

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 EB-11 AID-20 COME-00 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /112 W

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O 292103Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2091

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 0612

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BL

SUBJ: MILITARY ATTITUDES TOWARD BANZER

REF: USDAO LA PAZ MSG 242015Z

1. REGRETABLE THAT SUBJECT MESSAGE NOT CLEARED OR COORDINATED WITH THE EMBASSY'S POLITICAL SECTION. APART FROM MINOR ERRORS FROM SOURCES SUCH AS STATEMENTS THAT THE ARMY HAS A ROLE IN PRICE CONTROLS (IT DOES NOT), OR THAT PRICE INCREASES WERE ABOUT 300 PERCENT (THEY WERE ABOUT 100 PERCENT) WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN CORRECTED IN THE COMMENT, THE COMMENT ITSELF IS IN ERROR WHEN IT SUGGESTS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S VERY DIFFICULT DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE LATEST ECONOMIC PACKAGE WAS MADE TO PLACATE THE POLITICIANS AND THEREBY STAY IN OFFICE. POLITICIANS IN BOLIVIA AT THIS TIME HAVE NEITHER THE DESIRE TO ALIENATE THE PUBLIC AT LARGE NOR THE CLOUT TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE PRESIDENT STAYS IN OFFICE.

2. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT WISH TO SUGGEST THAT THE ARMY IS SOLIDLY BEHIND BANZER. IT ISN'T NOW AND NEVER HAS BEEN. IT MAY EVEN BE LESS SOLIDLY BEHIND THE PRESIDENT NOW THAN A FEW MONTHS AGO BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN, AFTER ALL,
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RATHER WIDE-SPREAD CRITICISM OF THE WAY THE GOV HAS HANDLED

NATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SINCE LAST OCTOBER. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE THAT GENERAL ALCOREZA WOULD HAVE TOLD A LARGE GROUP OF CADETS THAT THE ARMY WOULD DUMP BANZER IF HE APPEARS TO LOSE SUPPORT, AS STATED IN REFTEL.

3. THE EMBASSY AGREES THAT THERE MAY BE GROWING SENTIMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY FOR A CHANGE IN THE PRESIDENCY. THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED THE RATHER PERSISTENT TALK ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF A MILITARY JUNTA OR AN ALL-MILITARY CABINET. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS THE TIME FOR EITHER, BECAUSE NEITHER WOULD BE ABLE TO PRESENT NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE EXISTING PROBLEMS. THE MILITARY DOES NOT WISH TO BEAR THE FULL BRUNT OF GENERAL CRITICISM AND IS UNLIKELY TO PUT ITSELF IN THIS POSITION. ALSO REPORTED IN THE PAST HAS BEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOB IN DISCOVERING AND CRUSHING COUP PLOTS.

4. IN SUM, THE GOB IS FACING PROBLEMS AT THIS TIME AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, BUT WE BELIEVE BANZER'S SURVIVAL PROSPECTS CONTINUE TO BE GOOD.
STEDMAN

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