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ACTION SCT-02

INFO  LOG-00  ADS-00  AID-00  INR-07  SS-00  CIAE-00  EB-00
H-01  NSCE-00  ARA-00  NSAE-00  COME-00  SSD-00  HA-09
L-03  CTME-00  NRCE-00  TRSE-00  PM-10  PA-01  FAAE-00
CCO-00  DMB-01  INRE-00  CA-02  CG-00  USSS-00  USIE-00
JUSE-00  FBIE-00  SP-02  DC-01  DOE-00  H-01  SNP-01
FAIM-01  PRS-01  DS-01  P-02  T-01  047 W

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R 181938Z JUL 89
FM AMBASSASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0269
INFO AMBASSASSY BOGOTA
AMBASSASSY LA PAZ
AMBASSASSY QUITO
USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM
USCINCISO QUARRY HTS PM
AMBASSASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/OSC-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1
USCINCISO ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PIM, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT: RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND NEARS FIRST ANNIVERSARY MARK

REFS: (A) 88 LIMA 9898, (B) 88 LIMA 12894,
  (C) LIMA 5959, (D) LIMA 8338, (E) 88 LIMA 16252

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

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SUMMARY

UNCLASSIFIED


4. APRA'S VIOLENT HISTORY, BEGINNING WITH THE "BUFALOS" OF THE 1930'S, AND MOST RECENTLY ITS CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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SUSPECTED ROLE IN THE 1987 AND 1989 BOMBING OF THE PRO-SL "EL DIARIO" AND TWO LARGE INTERIOR MINISTRY WEAPONS PURCHASES IN 1988 [ ] HEIGHTEN SUSPICIONS THAT APRA LEADERS ARE NOT BEYOND SANCTIONING THE ACTIVITIES OF PARAMILITARY THUGS. REACTING TO PUBLIC PRESSURE, THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES PRESIDENT ON JUNE 8 FORMED AN INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE CRF.
INTRODUCTION

5. FOR NEARLY A YEAR, A PARAMILITARY GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND (CRF) HAS OPERATED THROUGHOUT MUCH OF PERU. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE CRF'S ACTIONS FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF DEATH THREATS, THE GROUP HAS SHOWN ITSELF WILLING TO COMMIT BRUTAL ASSASSINATIONS AND BOMBINGS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. VIEWED AS MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER TERRORIST GROUP IN PERU'S INCREASINGLY VIOLENT CLIMATE WHERE THE SENDERO LUMINOSO (SL) AND TUPAC AMARU REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MRTA) ACT WITH IMPUNITY, THE CRF IS WIDELY SUSPECTED TO BE RUN FROM WITHIN THE APRA GOVERNMENT.

WHO WAS RODRIGO FRANCO?

6. THE CRF (WHICH FOR A TIME CALLED ITSELF THE RODRIGO FRANCO DEMOCRATIC COMMAND) TAKES ITS NAME CONFIDENTIAL
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H-01 NSCE-00 ARA-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SSD-00 HA-09
L-03 CTME-00 NRCE-00 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 FAAE-00
CCD-00 OMB-01 INRE-00 CA-02 CG-00 USSS-00 USIE-00
JUSE-00 F61E-00 SP-02 OC-01 DOEE-00 M-01 SNP-01
FAIM-01 PRS-01 DS-01 P-02 T-01 /047 W
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R 181938Z JUL 89
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0270
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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USCINCDC QUARRY HTS PM
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/OSC-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

USCINCDC ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356: DECL: QADR
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PINR, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT: RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND NEARS FIRST

FROM A POPULAR APRA LEADER WHO WAS ASSASSINATED IN
AUGUST 1987, PRESUMABLY BY THE SENDERO LUMINOSO.
AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, RODRIGO FRANCO, 29,
HEADED A GOVERNMENT FOOD IMPORT AND MARKETING
AGENCY. HE WAS CONSIDERED THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST
ATTRACTIVE APRA LEADER IN THE GENERATION BEHIND
ALAN GARCIA. FRANCO'S WIDOW HAS COMMENTED TO THE
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PRESS THAT SHE RESENTS DEEPLY THE TERRORISTS' USE
OF THE NAME OF HER HUSBAND, A MAN WHO SHE SAYS DID
7. The CRF, in an event that marked a new stage in Peru’s terrorist conflict, first made its existence known with the murder of SL leader Osman Morote’s attorney, Manuel Febres Flores, on July 28, 1988 (Ref A). Morote, SL’s second-in-command, had been acquitted of some charges on July 20, 1988 in a court decision that sparked sharp criticism by prominent citizens, newspaper editors, politicians, and government officials. President Garcia called the acquittal a “scandal.” Febres, who had received numerous telephonic death threats in the wake of the judgment, was abducted by four armed men in the Lima district of Miraflores early in the morning of July 28 and killed shortly after in an execution-style murder. The "Rodrigo Franco Democratic Command" claimed responsibility through notes and telephone calls to several Lima newspapers. Nonetheless, the association of Democratic attorneys to which Febres belonged -- an SL front group -- attributed the murder to the APRA government.

8. Since its appearance, the CRF has carried out several other assassinations, bombings, and harassments and has made numerous death threats confidential.
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SOLANO, SAYING THAT THEY WERE EXECUTED FOR THEIR
ROLES IN THE 1987 MURDER OF RODRIGO FRANCO.

-- THE PARISH OF BISHOP LUIS BAMBAREN
GASTELUMENDI IN CHIMBOTE WAS BOMBED AUGUST 22, 1988.

-- ON NOVEMBER 11, 1988, THE HOMES OF "OIGA"
EDITOR FRANCISCO IGARTUA, FRENCH PRIEST JEAN
MONDET; AND UNITED LEFT (IU) MEMBER FERNANDO FUCHS
WERE BOMBED.

-- THE SAME DAY, TELEVISION PERSONALITIES CESAR
HILDEBRANDT AND ROXANA CANEDO; AND SODE (SOLIDARITY
AND DEMOCRACY) LEADER JAVIER SILVA RUETE RECEIVED
THREATENING NOTES SIGNED BY THE CRF.

-- SAUL CANTORAL (SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
FEDERATION OF PERUVIAN MINEWORKERS) AND A FEMALE
COMPANION, CONSUELO GARCIA, WERE KIDNAPPED AND
MURDERED ON FEBRUARY 13, 1989, SUPPOSEDLY BY THE
CRF.

-- ON APRIL 19, 1989, TINGO MARIA RADIO
JOURNALIST (AND IU ACTIVIST) GUILLERMO LOPEZ
SALAZAR WAS MURDERED, PRESUMABLY BY THE CRF OR
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MILITARY ELEMENTS WITH SIMILAR SYMPATHIES.
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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 EB-00
H-01 NSCE-00 ARA-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SSO-00 HA-09
L-03 CTME-00 NRCE-00 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 FAAE-00
CCO-00 OMB-01 INRE-00 CA-02 CG-00 USSS-00 USIE-00
JUSE-00 FBIE-00 SP-02 DC-01 DOEE-00 M-01 SNP-01
FAIM-01 PRS-01 DS-01 P-02 T-01 /047 W
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R 181938Z JUL 89
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0271
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USAFSD HOWARD AFB PM
USCINCDO QUARRY HTS PM
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/OSE-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

USCINCDO ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356:  DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PIMR, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT: RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND NEARS FIRST

-- THE CRF (AS WELL AS LEFTIST TERRORISTS) ARE
SUSPECTED IN THE APRIL 27, 1989 ASSASSINATION OF IU
DEPUTY ERIBERTO ARROYO MIO.

WHO IS BEHIND THE CRF?

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9. MORE AND MORE FINGERS ARE POINTING TO PERU'S


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GEN. FERNANDO REYES ROCA (DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL POLICE AND SUPPOSEDLY MANTILLA'S RIGHTEHAND MAN), NATIONAL POLICE COL. JAVIER PALACIOS (DIRCOTE OPERATIONS CHIEF), DIRCOTE CHIEF GEN. JUAN SALAS CORNEJO, AND GEN. VICTOR GASTELU (STATE SECURITY CHIEF).
11. In the case of Tingo Maria radio journalist Lopez Salazar, the eight assassins sought to avoid recognition by the use of masks and acted under the cover of darkness (Ref C). In contrast, SL terrorists, operating with virtual impunity in the upper Huallaga Valley, for some time have felt no need to disguise their identities. The killings in June 1989 of the Tingo Maria and Aucayacu mayors both occurred in broad daylight. Moreover, usually reliable "El Comercio" reported the Lopez Salazar incident without identifying the group responsible -- an indication that the editorial board suspected a paramilitary connection in the murder.

Evolving Tactics

12. Over the past year, the CRF's targets have come to take in an ever-expanding circle of enemies. The command's first actions, such as the slaying of Febres Flores, were aimed to hit at the SL. In the next stage, CRF threats and actions confidential confidential
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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 EB
H-01  NSCE-00 ARA-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SS0-00 HA-09
L-03  CTME-00 NRCE-00 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 FAAE-00
CCO-00  OMB-01 INRE-00 CA-02 CG-00 USSS-00 USIE-00
JUSE-00 FBIE-00 SP-02 DC-01 DOEE-00 M-01 SNP-01
FAIM-01 PRS-01 DS-01 P-02 T-01 /047 W

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FM AMENBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0272
INFO AMENBASSY BOGOTA
AMENBASSY LA PAZ
AMENBASSY QUITO
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USCINCSD QUARRY HTS PM
AMENBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/DSC-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

USCINCSD ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356:  DECL: DADR
TAGS:  PTER, PGOV, PINR, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT:  RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND NEARS FIRST

WENT AFTER INDIVIDUALS CRITICAL OF THE GARCIA ADMINISTRATION. MOST RECENTLY, A CRF LEAFLET REPORTEDLY APPEARED IN THE TOWN OF HUACHO, WARNING THAT THE COMMAND'S STRUGGLE WOULD NOW INCLUDE "BAD APRISTAS WHO FOSTER DISUNITY."

13. THE CRF HAS TRIED INCREASINGLY TO BEAT THE SL CONFIDENTIAL
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AT ITS OWN GAME. KNOWN TO SOW ITS OWN BRAND OF TERROR, THE COMMAND HAS ADOPTED THE TACTIC OF
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FOLLOWING BEHIND THE SL IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE INHABITANTS THAT THEY SHOULD BE MORE FEARFUL OF THE CRF. INDEED, THE CRF HAS BECOME ESPECIALLY ACTIVE IN AYACUCHO -- THE SL'S BIRTHPLACE AND STRONCHOLD. AYACUCHO MAYOR FERMIN AZPARRENT RECENTLY CLAIMED PUBLICLY THAT THE PEOPLE OF AYACUCHO "ARE LIVING BETWEEN TWO FIRES." IN A SIMILAR VEIN, AFTER SENDERO PASSED OUT FLYERS ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 5 IN HUANCAVELICA ORDERING AN ARMED STRIKE, CRF LEAFLETS BEGAN CIRCULATING IN THE AFTERNOON, WARNING THAT ANYONE HONORING THE STRIKE WOULD BE PUNISHED (REF D). IN THIS TUG-OF-WAR, SL'S WORSE REPUTATION WON OUT AND SHUT DOWN THE TOWN. THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF CRF REPRISALS.

14. THE WIDE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CRF INCIDENTS HAS PROMPTED THE QUESTION OF HOW TIGHTLY THE COMMAND IS CONTROLLED. \( \text{THERE IS ONE PLASIBLE HYPOTHESIS IS THAT THE CRF OPERATES THROUGH THE SECURITY FORCES AS A LOOSE NETWORK UNDER A FREE HAND TO TAKE CARE OF "PROBLEMS" AS SI} \)

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15. WE HEARD OTHER LESS BELIEVABLE RUMORS THAT THE RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND IS RUN OUT OF A BUILDING IN LIMA THAT HAS ALL THE TRAPPINGS OF AN OFFICE. IN LATE 1988 A LOCAL STRINGER WROTE A STORY BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM A SOURCE WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY THE CRF. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, HE WAS TAKEN TO THE COMMAND'S HEADQUARTERS AND WHILE THERE, SAW THE TYPICAL COMPLEMENT OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT IN USE, SUCH AS TELEPHONES, COMPUTERS, AND TYPewriters.
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FARFETCHED AS THE ARTICLE MIGHT SEEM, IT MAY HAVE TOUCHED ON SOME NERVES. THE REPORTER HAS TOLD EMBASSY OFFICIALS THAT FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE STORY, HE RECEIVED THREATS OVER THE TELEPHONE -- WHICH HE SAYS HE RECORDED -- FROM INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT THE CRF.


OTHER ALLEGATIONS OF APRA PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES
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17. Although APRA’s complicity in the CRF remains to be proven, during the 1930’s and 40’s, the legendary APRA “BUFALOS” actively employed strong-arm tactics. Former Prime Minister Armando Villanueva, among others, has a long association with the “BUFALOS.” In June 1988, (now Minister of Confidential

FOREIGN RELATIONS) Senator Guillermo Larco Cox caused a sensation when he told an interviewer that
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HE SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF ARMED SELF-DEFENSE
BRIGADES WITHIN THE RULING PARTY. LARCO COX'S
STATEMENT WAS APPARENTLY TOO BLUNT. THE
PALACE WAS FURIOUS WITH SUCH AN INDISCRETION. AFTER
ITS CONGRESS IN DECEMBER 1988, APRA ANNOUNCED THE
FORMATION OF A NATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR DEFENSE.
DEPUTY BARRA CABALLERO FELT COMPelled TO EXPLAIN TO
THE PRESS THAT THIS BODY WOULD ONLY STUDY THE USE
OF WEAPONS BY PARTY MEMBERS AND THAT THE FIGHT
AGAINST SUBVERSION WOULD BE HANDLED BY THE ARMED
FORCES AND THE POLICE. IN THE PAST THE "BUFALOS"
WERE PART OF THE DEFENSE SECRETARIAT.

18. RECENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY A POLICE SOURCE
ADDs MORE WEIGHT TO CHARGES OF APRA PARAMILITARY
INVOLVEMENT AND MAKES THE ATTEMPTED BOMBING OF
PRO-SL "EL DIARIO" IN OCTOBER 1987 LOOK LIKE THE
PRECURSOR OF CRF ACTIVITIES. IN THAT INCIDENT, AN
EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DETONATED PREMATURELY, KILLING TWO
OF THE WOULD-BE BOMBERS AND INJURING A THIRD. THE
SURVIVOR, FIRST IDENTIFIED BY POLICE AUTHORITIES AS
EDWIN DE LA TORRE UGARTE THEN AS JESUS MIGUEL
"CHITO" RIOS BAENZ, WAS TAKEN TO LIMA'S POLICE
HOSPITAL AND EVENTUALLY RELEASED WITHOUT LEGAL
CHARGES FILED AGAINST HIM. THE SOURCE ALSO CLAIMS
THAT THE SISTER OF ONE OF THE DECEASED COMPLAINED
ABOUT THE SMALL AMOUNT THE FAMILY WAS RECEIVING
FROM THE GOVERNMENT AS A "SURVIVOR'S PENSION".
WEEKLIES "SI" AND "DIIMA" REPORTED THE THREE YOUNG
MEN WERE MEMBERS OF ARE (REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT
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ALLIANCE) -- THE MOST VIOLENT OF THE ORGANIZATIONS
LINKED TO APRA.

19. ANOTHER PRE-CRF EVENT HINTS AT THE APRA'S
PREDISPOSITION TOWARD ARMED TACTICS. IN TWO
SEPARATE INCIDENTS ON APRIL 21, 1988, 20 YOUTHS
WERE DETAINED BUT QUICKLY ORDERED RELEASED. IN
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THEIR POSSESSION HAD BEEN FOUND FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, HOMEMADE BOMBS, DYNAMITE CHARGES, HOODS AND ARE PROPAGANDA. ONE OF THE YOUTHS, LATER INTERVIEWED BY "DIGA", CLAIMED SUCH ARSENALS WERE NECESSARY TO DEFEND APRISTA STUDENTS FROM SENDERO.

MANTILLA AND THE WEAPONS SCANDALS

20. ARMS PURCHASES BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ALSO FIGURE INTO RUMORS OF APRA'S PARAMILITARY PROCLIVITIES. IN EARLY MARCH 1988, NEARLY 306 TONS OF NORTH KOREAN WEAPONS -- LISTED AS "BATTERIES AND ACCESSORIES" ON THE BILL OF LADING -- WERE UNLOADED FROM THE PERUVIAN SHIP "SABOGAL". ACCORDING TO SPECULATION, AT LEAST SOME OF THE ARMS WERE DESTINED FOR APRA THUGS. MANTILLA'S ADMISSION OF DECEPTION IN THE BILL OF LADING (HE SAID IT WAS DONE AT THE REQUEST OF THE NORTH KOREANS) DID LITTLE TO EASE SUSPICIONS. MORE FUEL WAS ADDED TO THE FIRE IN JULY 1988 WHEN THE VENEZUELAN ARMED FORCES DETAINED THE POLISH SHIP "KUZNICA" CARRYING SIX TONS OF ARMS (INCLUDING RIFLES, AUTOMATIC

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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 EB-H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 COMEO-00 SSD-00 HA-09 L-03
CTME-00 NRC-00 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 FAAE-00 CCO-00
OMB-01 INRE-00 CA-02 CG-00 USSS-00 USIE-00 JUSE-00
FBIE-00 SP-02 DC-02 DOEE-00 M-01 SNP-01 FAIM-01
PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-02 P-02 T-01 ( AS-01 OC-02 )
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R 181938Z JUL 89
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0274.
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USAFSO HOWARD AFB PM
USCINCSD QUARRY HTS PM
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/OSC-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

USCINCSD ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12335: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PINR, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT: RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND NEARS FIRST

WEAPONS, SILENCERS, AMMUNITION, AND EXPLOSIVES) OF
APPARENT SOVIET-BLOC ORIGIN BUT LACKING PROPER
DOCUMENTATION. PERU'S INTERIOR MINISTRY QUICKLY
ISSUED AN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE STATING THE SHIPMENT
WAS INTENDED FOR THE POLICE FORCES, AND NEGOTIATED
FOR THE SHIP'S RELEASE. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S
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POLICE LIAISON, MANY OF THE WEAPONS IN THESE TWO
SHIPMENTS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE VARIOUS POLICE
Moreover, although a private security company has a contract with the Peruvian Institute of Social Security (IPSS) to provide bodyguards -- armed with officially-supplied weapons -- for some Peruvian officials, these arms account for only a small percentage of MOI purchases.

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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21. In May 1989, public outrage over the escalating spiral of violence prompted some Aprista administration posturing on the issue of the Rodrigo Franco Command. Numerous letters from Americas Watch, other international organizations, and private citizens to the Peruvian Government as well as a petition presented to Chamber of Deputies President Hector Vargas Haya provided additional pressure. (The petition, presented by Lu Deputy Manuel Piñeras, requested a formal inquiry into the CRF, and was backed by representatives of the Catholic Church, Organized Labor, and the equivalent of the American Bar Association in Lima.) On May 17, Mantilla became the first high-level government authority to concede that the CRF exists. He characterized the CRF as a terrorist group, while categorically denying the operation of state-sponsored paramilitary groups in Peru. A few days later, President Garcia announced confidential confidential

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He had instructed Mantilla to find out who was behind the command.

22. The interior minister produced some speedy[1] results. On May 21 the ministry released an official communiqué touting the first arrest of three CRF suspects in Yurimaguas (Loreto Department). Sixteen days later, the detainees were ordered released by the public prosecutor for Loreto, presumably for lack of evidence. Our police sources say the three had no links to the
23. THE PETITION INTRODUCED BY PIQUERAS, AS WELL AS THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR AN INQUIRY INTO THE CRF, LED THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ON JUNE 8, 1989 TO INSTALL AN INVESTIGATORY COMMITTEE. APRA DEPUTY ABDON VILCHEZ MELO HEADS THE GROUP. OTHER DEPUTIES NAMED TO THE PANEL WERE MANUEL PIQUERAS, HÉCTOR HUERTO MILLA (APRA), VÍCTOR CARRANZA MARINOS (APRA), GUSTAVO ESPINOZA MONTESÍNOS (IU), AND CELSO SOTOMARINO (PPC). THE COMMISSION, WHICH FIRST CALLED MANTILLA AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE (RET.) GEN. JULIO VELASQUEZ GIACARINI TO TESTIFY, ALSO PLANS TO HEAR FROM DIRCOTE CHIEF, JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY THE CRF, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CHURCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS. DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JULY, SEVERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TRAVELED TO AYACUCHO AND HUANCAYO TO INTERVIEW SOME OF THE MANY RECIPIENTS OF CRF DEATH THREATS IN THOSE AREAS.

24. INDICATIONS SURFACED QUICKLY THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL
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COMMISSION WILL BE CONSUMED BY CONTROVERSY.
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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USAFSO HOWARD AFB "M"
USCINCOSO QUARRY HTS PM
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DIA WASHDC

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DIA FOR DAH-5/OSC-2D/DB-6D2/JSI-4B/DB-3C1

USCINCOSO ALSO FOR POLAD JOHN YOULE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
PANEL, PIQUERAS CRITICIZED IT FOR BEING DOMINATED
BY APRA MEMBERS. NEXT VILCHEZ DREW FIRE AS THE
WRONG CHOICE TO HEAD A PROBE INTO A PARAMILITARY
GROUP BECAUSE OF THE LONGSTANDING AND NUMEROUS
ALLEGATIONS OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT
EPISODES. THEN, LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER THE
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COMMISSION'S FORMATION, APRA MEMBER CARRANZA
RESIGNED, SAYING HE NEEDED TIME TO START COLLECTING
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SIGNATURES FOR HIS REELECTION BID. THE REMAINING MEMBERS PLAN TO CONTINUE TO HEAR TESTIMONY BUT APPARENTLY WILL BE UNABLE TO SUBMIT ANY FINDINGS TO THE LEGISLATURE UNTIL A REPLACEMENT FOR CARRANZA IS NAMED (NOT EXPECTED TO HAPPEN UNTIL AUGUST).


26. WHILE THE COMMISSION GOES ABOUT ITS TASK, INTIMATIONS OF GOP INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRF CONTINUE. ON JUNE 16, THREE MEN CLAIMING TO REPRESENT 70 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL POLICE--WEARING MASKS AND POLICE UNIFORMS--HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THAT PREPARATIONS WERE UNDERWAY TO ORGANIZE A POLICE STRIKE AND TO DENOUNCE SEVERAL POLICE OFFICIALS AS CRF CHIEFTAINS. THE MEN'S CLAIM TO BE MEMBERS OF THE POLICE HAS SINCE BEEN DISPUTED. MORE RECENTLY, ON JULY 3, LEFTIST "LA REPUBLICA" REPORTED THAT LEADERS OF THE STRIKING MINISTRY OF HEALTH DOCTORS (ON STRIKE SINCE LATE MAY) SAY THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN CONFIDENTIAL RECEIVING DEATH THREATS FROM THE COMMAND.

27. COMMENT: IT MAY BE A LONG TIME, IF EVER, BEFORE ANYTHING RESEMBLING CONCLUSIVE PROOF ABOUT THE RODRIGO FRANCO COMMAND IS FOUND, BUT WE THINK OBSERVATIONS MADE OVER THE PAST YEAR PERMIT US TO MAKE SOME TENTATIVE JUDGMENTS ON SEVERAL KEY QUESTIONS.
SECOND, THE CRF EXISTED AS AN INFORMAL CLIQUE EVEN BEFORE THE FEBRES MURDER. THIRD, WE BELIEVE THAT THE CRF IS A LOOSELY-KNIT GROUP THAT MAKES USE OF EXISTING NETWORKS AND TECHNIQUES SUCH AS SURVEILLANCE. FINALLY, THE CRF RUBRIC PROBABLY IS BEING USED BY OTHER GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.

28. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE COMMITTEE’S INVESTIGATION INTO THE CRF WILL PRODUCE ANY SMOKING GUNS. ALREADY THE PANEL HAS GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT IT PLANS TO LIBERALLY REDEFINE THE TASK AT HAND. A CASE IN POINT IS VILCHEZ’ STATEMENT THAT OTHER ARMED GROUPS BESIDES THE CRF EXIST. ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE CORRECT, THE PRONUNCIATION SUGGESTS THAT SEARCHING FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMMAND WILL NOT BE THE OVERRIDING CONCERN.

WATSON