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EXCISE

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ACTION ARA-00

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-----267030 202323Z /61

O 202251Z MAY 87  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9625  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
USINT HAVANA  
USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IS/FPC/CDR *DR* Date: 9-3-96

( ) RELEASE ( ) DECLASSIFY  
(X) EXCISE (X) DECLASSIFY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 LIMA 05732

USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PGOV, PTER, PE, PREL, US  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH IU PRESIDENT  
BARRANTES

1. (C) SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET ON  
MAY 7 WITH UNITED LEFT (IU) PRESIDENT ALFONSO  
BARRANTES AT BARRANTES' HOME. BARRANTES  
EXPOUNDED AT LENGTH ON A VARIETY OF  
TOPICS.)

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[ UNKNOWN TO US, BARRANTES HAD ARRANGED FOR MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE. THE MEETING, PLUS BARRANTES' SUBSEQUENT FAVORABLE REFERENCES TO IT, LED TO A STORM OF VICIOUS CRITICISM OF BARRANTES BY IU RADICALS AND THE PRO-TERRORIST PRESS. REACTION FROM OTHER QUARTERS WAS MODERATE; CONSERVATIVE COLUMNIST D'ORNELLAS CLAIMED THAT BARRANTES USED THE MEETING TO PORTRAY THE UNITED STATES AS COMFORTABLE WITH AN IU VICTORY IN THE 1990 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

END SUMMARY.

2. (U) AMBASSADOR CALLED ON ALFONSO BARRANTES, EX-LIMA MAYOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED LEFT (IU) COALITION, PERU'S SECOND STRONGEST POLITICAL PARTY, ON MAY 7 AT HIS  
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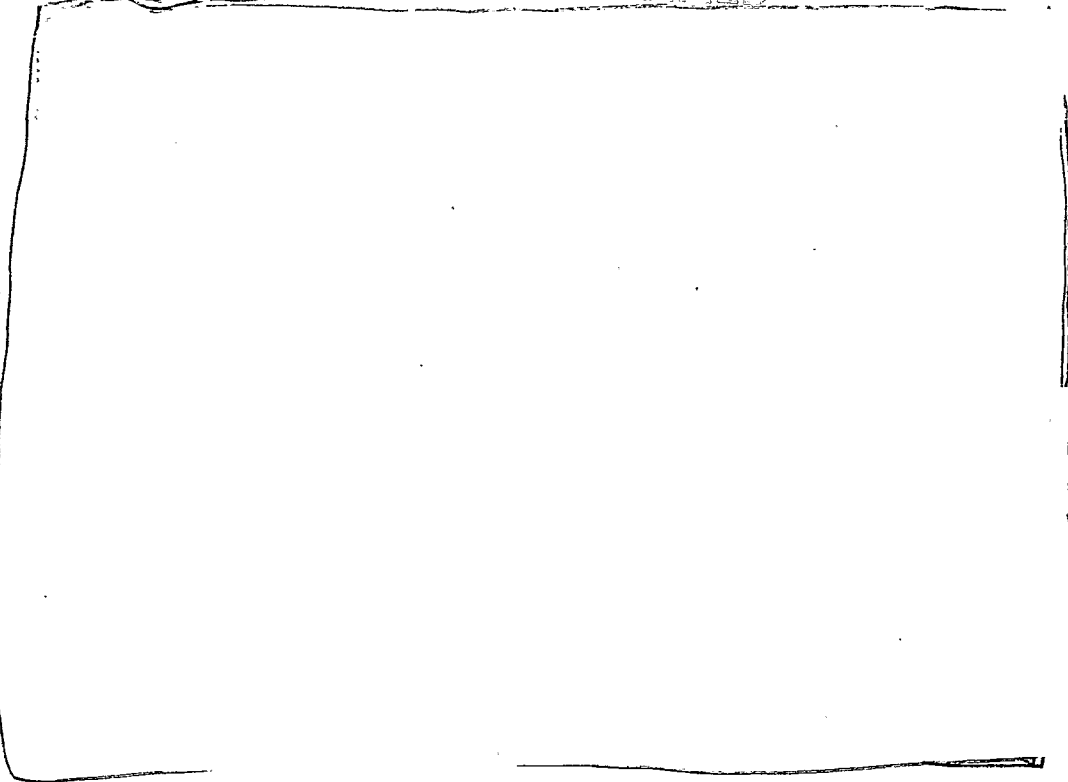
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RESIDENCE. WITHOUT TELLING US BEFOREHAND, BARRANTES ARRANGED FOR NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION PHOTOGRAPHERS TO BE ON HAND FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE.

3. (C) THE MEETING LASTED ONE HOUR; ITS TONE WAS CORDIAL.

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9626  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
USINT HAVANA  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 LIMA 05732

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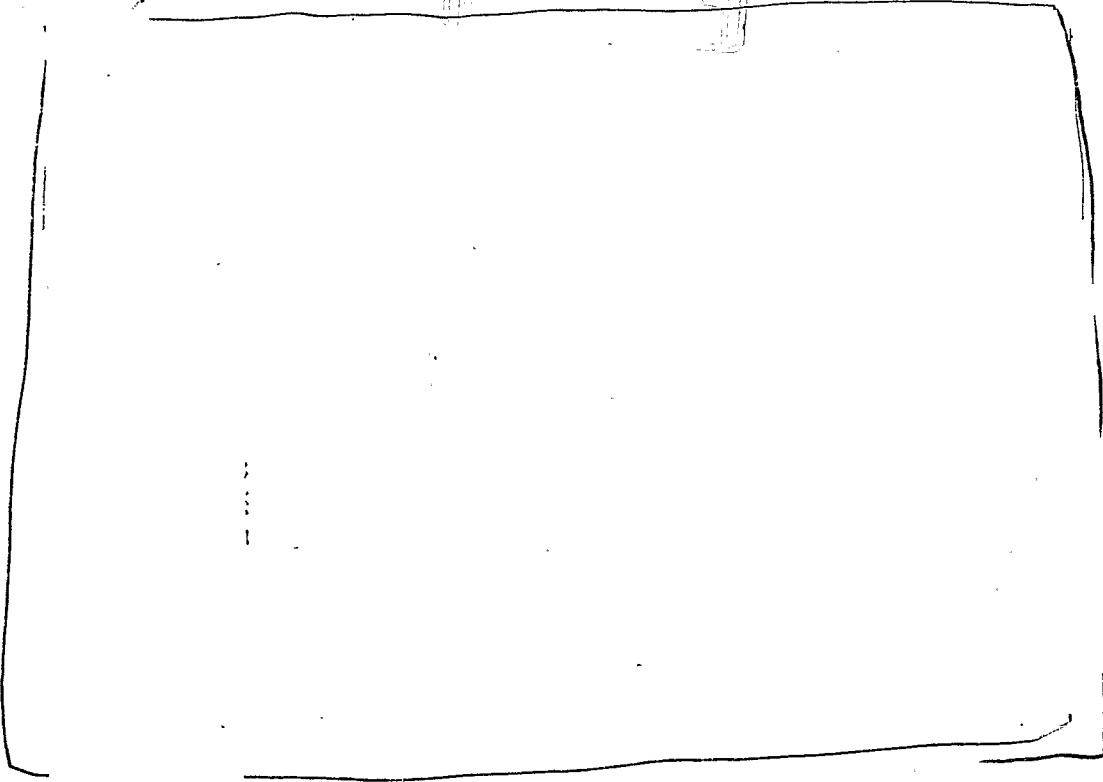
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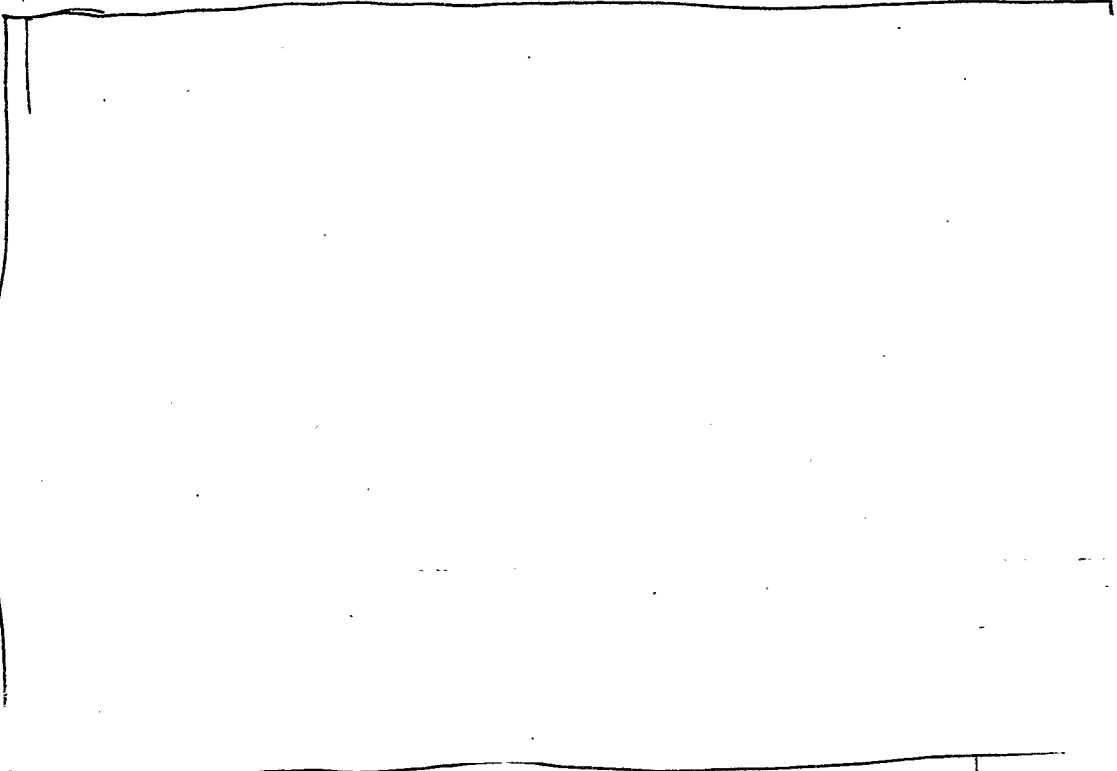
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 LIMA 05732

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11. (U) PRESS COVERAGE AND LOCAL REACTION

AFTER THE MEETING, BARRANTES TALKED BRIEFLY ABOUT IT WITH A REPORTER FROM THE LEFTIST DAILY "LA REPUBLICA" (WHICH USUALLY GIVES FAVORABLE COVERAGE TO BARRANTES). BARRANTES WAS UPBEAT, CALLING THE VISIT A "FRATERNAL" MEETING BETWEEN THE AMBASSADOR AND THE LEADER OF THE COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST POLITICAL FORCE. THERE WAS DIALOGUE, HE SAID, BUT NO "IDEOLOGICAL OR POLITICAL CONCESSIONS." HE SAID "ECONOMIC ISSUES" HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, BUT OTHERWISE DECLINED TO DISCUSS SPECIFIC TOPICS OF CONVERSATION. WHILE SUCH A MEETING MIGHT HAVE BEEN "HERETICAL" YEARS AGO, HE SAID, CHANGES IN PERU AND IN U.S.-PERU RELATIONS NOW MADE DIALOGUE POSSIBLE. BARRANTES ASSURED HIS AUDIENCE THAT THERE WOULD BE FUTURE MEETINGS; HE THEN CALLED ATTENTION TO HIS FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH OTHER FOREIGN AMBASSADORS.

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12. (U) "LA REPUBLICA" PROCEEDED TO DEVOTE THE FRONT PAGE, AS WELL AS THE SUCCEEDING TWO PAGES, FULLY TO THE MEETING, CALLING THE VISIT "UNPRECEDENTED" AND OF "TRANSCENDENTAL IMPORTANCE." BEGINNING THE FOLLOWING DAY (MAY 9), THE MORE RADICAL LEFTIST PRESS -- "LA VOZ" (IU HARDLINERS), "CAMBIO" (PRO-MRTA-MIR), AND "EL DIARIO" (PRO-SENDERO) -- BEGAN TO CRITICIZE THE MEETING AS A "SELL OUT" AND AS A "MANIPULATION" BY "HE

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AMBASSADOR OF THE IU. THE RADICALS' MESSAGE WAS THAT THE IU HAD NOTHING TO DISCUSS WITH THE USG; THAT BARRANTES HAD FAILED TO SEEK PERMISSION FROM THE IU NATIONAL DIRECTORATE TO MEET WITH THE AMBASSADOR; AND THAT BARRANTES HAD THEN NEGLECTED TO INFORM IU LEADERS WHAT ISSUES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. CRITICISM IN THESE DAILIES WAS NOT ONLY EXTENSIVE, BUT ALSO EXTREMELY OFFENSIVE AND WAS DIRECTED MORE AGAINST BARRANTES THAN THE UNITED STATES.

13. (U) THERE WAS LITTLE REACTION, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, FROM THE GOP, APRA, OR THE PPC. AN EXCEPTION WAS CONSERVATIVE COLUMNIST MANUEL D'ORNELLAS (FROM THE ULLOA DAILY "EXPRESO") WHO CLAIMED THE MEETING SHOWED BARRANTES KNEW HIS DAYS WERE NUMBERED AS IU PRESIDENT, DUE TO RADICALS' OPPOSITION, AND SO WAS "OPENING POLITICAL SPACE" TO THE CENTER. D'ORNELLAS ADDED THAT BARRANTES INTENDED THAT

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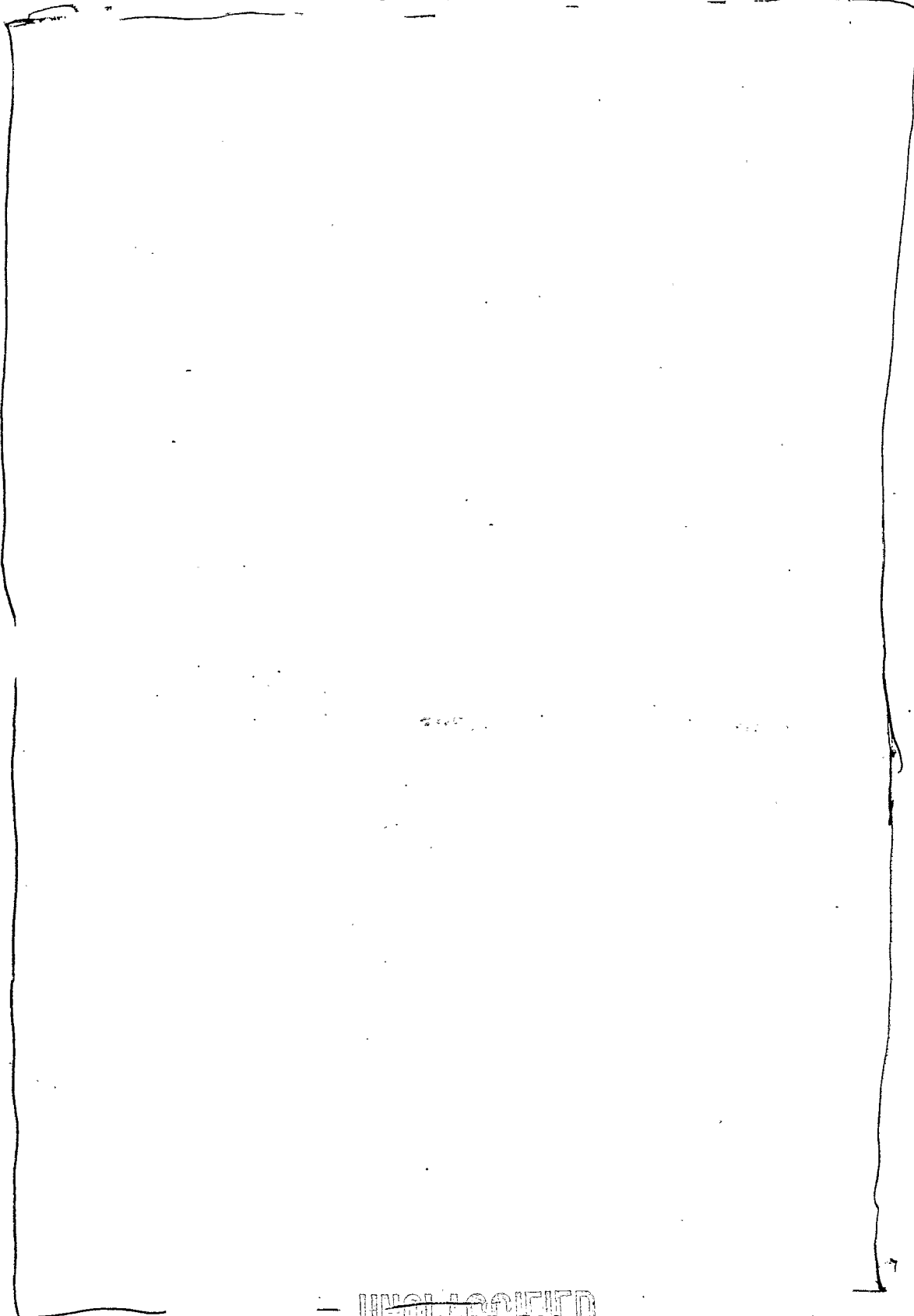
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*THE MEETING SHOW THAT A VOTE FOR HIM IN 1990  
WOULD NOT BE A "WASTED VOTE," I.E., THAT  
HIS ELECTION WOULD NOT TRIGGER U.S. "ECONOMIC  
VETO."*

14. (C) COMMENT: PRESS REPORTS NOTWITH-  
STANDING, THERE HAS BEEN EMBASSY AND AMBASSADORIAL  
CONTACT WITH BARRANTES FOR A PERIOD OF YEARS.  
THIS WAS, HOWEVER, THE FIRST PRIVATE CONVERSA-  
TION WITH BARRANTES SINCE HE STEPPED DOWN AS  
LIMA MAYOR IN LATE DECEMBER 1986.

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