

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980LIMA06226

7/11/80

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Channel: n/a

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 NSC-05
SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01 /052 W
-----115204 112316Z /66

P R 112237Z JUL 80
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1979
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

Release Excise Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: In Part In Full

Classify as ___ Extend as ___ Downgrade to

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

E.O. 12065: GDS 7/11/86 (SHLAUDEMAN, HARRY W.) OR
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PE, AR
SUBJECT: (U) THE CASE OF THE MISSING MONTONEROS

REF: LIMA 5570

1. [REDACTED] - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. DURING A PRIVATE CONVERSATION JULY 11 IN HIS OFFICE, I ASKED PRIME MINISTER RICHTER PRADA TO FILL ME IN ON THIS CASE. HIS RESPONSE STUCK CLOSELY TO THE OFFICIAL VERSION (REFTEL): RICHTER INSISTED WITH CONSIDERABLE VEHEMENCE THAT NO ONE WAS TORTURED OR KILLED HERE. THE THREE ARGENTINES WERE LEGALLY EXPELLED AND DELIVERED TO A BOLIVIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH LONG-STANDING PRACTICE. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT THE PERUVIANS HAD MADE NO AGREEMENT TO HAVE THE THREE TURNED OVER TO THE ARGENTINES, ALTHOUGH, HE CONCEDED, THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY PROBABLY DID JUST THAT. WITH RESPECT TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CHARGES, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT TWO OTHER MONTONEROS WERE INVOLVED IN THE CASE BUT THAT THEY HAD EVADED DETENTION AND ARE NOW "FUGITIVES". MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IS NOT LOOKING FOR THEM AT THE MOMENT IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER

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INCIDENTS ON THE EVE OF BELAUNDE'S INAUGURATION.

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3. ACCORDING TO RICHTER, THE STORIES COMING OUT OF LA PAZ TO THE EFFECT THAT THE "RECEIPT" FOR THE DEPORTEES WAS SIGNED UNDER DURESS OR THAT THE MAN WHO PURPORTEDLY SIGNED IT DOES NOT EXIST ARE ALL DUE TO THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY AND PRESIDENT GUEILER. HE NOTED THAT THE GOB HAS SO FAR FAILED TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE MATTER, SUGGESTING THAT THE FACTS DO NOT SUPPORT THE VARIOUS STATEMENTS CASTING DOUBT ON THE GOP'S VERSION. RICHTER HAS LET GENERAL GALTIERI KNOW THROUGH THE ARGENTINE ATTACHE HERE AND THE PERUVIAN ATTACHE IN BUENOS AIRES OF THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS THE CASE HAS CREATED FOR HIM AND THE ARMY. HE READ TO ME TWO MESSAGES FROM GALTIERI EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY, STATING THAT THE ARGENTINE ARMY IS STUDYING THE MATTER AND INDICATING THAT THERE MAY BE AN "INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT" EARLY NEXT WEEK. RICHTER THOUGHT THAT MIGHT FORESHADOW A LIVE PUBLIC APPEARANCE BY THE THREE MONTONEROS. RICHTER ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD GIVEN THE ARGENTINE ATTACHE HIS VIEW THAT "IT WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT" FOR VIDELA TO ATTEND BELAUNDE'S INAUGURATION.

4. I ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE RUMORS THAT HE MIGHT AS A RESULT OF THIS AFFAIR RETIRE FROM THE ARMY ON JULY 28. RICHTER SAID HE FLOATED THAT POSSIBILITY HIMSELF, MAKING CLEAR THAT IN THE PROCESS HE WOULD TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CASE, THUS SHIELDING HIS "INSTITUTION". HOWEVER, THE OFFICER CORPS PURPORTEDLY REJECTED THE IDEA, INSISTING THAT HE STAY ON UNTIL MANDATORY RETIREMENT AT THE END OF [REDACTED]
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THE YEAR. ONE PROBLEM WITH THE EARLY-RETIREMENT SCHEME, ACCORDING TO RICHTER, IS THAT NEITHER OF HIS POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS WOULD OFFER THE INSTITUTION MUCH PROTECTION. CHIEF OF STAFF HOYOS IS THOROUGHLY MISTRUSTED BY BELAUNDE'S ACCION POPULAR AND "GAUCHO" LISNEROS, COMMANDER OF THE FIRST REGION, HAS BEEN A FAVORITE TARGET OF THE LEFT FOR YEARS, IN PART BECAUSE OF HIS STRONG TIES TO THE ARGENTINE MILITARY.

5. COMMENT: THE ASSERTION THAT TWO MONTONEROS ARE 'FUGITIVES' APPEARS OMINOUS TO ME, SUGGESTING AS IT DOES PERMANENT DISAPPEARANCES. RICHTER EVIDENTLY

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MEANS TO TRY TO RIDE IT OUT BY HOLDING TO THE
OFFICIAL LINE. WE THINK HE IS LIKELY TO HAVE A
TOUGH TIME, PARTICULARLY AFTER JULY 28.
SHLAUDEMAN

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