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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ7904

PAGE 01 LIMA 03392 01 OF 04 182007Z
ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	A-00
	ACQ-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	CTME-00	INL-01
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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7043
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC//NMJIC-J2/DH-511
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 LIMA 003392

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PAGE 02 LIMA 03392 01 OF 04 182007Z

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DAVID W COX
DATE/CASE ID: 07 OCT 2008 200706146

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/17/2007

TAGS: PHUM PGOV PINR PE

SUBJECT: MURDER/DECAPITATION OF INTELLIGENCE AGENT MARIELA
BARRETO HORRIFIES PERU

REF: A) IIR 6 876 0234 97; B) LIMA 3283

1. CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE JAMES MACK. REASON 1.5 (D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: THE DISCOVERY IN MARCH OF THE DECAPITATED BODY OF PERUVIAN ARMY INTELLIGENCE AGENT (SIE) MARIELA BARRETO AND REPORTS ABOUT HER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD HAVE CAUSED AN UPROAR IN PERU. THIS SHOCKING STORY CAME ON THE HEELS OF PUBLICITY SURROUNDING THE TORTURE BY SUPERIORS OF FELLOW SIE AGENT LEONOR LA ROSA. DEFENSE MINISTER CASTILLO TOLD CONGRESS APRIL 9 THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE NOT INVOLVED IN BARRETO'S MURDER, AND THEREFORE IT WAS UP TO THE CIVILIAN COURTS TO FIND AND PUNISH THOSE RESPONSIBLE. COLINA DEATH SQUAD LEADER SANTIAGO MARTIN RIVAS, THE FATHER OF ONE OF BARRETO'S CHILDREN, HAS PUBLICLY DENIED INVOLVEMENT IN THE MURDER. EVEN SO, HE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD ARE BEING INVESTIGATED BY POLICE. A FORMER SIE AGENT HAS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT BARRETO WAS KILLED BY THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD IN RETALIATION FOR HAVING LEAKED TO THE PRESS INFORMATION REGARDING THE 1992 LA CANTUTA MASSACRE. THIS AGENT WAS DETAINED ON DISLOYALTY AND DESERTION CHARGES THE FOLLOWING DAY. END SUMMARY.

INTEL AGENT MURDERED

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PAGE 03 LIMA 03392 01 OF 04 182007Z

3. (U) THE MUTILATED BODY OF PERUVIAN ARMY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER MARIELA BARRETO WAS FOUND MARCH 23. BARRETO'S HEAD AND THE LOWER PARTS OF HER LEGS AND ARMS HAD BEEN CHOPPED OFF, PROBABLY IN ORDER TO PREVENT IDENTIFICATION. BARRETO WAS 28 YEARS OLD AND HAD TWO DAUGHTERS. "COLINA" DEATH SQUAD LEADER SANTIAGO MARTIN RIVAS, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE NOTORIOUS 1992 LA CANTUTA UNIVERSITY MASSACRE, IS THE FATHER OF MARIELA'S FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, NATALY. BARRETO'S BODY WAS IDENTIFIED MARCH 25 AND SHE WAS BURIED IN A

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MILITARY CEMETERY MARCH 26. REVELATIONS REGARDING BARRETO'S MURDER COINCIDED WITH THE APRIL 6 TELEVISED INTERVIEW OF SIE AGENT LEONOR LA ROSA, WHO WAS SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF BEING TORTURED BY HER SUPERIORS, AND GENERATED PUBLIC OUTRAGE.

[REDACTED]

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4. (C)

[REDACTED]

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TO [REDACTED] SHE HAD BEEN ON MATERNITY LEAVE SINCE DECEMBER AND GAVE BIRTH TO A DAUGHTER, HER SECOND CHILD, ON JANUARY 17. ON MARCH 22, THE DAY OF HER DISAPPEARANCE, MARIELA [REDACTED] SHE WAS GOING TO THE MILITARY HOSPITAL, BUT DID NOT GIVE SPECIFICS. SHE LEFT HER HOME SHORTLY AFTER 6:30 A.M. AND SAID SHE WOULD RETURN AT 10:00 A.M. WHEN SHE DID NOT RETURN BY MIDDAY, HER FAMILY BECAME CONCERNED AND [REDACTED]

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PAGE 04 LIMA 03392 01 OF 04 182007Z

[REDACTED], SEARCHED FOR HER IN HOSPITALS AND POLICE STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. AT 1:00 A.M. SUNDAY MORNING, A SIE AGENT FRIEND OF MARIELA'S KNOWN [REDACTED] ONLY AS "MAYRA," ACCOMPANIED BY SOMEONE THEY THOUGHT WAS MAYRA'S HUSBAND, TURNED UP UNEXPECTEDLY ASKING FOR MARIELA.

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[REDACTED]

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MARIELA'S FUNERAL

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6. (C) ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, A FUNERAL SERVICE WAS HELD FOR MARIELA. SIE CHIEF COL. JOSE SANCHEZ NORIEGA (WHO WAS JAILED APRIL 8 ON CHARGES RELATING TO THE TORTURE OF SIE AGENT LA ROSA) ATTENDED, AS DID MAYRA. MARIELA WAS PREPARING TO RETURN TO THE SIE AFTER HER MATERNITY LEAVE AND WAS REPORTING TO A MAJOR ESPINOZA,

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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ7905

PAGE 01 LIMA 03392 02 OF 04 182007Z
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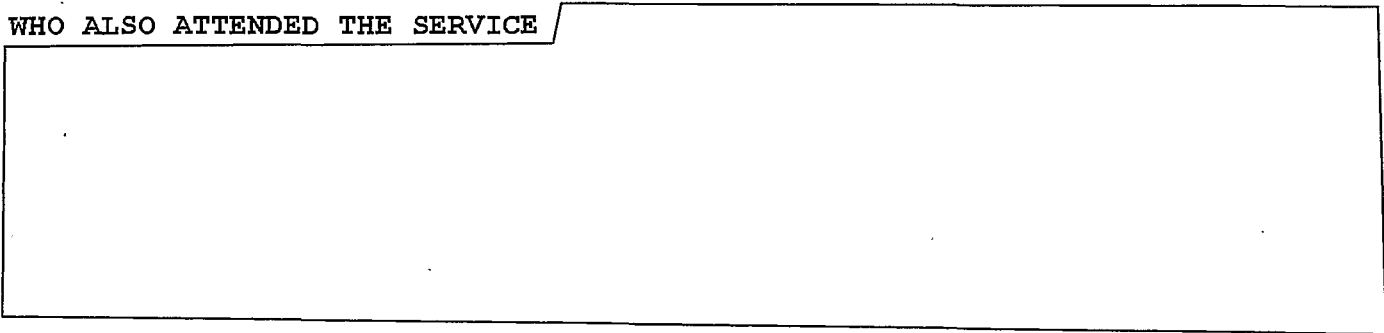
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PAGE 02 LIMA 03392 02 OF 04 182007Z

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/17/2007
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SUBJECT: MURDER/DECAPITATION OF INTELLIGENCE AGENT MARIELA
BARRETO HORRIFIES PERU

WHO ALSO ATTENDED THE SERVICE



B6

DISCOVERY OF THE DISMEMBERED BODY

7. (C) MARIELA'S BODY WAS FOUND MARCH 23, AFTER A 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITNESSED TWO MEN LEAVE A BAG AT 8:30 A.M. BY A HIGHWAY NORTH OF LIMA. SHE AND HER FRIENDS LATER INVESTIGATED AND FOUND WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE MARIELA'S BODY. THE GIRL'S FATHER THEN ALERTED POLICE. WHEN THE POLICE BEGAN THEIR INVESTIGATION THEY INITIALLY SUSPECTED MARIELA'S FIANCE, ELMER VALDIVIESO, A DRIVER WITH ARMY INTELLIGENCE. HOWEVER, SHOWN A PHOTO OF VALDIVIESO, THE EYEWITNESS SAID HE WAS NOT ONE OF THE MEN WHO LEFT THE BODY. [REDACTED] BELIEVES VALDIVIESO IS INNOCENT. THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT THE 14-YEAR-OLD EYEWITNESS HAS RECEIVED DEATH THREATS.

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HOWEVER, THE GIRL'S FATHER, CONCERNED ABOUT HER SAFETY, HAS NOT
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PAGE 03 LIMA 03392 02 OF 04 182007Z
PERMITTED APRODEH TO INTERVIEW HER MORE THAN ONCE AND APRODEH DOES
NOT HAVE INFORMATION ON THIS THREAT.

PRESS BEGINS TO DISCUSS MARIELA'S DEATH

8. (U) RUMORS THAT MEMBERS OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE, SPECIFICALLY
MEMBERS OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD, WERE INVOLVED IN MARIELA'S DEATH
BEGAN APRIL 6 WHEN VARIOUS WEEKEND NEWS PROGRAMS RAN REPORTS ON HER
MURDER. EARLY PRESS REPORTS SPECULATED THAT MARIELA HAD BEEN
KILLED BY COLINA DEATH SQUAD MEMBER JUAN SOSA SAAVEDRA ON ORDERS OF
MARTIN RIVAS. (SOSA DENIED THIS IN AN APRIL 17 MAGAZINE
INTERVIEW.) THE EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE ABOUT MARIELA'S MURDER
COINCIDED WITH NEWS THAT FELLOW AGENT LEONOR LA ROSA'S HAD BEEN
TORTURED. ON APRIL 9, DEFENSE MINISTER TOMAS CASTILLO, IN A
PRESENTATION TO CONGRESS ON BOTH CASES, STATED THAT THE CIVILIAN
COURTS HAD JURISDICTION OVER FINDING THOSE WHO MURDERED MARIELA,
SINCE THE ARMED FORCES WERE NOT INVOLVED (REF B). THAT NIGHT AT
11:30, A CIVILIAN PROSECUTOR SHOWED UP AT THE BARRETO RESIDENCE FOR
THE FIRST TIME AND INTERVIEWED HER FAMILY UNTIL TWO IN THE MORNING.
THE BARRETOS NOTICED A STRANGE VEHICLE DRIVING AROUND THEIR HOME ON
THE EVENING OF APRIL 8 AND ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY.
THROUGH APRODEH THEY HAVE SENT A LETTER TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OMBUDSMAN EXPRESSING THIS CONCERN.

MARIELA'S TIES TO LEONOR LA ROSA

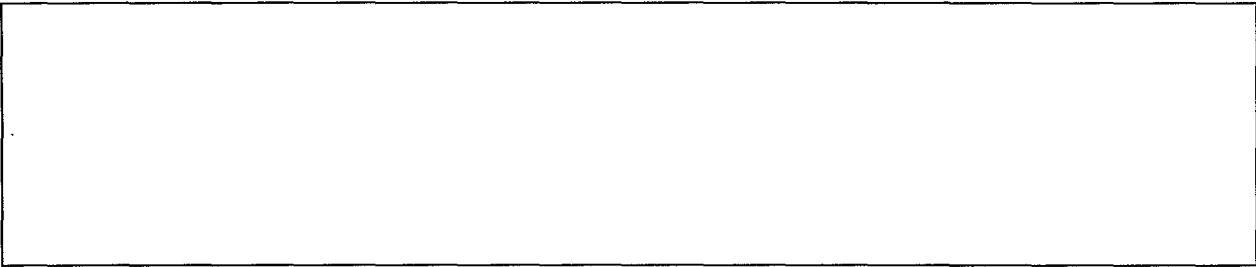
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MARIELA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH COLINA DEATH SQUAD LEADER MARTIN RIVAS

10. (U) AS FOR [REDACTED] RELATIONSHIP WITH MAJOR SANTIAGO MARTIN RIVAS, THE LEADER OF THE "COLINA" DEATH SQUAD, [REDACTED] SAID [REDACTED] HAD NEVER MET HIM AND DID NOT THINK HE HAD EVER SEEN HIS DAUGHTER NATALY, WHO WAS BORN IN JULY 1993. [REDACTED] DID SHOW [REDACTED] A PHOTO OF MARTIN RIVAS FROM A NEWSPAPER WHEN NEWS EMERGED OF MARTIN RIVAS'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE JULY 1992 MASSACRE OF A PROFESSOR AND NINE STUDENTS AT LA CANTUTA UNIVERSITY, FOR WHICH HE WAS SENTENCED BY A MILITARY COURT TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON. MARTIN RIVAS WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON IN JUNE 1995 AS A RESULT OF THE AMNESTY GRANTED TO MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO COMMITTED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DURING THE WAR ON TERRORISM.

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11. (U) IN RESPONSE TO INTENSE MEDIA SPECULATION REGARDING HIS ROLE IN MARIELA'S MURDER, MARTIN RIVAS APPEARED APRIL 13 ON THE

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PAGE 01 LIMA 03392 03 OF 04 182008Z

ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	A-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 LIMA 003392

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PAGE 02 LIMA 03392 03 OF 04 182008Z

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/17/2007
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HIGHLY-RATED SUNDAY PROGRAM "PANORAMA." HE CATEGORICALLY DENIED
 ANY INVOLVEMENT IN MARIELA'S MURDER, ADDING THAT HE HAD BEEN IN
 TRUJILLO WHEN SHE WAS KILLED. MARTIN RIVAS SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN

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MARIELA IN OVER A YEAR AND A HALF. HE ADMITTED TO SPEAKING TO HER A FEW DAYS BEFORE HER DEATH REGARDING SOME FINANCIAL NEEDS OF MARIELA, AND SAID HE HAD DEPOSITED MONEY IN A BANK. MARTIN RIVAS EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR MARIELA, SAYING SHE DID NOT DESERVE TO DIE IN SUCH A FASHION. HE SAID HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HER HAD BEEN "FLEETING" AND THAT HE HAD NEVER LIVED WITH HER NOR MET HER PARENTS. IN ADDITION TO DENYING INVOLVEMENT IN MARIELA'S MURDER, MARTIN RIVAS, WHO DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS AN "ANALYST," SAID HE HAD NEVER KILLED ANYONE AND WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE 1992 LA CANTUTA UNIVERSITY MASSACRE DESPITE HAVING BEEN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR THAT OFFENSE BY A MILITARY COURT. HE ALSO DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD. THE INTERVIEW REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) AND LED TO THE RESIGNATION OF A "PANORAMA" PROGRAM EMPLOYEE FOR ETHICAL REASONS. (NOTE: THE SIN, WHOSE DE FACTO CHIEF IS VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS, COORDINATES ALL PERUVIAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. AS A PERUVIAN INTELLIGENCE ENTITY, THE SIE PROVIDES THE SIN THE PRODUCT OF ITS INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS AND COORDINATES ITS IMPORTANT OPERATIONS WITH THE SIN. END NOTE.)

THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION

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PAGE 03 LIMA 03392 03 OF 04 182008Z

12. (U) ON APRIL 15 AND 16, MARTIN RIVAS WAS INTERVIEWED BY CRIMINAL POLICE INVESTIGATING MARIELA'S DEATH. A FELLOW COLINA DEATH SQUAD MEMBER, MAJOR CARLOS PICHILINGUE GUEVARA, HAS ALSO BEEN QUESTIONED. POLICE PLAN TO INTERVIEW SIE AGENT IRIS CHUMPITAZ, WHO ACCORDING TO APRODEH IS "MAYRA." MARIELA'S PARENTS BELIEVE MAYRA ALSO BE THE MOTHER OF ANOTHER OF MARTIN RIVAS'S CHILDREN. POLICE ALSO PLAN TO QUESTION ARMY COMMANDER RAFAEL ALCANDRE, WHOM MARIELA'S PARENTS HAVE TOLD POLICE THEIR DAUGHTER OFTEN SPOKE ABOUT. MARIELA'S FIANCE, ELMER VALDIVIESO, IS ALSO STILL BEING QUESTIONED. ACCORDING TO APRIL 17 PRESS REPORTS, POLICE HAVE ALSO PREPARED DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO MEN, ONE WHO SAID HE WAS AN ARMY CAPTAIN, WHO ASKED ABOUT MARIELA AFTER SHE REPORTEDLY ENTERED AN AMUSEMENT PARK SEEKING A JOB AS A SECURITY GUARD MARCH 22. THE CAPTAIN REPORTEDLY ASKED WHY MARIELA HAD VISITED THE AMUSEMENT PARK. SHORTLY AFTER MARIELA'S DISAPPEARANCE, SOME SIE AGENTS TOLD VALDIVIESO THAT SHE WAS SEEN ENTERING SIE OFFICES ON MARCH 22.

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ACCUSATION BY FORMER INTEL AGENT

13. (U) IN AN APRIL 10 TELEVISION INTERVIEW, JOSE BAZAN, A FORMER SIE AGENT, STATED THAT MEMBERS OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD, WHOM HE SAID HE HAD BEEN CLOSE TO, ALWAYS SUSPECTED THAT MARIELA HAD PASSED INFORMATION TO THE PRESS AND THEREFORE, IN HIS VIEW, THEY KILLED HER IN REVENGE. HE SAID HER KILLING WAS NOT SANCTIONED BY THE SIE. BAZAN ADDED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO ACTIVE DUTY SIE AGENTS WHO DEPLORED MARIELA'S MURDER. THESE AGENTS BELIEVED THAT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD HAD BEEN DEACTIVATED, ITS FORMER
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PAGE 04 LIMA 03392 03 OF 04 182008Z
MEMBERS STILL MEET. BAZAN ALSO DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MARTIN RIVAS, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS PSYCHOLOGICALLY UNSTABLE, HAD COMPLETELY RETIRED FROM THE SIE.

14. (U) BAZAN SAID IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT FOR SOMEONE TO LEAVE THE SIE, BUT MANY AGENTS KNOW A LOT OF CLANDESTINE INFORMATION AND WORRY THAT THEY WILL BE WATCHED OR "DISAPPEARED" SHOULD THEY LEAVE. FOR THIS REASON THEY REMAIN WITH THE SIE DESPITE RECEIVING A LOW SALARY. BAZAN SAID MOST OF THE 1200 TO 1400 SIE EMPLOYEES ARE PAID ONLY 800 SOLES A MONTH (EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT USD 310). HE INDICATED THAT
T
THERE WERE MANY CASES INVOLVING SIE PERSONNEL BEING TORTURED WHEN THEY WERE SUSPECTED OF DISLOYALTY AND ASSERTED THAT ARMED FORCES CHIEF GENERAL NICOLAS HERMOZA RIOS KNEW OF THIS PRACTICE AND THAT HERMOZA ALSO KNEW THAT THE TORTURE OF CIVILIAN DETAINEES WAS COMMON ON ALL MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.

15. (C) BAZAN SAID THAT THERE ARE FISSURES WITHIN THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) AND THAT THOSE WHO ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE HAVE BEEN PASSING INFORMATION TO THE PRESS IN ORDER THAT ABUSES NOT BE REPEATED. BAZAN ALSO ADMITTED THAT, AS A SIE AGENT, HE PARTICIPATED IN THE BOMBING OF CONGRESSMAN DIEZ CANSECO'S HOME A FEW YEARS AGO. AS FOR DE FACTO SIN CHIEF MONTESINOS, BAZAN CLAIMED THAT MONTESINOS WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF MARTIN RIVAS AND THAT IT WAS MONTESINOS WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CREATION OF THE COLINA DEATH SQUAD. (COMMENT: WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO CONFIRM

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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ7907

PAGE 01 LIMA 03392 04 OF 04 182008Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 LIMA 003392

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PAGE 02 LIMA 03392 04 OF 04 182008Z

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BAZAN'S CLAIM OF A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONTESINOS AND MARTIN RIVAS. END COMMENT.) BAZAN WAS ARRESTED ON APRIL 11 AND HAS BEEN CHARGED IN A MILITARY COURT WITH DISLOYALTY AND DESERTION AS WELL AS WITH FINANCIAL FRAUD. (COMMENT: A HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER, WHILE NOT DISCOUNTING WHAT BAZAN HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE BARRETO CASE, SAID BAZAN WAS WELL KNOWN TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY AND JOURNALISTS AS SOMEONE WILLING TO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR MONEY. ANOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS NGO OFFICIAL HAS SAID THAT IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR POORLY PAID SIE AGENTS TO PROVIDE JOURNALISTS WITH INFORMATION IN RETURN FOR CASH. END COMMENT.)

COMMENT

16. (C) PERU -- OR AT LEAST, THE PERU WHICH PAYS ATTENTION TO PRINT OR ELECTRONIC MEDIA (WHICH IS PROBABLY LESS THAN HALF THE POPULATION) -- IS AGAIN CONVULSED BY HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES. THIS TIME, THOUGH, INSTEAD OF THE VICTIMS BEING ACCUSED TERRORISTS OR THEIR SYMPATHIZERS, THEY ARE MEMBERS OF AN ALLEGEDLY ELITE BRANCH OF THE ARMED FORCES -- ITS INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. THE BARRETO MURDER, ALONG WITH THE LA ROSA TORTURE (REF B), HAVE PRESENTED PERUVIANS A GLIMPSE AT THE DARK SIDE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT AND, THANKS TO CRUSADING JOURNALISTS, HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES, AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL FIGURES, THE DOOR ON THIS PROBLEM MIGHT BE

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PAGE 03 LIMA 03392 04 OF 04 182008Z
PUSHED OPEN A BIT FURTHER.

17. (C) HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT READY TO DECLARE THAT JUSTICE WILL TRIUMPH AND THE WRONGDOERS WILL BE PUNISHED. EVEN IF A HANDFUL OF INTELLIGENCE TYPES ARE CONVICTED OF EITHER INCIDENT, THE SYSTEM WILL HAVE SOUGHT OUT AND PUNISHED ONLY THOSE WHO COMMITTED THE CRIME, NOT THOSE GUILTY OF PERMITTING THE EVOLUTION OF A CULTURE WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES OR SECURITY FORCES WHICH ALLOWS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS TO OCCUR. ONE OPPOSITION MEMBER OF CONGRESS WHO VISITED LA ROSA IN THE HOSPITAL REMARKED SADLY THAT EVEN LA ROSA, AS THE VICTIM, COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THAT ALL TORTURE, NOT JUST THE ABUSE SHE SUFFERED, WAS WRONG.

18. (C) WHAT WE HAVE ASKED THIS WEEK, BOTH OF OURSELVES AND OF OUR CONTACTS, IS IF THE PERU OF 1997 IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PERU OF 1991-1992 WHICH FORGAVE THE ATROCITIES COMMITTED IN BARRIOS ALTOS, LA CANTUTA, AND ELSEWHERE. ON THE SURFACE, THE ANSWER IS YES. DESPITE THE MRTA RESURGENCE IN DECEMBER 1996, THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM HAS BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL AND MANY PERUVIANS ARE STILL ABLE TO RATIONALIZE HARSH MEASURES TAKEN TO DEFEAT AN EVIL WHICH THREATENED THE VERY INTEGRITY OF THE NATION-STATE. BUT WE DO NOT YET KNOW IF THE PUBLIC REVULSION AT THESE INCIDENTS IS DEEP ENOUGH TO BLOCK ANY POTENTIAL EFFORTS TO SWEEP THEM ASIDE AS ONLY THE WORK OF A FEW EMPLOYEES OF THE PERUVIAN STATE. WE HAVE SEEN, THOUGH, THAT THERE HAS BEEN SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE IMAGE OF PRESIDENT FUJIMORI FOR THOSE PERUVIANS WHO WERE STILL WILLING TO FORGIVE HIS DEMOCRATIC SHORTCOMINGS IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS HAVING SAVED PERU FROM ITSELF. FOR MANY POLITICALLY AWARE PERUVIANS THE REVELATIONS OF TORTURE AND MURDER WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES HAVE TRANSLATED INTO A FEELING THAT, IN THE WORDS OF ONE POLITICIAN, "THIS IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT THAT I THOUGHT I WAS SUPPORTING."

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PAGE 04 LIMA 03392 04 OF 04 182008Z
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