

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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INFO USCINCSO

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AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 4970

E.O.M 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STRUCTURAL
REFORMS (CONARE)

REF: LA PAZ 4777

1. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STRUCTURAL REFORMS (CONARE), WHICH IS TO STUDY A SERIES OF PROPOSALS FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN BOLIVIA'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, WAS SWORN INTO OFFICE BY PRESIDENT BANZER ON JULY 30. CABINET MINISTERS, POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND THE JOINT COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES WERE PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY, WHICH MARKS THE FIRST

STAGE IN A PROCESS OF "CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" SCHEDULED TO TERMINATE WITH THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW PRESIDENT IN DECEMBER 1975. IN HIS SPEECH, BANZER NOTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT THE ARMED FORCES TO RETURN TO THEIR BARRACKS, FOLLOWING TEN YEARS OF MILITARY RULE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT

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NOTED THAT THE MILITARY WILL "OBSERVE AND GUARANTEE"

THE TRANSITION PROCESS TO CIVILIAN RULE, WHILE SUBSEQUENTLY RETAINING ITS ROLE AS THE "TRUE POWER FACTOR" IN BOLIVIAN SOCIETY.

2. THE THIRTY-MAN COUNCIL, -9 OF WHOSE MEMBERS TOOK OFFICE ON JULY 30, WILL NOW COMMENCE AN INTENSIVE PERIOD OF STUDY OF DIFFERING REFORM PROPOSALS. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE GOB BY JANUARY 23, 1975, WHEN CONARE'S MANDATE EXPIRES; THESE PROPOSALS WILL THEN BE STUDIED, AND POSSIBLY MODIFIED, BY THE GOVERNMENT, PRIOR TO THEIR PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC IN A NATIONWIDE REFERENDUM ON MARCH 23, 1975. ACCORDING TO THE INTERNAL RULES OF PROCEDURE ADOPTED BY CONARE IN ITS FIRST MEETING, ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WILL WORK FULL-TIME ON THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES, FOR WHICH THEY WILL RECEIVE A SALARY FROM THE GOB. MOST OF CONARE'S WORK WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN COMMITTEES AND STUDY GROUPS; WHEN THE COUNCIL MEETS IN PLENARY SESSION, AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO ACHIEVE "CONSENSUS" ON EACH SUBJECT TO BE DEBATED, AND NO VOTES WILL BE TAKEN.

3. COMMENT: AS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED BY THE BANZER GOVERNMENT, CONARE WAS TO BE COMPOSED OF FOUR REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES (MNR, FSB AND FUERZAS REVOLUCIONARIAS BARIENTISTAS), CAMPESINOS AND THE ARMED FORCES, TOGETHER WITH 10 DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONALS WHO WOULD PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. HOWEVER, CONARE PRESIDENT EDWIN TAPIA, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY AND LEADER OF THE FRB, HAS ENCOUNTERED SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN ASSEMBLING THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERSHIP. IN THE WAKE OF THE OUTRIGHT REFUSAL BY ALL OPPPOSITION PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNCIL'S DELIBERATIONS, PLUS THE DECISION OF THE ARMED FORCES NOT TO BE OFFICIALLY REPRESENTED ON THE COUNCIL, CONARE IS NOW COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS OF CITIZENS: THREE DELEGATES EACH FROM THE MNR, FSB AND FRB; ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF THE NINE DEPARTMENTS OF BOLIVIA; SIX REPRESENTATIVES FROM NON-POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (LABOR, BUSINESS AND CAMBESINO ORGANIZATIONS) AND SIX PROFESSIONALS.

4. CONARE'S MEMBERSHIP REFLECTS THE GOB'S DIFFICULTY IN
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ATTRACTING PROMINENT POLITICAL NAMES TO THE COUNCIL. NO OPPOSITION POLITICIANS ARE PRESENT ON THE COUNCIL, WHILE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRO-GOVERNMENT PARTIES ARE LESSER POLITICAL LIGHTS, FEW OF WHOM ARE WELL-KNOWN IN BOLIVIAN POLITICAL CIRCLES. CAMBESINO AND LABOR DELEGATES TO THE COUNCIL ALSO APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN MORE FOR THEIR

SUBSERVIENCE TO THE GOB'S WISHES THAN FOR ANY ABILITY
TO SPEAK FOR THE CONSTITUENCIES WHICH THEY NOMINALLY REPRESENT.
THE MOST NOTABLE COMMON CHARACTERISTIC OF THE COUNCIL'S
TWENTY-NINE MEMBERS IS THEIR UNUSUALLY HIGH EDUCATIONAL
LEVEL; 8 OF THE 29 ARE SUFFICIENTLY WELL-EDUCATED TO PREFACE
THEIR NAMES WITH THE HONORARY TITLE OF DOCTOR. ALSO,
SOME TEN OF THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERS HAVE RECEIVED LEGAL
TRAINING.

5. THE COUNCIL WILL BE COMPLETED WHEN A FURTHER LABOR
REPRESENTATIVE IS CHOSEN; IF THE MINE WORKERS' FEDERATION
REJECTS THE POSITION OFFERED TO IT, THE LAST SEAT ON THE
COUNCIL WILL GO TO A REPRESENTATIVE OF EITHER THE RAILWAY
OR PETROLEUM WORKERS. A COMPLETE LIST OF THE COUNCIL WILL
FOLLOW SHORTLY BY AIRGRAM.

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