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Peru: U.S. Suspends Disbursement Of \$95 Million In Military & Economic Aid

by Barbara Khol

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Aug. 6: The Peruvian Interior Ministry announced the creation of special offices where civilians can report human rights violations committed by members of the police and armed forces. During the previous week, President Alberto Fujimori received a letter signed by 25 members of the US Congress, including Sen. Edward Kennedy, accusing his government of accomplishing little to prevent army and police excesses in the on-going war against rebel groups. Senators and Representatives called on the White House to withhold \$95 million in economic and military aid earmarked for anti-narcotics efforts. Peruvian government figures show that 3,106 people were killed in political violence during the first year of the Fujimori administration. A spokesperson for the US Embassy in Lima said the aid retention approved by Congress did not constitute a sanction, but was the outcome of deliberations interrupted by the congressional recess. Aug. 7: Peruvian Foreign Minister Carlos Torres confirmed the suspension of \$95 million in US aid. The minister said the move is temporary: disbursement will be resumed after the US Congress resumes activities on Sept. 5. Members of Congress are expected to conclude final revisions on a recently concluded bilateral anti-narcotics agreement. A US Embassy spokesperson said the decision to withhold the aid was not connected to human rights abuses attributed to the Peruvian public security forces. Aug. 10: Peruvian Sen. Enrique Bernales said President Fujimori will visit Washington to personally inform President George Bush of the human rights situation. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 08/06/91; EFE, 08/07/91; AFP, 08/10/91)

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