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AMEMBASSY BOGOTA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO NIACT IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
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USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM
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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PE
SUBJECT: COUP CONCERNS: POLITICAL CONTEXT

REFS: (A) LIMA 7531 (NOTAL), (B) LIMA 7364 (NOTAL),
- (C) LIMA 7532 (NOTAL), (D) LIMA 7530 (NOTAL)

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

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2. THE FOLLOWING AMPLIFIES SUMMARY ASSESSMENT TRANS-

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SAM A. MOSKOWITZ
DATE/CASE ID: 9 AUG 1999 199902275

MITTED EARLIER TODAY IN REF A.

3. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT: GARCIA HAS BEEN POLITICALLY HURT IN PAST TEN DAYS. PERUVIAN MEDIA WHICH REFLECT FAR LEFT OPINION HAVE MADE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT COMMUNIST GROUPS CONSIDER GOP'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO PRISON MASSACRES TOTALLY INADEQUATE. VITRIOLIC RHETORIC AND ACCUSATIONS IN THESE PUBLICATIONS SUGGESTED A POTENTIALLY IRREPARABLE BREAK WITH GARCIA ADMINISTRATION. A MAIN ELEMENT IN GARCIA'S POLITICAL STRATEGY UNTIL NOW HAS BEEN TO COOPT IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF FAR LEFT. HIS VIEW, AS EXPRESSED TO U.S. AND OTHER INTERLOCUTORS MANY TIMES, HAS BEEN THAT HE NEEDS TO MANAGE THE COMMUNISTS IN THIS WAY TO MAINTAIN A MODICUM OF SOCIAL PEACE IN AN INHERENTLY FRAGILE AND DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT. SHARP BREAK WITH FAR LEFT, WHICH PRISON KILLING ISSUE SEEMED TO ENTAIL, WOULD ULTIMATELY HAVE ERODED GARCIA'S POPULARITY AND UNDERCUT HIS STRATEGY.

4. AT SAME TIME, LIMA CONGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL SERVED TO DAMAGE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL STATURE AND TO DEAL A BLOW TO HIS ASPIRATIONS FOR NAM LEADERSHIP. MANY DELEGATES WERE SHOCKED BY PRISON AFFAIR, AND WERE DEEPLY DISCONCERTED BY GENERAL SECURITY SITUATION IN LIMA (REF B).

5. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT GARCIA COULD NOT HAVE CONTAINED LURIGANCHO PRISON PROBLEMS WITHIN PARAMETERS SET BY HIS ORIGINAL CHARGE THAT SOME 30 INMATES HAD BEEN MASSACRED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT A VARIETY OF WITNESSES AND OTHERS WITH ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION WERE PREPARING

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TO TAKE IT TO COURTS AND PRESS.

6. CONFRONTED BY THIS SITUATION, PRESIDENT CHOSE TO ADOPT AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH DESIGNED TO RECOVER HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL POSITION AND RESTORE HIS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. BY ANNOUNCING LURIGANCHO ATROCITIES HIMSELF (REF C), HE PUT HIMSELF AHEAD OF EVENTS AND MOVED TO COOPT COMMUNISTS. IT IS GARCIA NOW WHO IS SHAPING NATIONAL INDIGNATION. HE OBVIOUSLY EXPECTS POPULACE WILL FOLLOW HIM IN REJECTING BARBARISM THESE KILLINGS ENTAILED. INTERNATIONALLY, GARCIA PROBABLY BELIEVES MOVE WILL RESTORE LUSTER TO HIS IMAGE AND

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REINVIGORATE HIS LEADERSHIP PROSPECTS.

7. THE DANGER. PURSUING THIS APPROACH ENTAILS SUBSTANTIAL RISKS. ALTHOUGH GUARDIA REPUBLICANA (GR) POLICE EVIDENTLY PERPETRATED THE LURIGANCHO MASSACRE, PRISON WAS AT TIME UNDER AUTHORITY OF JOINT MILITARY COMMAND. AN ARMY GENERAL (RABANAL) WAS IN CHARGE. QUESTION WILL INEVITABLY ARISE AS TO WHERE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY LIES. THE GR WILL PROBABLY RESIST TAKING FALL WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO IMPLICATE OTHERS. GENERAL RABANAL IS LIKELY TO BE FIRED. BUT THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE PRESSURES FOR "HEADS TO ROLL" AT HIGHER MILITARY LEVELS. IT IS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT MILITARY IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR INSTITUTIONS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND LEGAL ACTIONS INVOLVING CONDUCT OF ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGNS BOTH IN PAST AND FUTURE. THEREIN LIES KEY DESTABILIZING ELEMENT. PROCESS GARCIA HAS SET IN MOTION COULD HAVE CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ARMED FORCES

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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y MRN CORR 07533 VICE 07534

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DOWN THE ROAD.

8. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ASSORTED MEETINGS HAVE BEEN
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HELD WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES TO ANALYZE SITUATION.
ARMY HIGH COMMAND MET FOR SEVERAL HOURS JUNE 27.
BUT ALL OUR SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT NO MILITARY MOVE
TO INTERVENE IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IS UNDERWAY OR
IMMINENT. KEY GENERALS AND ADMIRALS DENY IT POINT
BLANK BOTH TO US AND TO THIRD COUNTRY ATTACHES. WE
HAVE OBSERVED NO UNUSUAL ACTIVITY AT JOINT COMMAND.

9. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT REPORTS OF COUP PLOTTING
WERE GENERATED BY GARCIA ADMINISTRATION AND SPREAD
ABROAD IN ORCHESTRATED FASHION TO BUILD INTERNATIONAL
SUPPORT FOR PERUVIAN DEMOCRACY IN WHAT WILL BE A
CHALLENGING PERIOD. IN ADDITION TO GARCIA'S CONVERSATIO
WITH CANADIAN AMBASSADOR (REF D), WE ARE AWARE OF
A SERIES OF OTHER HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS, INCLUDING A
CALL BY FOREIGN MINISTER WAGNER TO ARGENTINE COUNTER-
PART CAPUTO. BEYOND HELPING BUY INSURANCE AGAINST A
COUP, THIS EFFORT WAS PROBABLY INTENDED TO CREATE
SYMPATHY FOR GARCIA, REVERSE BAD PUBLICITY HE HAS
BEEN RECEIVING AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTE TO GOAL OF REFUR-
BISHING HIS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. HOWEVER,
IT COULD TURN OUT TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. PERUVIAN
MILITARY IS BEING CAST AS VILLAIN AND SPECTER OF
VENDETTA AGAINST THOSE WHO CONDUCT ANTI-SUBVERSIVE
ACTIVITIES IS BEING RAISED. GARCIA'S EFFORT TO MOBILIZE
SUPPORT ABROAD MAY, THUS, FURTHER DAMAGE HIM WITH
MILITARY.

JORDAN

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