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IMMEDIATE

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CONFIDENTIAL

FM QUITO 290245Z JANUARY 1981
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 006 OF 28 JANUARY
AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK SIC: ACA/Z86/U2J
INFO ROUTINE LIMA

Hd S Am → Hd UND
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Hd Cons → CAB OFF
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REF DA'S TELEGRAM 202140Z COPIED SAND. ECUADOR/PERU BORDER DISPUTE.

1. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN COMMUNIQUE FROM PRESIDENTIAL PALACE THIS EVENING CONFIRMED THAT TWO PERUVIAN ATTACKS HAD TAKEN PLACE ON ECUADOREAN MILITARY POSTS TODAY WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY. FIRST ATTACK BETWEEN 0900-0930 HOURS BY 4 HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS AND 2 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT USING MACHINE GUN FIRE AND HIGH EXPLOSIVES WAS CONCENTRATED ON PAQUISHA POST IN CORDILLERA DEL CONDOR. A SECOND ATTACK IN THE SAME AREA TOOK PLACE AT 1305 HOURS. FIGURES FOR CASUALTIES WERE NOT RELEASED BUT MFA SOURCES SAY 10 ECUADOREAN SOLDIERS WERE KILLED.
 2. ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT HAVE PROTESTED VIGOROUSLY TO PERU CALLING ON PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO STOP IMMEDIATELY ACTS OF AGGRESSION AND HOSTILITIES AGAINST ECUADOR.
 3. ECUADOR HAS CALLED FOR URGENT MEETING OF CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF OAS AND IN COMMUNIQUE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REJECTED PERUVIAN ATTEMPTS TO DISTORT FACTS AND TO LABEL ECUADOR AS AGGRESSORS. ECUADOR WANTS PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND HAS INVITED PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO MEASURES TO PREVENT REPETITION OF THESE ACTS OF AGGRESSION. MINISTER WARNED THAT THE ECUADOREAN ARMED FORCES ARE NEVERTHELESS PREPARED TO DEFEND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF COUNTRY.
 4. PRESIDENT HAS SUMMONED THE JUNTA CONSULTATIVA A COMMITTEE MADE UP OF PRIMARILY EX FOREIGN MINISTERS AND NORMALLY ONLY CALLED IN AN EMERGENCY.
 5. PERUVIAN RADIO MONITORED IN QUITO REPORTED THE EVACUATION OF SMALL VILLAGES ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER AND HAVY TROOP MOVEMENTS.
- BACKGROUND
6. ON THURSDAY 22 JANUARY PAQUISHA (A MILITARY OUTPOST IN DISPUTED BORDER AREA ON PROTOCOL DEL B.L.O. DE JANEIRO 1942

BACKGROUND

6. ON THURSDAY 22 JANUARY PAQUISHA (A MILITARY OUTPOST IN DIS-PUTED BORDER AREA ON PROTOCOL DEL RIO DE JANEIRO RO 1942 LINE) WAS ATTACKED BY PERUVIAN HELICOPTER GUNSHIP SEVERELY DAMAGING GROUNDED ECUADOREAN HELICOPTER AND CRITICALLY INJURING PILOT. ATTACK CAME AFTER EARLIER OVERFLYING OF ECUADOREAN TERRITORY AT MAYAYCO. ECUADOR PROTESTED STRONGLY AT VIOLATION OF TERRITORY AND PREMEDITATED ATTACK ON PAQUISHA AND FORCES PUT ON FULL ALERT. PERUVIANS REJECTED PROTEST BLAMING ECUADOREANS FOR SHOOTING ON UNARMED TRANSPORT HELICOPTER ON ROUTINE FLIGHT. POLITICIANS TRIED TO DEFUSE SITUATION CALLING FOR DIALOGUE TO RESOLVE SITUATION AND NOT THE USE OF ARMS. MILITARY USED OPPORTUNITY TO PRESSURE GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT PURCHASES OF URGENTLY NEEDED EQUIPMENT, AMMUNITION AND SUPPLIES, INCLUDING SOME FROM BRITAIN.
7. LATEST INCIDENTS HAVE LED TO ESCALATION IN SITUATION AND FEELINGS IN ECUADOR ARE RUNNING HIGH.
8. ECUADOREANS REGARD ATTACKS AS TOTALLY UNCALLED FOR. REPORTS FROM PERU SUGGEST THAT PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE LOST CONTROL OF MILITARY WHO ARE USING BORDER INCIDENTS TO PRESSURISE GOVERNMENT INTO RECOGNISING BOLIVIAN REGIME. ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO IS THAT PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE ENGINEERED INCIDENTS TO DIRECT ATTENTION AWAY FROM INTERNAL PROBLEMS.
9. THERE ARE NO BRITISH SUBJECTS IN BORDER AREA TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.
10. WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED.

FCO PLS PASS LIMA

WHITE

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