

2-16-1989

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John Neagle

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Peru: Mineworkers Union Leader Assassinated

by John Neagle

Category/Department: General

Published: Thursday, February 16, 1989

According to statements by police on Feb. 14, Saul Cantoral, secretary general of the National Federation of Mineworkers, was shot to death at about midnight on Feb. 13 outside Lima. Police said a young woman accompanying Cantoral was killed when she was run over by the gunmen's car. A note by Sendero Luminoso was reportedly left on Cantoral's body claiming responsibility for the killings, and said the union leader was a police informer. Police would not comment on the note. In the past year, Sendero Luminoso rebels reportedly infiltrated the Federation. Union officials cited by AFP said that Cantoral opposed the rebels, and had been reluctant to launch further work stoppages. Miners' strikes cost the economy an estimated \$300 million in the past 12 months. The officials said the union leader had received death threats from Sendero Luminoso, and had also been threatened since the union's last strike in November by the rightwing Rodrigo Franco Command death squad. Police said Cantoral and companion were kidnapped late Feb. 13 in Lima by four or five men driving a station wagon. The two victims were taken to Cantogrande, a Lima suburb, and killed. (Basic data from AFP, 02/14/89)

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