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John Neagle

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Peru: Notes On Recent Violence

by John Neagle

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Oct. 4: Gunmen kidnapped Hector Delgado Parker, senior news executive of Channel 5 and former adviser to President Alan Garcia. Delgado's armor-plated car was shot up, his driver killed, and his bodyguard was badly wounded. Police said pamphlets from the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) were found at the site. Oct. 6: AP cited an unidentified Interior Ministry spokesperson as saying that about 16,000 people were detained in a search for Delgado by about 3,000 police using dogs and supported by light armored cars. All but 4,000 were released after questioning. Oct. 9: Police said three Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas killed the chauffeur of mayoral candidate for the center-right Fredemo Party, Richard Muller, in Concepcion (120 miles east of Lima). Muller was not in the car at the time of the attack. A bodyguard was also wounded. Local police reported that MRTA rebels kidnapped rancher Oswaldo Zender from his home after setting fire to the Iscozasin town hall, about 140 miles northeast of the capital. The rebels left a note demanding $100,000 in ransom for Zander's relatives. [According to an Oct. 7 report by Notimex, in the first half of 1989, 1,166 Peruvians died as a result of political violence in incidents involving guerrillas, paramilitary groups or government security forces. Human rights groups say that 3,000 people have been "disappeared." According to official statistics, 15,000 Peruvians have died since the emergence of Sendero Luminoso in 1980. At present, over half of Peru's population resides in "emergency zones," or in areas where the military has assumed control. According to Notimex, an upcoming report on human rights in Peru by Amnesty International states that civilians and police linked to the Interior Ministry have been carrying out extrajudicial executions outside of emergency zones. Francisco Soberon, coordinator of the Pro-Human Rights Association (APDH), said that thus far this year paramilitary groups launched 41 attacks against journalists and 12 against attorneys. These attacks have not been investigated, he said. Sen. Javier Diez Canseco Cisneros, of the United Left (IU) coalition, said that "impunity is and has been" the current regime's modus operandi. Sendero Luminoso is known for summary executions, and MRTA for abductions. Rightist paramilitary groups include the Rodrigo Franco, Braulio Zaga Pariona and Manuel Santana Chiri commandos. According to the political opposition, the Rodrigo Franco group is linked to the Interior Ministry. Economist Carlos Malpica, a former member of the governing APRA party, said that Peru is experiencing the worst crisis of its history, evidenced by a 25% decline in gross domestic product, and 4,000% consumer price inflation. Hugo Blanco, leader of the Peruvian Peasant Confederation (CCP) and a former guerrilla, said that as a result of the combined effects of economic deterioration, political crisis, and growing violence, the government has virtually lost control in certain regions of the country. Government authority, he said, has been supplanted by that of drug traffickers and terrorists.] (Basic data from AP, 10/06/89, 10/09/89; Notimex, 10/07/89)

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