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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. [REDACTED] 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
DETERMINISM".
ORTIZ

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