

Item Subject: Huanuco Cables

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secret

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noforn

e.o. 12356: decl: oadr

tags: phum, prel, PTER, snar, ICRC, us, pe

subject: ACTION PLAN FOR HUANUCO army killing  
 allegations

ref: (a) lima 3492, (b) lima 3532  
 - (c) lima 3587, (d) lima 3623  
 - (e) lima 3640, (f) lima 3669  
 - (g) lima 3673, (h) lima 3641

1. (c) summary: there are at least 24 killings of civilians in the uhv that have been attributed by human rights ngo's and journalists to the army during an operation that began in late march. the numbers may rise. the charges are credible, but we cannot categorically confirm them. to do that would require access to the zone by the icrc -- currently denied by the army -- and a rapid investigation by the gop. we have held off on direct EMBASSY investigation IN AREA OF KILLINGS due to security concerns, and desire not to supplant existing, effective groups based in peru, PARTICULARLY THE ICRC.

2. (C) our immediate concerns are to gather more information, and to express concerns not only

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about the accusations, but also the denial of icrc access, and the need for prompt an impartial gop investigation. more generally, we must underscore our interests transcend individual cases. the gop coincidentally has just made several attacks against foreign human rights ngo's, and remains resentful of past usg efforts in the human rights field. for our message to succeed, we must ensure gop understands our concerns reflect HIGH LEVEL VIEWS IN washington. AT DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST WE HAVE ALREADY RAISED HUANUCO KILLINGS WITH EU AND JAPAN IN LIMA; we recommend THAT THIS APPROACH BE SECONDED IN CAPITALS, AND THAT COUNTRIES SHARING OUR CONCERNS BE ASKED TO JOIN US DIRECTLY IN EVENTUAL, POSSIBLE INVESTIGATIVE ACTIONS IN PERU. we also recommend USG seek RETURN TO PERU OF un special rapporteur on executions and disappearances. end summary.

3. (c) to review the bidding, human rights ngos have accused members of the peruvian army of the following killings of noncombatants in the upper huallaga valley (refs a-e):

-- between march 29-31, eight persons in cayumba chico.

-- around april 8, seven persons in molluna (with another two persons disappeared).

-- around april 8, nine persons in moena.

-- in addition, there are other reports that the total death toll may reach as high as 100.

4. (c) the congress' human rights commission president, carlos blanco, (a gop majority member) VISITED cayumba chico on april 12-13, accompanied by members of the attorney general's office, a medical examiner, and an army inspector; this visit was supported by army helicopters and security personnel. blanco told polcouns april 20 he had not reached a formal conclusion, but he noted that "even the army does not rule out the possibility that soldiers killed the victims."

5. (c) journalists visited the moena site surreptitiously; the icrc has been denied all access to this and other towns on the west bank of the huallaga since april 1. persons claiming

to have witnessed the killings are located in aucayacu and anda (both north of tingo maria), and in huanuco city. some witnesses and some of the priests who have helped them are due in lima april 21.

6. (s/nf) collecting human rights information violations in conflictive areas is complicated. embassy has been in touch with the coordinadora nacional de derechos humanos and the icrc since word of the killings first broke. we also received a debrief from one of the journalists who visited moena. nas officer on a previously scheduled visit to tingo maria met there with prosecutors and journalists (septel). polcouns met with congressman blanco, and a milgroup officer met april 21 with the defense ministry official in charge of human rights. dao has sought meetings with members of the army (carried out april 21), as well as permission to visit tarapoto (headquarters of the huallaga front) and tingo maria (so far the army has not responded).

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[redacted] we have not sought to send an officer to the west bank itself, or even to aucayacu or anda, due to serious security concerns. given existence of groups in peru that can do their own objective investigation (unlike the case in central america in the early 1980s), we have for now decided to rely on their contacts.

7. (C) charge met with ATTORNEY GENERAL blanca nelida colan on april 20 (ref H), and has asked for a meeting with ccd president jaime yoshiyama. this, in addition to our other calls on congress and the nas visit to tingo maria, has certainly sent a message of usg concern about the killings. reinforcing this concern will be the charge's meetings to express usg views with the japanese ambassador (ref F) and european UNION ambassadors on april 21 (refs e and g), which will filter back to the gop, AND MAY PROVOKE MORE GOP CHARGES OF "UNFRIENDLY" ACTIONS BY THE EMBASSY.

8. (C) we have several overlapping concerns at this point. one is collecting more information. all appropriate elements of the mission are now engaged in this. in addition to staying in touch with the groups mentioned in paras 4 - 6, we are trying to meet with persons who allegedly witnessed the killings. these persons are

apparently spread out in aucayacu, anda, and huanuco city; some may come to lima soon. we are also seeking to meet with the priests and religious workers who first had contact with the witnesses; they are also in the cities mentioned above.

9. (C) OUR FIRST concern, HOWEVER, is to GAIN renewed icrc access to the zone. while the gop knows of our concerns, it is essential that this message be made by at as high a level as possible TO THE GOP IN LIMA FROM WASHINGTON. PERUVIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WILL SERIOUSLY WATER DOWN DEMARCHE. THE ICRC IS INDISPUTABLY THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED, MOST APPROPRIATE, RELIABLE, AND DISCRETE NGO CHARGED WITH LOOKING INTO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AND OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON CONDUCT OF ARMED FORCES IN CONFLICTS. IN LIGHT OF INFORMATION REPORTED SEPTEL, GOP MAY INTEND TO BLOCK ICRC ACCESS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD AND UNTIL ALL EVIDENCE CAN BE DISPOSED OF.

10. (C) OUT NEXT concern is that the appropriate civilian and military investigations, which have been launched, make headway. in this regard, we understand that congress will send its human rights commission to the zone during the week of april 25.

11. (C) the gop has been extraordinarily testy in the last several weeks about perceived foreign interference in internal human rights problems. it is particularly upset about usg criticism on human rights, which it largely blames on its perception that embassy lima is out OF TOUCH WITH WASHINGTON on human rights. president FUJIMORI is also frustrated since human rights has forced him to recalculate his relationship with the army, which along with his popularity is the key to his survival. we are proceeding carefully, since we do not want the gop to turn a legitimate human rights issue into a question of sovereignty. NOR DO WE WANT PUBLIC TREATMENT OF THE ISSUE BY THE EMBASSY TO SERVE AS A GOP PRETEXT TO DODGE THE NEED FOR AN INVESTIGATION.

12. (C) WE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AT THIS TIME:

-- ASSISTANT SECRETARY WATSON TO TELEPHONE PRIME/FOREIGN MINISTER GOLDENBERG TO UNDERLINE

USG CONCERN THAT A FULL INVESTIGATION BE HELD, THAT ICRC ACCESS TO THE AFFECTED AREA BE GIVEN, AND THAT RESPONSIBLE PARTIES BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE IF IT IS ESTABLISHED WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HUANUCO KILLINGS.

-- DEPARTMENT TO INSTRUCT EMBASSIES IN TOKYO AND EU CAPITALS TO FOLLOW UP ON INSTRUCTIONS CARRIED OUT BY CHARGE WITH THEIR EMBASSIES IN LIMA. HR-CONCERNED COUNTRIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN US EMBOFFS IN INVESTIGATIVE ACTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR DIPLOMATS IN PERU.

-- DEPARTMENT SHOULD RAISE AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN UN SYSTEM AN EARLY RETURN TO PERU OF THE UN SPECIAL RAPPOREUR ON summary executions and disappearances.

13. (C) EMBASSY DOES NOT PROPOSE AT THIS TIME THAT AN EMBOFF REVISIT THE TINGO MARIA AND AUCAYACU AREAS. APRIL 19 - 20 VISIT BY EMBOFF (SEPTEL) SERVED MAINLY TO LAY DOWN MARKER OF USG INTEREST AND WAS CONDUCTED IN LOW KEY FASHION. AN EARLY EMBOFF VISIT COULD BE SEEN AS PROVOCATIVE AND WOULD DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM OUR PRIMARY GOAL OF REGAINING ICRC ACCESS. IF A VISIT IS SCHEDULED, US EMBOFFS SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND/OR JAPAN. SHOULD A VISIT OCCUR, SAFEST MEANS OF TRAVEL POSSIBLE WILL HAVE TO BE USED.

-- IF HIGH LEVEL USG TELEPHONIC DEMARCHE TO GOLDENBERG DOES NOT PRODUCE EARLY RESULTS, DEPT SHOULD ISSUE PUBLIC STATEMENT DEPLORING BLOCKAGE OF ICRC ACCESS AND CALLING ON GOP TO OPEN AREA TO IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION.

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