

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 AGR-20 L-03 TRSE-00

COME-00 DRC-01 RSC-01 /079 W
----- 018954

P R 142121Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3088

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 LA PAZ 3128/1

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, ECON, BL

SUBJECT: PL-480 TITLE I

LIMA FOR AGATT

REF: STATE 092148 AND LA PAZ A-023.

SUMMARY: WE ESTIMATE THAT EVEN IF PRESENT COMMERCIAL WHEAT/FLOUR IMPORT ARRANGEMENTS IMPLEMENTED BOLIVIA WILL HAVE SUPPLY GAP OF ABOUT 40,000 M.T. OF WHEAT WHICH SHOULD BE MET BY PL-480.

WE BELIEVE FURTHER AGREEMENT JUSTIFIED ON BASIS POOR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROSPECTS FOR 1975, AS INTEGRAL ELEMENT USG ASSISTANCE STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT SECTORS IN WHICH USG DIRECTING ITS EFFORTS. WE ALSO SEE POSSIBILITY THAT PL-480 GENERATIONS MIGHT BE USED TO HELP FINANCE LOCAL CURRENCY COSTS LATER PHASES RECONSTRUCTION FLOOD DAMAGED AREAS.

WE JUDGE PL-480 HAS HIGH GOB PRIORITY, IS POLITICALLY IMPORTANT AND THAT USG HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO USE THIS FLEXIBLE TOOL IN HELPING SOLVE BOLIVIA'S GRAIN SUPPLY PROBLEM AND TO AVOID JOLTING CHANGE FROM SUBSTANTIAL WHEAT CREDIT PROGRAM TO NO WHEAT CREDIT PROGRAM AT ALL. END SUMMARY:

1. TABLE 1. WHEAT. FY 1974 ESTIMATE. AGREEMENTS: 0; SHIPMENTS: 93,600 M.T.; CARRYOVER TO FY 1975: 3,500 M.T.

2. FY 1975 ESTIMATE. AGREEMENTS: 36,778 M.T. (US\$ 5.0 MILLION);

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SHIPMENTS: 40,278 M.T. (US\$ 5.5 MILLION); CARRYOVER TO FY 1976: 0.

3. TABLE 2. WHEAT.

	FY 1973	FY 1974	FY 1975	
SUPPLY	ACTUAL	ESTIMATE	PROJECTED	
A. BEGINNING STOCK	50,800	6,000	0	
B. PRODUCTION	54,000	57,200	58,700	
C. IMPORTS	163,100	194,100	236,278	
1. COMMERCIAL	123,200	97,200	182,700	
2. PL-480	39,900	96,900	43,578	
A. SALES	37,700	93,600	40,278	
B. DONATIONS	2,200	3,300	3,300	
3. OTHER DONATIONS	0	0	10,000	
TOTAL SUPPLY	267,900	257,300	294,978	
DISTRIBUTION				
A. CONSUMPTION	250,400	244,900	270,800	
B. FEED/SEED/WASTE	11,500	12,400	12,400	
C. EXPORTS	--	--	--	
D. ENDING STOCKS	6,000	0	1,778	
E. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	267,900	257,300	294,978	

4. FOREGOING TABLES REQUIRE SOME EXPLANATION. CONSUMPTION WAS CURTAILED IN FY 1974 BY (A) FAILURE OF ARGENTINA TO DELIVER ON COMMITMENTS AND OF GOB TO MAKE TIMELY ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS; (B) TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES THAT AFFECTED ARGENTINA, BOLIVIAN, CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN RAILWAYS (MAINLY BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT RAILWAY CARS, STRIKES, LANDSLIDES AND FLOODING) AND THAT AFFECTED INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION IN BOLIVIA WHETHER BY RAIL OR TRUCK (MAINLY DUE TO LANDSLIDES AND FLOODING); AND (C) RISING PRICES OF WHEAT, FLOUR AND BREAD. OUR PROJECTION FOR FY 1975 ASSUMES CONSUMPTION WILL RETURN TO AT LEAST FOUR PERCENT ANNUAL GROWTH TRACK TAKING FY 1973 AS BASE YEAR. (HISTORICAL CONSUMPTION TREND FROM 1968 TO 1972 WAS SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 5 PERCENT). SHOULD CONSUMPTION NOT REACH THIS LEVEL AND INSTEAD REMAIN STAGNANT AT ABOUT 245,000 M.T., OUR PROJECTION WOULD IMPLY HEALTHY AND MUCH NEEDED INCREASE IN STOCKS TO ABOUT 27,578 M.T. STOCK LEVEL IN TABLE 2 UNREALISTICALLY LOW AND GOB AUTHORITIES UNDOUBTEDLY PLANNING TO HIGHER LEVEL.

5. OUR COMMERCIAL IMPORT ESTIMATES FOR FY 1975 INCLUDE 20,000 M.T. OF FLOUR ALREADY PURCHASED FROM U.S., 30,000 M.T. OF WHEAT WHICH PROBABLY WILL ALL COME FROM U.S. UNDER ALREADY AUTHORIZED CALL FOR BIDS AND 90,000 M.T. OF FLOUR FROM ARGENTINA UNDER AN AGREEMENT

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ALREADY REACHED WITH GOA.

6. GOB AUTHORITIES HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT 90,000 M.T. FLOUR AGREEMENT WILL BE CARRIED OUT. GOA FAILED TO DELIVER ABOUT 34,000 M.T. OF FLOUR AT US\$ 165 PER M.T. UNDER 1973 AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO SUBSECRETARY LANDIVAR GOB HAD OPENED L/C'S AND MADE DOWN PAYMENT IN 1973 ON REMAINING 34,000 M.T. AND IS NOW REFUSING PROCEED WITH PURCHASES UNDER 90,000 M.T. AGREEMENT UNTIL 1973 COMMITMENT FULFILLED OR DOWN PAYMENT RETURNED. GOB

ALSO HAD AGREEMENT WITH GOA TO PURCHASE 30,000 M.T. OF WHEAT IN ADDITION TO 90,000 M.T. OF FLOUR, BUT THIS AGREEMENT WAS CANCELLED (PRESUMABLY BEFORE L/C'S OPENED) WHEN GOB DISCOVERED THAT WORLD MARKET WHEAT PRICES, ESPECIALLY U.S. PRICES, HAD FALLEN FAR BELOW GOA QUOTE. UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT ARGENTINE DELIVERIES MAY GROW INTO MAJOR PROBLEM, CAUSING GOB TO SHIFT SOME OF THESE FLOUR PURCHASES TO OTHER SUPPLIERS IN LATE CY 1974.

7. BOLIVIA HAS GREATLY IMPROVED EXPORT EARNINGS PROSPECTS AND B/P SURPLUS FOG CY 1974. BELIEVE, HOWEVER, ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO FORTUITOUS AND LIKELY HIGHLY TRANSIENT NATURE THIS IMPROVEMENT. FIRST, IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT IN CY 1973, BOLIVIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE COST FOR 93,800 M.T. OF IMPORTED FLOUR WAS ABOUT US\$16.9 MILLION AND FOR ABOUT 71,400 M.T. OF IMPORTED WHEAT (ALL PL-480 TITLE I) WAS ABOUT US\$ 4.2 MILLION INCLUDING CUP, 5 PERCENT DOWN PAYMENT, INTEREST, FREIGHT AND INSURANCE. AT CURRENT PRICES OF ABOUT US\$ 290 PER M.T. (CIF LA PAZ) FOR IMPORTED FLOUR AND US\$ 200 PER M.T. (CIF LA PAZ) FOR IMPORTED WHEAT, SAME TONNAGES WOULD COST US\$ 27.2 MILLION AND US\$ 14.3 MILLION RESPECTIVELY WITHOUT PL-480 CREDIT. THIS WOULD MEAN SUDDEN US\$ 20.4 MILLION IMPORT COST. ON BASIS OUR CURRENT ESTIMATES FOR FLOUR AND WHEAT US\$ 15.2 MILLION (USING ABOVE UNIT COSTS) FOR US\$ 28.5 MILLION INCREASE OVER 1973 PAYMENTS. THIS INCREASE PLUS ALMOST US\$ 20 MILLION INCREASE IN GULF COMPENSATION PAYMENTS OVER 1973 AND OTHER DEBT SERVICE INCREASES WILL CUT DEEPLY INTO BOLIVIA'S EXCHANGE RECEIPT GAINS DESPITE RISING PRICES FOR METALS AND HIGH, BUT DECLINING, PRICES FOR CRUDE OIL.

8. WHILE BOLIVIA'S 1974 BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SURPLUS NOW MAY TURN OUT TO BE CLOSER TO US\$ 50 MILLION THAN TO LOW END OF RANGE SENT REFAIR, THIS DUE IN LARGE PART TO LARGE COMMERCIAL BANK LOANS WHICH DO NOT INDICATE STRENGTHENING OF BASIC BALANCE. WHILE BASIC BALANCE PROBABLY WILL IMPROVE IN 1974, MUCH BASED ON FRAGILE PRICE INCREASES OF METALS (CONCENTRATES) EXPORTS. NO ONE SURE WHEN SPECULATIVE BUYING MAY END AND SEND PRICES DOWN.

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9. B/P SURPLUS FOR BOLIVIA LIKELY TO BE SHORT-LIVED AS IMPORT PRICES, FREIGHT AND INSURANCE COSTS CATCH UP WITH EXPORT PRICE INCREASES. IMF HAS PROJECTED B/P SURPLUS MAY ALMOST DISAPPEAR AND MAY WELL BE IN DEFICIT IN 1975 AND THAT CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE WILL AGAIN BE DECIDEDLY NEGATIVE ON ALL REASONABLE ASSUMPTIONS. ADDITIONAL B/P ANALYSIS BEING SENT SEPTEL UNDER PREPARATION WITH SUBJECT TITLE "IMPLICATIONS FOR BOLIVIAN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF ITS 1974 EXPORT PRICES".

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 AGR-20 L-03 TRSE-00 COME-00

DRC-01 RSC-01 /077 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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10. LATENT B/P PROBLEM ARISES PRIMARILY FROM HIGH DEPENDENCE OF BOLIVIAN ECONOMY ON IMPORTS FOR MANUFACTURED GOODS, RELATIVELY ELASTIC DEMAND FOR ITS EXPORTS, AND PAST, AND PERHAPS FUTURE, GOB INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO KEEP UNFINANCED TREASURY DEFICIT WITHIN ACCEPTABLE BOUNDS.

PRESENT MINFIN HAS DEMONSTRATED MARKED CAPABILITY FOR MAKING BUDGET CUTS AND IMPROVING REVENUE COLLECTIONS SINCE HE DESIGNATED MINFIN. HE IS ALSO CURRENTLY RIDING CREST OF INCREASED REVENUE BASED ON RISING EXPORT PRICES. B/P OUTCOME FOR 1975 AND FUTURE YEARS WILL DEPEND GREATLY ON WHETHER (A) GOB DECREES FURTHER WAGE INCREASES IN 1974; (B) EXPORT PRICES DECLINE IN 1975; (C) GOB DEVELOPS CONTINGENCY FISCAL MEASURES TO MEET REVENUE LOSS FROM EXPORT PRICE FALLS; AND (D) GOB GETS ON WITH THE JOB OF SHIFTING ITS TAX BASE MORE TOWARDS INTERNAL INCOMES AND AWAY FROM EXTERNAL SECTOR.

11. PL-480 TITLE I COUNTERPART GENERATIONS EXTREMELY USEFUL TO MEET PROGRAM COMMITMENTS AND TO MEET REQUIREMENTS EXPECTED TO BE ESTABLISHED OR REESTABLISHED BY AGRICULTURE SECTOR ANALYSIS WHICH EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY JULY. GOB REVENUE GAINS DERIVING FROM PRESENTLY FAVORABLE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION STILL LEAVES BUDGET FOR THIS YEAR AND NEXT IN PRECARIOUS EQUILIBRIUM, AT BEST. ONE REASON IS THAT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FROM EXTERNAL DONORS, PLANS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INCREASED REVENUES IN PART BY

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ALLOCATING RELATIVELY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SIZE AND DIRECTION OF ITS INVESTMENT BUDGET IN LABOR RURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, 1974 CAPITAL EXPENDITURES BY GOB TREASURY SCHEDULED TO INCREASE BY US\$ 25 MILLION (ABOUT 126 PERCENT) ABOVE CORRESPONDING 1973 LEVEL. ALSO, OVERALL PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURES ASSIGNED TO ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY IN AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND EDUCATION ARE BUDGETED TO INCREASE FROM 15 PERCENT OF TOTAL 1973 EXPENDITURES TO 20 PERCENT IN 1974.

12. IN THIS SITUATION, AND MINDFUL OF THE LESS FAVORABLE B/P OUTLOOK FOR 1975, WE CONTINUE, AS REFLECTED IN THE DAP PROGRAMMING OF USG MEASURES (PP 153/154), TO PLACE CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE ON ROLE OF PL-480 I NOT ONLY IN HELPING TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMY'S ABILITY MEET TRADITIONALLY STRONG B/P PRESSURES, BUT ALSO TO ASSURE TIMELY AVAILABILITY POLITICALLY CRITICAL EXTERNAL SUPPLIES OF WHEAT/FLOUR PENDING PROGRESS IN USAID-SUPPORTED GOB EFFORTS INCREASE DOMESTIC WHEAT PRODUCTION. IN THIS CONTEXT, PL-480 TITLE I HAS ALWAYS BEEN INTEGRAL ELEMENT IN USG ASSISTANCE STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURE. ITS AVAILABILITY CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT TO ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOALS. THE JOINTLY PROGRAMMED COUNTERPART FUNDS GENERATED BY TITLE I HELP TO PROVIDE US WITH OPPORTUNITY CONSULT WITH GOB IN ORDERLY AND TIMELY FASHION ON DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS WE BELIEVE GOB SHOULD FAVOR IN FORMULATION OF ITS BUDGETS FOR AGRICULTURE AND RELATED ACTIVITIES (E.G., TRANSPORTATION) AS WELL AS FOR OTHER AREAS WHICH NORMALLY DO NOT DIRECTLY RECEIVE ALLOCATIONS COUNTERPART FUNDS (E.G., EDUCATIONA DN HEALTH). IN THIS MANNER, WHILE ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF 1974 GOB EXPENDITURES GUDGET IS TO BE FINANCED BY COUNTERPART FUNDS FOR KEY ACTIVITIES SUCH AS MOBILITY AND INVESTMENT FUNDS FOR MANAG AND THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SERVICE, WE HAVE ALSO SUCCESSFULLY ENCOURAGED GOB DURING NEGOTIATIONS ON PROGRAMMING OF COUNTERPART FUNDS, TO INCREASE ITS RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO OTHER SECTORS OF DEVELOPMENTAL INTEREST.

13. WE BELIEVE GOB BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS TO RURAL SECTOR SHOULD INCREASE EVEN FURTHER IN THE COMING YEARS AND CONSIDER AVAILABILITY OF PL-480 COUNTERPART FUNDS TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN OUR EFFORTS TO SO ENCOURAGE THE GOB. PARTICULARLY WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROSPECTIVE EARLY COMPLTION OF JOINT GOB/USAID SECTOR ASSESSMENTS IN AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HEALTH WE WILL BE IDENTIFYING PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS BEYOND PRESENT GOB LEVELS. IF WE ARE TO INFLUENCE THE GOB TO ACT ON ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS, IT CLEARLY WILL BE IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE TO HAVE PL-480 FOOD RESOURCES AND COUNTERPART FUNDS ON HAND TO REINFORCE GOB RESOLVE AND CAPACITY TO CARRY

OUT THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES. FY 1975 AGREEMENT
WOULD BE SUPPORTIVE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF SELF-HELP GOALS
CONTAINED IN CY 1972 AGREEMENT WHICH CONTINUES BE ESSENTIAL
ELEMENT OF OUR SECTORAL STRATEGY. ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND
JUSTIFICATION WILL BE PROVIDED IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR
ASSESSMENT TO BE REASY IN EARLY JULY.

14. THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL, SPECIAL JUSTIFICATION FOR FY 1975
TITLY I AGREEMENT WITH BOLIVIA, VIZ., THE COUNTRY'S
NEED TO FINANCE LATER PHASES RECONSTRUCTION OF AREAS DAMAGED
BY EXCEPTIONAL FLOODS OF 1974. GOB FORMULATING DETAILED
RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPING SPECIFIC
PROPOSALS FOR EXTERNALLY-ASSISTED PROJECTS. IN THIS SITUATION,
THERE WILL BE EXTRAORDINARY GOB BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS DURING
NEXT TWO-THREE YEARS TO HELP FINANCE RECONSTRUCTION
ACTIVITIES. A FY 1975 TITLE I AGREEMENT WOULD GENERATE
COUNTERPART FUNDS WHICH IN PART COULD BE USED TO HELP MEET
THOSE REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECTS HAVING LONGER
GESTATION PERIOD AND THEREFORE NOT COMING ON-STREAM FOR
A YEAR OR TWO, MANY OF WHICH RELATE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY
TO AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT. SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT THESE
COUNTERPART FUNDS WOULD NOT RPT NOT ADDRESS SHORTER-TERM
RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS, WHICH BEING IDENTIFIED BY RECNET
JOINT IDB-AID SURVEY TEAM, AND WHICH ALONG WITH MORE COMPLEX
RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS REQUIRING DETAILED PLANNING,
PROBABLY WILL REQUIRE EXTERNAL FINANCING.

15. GOB STRONGLY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING ITS DOMESTIC GRAINS
PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY WHEAT, AND LARGE PORTION PL-480
GNERATIONS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE UTILIZED TO SUPPORT
GRAINS PROGRAM. RISE OF WHEAT/FLOUR PRICES IN 1973 AND
EARLY 1974 HAVE SERVED TO INCREASE TOB ATTENTION AND EFFORTS
TO INCREASE DOMESTIC WHEAT PRODUCTION. ON OTHER HAND,
IF INTERNATIONAL PRICES CONTINUE DECLINE THIS INCENTIVE
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MAY FADE AND GOB'S TRADITIONAL DESIRE TO OBTAIN PL-480
TITLE I FOR PESOS IT GENERATES SUBJECT TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
CONTROL MAY LEAD IT TO NEGLECT PROPER DOMESTIC WHEAT
PRICE POLICY AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM NECESSARY TO
ENCOURAGE NATIONAL WHEAT PRODUCTION. THIS CONSIDERATION
MIGHT HAVE SOME WITHGT ONLY IF PL-480 WERE TO COVER MOST
OF BOLIVIA'S 100,000 M.T. ANNUAL REQUIREMENT FOR WHEAT IN
TIME FOR LOW WORLD WHEAT PRICES. IN OUR JUDGMENT
PROPOSED PROGRAM IS TOO SMALL TO HAVE THIS EFFECT.

16. FINALLY , EMBASSY JUDGES FURTHER PL-480 AGREEMENT AS
POLITICALLY IMPORTANT. GOB, ON BASIS REPEATED STATEMENTS
ITS HIGH OFFICIALS, PLACES VERY HIGH PRIORITY ON PL-480
FOR B/P RELIEF IN TERMS OF THEIR VIEW OF CY 1975 B/P

OUTLOOK AS WELL AS PESO GENERATIONS. IT ALSO SEES PL-480 AS ASSURING PORTION NEEDED WHEAT SUPPLIES AT TIME WHEN WORLD WHEAT/FLOUR MARKETS SUBJECT RADICAL CHANGES AND SHORTAGES AND WHEN ITS OTHER PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER, ARGENTINA, FAILING TO MEET CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS AND TRYING USE ITS FLOUR AND WHEAT AS BARGAINING LEVER TO ACHIEVE ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENDS IN BOLIVIA SUCH AS ASSURING LARGER AND CHEAP SUPPLY OF BOLIVIAN GAS AND PREVENTING CLOSER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN BOLIVIA AND BRAZIL. EMBASSY BELIEVES USG HAS SOME RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP FLEXIBLE INSTRUMENT THAT CAN HELP SOLVE BOLIVIA'S POLITICALLY SENSITIVE GRAIN SUPPLY PROBLEM AS WELL AS SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR AVOIDING GOING FROM SIZEABLE WHEAT CREDIT PROGRAM TO ABSOLUTELY NO WHEAT CREDIT PROGRAM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WHEAT, DATA, PL 480 TITLE 1, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICITS, CREDIT AGREEMENTS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAPAZ03128
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740118-1129
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740550/aaaabsdv.tel
Line Count: 346
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 092148 AND LA PAZ A-023.
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <14 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PL-480 TITLE I LIMA FOR AGATT
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, ECON, BL, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005