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"reconciliation" measures should ensure that it remains a hot political issue for some time after its release. END SUMMARY.

2. Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) will publish its final report on the violence in Peru from 1980-2000 on 8/28. On that day, copies of the report will be given to President Toledo, the President of the Congress, and the President of the Supreme Court. On 8/29, the Commission will make a formal presentation to the people of Ayacucho, the province that was hardest hit by the violence of those years. The Embassy will be represented at the Ayacucho presentation; the USG, through USAID, has provided a large portion of the CVR's operating budget.

3. The CVR's report will be the fruit of 21 months' work, involving visits to 530 districts and 137 provinces, 16,885 testimonies taken following preliminary interviews with nearly 10,000 people, eight hearings with victims, six hearings on different themes, seven public assemblies, and one public audience. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] in a recent meeting with Poloff, said he thought that the most critical part of the report will be its conclusion. There the CVR will recommend how the GOP can ameliorate Peru's social and cultural divisions. The report will give the GOP two alternatives, one minimal and one maximal. The first proposes that the President appoint a Task force that would take 60 days to study the report's recommendations and decide how they can be concretized into specific projects. The second will ask that the Congress create a National Reconciliation Council that would become a permanent body dedicated to addressing Peru's deep social divisions through a constant diet of action and educational programs.

[REDACTED] added many misunderstand the CVR's work: when it speaks of reconciliation, it does not mean that the SL members and others should go unpunished. Rather, the CVR wants Peruvians to think about the combination of racism, discrimination and enormous social differences that allowed SL to gain a foothold. The CVR, he concluded, will also seek some form of financial recompense for victims of the violence.

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4. Rumors that the CVR will report negatively on the presidencies of Fernando Belaunde Terry (1980-85), Alan Garcia (1985-1990) and Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) have led members of Belaunde's Accion Popular party, Garcia's APRA party, and Fujimori's administration to launch preventive criticism on the CVR and its work. Likewise, concern over the CVR's treatment of the Armed Forces and the National Police has sparked attacks on the CVR from politicians (principally from the Unidad Nacional alliance) and media who

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defend those organizations' interests. [redacted] told Poloff that accusations the CVR is threatening the Armed Forces are overblown. "We have excellent relations with the younger military officers, who want to professionalize the Army," he said, while the only officers who need fear the report are those who committed crimes.

5. The CVR's opponents have focused their critique on the Commission's top officials, suggesting that their conclusions and recommendations will be colored by their alleged "left-wing" views, and that they paid themselves and their staff's "outrageous" salaries. The tabloid "La Razon" (owned by the Wolfensohn brothers, who are under house arrest charged with accepting money from Fujimori's security advisor Vladimiro Montesinos) has been the most vocal critic, leading off with the headline, "Sendero (Luminoso) had candidates for

the Truth Commission!" To back up its article, "La Razon" published an alleged transcript of an interview that [redacted] had conducted with imprisoned SL leader Abimael Guzman in 2000. [redacted] responded by filing a criminal defamation case, charging that the transcripts of the tape as published contain at least twenty-eight changes from what was actually said. In another recent article in "La Razon," retired General German Parra Herrera asserted that "the Senderistas will use the CVR to destroy the armed forces."

6. Other critics have been more subtle. Bishop of Lima Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani was Bishop of Ayacucho during much of the period under review, and his stewardship over the Church in that Department is expected to receive negative treatment by the CVR. In his sermon on Sunday, August 17, Cipriani questioned what the Commission means by "reconciliation." The Cardinal explained that reconciliation was "impossible" with terrorists, as that could only take place through a closer association with God.

7. President Alejandro Toledo responded to the criticism by inviting CVR officials to the Presidential Palace on 8/8, and afterwards urging Peruvians to await the report's publication with "deliberation and serenity," vowing that his administration would apply "truth, justice and reconciliation" in dealing with the consequences of Peru's two violent decades. Prime Minister Beatriz Merino, Interior Minister Fernando Rospigliosi and Women's Affairs Minister Anel Townsend have also taken the initiative in publicly supporting the CVR's work, as have a sizeable number of pro-GOP congressmen (although not the ruling Peru Possible party legislative bloc). International human rights

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organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Human Rights Watch, have lent their support to the CVR, praising its performance and questioning the motives of its critics.

8. Public opinion remains strongly supportive of the CVR. A nationwide poll to address the issue, taken by respected polling firm Apoyo on 8/15-16, found that 51% approved of the Commission's work, with 35% disapproving and 14% having no opinion. Another firm, DATUM, took a poll in Lima/Callao on 8/23-24 that found 54% approval and only 26% opposed to the CVR's work. [redacted] told Poloff, "In a country where no one has faith in institutions, the CVR enjoys 51 percent support despite the wave of recent attacks in the press."

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9. COMMENT: The CVR's report is guaranteed to be front-page news as soon as it is released. The report's conclusions regarding responsibility for violence are certain to be hotly debated, as will its recommendations for future criminal prosecutions, compensation for victims, and political, economic and social measures to promote reconciliation. This is in keeping with the main purposes of the Commission, which are to encourage Peruvians to confront their country's recent violent past, come to terms with what occurred, and take the necessary measures to ensure that history does not repeat itself. The USG has been the chief financial supporter of the CVR's operations, and the Embassy plans to be represented at the 8/29 presentation of the final report to the people of Ayacucho. END COMMENT.

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