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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT

TAGS: PTER, ASEC, PHUM, PE

SUBJECT: SENDERO THREATENS PRIESTS IN ANCASH

1. (U) ON FEBRUARY 8, SENDERO LUMINOSO POSTED A "HIT LIST" OF FOREIGN AND PERUVIAN PRIESTS AND OTHER RELIGIOUS WORKERS IN ANCASH DEPARTMENT, SOME 250 KILOMETERS NORTH OF LIMA THAT MUST LEAVE THE AREA OR FACE EXECUTION. THE LIST, FOUND AT A MARKET IN THE INDEPENDENCE SECTOR OF HUARAZ (CAPITAL OF ANCASH) SPECIFICALLY LISTED BY NAME THE ITALIAN PRIESTS OF THE PARISHES OF MACARA, ASUNCION CHACAS AND OUR LADY OF BELEN -- ALL THREE IN RURAL AREAS -- AND THE SPANISH PRIEST OF THE CONVENT OF SAN ANTONIO, IN HUARAZ PROPER. SEVERAL UNIDENTIFIED PERUVIAN PRIEST WERE ALSO THREATENED. THERE ARE NO U.S. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS WORKERS IN THE AREA AND NONE WERE NAMED IN THE SENDERO DOCUMENT.

Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify
Date 6-4-02 Exemption _____

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2. (C) THE THREAT IS BEING TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY BY CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALS. THE SENDERO COLUMN OPERATING IN THE ANCASH AREA IS ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE AND HAS KILLED FOREIGN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS WORKERS IN THE PAST. ON OCTOBER 3, 1992, SENDERO ASSASSINATED AN ITALIAN PRIEST IN THE CARHUAZ AREA OF ANCASH AND IN AUGUST 1991 SENDERO KILLED TWO POLISH FRANCISCAN PRIESTS AND AN ITALIAN PRIEST IN TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS. THE RELIGIOUS WORKERS NAMED IN THE DOCUMENT GATHERED IN HUARAZ ON FEBRUARY 9 TO DECIDE WHETHER TO EVACUATE THE AREA OR STAY AND FACE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES. THE LAST FOREIGNER KILLED BY SENDERO WAS YUGOSLAV ENGINEER DJORAJE BULOVAN, WHO WAS ASSASSINATED WHILE WORKING AT A REMOTE HYDROELECTRIC SITE IN RURAL LIMA PROVINCE ON OCTOBER 20, 1992.

3. (C) CHURCH CONTACTS TOLD POLOFF THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT SENDERO HAS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED RELIGIOUS WORKERS BY NAME. THE CHURCH OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED THAT ONLY SOME OF THE PRIESTS NAMED HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK, THE USUAL "CRIME" THAT IN THE PAST HAS PROVOKED A SENDERO ATTACK. ALSO WORRYING CHURCH OFFICIALS IS THAT SENDERO HAS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED PERUVIAN PRIESTS IN THE LIST. PERUVIAN CLERGY HAVE GENERALLY BEEN SPARED ATTENTION BY SENDERO AND THEIR INCLUSION, ALONG WITH FOREIGN PRIESTS, IN THE HIT LIST MAY MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE CHURCH TO CONDUCT ITS PASTORAL WORK IN THE AREA. THE CHURCH HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN ORGANIZING UNARMED RONDAS CAMPESINAS IN THE HUARAZ AREA TO RESIST SL. THESE ATTACKS COULD BE RETALIATION FOR THAT CHURCH EFFORT.
BRAYSHAW##

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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