

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3482

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS PFOR BL UR

SUBJ: MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR BOLIVIA

REF: LA PAZ 4041

1. IN MY CONVERSATION OF JUNE 20 WITH PRESIDENT BANZER, I DID NOT MAKE A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF U.S. CONCERN ABOUT GOB RECEIPT OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HIS AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES BY SOVIET TECHNICIANS AND INTIMATED HIS OPPOSITION TO RECEIPT OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT. YET HE IS ANXIOUS TO GET MORE UP-TO-DATE MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE ARMY, PARTICULARLY, TO IMPROVE ITS MORALE. HE MENTIONED THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISITS TO MILITARY UNITS IN THE WAKE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT HE FOUND KULL SUPPORT FOR HIMSELF AND THE GOVERNMENT, BUT WAS QUESTIONED BY MANY YOUNGER OFFICERS ABOUT THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT THEY HAVE BEEN EXPECTING. I CONCLUDED DURING OUR TALK THAT WITHOUT SPECIFIC P&A DATA ON A TANK SUBSTITUTE SUCH AS AN ASSAULT CAR, THE PRESSURE ON US FOR EQUIPMENT WOULD INCREASE IF I APPLIED MORE PRESSURE ON HIM NOT TO ACCEPT MATERIEL FROM THE USSR. ALSO I BELIEVE THE ODDS ARE AGAINST THE GOB ACCEPTING SOVIET EQUIPMENT AND ESPECIALLY TECHNICIANS.

2. IF I CAN BE ARMED WITH P&A DATA ON A SUITABLE VEHICLE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO A TANK TO GIVE PERSONALLY TO PRESIDENT BANZER, I COULD THEN, MORE SUCCESSFULLY I BELIEVE, MAKE A DEMARCHE, IF THE

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DEPARTMENT WISHES, TO HIM ABOUT SOVIET TANKS. ALTHOUGH HIGH-

RANKING OFFICERS OF THE BOLIVIAN ARMY HAVE SHOWN NO INTEREST IN
CADILLAC-GAGE ASSAULT CARS, PRESIDENT BANZER MAY BE ABLE TO
CONVINCE THEM OF THEIR SUITABILITY. AS I REPORTED IN REFTTEL,
HE BROUGHT THESE UP HIMSELF IN MY JUNE 20 TALK.
STEDMAN

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