PTQ0994

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-08 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 AMAD-01 ACQ-01
CIAE-00 INL-01 DINT-00 DODE-00 DOE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00
EB-00 FIBE-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 JUSE-00
LAB-01 L-01 ADS-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01
OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 P-00 CIO-00 SP-00
STR-00 TRSE-00 T-00 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-01 DRL-04
G-00 FDIC-01 SAS-00 /026W

--392801 302300Z /38

P 302247Z APR 98
FM AMEBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2826
INFO AMEBASSY BOGOTA
AMEBASSY BRASILIA
AMEBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEBASSY LA PAZ
AMEBASSY QUITO
USIA WASHDC 4359
USCINCOC MIAMI FL

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DEPARTMENT FOR ARA/AND

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD AND J-5

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/30/08

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV KDEM PINR PE
SUBJECT: PRESS VS. PRESS - NEW CAMPAIGN TO HARASS JOURNALISTS

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR DENNIS C. JETT, EMBASSY LIMA.
REASON: 1.5 (D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: EVIDENCE IS MOUNTING OF A SMEAR CAMPAIGN
USING PERUVIAN TABLOIDS TARGETING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS WHOSE STORIES ARE PERCEIVED AS THREATENING TO THE FUJIMORI GOVERNMENT. BRIBES, DEATH THREATS, AND ACCUSATIONS OF TREASON ROUND OUT THE TACTICS

Current Class: [REDACTED]
DESIGNED TO MAKE PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS THINK TWICE BEFORE REPORTING STORIES UNFLATTERING TO THE MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES.
END SUMMARY.

3. (C) IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN OF ATTACKS ON SECTIONS OF THE PRESS IN PERU, A SERIES OF ARTICLES HAS BEEN APPEARING IN THE PAGES OF FOUR LIMA TABLOIDS ACCUSING SEVERAL JOURNALISTS OF TREASON FOR THEIR INVESTIGATIVE ARTICLES WRITTEN ON THE PERUVIAN ARMED FORCES AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. ON A DAILY BASIS SINCE MARCH 27, FOUR PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS (JOSE ARRIETA, ANGEL PAEZ, FERNANDO ROSPIGLIOSI, EDMUNDO CRUZ) AND ONE OWNER/DIRECTOR (GUSTAVO MOHME, WHO IS ALSO AN OPPOSITION CONGRESSMAN) HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECTS OF LENGTHY ARTICLES IN THE YELLOW PRESS, INCLUDING A BRAND-NEW PAPER, "EL TIO," WHICH STARTED RUNNING THE ARTICLES SHORTLY AFTER ITS INCEPTION. MOHME AND THREE OF THE JOURNALISTS WORK WITH THE STRONGLY OPPOSITION DAILY "LA REPUBLICA" AND THE OTHER, JOSE ARRIETA, IS THE FORMER CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER FOR BARUCH IVCHER'S TELEVISION CHANNEL.

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PUBLISHED AN EIGHT-PAGE SUPPLEMENT ATTACKING THE FIVE JOURNALISTS, AND THEN UPDATED IT TWO WEEKS LATER.

4. (SBU) THE DEFAMATORY ARTICLES BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER THE FIRST INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER INTELLIGENCE AGENT LUISA ZANATTA CONFIRMING THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES' TELEPHONE TAPPING OF BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION FIGURES, INCLUDING FORMER UNSYG JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR.

6. (C) ALL THESE TABLOID STORIES HAVE THE SAME CHARACTERISTICS AND
EVEN SOME OF THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BARUCH
IVCHEL LAST YEAR BEFORE HE LOST CONTROL OF HIS TELEVISION CHANNEL.
"TRAICION A LA PATRIA" (TREASON) IS ALSO THE SAME LANGUAGE WHICH

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APPEARED IN THE GRAFFITI ATTACKING AMBASSADOR JETT LAST JUNE FOR
HIS COMMENTS ON THE MIG-29S. SEVERAL MEDIA OUTLETS ARE
INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBLE SOURCE OF THESE ATTACKS IN THE TABLOID
PRESS, AND CONCLUDE, THAT THESE ARE POSSIBLY COMING FROM
WITHIN THE PERUVIAN MILITARY.

7. (SBU) AMBASSADOR JETT VISITED "LA REPUBLICA" OFFICES THIS WEEK
TO DISCUSS THESE ATTACKS AND GAVE AN INTERVIEW ON U.S. SUPPORT
FOR A FREE PRESS. HIS COMMENTS ON THE SAME ISSUE AT A USIS-ORGANIZED
SEMINAR ON THE ROLE OF A FREE PRESS IN A DEMOCRACY WERE ALSO
CARRIED WIDELY AND HAVE RECEIVED FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM PERUVIAN
JOURNALISTS.

COMMENT

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OUR JUDGMENT IN LAST YEAR'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT THAT PERU CONTINUES
TO ENJOY FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, BUT ALSO THAT JOURNALISTS ARE UNDER
ATTACK, ESPECIALLY IF THEY TOUCH ON ISSUES INVOLVING MALFEASANCE IN
THE MILITARY OR INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. SO FAR, THE ATTACKS HAVE
NOT RESULTED IN BODILY HARM, ALTHOUGH THAT MIGHT NOT BE TRUE FOR
LONG SINCE THE APRIL 29 STORY ON ANGEL PÆEZ SAID HIS ACTIONS SHOULD
NOT GO "UNPUNISHED." INDEED, MANY FOLLOWING THE FREE PRESS ISSUE
REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION THAT THE KILLING OF
A RADIO JOURNALIST AND HER HUSBAND IN NORTHERN PERU LAST MONTH

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