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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00	UTED-00
	VC-00	IPS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	MMS-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OIG-03	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
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INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, AINF, PHUM, PE
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH TRUTH COMMISSION ON U.S.
SUPPORT, FOIA

REF: A) LIMA 06503 B) LIMA 06393

1. (U) SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED STRONG U.S. SUPPORT FOR PERU'S TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AND EXPLAINED THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) PROCESS IN A MEETING NOVEMBER 27 WITH COMMISSION MEMBERS. TRUTH COMMISSION PRESIDENT SALOMON LERNER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION

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FOR U.S. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DATE. LERNER PRESENTED A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT (REF. A) REQUESTING DOCUMENTS FROM U.S. ARCHIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN PERU BETWEEN 1980-2000. THE COMMISSION IS IN CONTACT WITH THE U.S. NGO NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES (NSA), WHICH IN THE LAST YEAR HAS FILED SOME 300 FOIA REQUESTS RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN PERU. WE URGE GIVING THE COMMISSION'S REQUESTS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRIORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR PERU'S TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DURING A MEETING THE AMBASSADOR SOUGHT WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION SALOMON LERNER AND NINE OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS NOVEMBER 27. RECALLING U.S. SUPPORT FOR SIMILAR ENDEAVORS IN SOUTH AFRICA, CHILE, ARGENTINA, AND CENTRAL AMERICA, THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT WE SUPPORT SUCH EFFORTS AS PART OF OUR GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE OF HELPING TO BUILD

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AND STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACIES. POINTING OUT THAT A STRONG DEMOCRACY REQUIRES CERTAIN PRECONDITIONS, INCLUDING AN EDUCATED PUBLIC, STRONG MIDDLE CLASS, RELIABLE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, ETC., THE AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY MUST ALSO COME TO TERMS WITH ITS PAST, WHICH OFTEN REQUIRES A PROCESS OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION. THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED THE U.S. STRUGGLE WITH ITS OWN HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND RACISM, NOTING THE U.S. IS WELL AWARE OF THE DIFFICULT PROCESS A COUNTRY MUST GO THROUGH TO CONFRONT ITS PAST.

3. (U) THE AMBASSADOR REVIEWED BOTH THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT FUNDING USAID/OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES (OTI) HAS MADE TO THE COMMISSION. TO DATE, USAID/OTI HAS OBLIGATED \$842,721 THROUGH SIXTEEN GRANTS, FOUR OF WHICH (TOTALING 34 PERCENT OF THE FUNDING) ARE DIRECTLY WITH THE COMMISSION USAID/OTI'S CURRENT DIRECT SUPPORT INCLUDES COMPUTER EQUIPMENT, HIRING CONSULTANTS TO HELP DESIGN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TO DEVELOP A MEDIA STRATEGY, AND CONTRACTING A SPECIALIST TO ASSIST IN THE SET UP OF THE COMMISSION'S INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

4. (U) TWELVE OF USAID/OTI'S GRANTS GO TO ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THE COMMISSION'S WORK INDIRECTLY. THESE GRANTS HAVE GONE TO SEVEN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) HERE IN PERU. THE SUPPORT PRIMARILY FUNDS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOPS, INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGNS, TRAINING, PUBLIC FORUMS, AND DEBATES TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE COMMISSION AND ITS WORK. THE AMBASSADOR GAVE LERNER SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF THIS INDIRECT USAID/OTI FUNDING. FOR

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EXAMPLE, AN NGO THAT SPECIALIZES IN RURAL EDUCATION

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INITIATIVES, RURAL EDUCATION SERVICES (SER), CONDUCTED
INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND AN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN IN
APURIMAC, AYACUCHO, CUZCO, AND HUANCVELICA TO RAISE PUBLIC
AWARENESS ABOUT THE COMMISSION AND ITS OBJECTIVES. THE
LEGAL DEFENSE INSTITUTE (IDL) IS PRODUCING RADIO AND
TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND DOCUMENTARIES ALSO TO RAISE PUBLIC
AWARENESS ABOUT THE COMMISSION AND ITS WORK. PERU'S HUMAN
RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN CONDUCTED FORENSIC INVESTIGATIONS AND HELD
PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AND FORUMS ABOUT THE COMMISSION.

5. (U) THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT USAID/OTI'S FINANCIAL
SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE NEXT YEAR. LOOKING AHEAD, USAID/OTI
IS PLANNING TO PROGRAM AN ADDITIONAL \$750,000-\$1,000,000
FOR ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH COMMISSION OVER THE
NEXT 12 TO 18 MONTHS. (NOTE: COMBINED CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
OTHER DONORS THIS CALENDAR YEAR HAVE BEEN APPROXIMATELY
\$200,000 COMPARED TO OVER \$840,000 PROVIDED BY USAID/OTI).

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

6. (U) THE AMBASSADOR OUTLINED HOW THE U.S. CAN OFFER
ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE FOIA. HE ENCOURAGED THE COMMISSION
TO USE THE FOIA AS A TOOL TO ACCESS DOCUMENTS FROM THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT AND FURTHER EXPLAINED HOW TO MAKE REQUESTS. HE

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AC-01 DCP-01 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OIG-03 OMB-01
OPIC-01 PA-00 PC-01 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00
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CAUTIONED THAT THE PROCESS CAN BE LENGTHY. THE AMBASSADOR TALKED ABOUT THE U.S. NGO NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES (NSA), POINTING OUT THAT IT HAS APPROXIMATELY 300 FOIA REQUESTS RELATED TO PERUVIAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ALREADY IN PROCESS.

7. (U) LERNER EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THE U.S. SUPPORT. HE STATED THAT USAID WAS THE FIRST ORGANIZATION TO VISIT AND OFFER ASSISTANCE TO HIM ONCE THE COMMISSION WAS FORMED. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE COMMISSION IS GETTING A BETTER SENSE OF THE ENORMITY OF THE TASK AHEAD OF THEM. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE THE MATERIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES NECESSARY TO MEET THEIR OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE TIMEFRAME (UNTIL FEBRUARY 2003).

8. (SBU) LERNER EXPLAINED THAT PRESS REPORTS CLAIMING HIS OFFICE HAD ALREADY SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE U.S. CONGRESS REQUESTING DOCUMENTS WERE (UNINTENTIONALLY) NOT ACCURATE. HIS OFFICE INTENDED TO SEND THE LETTER, BUT DUE TO AN INTERNAL ERROR, NEVER DID. LERNER GAVE THE AMBASSADOR A NEW LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN RELEASING U.S. DOCUMENTS FOR USE IN THE COMMISSION'S WORK. LERNER NOTED THAT THE COMMISSION HAS MADE CONTACT WITH NSA.

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THE COMMISSION AT WORK
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9. (U) PERU'S TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION NOVEMBER 13 BEGAN INVESTIGATING THE TERRORIST VIOLENCE AND ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS THAT OCCURRED BETWEEN MAY 1980 AND NOVEMBER 2000. THE VIOLENT ERA IN PERU'S HISTORY LEFT 25,000 DEAD AND MORE THAN 6,200 DISAPPEARED. THE COMMISSION FACES THE CHALLENGE OF DETERMINING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VIOLENCE, WHILE SEEKING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. AS NOTED, THE COMMISSION'S WORKING PERIOD WILL END FEBRUARY 13, 2003.

10. (U) COMMENT. PER REF. A, THE LERNER LETTER SIMPLY ASKS FOR ALL U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, TORTURE, FORCED DISAPPEARANCES AND THE LIKE FOR THE PERIOD 1980-2000. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT, AS FORMULATED, THE NUMBER OF RESPONSIVE DOCUMENTS WILL BE DISAPPOINTING. HOWEVER, MANY OF NSA'S 300 FOIA REQUESTS (NSA E-MAILED US COPIES OF 60) FOR PERU ARE VERY DETAILED, SPECIFIC REQUESTS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE. WE WILL WORK WITH LERNER AND NSA TO COORDINATE INFORMATION SHARING, SO THAT THE COMMISSION CAN IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE THE COMMISSION'S NEEDS ARE NOT COVERED BY NSA'S MUCH MORE SPECIFIC REQUESTS. THE COMMISSION CAN THEN INITIATE NEW, SPECIFIC FOIA REQUESTS.

11. (U) WE URGE A COORDINATED INTER-AGENCY EFFORT TO RESPOND TO THE COMMISSION'S REQUEST WITHIN, SAY, A NINE-MONTH PERIOD.

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