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JPRS L/8966

7 March 1980

Latin America Report

(FOUO 4/80)

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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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CUBA

HUBER MATOS RECALLS EARLY REVOLUTION DAYS, 'GULAG' PRISONS

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 16 Dec 79 pp 79, 80, 82, 83, 85

[Interview with Huber Matos by Pierre Golendo of CAMBIO 16 in San Jose, Costa Rica, date not given]

[Text] Around the end of December 1956, 12 men wandered exhaustedly through the rugged mountains of the eastern coast of Cuba. They had just had a battle with the troops of Fulgencio Batista, a sergeant-stenographer of fortune, who rose to the presidency of the republic. They barely had any ammunition and only 11 old rifles. They were the remnants of an expedition which left neighboring Mexico on 2 December and had landed under the command of a young 29-year-old lawyer named Fidel Castro. They were the revolutionaries of the Sierra Maestra.

A short time afterward, a modest Cuban schoolteacher from the city of Manzanilla, Huber Matos, joined the guerrillas. He brought clothing, supplies and medicines to the scene of the fighting. Two years later, that same man brought an airplane from Costa Rica with tons of weapons and ammunition, which he delivered to the leaders of the 26 July Movement.

In recognition, the chief of the insurrection, Fidel Castro, appointed him a major in the rebel army, the highest grade, and he placed him in command of Column No 9, which was to participate in the siege and seizure of the city of Santiago de Cuba, the capital of Oriente Province.

Only a year later, that same honored major was to fall into disgrace for opposing communist infiltration into the spheres of the nascent revolutionary government and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

Released last 21 October, thanks to international pressure, from San Jose, Costa Rica, where he has rejoined his wife, son and grandchildren, whom he did not yet know, Huber Matos gives another veteran of Castro's prisons, Pierre Golendo, an exclusive interview for CAMBIO 16 about the circumstances and real reasons for his arrest, and he reveals the sub-human conditions of the Cuban political prisoners.

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CAMBIO 16: Under what specific circumstances did your arrest take place, you being the military chief of Camaguey Province?

Huber Matos: After the defeat of Batista, shortly after what we could call the dawn of freedom, some of us noted indications that the revolution did not appear to be moving in the agreed-upon direction. Everything that had been promised to the people about a democratic, humanistic, nationalist change filled with the thirst for justice, with active participation in government, was being removed from their view. We viewed the progressive process of ideological reorientation taking place among the cadres of the armed forces as the most serious symptom. Thus, the magazine VERDE OLIVO, the color the Rebel Army uniform, was changing the tone of its lecturing aimed at the soldiers and officers toward undemocratic positions.

We inquired and we learned of the promotion of known communists to important posts. And although none of us were anticommunists, we could not refrain from showing our annoyance at those events. While a large number of Marxist-Leninists fought in the Sierra Maestra, the participation at high levels of the Batista Government of prominent members of the cryptocommunist Popular Socialist Party such as Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Blas Roca, was well known.

The Resignation

On the other hand, it was becoming more and more obvious that the revolution needed a collective leadership. Armed struggle had been led exclusively by Fidel. However, it was now a matter of governing a nation, of administering the interests of the Cuban people and the best way to attempt it was in a democratic manner. We proposed this to Castro repeatedly and he always said we were right. However, time went by and nothing happened, he kept putting us off.

Things being as they were, I sent Fidel the first private letter explaining that it would be best for me to leave the army. It was July 1959 and a year had already gone by since the victory and I believed that it was enough time. I did not receive a reply. On 19 October, three months later, I decided to leave the revolutionary leadership and the ranks of the Rebel Army.

At that time it was already obvious to me that the Sierra Maestra slogan of "Liberty or Death" was becoming something else and that it was committing us to nothing less than the negative task of giving death to democracy. At the same time that I was privately telling Castro of my decision, I sent my request for discharge to the army staff in care of Camilo Cienfuegos. I wanted to go home and to my private activities. I was a teacher and I always liked education more than the barracks.

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CAMBIO 16: And that is what was called a plot?

Huber Matos: On the night 20-21 October, we were surprised to hear on the radio that there was a military uprising in Camaguey. Captain Mendoza, today a member of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, and the director of the official daily GRANMA, shouted over the airwaves that we were with Trujillo, with the Batista followers in Miami, that we were sabotaging the agrarian reform and that we were disobeying the decisions of the central government. We were about to lose our tempers and engage in a shootout with those on the radio. However, we understood that it was a trap and we decided to wait.

The morning after, Maj Camilo Cienfuegos, a close friend from the early times of the guerrillas, stood before us. He asked us to turn over command and remain under arrest. "What? It has been turned over since early morning." Camilo was surprised. I explained to him how Fidel Castro had called my second in command in the military district by telephone and had put him in charge of the operation.

Cienfuegos, Missing

I was arrested and sent to a cell in El Morro in Havana, a very narrow cell, where there was not even a hole in which to take care of one's needs, no water, a punishment cell.

When I had been under those conditions for 5 days, Castro made the people, in a huge gathering in front of the Presidential Palace, raise their hand asking for my death. What had happened in Camaguey was linked to other events to make the people believe that there was an attempt at treason. The only "plot" was the resignation of a group of officers when they learned of the dastardly deed that had been committed against me.

On 14 December 1959, at 1600 hours at the Infantry Division Theater in Ciudad Libertad, former Columbia Barracks, the trial against Huber Matos and another 19 officers from the Camaguey District began. The case heard carries the number 340. An important witness, the legendary Maj Camilo Cienfuegos, the inseparable companion of the main accused, could not attend. Camilo had disappeared in a light aircraft during a Camaguey-Havana flight on 17 November. He did not have time to corroborate the statements against Matos, which a morning paper put in his mouth on the very morning of his departure. The official version said that the aircraft crashed as a result of a tropical storm. Castro himself encountered serious difficulties in entering the trial room. From the "jeep" he was driving, he had to threaten to use a machinegun to open a path through the large group of soldiers loyal to Matos, who with bared chests shouted at him: "Shoot here you queer."

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The Trial

CAMBIO 16: After refusing to testify with anything more than a terse yes or no, you spoke in your defense for nearly 3 hours. However, the speech by Fidel Castro was to be decisive. Why do you think that the Cuban leader took on the work of making the accusation at that time?

Huber Matos: Actually Castro directed the trial completely. He selected the members of the court from among his sworn followers. The chief of his escort, for example, was one of those in charge of trying me, and he had even hammered the people beforehand with a systematic campaign, presenting me as "the blackguard who must be punished severely." However, as if that were not enough, Castro also attended as the main witness for the prosecution and spend 7 hours attacking me. Anyone who reads the text of his speech will confirm that during all that time he did not manage to provide a single proof.

Despite everything, even with such obvious irregularities as that of the three individuals from the rear of the room, from among the drapcries who came forward to testify, as if in a farce, the statement by the chief of the armed forces, Raul Castro (he of the "dirty work"), the public received my statement with applause. During my statement I said that I was willing to give my life if by doing so the revolution returned to its original state, if the promises of Castro in the first phase were kept. I spoke of that revolution that was going to give land to the peasant, school to the children, housing to the family, in the words of Fidel: "a revolution as green as the palms." That was what made the audience, mainly officers of the army selected by the authorities, come over to my side.

If the court had handed down a sentence that same day, the decision would have been "not guilty." But the trial was postponed to give it a greater legal appearance. Actually, it was to give Fidel time to prepare his speech. When he spoke, the die had been cast, the verdict was assured. The sentence was 20 years. Actually, Castro had already opted for that sentence, hoping that during that time my life would end in prison.

Later on I learned that on that occasion some of Castro's ministers, close friends in the leadership of the 26 July Movement such as Faustino Perez, Manolo Ray and some others, defended me against Fidel. It is a miracle that I returned to prison alive, but such cases happen and mine was one of them. I believe that up to the last minute Fidel Castro thought of tearing off my head in one way or another. International support saved me. Although it is also probable that he may have released me with the hope of having me shot somewhere. He does not worry me.

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Sovietization

CAMBIO 16: Then it can be said that yours was the first Stalinist trial since the victory of the revolution.

Huber Matos: I would say that it was a typically fascist trial, although unfortunately, Cuba is a nation dependent on the Soviet Union. Castro is nothing more than a satrap, a representative of Russian interests. That is why they had the chance to place nuclear rockets or missiles on the island and they took them away after having discussed things with the North Americans. More recently, when again there was talk about Soviet troops in Cuba, they did not call on Castro to discuss things; things were resolved only and exclusively between the Russians and the Yankees.

We Cubans are not the masters of government, we are not self-determined. If Moscow did not subsidize Castro with millions of pesos daily, if it did not arm him, if they did not give him petroleum, machinery, cereals... the Castro regime would not have lasted a week. The Russians support him but they also charge for it. The pretense of independence of the island is an irony for which the Cuban people pay with the miseries imposed. Cuba is a very important strategic base on the American scene, in the panorama of the Atlantic and the Caribbean.

Gulag

During the 20 years spent in prison by this legendary "bearded one," who wanted a Cuban-style revolution for the island, he was in many of the penal establishments of the tropical Gulag: La Cabana, el Principe and Combinado de La Habana del Este. During all this time Matos was always a recalcitrant prisoner and continuously received the visits of Castro's assassins. During these visits, beatings alternated with attempts to make him publicly apologize for his "counterrevolutionary actions." Matos himself took a long time convincing himself that torture and murder went on in the Castro prisons. "Fidel was my brother," he says, "in my mind I could not accept that atrocities worse than those of the times of Batista were being committed."

Huber Matos: Around that time I had a visit every 3 or 4 months and when my family told me that prisoners were being shot, bayoneted and made to work like slaves on the Isle of Pines, and that this took place every day, I did not believe them until they brought more than 100 prisoners from the island to La Cabana on 29 May 1966. For some hours they kept us together in the same section of the prison. It was enough. When night came and they threw me once more into a miserable cell, I already had heard the stories from my comrades about the atrocities that were being committed, the same ones my family had told me about. Today we know how many blows, how many bayonets have been used to terrorize the prisoners, and we know the names of comrades who were murdered in the prisons and those of many others who are only human wreckage.

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There are still many things not known outside Cuba. A prisoner is rarely told "You are being punished," in prison. Punishment is imposed on him in such a manner that it appears that the individual himself is responsible. They kept me naked for 13 months, without clothing, without visits, without medical care, without anything that could remind anyone of the existence of a prisoner. All this because I resisted when they changed my uniform. They wanted to give us another one similar to that of common prisoners. They attempted to take away from us the classification of men who fought for ideas, of prisoners of conscience. Later on I spent more than 7 years without the right to receive my family because I had refused to submit to the whims of the guards who wanted to break our will. Sometimes they wanted us to remove our shirts during visits, other times, that we be naked, and if you accepted this you soon found yourself on all fours. So when the pack of thugs would come to my cell with the story that they were going to search me, and I would tell them to cut the stories and to go ahead with the beating, they would do so immediately.

CAMBIO 16: In your letter dated 20 October 1975 you wrote that you were convinced that you would spend the rest of your days behind bars. With what state of mind did you face that black future?

Huber Matos: From the time they threw me into the Isle of Pines prison, the jailers never ceased threatening me that I would not leave there alive. In many ways they came to suggest to me that if there were some chance of my liberation, if there were some circumstance that would mean a change of government in Cuba, they had instructions to liquidate me. I believe it was on 15 or 16 April 1961, in any case before the landing at the Bay of Pigs on 17 April, an individual sent from Havana appeared. He approached the entrance to the cell block where a group of us prisoners were, and showing us a submachinegun, said: "There are reports of a landing of people from abroad and you know why I am here. At any time that there is the possibility of an invasion here and of their coming to rescue you, you go down." I believe it is also known that during the October 1962 crisis the prison on the Isle of Pines was mined with dynamite. Several tons of explosives were placed and they planned to turn the entire area of the prison into a lake if things became difficult.

Then, in the cell, they also tried to liquidate me. They gave me beatings that could have easily ruptured my liver. But they had no luck. I have some broken ribs and my left arm is damaged. But I survived.

CAMBIO 16: Why do you think Castro is releasing prisoners?

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Huber Matos: Because of his interest in obtaining American loans and technology. Castro is a calculating, cold, unscrupulous person, and surely he thinks that with the recent prisoner releases and by keeping Huber Matos and other prominent comrades alive, he can become eligible for American dollars. It is a business operation.

Anyway, they are not releasing as many prisoners as the Castro propaganda says. It is a lie. In the various lists of pardons, which at times are for 400 to 500 prisoners, there have been only a few of the "planted" ones, who are the ones who have been locked up the longest, those who are in the poorest physical condition with their nervous system destroyed. Those people remain in prison. There is precisely where the problem lies. Castro is seeking a way to visibly and very slowly release 3,600 prisoners, leaving those who really need release the most still in his clutches.

When the first list of 400 prisoners pardoned appeared in December 1978, over there in prison we examined the list. More than 100 of those on the list had been released 2, 4, and up to 12 years before, although for the purposes sought, they were carried as prisoners on the prison rolls. Also appearing on these first lists were "phantom" prisoners, people who no one knew. They were propaganda prisoners.

On the other hand, there is a group of people who will never be released and who are urgently in need of international solidarity. Among the more than 500 "planted" ones there are four women, poor things, who have very long sentences and who greatly need their freedom and suffer greatly. There is a group taken from the Habana del Este prison to that of Boniato, who are serving life sentences.

CAMBIO 16: Silvio Rodriguez, among others...

Huber Matos: Yes. Silvio Rodriguez Barrientos is there, a good comrade, a brother of mine for whose life I fear. I have revealed the case because he is a person very closely identified with Huber Matos and it could be that they will now take it out on him because of the charges I have been making against Castro since my release. He has been a greatly punished person because he has always resisted the jailers and thugs. Moreover, he is a Catholic and that is a very serious thing there inside. He is a brave man.

This group at Boniato has been without medical care, on a starvation diet and without sun. All of them are people of great determination. They have been transferred to that prison with the primary goal of destroying or crushing them, but in any case to deprive them of the possibility of release by pardon. Latest reports received say that they were on a hunger strike and in a very serious condition. They are "planted" prisoners, who do not compromise with communism. That is their only guilt and that is the reason they are being kept behind bars. That is why the Cuban authorities describe them as terrorists.

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CAMBIO 16: Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo is also in this group.

Huber Matos: We are very good friends. We have been together more than once in El Principe prison, in cell block number 23. He is a prisoner who remains "planted," in a position of struggle, in total and open confrontation with the regime, and that is why he will be one of the ones who will not be easily released.

Moreover, they have it in for Menoyo because he revealed the scheme by the communist officials of the Ministry of Interior to open the doors of the prisons to the press. He rejected the farce in the interview he had with several American newsmen and it was published throughout the world. He did not accept the blackmail and he asked for the release of all the prisoners and not individual pardons. We, 138 prisoners, made a much more detailed explanation than that of Menoyo on the reasons for rejecting the dialog, but it was made known after his. We had difficulties in having it brought outside. At any rate, what is important is that in both of them were revealed the deals Castro had made with his agents in exile in Latin America and Spain.

Huber Matos, one of the legends of the Sierra Maestra, the man who entered Havana on the "tank of victory" together with Fidel Castro and Camilo Cienfuegos, the former commander of the Camaguey Military Region, who considers himself the victim of communist infiltration into the Rebel Army, just as the president of the republic (Manuel Urrutia) and the chief of the air force (Diaz Lanz) were before him, holds no resentment against Fidel Castro. At 60 years-of-age, in the same Costa Rica from where he went to join the men of the guerrillas, he declares: "I believe that the meanness of Fidel Castro, his cowardliness and his abuses have left nothing in my mind and my heart but contempt, an infinite contempt."

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CUBA

'PRELA' CLAIMS ILLEGAL REBEL STATIONS BROADCAST FROM FLORIDA

PA120201 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1631 GMT 11 Feb 80 PA

[Article by Elmer Rodriguez]

[Text] Havana, 11 Feb (PL)--The deceit of the counterrevolutionary radio stations broadcasting from U.S. territory to Cuba but which claim to be broadcasting from some part in the island, has been completely revealed.

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission recently confiscated several transmitters operated by Cubans living in Miami, Florida.

The programs, allegedly broadcast from various parts of Cuba, were edited in North America and some "unsuspecting" foreign correspondent, stationed in Havana, reported the matter as if it were true.

The U.S. authorities themselves emphatically denied this report when they closed down three illegal radio stations located in Florida. They did not make any arrests however.

According to reports ham operators from the United States and other countries had protested that the illegal stations were interfering with their broadcasting frequencies.

Although U.S. officials announced the confiscation of radio equipment worth several thousand dollars, they added that it was impossible to say which of the three counterrevolutionary stations had been closed down.

A well-known revolutionary, of Cuban origin, admitted in Miami that the programs, lasting some 30 or 40 minutes, were recorded at the offices of the Alfa 66 terrorist group which is located in Miami.

Their own statements reveal the deceit and farce of these counterrevolutionary stations which claimed their information came from within Cuba.

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To broadcast in the United States one must have a license from the Federal Communications Commission. These stations did not have this document.

Although members of the Alfa 66 group and Radio Abdala (another illegal radio station) said they will continue operating, U.S. officials did not reveal what would be the consequences of this new violation of the nation's laws.

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CUBA

BRIEFS

REPRESSION, EXECUTIONS REPORTED--Confidential reports from various Western embassies in Havana confirm that an upswing in repression has taken place in the wake of a cabinet reshuffle in December in Cuba. The reports indicate that executions of military personnel by firing squads have occurred and that pamphlets criticizing the hard economic times besetting Cuba have appeared in Havana. [Text] [Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 3 Feb 80 p 5]

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

BRIEFSS

BANANA EXPORTING GROUP MEMBERSHIP--Santo Domingo, 23 Feb (PL)--The Dominican Republic has become the fifth member of the multinational Banana Marketing Corporation (COMUNBANA) at a time when its exports are very low. Jesus Hernandez, director of the Dominican Center for Export Development, and Alfredo Orange, executive director of COMUNBANA, signed an agreement yesterday formalizing the incorporation of the Caribbean country into that organization. The COMUNBANA, an enterprise created by the Union of Banana Export-Countries in March 1977, also includes Honduras, Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama. Its goal is to protect the prices of the banana at international markets which are still controlled by large corporations. The Dominican Republic is joining COMUNBANA at a time when its exports are very low. Exports dropped from \$11 million per year over the past few years to a little over \$1 million. [Text] [PA242047 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2300 GMT 23 Feb 80 PA]

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EL SALVADOR

OCLAE CLAIMS CAPTURE OF STUDENTS BY U.S. MARINES

PA021849 Havana PRELA in Spanish 0030 GMT 2 Feb 80 PA

[Text] Havana, 1 Feb (PL)--The Continental Organization of Latin American Students (OCLAE) has reported the kidnapping of Salvadoran University students Jose Humberto Mejia and Francisco Arnulfo Ventura.

In a press bulletin released here today, the OCLAE indicated that the two youths were captured during a joint operation of the U.S. Marines who guard the U.S. Embassy and Salvadoran repressive forces.

It stressed that the capture occurred a few hours after the mass popular demonstration on 22 January when more than 20 people were killed and 100 were wounded.

The OCLAE condemned the reactionary offensive of the Salvadoran tyranny and reiterated the Latin American students' solidarity with the Salvadoran people.

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EL SALVADOR

INTERVIEWED LP-28 LEADER SEEKS 'AUTHENTIC REVOLUTION'

PA151634 Rome IPS in Spanish 0355 GMT 15 Feb 80 PA

[Interview with Marisol Galindo, leader of the 28 February Peoples Leagues of El Salvador by Rafael Cribari]

[Text] Panama City, 14 Feb (IPS)--Shortly before being arrested by the Panamanian National Guard, Marisol Galindo, a member of the political committee of the Salvadoran 28 February Peoples Leagues [LP-28], told IPS that "our people's struggle does not want a reformist solution but rather an authentic revolution."

The LP-28 leader said yesterday's occupation of the Panamanian Embassy by the LP-28 "is an act in repudiation of the repressive and massacring policy of the junta which rules El Salvador."

Galindo and five other LP-28 leaders who were visiting Panama to make known the Salvadoran situation were detained by the national guard after the Panamanian Embassy in El Salvador was occupied.

She charged that "many companeros died in the actions against the Christian Democratic headquarters occupied by our activists and in the attack against a student demonstration on 12 February." She added, "We have not been able to recover their bodies."

According to Galindo, witnesses saw that "our dying militants were brutally taken to the garrisons of the repressive forces" during those actions.

She said the LP-28 is also "denouncing the brutal assassination of Julio Salinas, a member of the political committee of the LP-28, an electrician and a labor leader who was killed by the army on 12 February."

Referring to her country's situation, Galindo believes that reformism is not the alternative and that the only solution for the country is "an authentic revolution which must be antioligarchic and anti-imperialist."

Questioned about the nature of the Salvadoran Armed Forces, the main participants in the current government, the LP-28 leader indicated that "we

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recognize that there is a small group of young progressive officers in the army." But she quickly added that "this is a small group and most of the armed forces and the officers in command are totally fascist."

Galindo also said that "our fierce struggle for freedom needs the militant international solidarity of the democratic governments and peoples who understand that our cause is just."

In this regard, she stressed the Panamanian people's solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionary organizations. She noted that the occupation of the embassy "was never against the Panamanian Government and people whom we support."

Questioned about the outlook for her country, Galindo expressed optimism, although she warned that once imperialism exhausts the reforming plan of the junta it will try through all means to intervene to prevent the people's victory. "We are determined to struggle as much as is necessary but we need the fraternal help of all peoples to achieve freedom," she added.

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HONDURAS

BRIEFS

NEWSMEN DENOUNCE GOVERNMENT PRESSURES--San Jose, 9 Feb (PL)--The Honduran Foreign Correspondents Association today denounced the systematic pressure the military regime exerts on foreign newsmen. According to a document released by this organization, three of its members have been slandered by government press secretary Herman Allan Padgett because they refused to cooperate with the maneuvers of Gen Policarpo Paz Garcia's regime. The association also denounces administrative corruption and social injustice, as well as the abuses committed against the citizens, along with the government's lack of seriousness and its inability to resolve the country's serious problems. "All of this helps shape the country's image abroad," the document affirms. The document demands that Padgett present evidence to back his charges, which it terms "defamatory and slanderous." [Text]
[PA101712 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2340 GMT 9 Feb 80 PA]

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JAMAICA

FOREIGN RELATIONS MINISTER URGES U.S. NONINTERFERENCE IN CARIBBEAN

PA071630 Havana PRELA in English 1600 GMT 7 Feb 80 PA

[Article by Jorge Armendariz]

[Text] Cozumel, Mexico, Feb 7 (PL)--Jamaica demanded that the United States respect the region of the Caribbean as a zone of peace, free from all kinds of foreign interference.

The minister of foreign relations of Jamaica, Percival James Peterson, interviewed on this Mexican island, rejected categorically U.S. offers of military aid in the Caribbean due to Cuba's alleged geopolitical and military movements in the zone.

Peterson said that recent U.S. press reports on the true situation in the Caribbean form part of a deliberate campaign of manipulation and misunderstanding aimed at deforming Caribbean reality.

"The people of the Caribbean have the right to determine their own future and any threat which violates this principle is strongly rejected by Jamaica," Peterson emphasized.

The statements of the Jamaican foreign minister constituted a firm rejection of reports appearing in the U.S. publication NEW DAY, to the effect that the government of President James Carter is planning to use all its influence to oust Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley from his post due to his independent foreign policy.

Peterson, who accompanied Prime Minister Manley on an official five-hour visit to this Caribbean island, confirmed that U.S. and Jamaican functionaries met recently in Miami, Florida, to analyze the political situation of the Caribbean nation.

"It was just a meeting to air problems, but at no time did the U.S. officials make threats. If this should have occurred, the Jamaican Government would have reacted strongly," the foreign minister stressed.

Jamaica will maintain unchanged its independent position both in questions of domestic and foreign policy, Peterson underlined.

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JAMAICA

CARICOM COUNTRIES ISSUE COMMUNIQUE

PA151347 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2135 GMT 10 Feb 80 PA

[Article by Frank Gonzalez]

[Text] Kingston, 10 Feb (PL)--The fifth foreign ministers meeting of the Caribbean Common Market [CARICOM] expressed its support of the Jamaican Government in its negotiations with the IMF.

The declaration is included in the final communique released last night in Castries, Santa Lucia capital, site of the conference.

Jamaica presented before the rest of the CARICOM member countries its rejection of the conditions demanded by the IMF to grant an extension of the loan granted to this country last year.

The IMF demanded a \$150 million budget cut while Jamaica agreed to reduce the budget by only \$100 million in order to protect social benefit programs and to avoid massive lay-offs.

The foreign ministers also came out in favor of strengthening the CARICOM mechanisms and agreed that ideological pluralism is an irreversible fact in the region.

They admitted the negative effects caused by the increasing petroleum prices on their national economies which are also affected by the inflation imported from industrialized countries.

The foreign ministers expressed their support of Belize's right to independence and condemned Guatemala's expansionist attitude despite the overwhelming support given to the people of Belize on regional and international levels.

With respect to South Africa, they asked the British Government to comply strictly with the agreements on Zimbabwe, especially regarding the holding of free elections.

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The communique asks Great Britain to guarantee the withdrawal of South African troops and personnel, and to abstain from using Rhodesians and the so-called "auxiliary forces" within Zimbabwe.

They reasserted their support of the people of Namibia led by its legitimate representative, SWAPO, in its just struggle for independence.

In regards to the Middle East, they reasserted their support of the Palestine people and deplored the continued aggressive actions of Israel and its occupation of Arab territories.

In discussing the problems of mercenaries, they said that the CARICOM countries should, on their own initiative, consider passing laws on the matter.

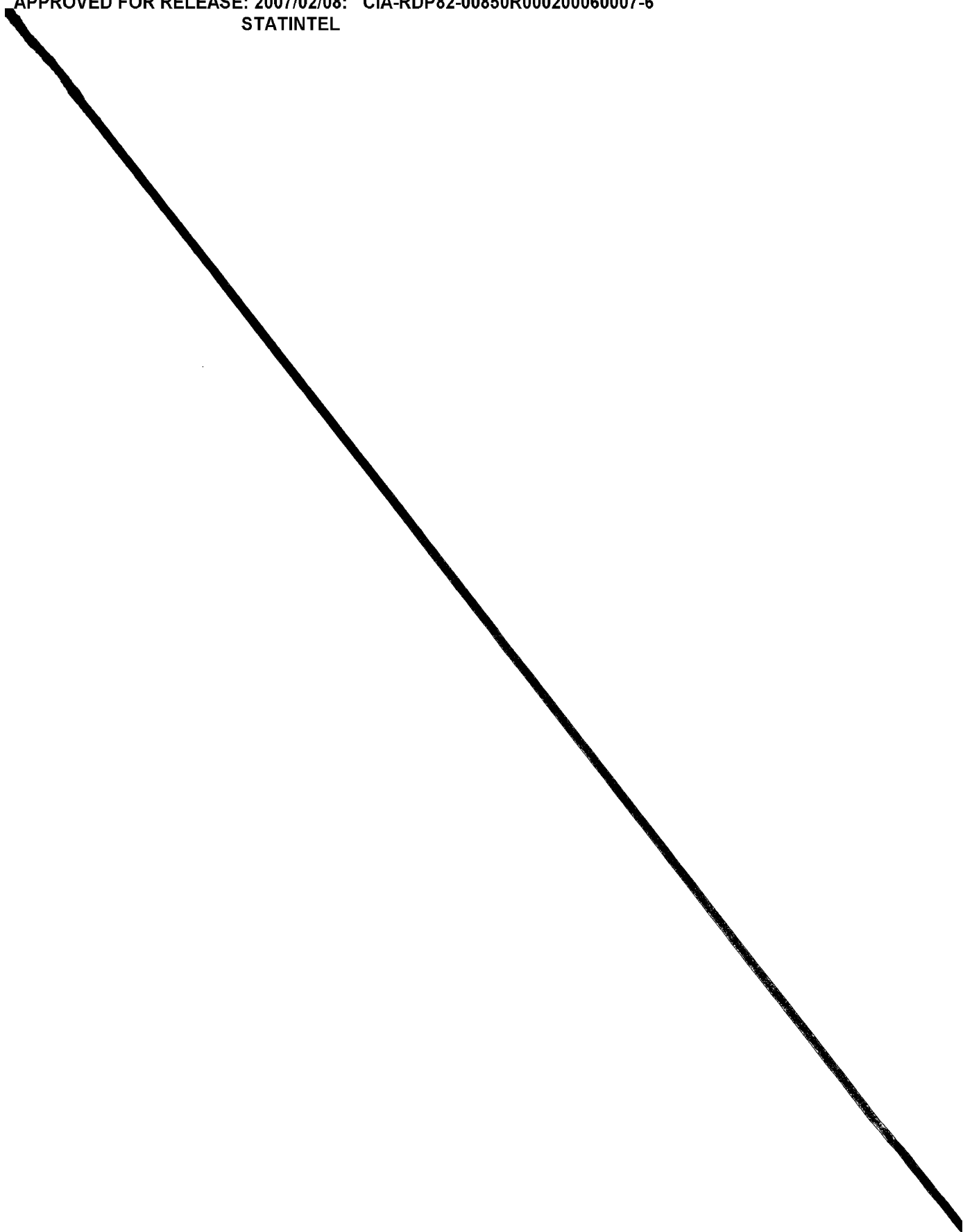
The foreign ministers also said that the positions of the English-speaking Caribbean countries should be duly expressed at international forums and that their opinions be taken in consideration by the Latin American group in drafting their positions.

The conference lasted 3 days during which it was agreed to hold the next congress in Saint George's, capital of Grenada.

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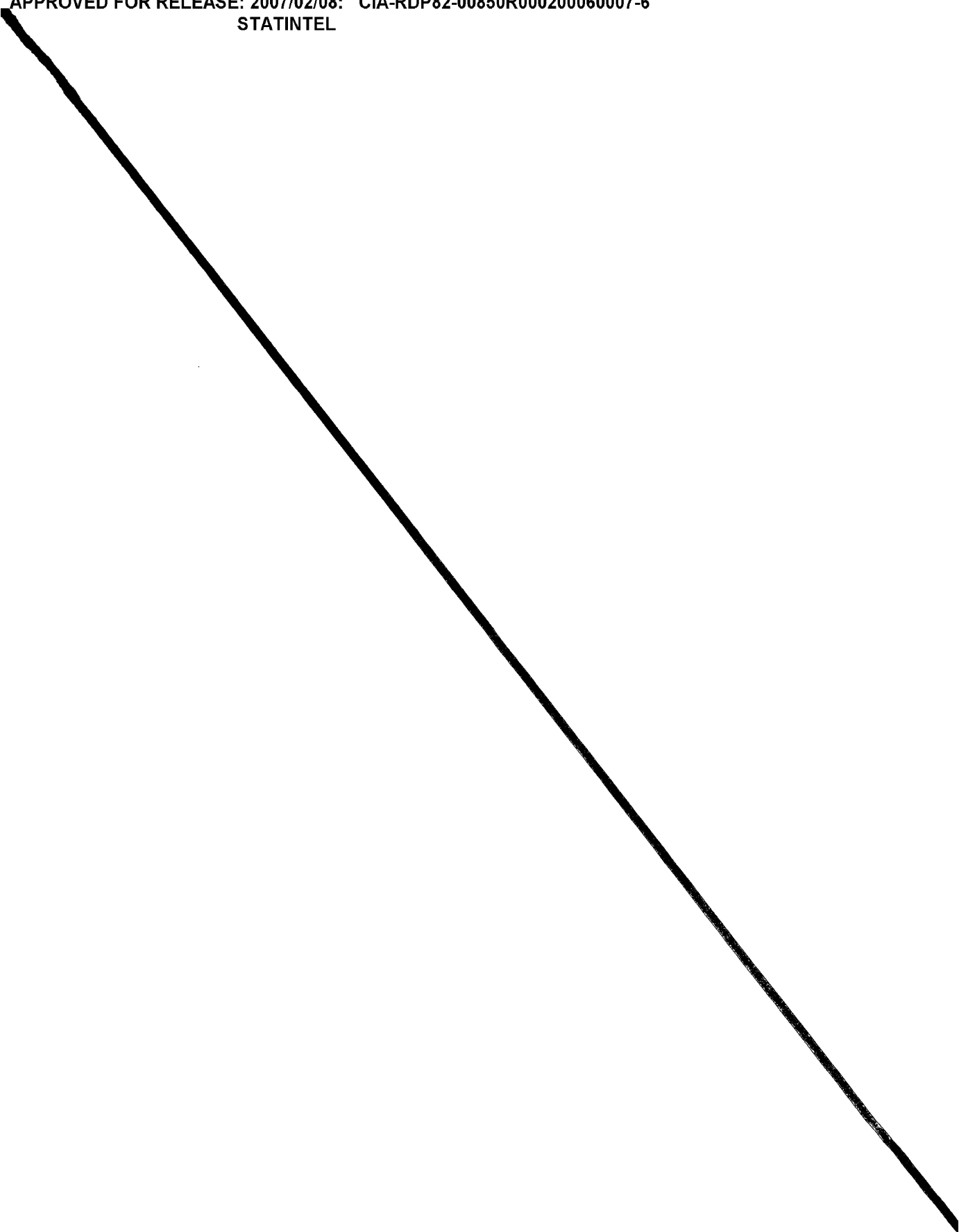
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NICARAGUA

INTERIOR MINISTRY HITS 'AP' FOR ALLEGING PRISONER ABUSES

PA012333 Havana PRELA in Spanish 2300 GMT 1 Feb 80 PA

[Text] Managua, 1 Feb (PL)--The Nicaraguan Interior Ministry has denounced a campaign carried out by the Associated Press [AP] on alleged abuses against political prisoners in Nicaragua.

An official communique issued here noted that the lies disseminated by AP are based on statements by the organization "Freedom House," also American and directed by defenders of the Anastasio Somoza dictatorship.

The document reaffirms the absolute respect that Nicaragua has been demonstrating toward the political prisoners, most of whom are Somozist assassins and counterrevolutionaries who committed crimes against the Nicaraguan people.

After recalling that the American organization in question never denounced the abuses of the tyranny overthrown by the people, the Interior Ministry called the attention of the international public to the anti-Nicaraguan propaganda being carried out by the AP News Agency.

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NICARAGUA

BRIEFS

CUBAN DOCTORS ARRIVE--Managua, 9 Feb (PL)--A contingent of 19 Cuban doctors arrived at Augusto Cesar Sandino International Airport here today to join their country's internationalist brigade, which includes over 200 specialists. The new contingent, made up of specialists in various areas of medicine, will leave immediately for the town of Siuna, in Zelaya, the country's largest department, on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. The Atlantic region, which accounts for more than half the country's area, is the most isolated in Nicaragua and suffered the greatest poverty and neglect in the areas of health, education and social welfare under the deposed Somozist regime. With the arrival of the Cuban internationalist contingent, there will be a considerable improvement in health services to miners. In addition, Indian communities in the area will also benefit from the services of the doctors from that Caribbean island. One mine is located in Siuna and two others in Bonanza and Rosita. [Erasmus Terrero] [Excerpts] [PA101751 Havana PRELA in Spanish 0220 GMT 10 Feb 80 PA]

SANDINISTS IN EL SALVADOR--Managua, 6 Feb (PL)--The Nicaraguan Government today reiterated its complete respect for the principle of nonintervention by denying that Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) members have been arrested in El Salvador. A communique released by the Interior Ministry strongly denies reports by several Western news agencies citing Salvadoran army sources as saying that two alleged Nicaraguan Sandinists had been arrested in El Salvador. The communique says: "The Interior Ministry flatly denies the presence of members of our organization on either of the two sides involved in the violent incidents taking place in El Salvador." It adds that "the Nicaraguan revolutionary government has repeatedly stated its total respect for the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other nations and it has strongly rejected such maneuvers." [Text] PA071926 Havana PRELA in Spanish 0225 GMT 7 Feb 80 PA]

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PANAMA

PANAMA PEOPLE'S PARTY SIXTH NATIONAL CONGRESS ADJOURNS

PA120358 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1605 GMT 11 Feb 80 PA

[Text] Panama City, 11 Feb (PL)--The Sixth National Congress of the People's Party of Panama (PPP) adjourned following the election of a new Central Committee and an analysis of its political platform for the immediate future.

Ruben Dario Souza, who was reelected secretary general of the Panamanian communists, made a closing analysis of what he termed a party triumph with the holding of this congress 12 years after the last congress which was held in secret.

In his closing speech last night Souza said the communists will fight to definitely expel foreign oppression from Panama and to consolidate a progressive democracy.

The model we propose, Souza stressed, is aimed at changing the composition of the Panamanian state and seeking the representative participation of all political forces intent on national liberation.

A second thesis of the congress concerned the economy and proposed struggling for the creation of a multisectorial model with the participation of private enterprise, independent sectors, cooperatives and the state, the latter two with more decision-making power. The thesis states that the actions of the cooperatives and the state must guarantee in this model the development of a social-oriented economy.

The Sixth Congress of the People's Party also broached tasks dealing with their transformation into a mass organization. The development of a policy aimed at their broad expansion throughout the country was approved.

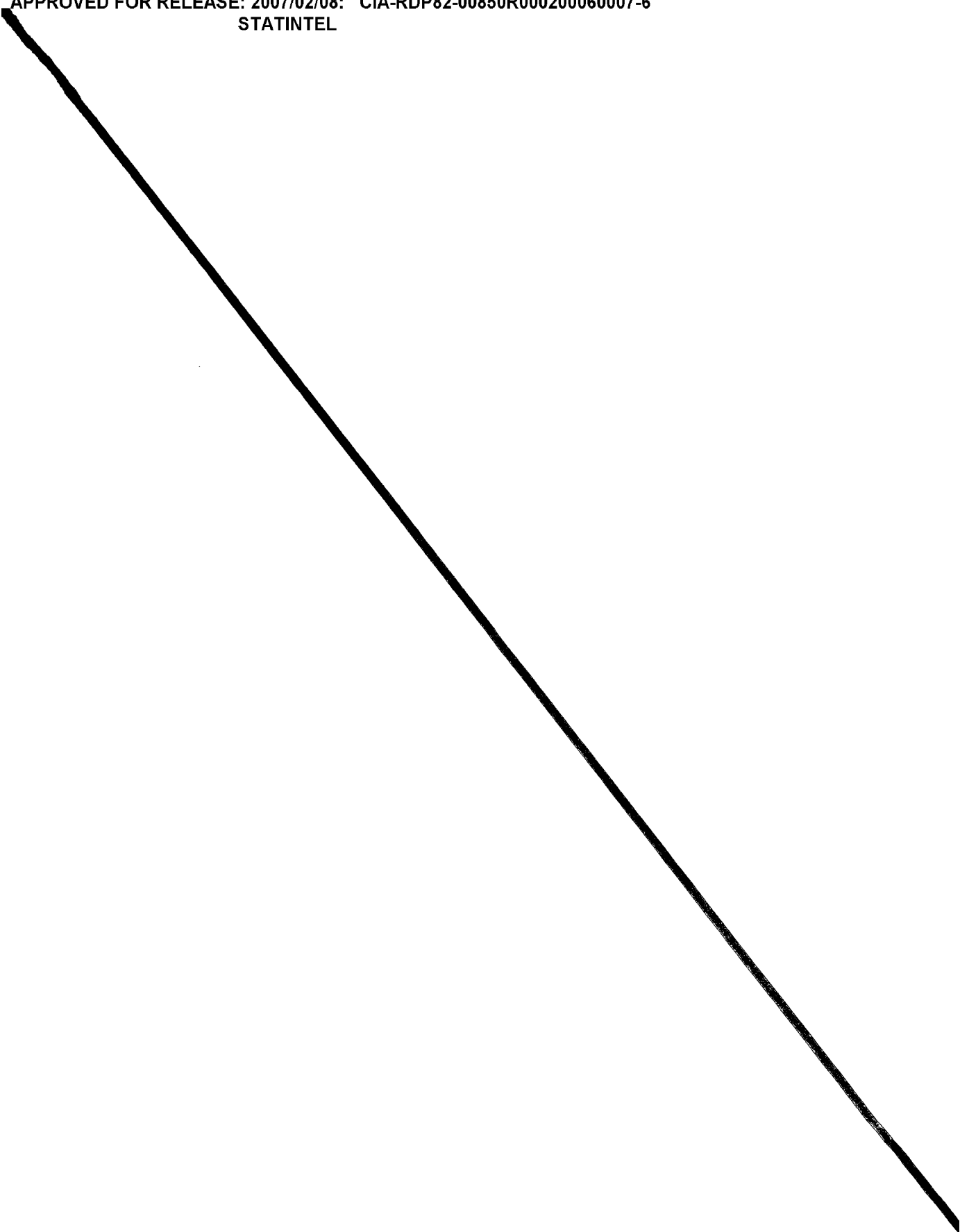
Some 2,000 persons, including delegates and guests, attended the congress' adjournment held over the weekend at the "Atlapa" conventions center in this capital.

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PERU

PCP, OTHERS PROTEST JOURNALIST'S ARREST

PA161600 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1215 GMT 15 Feb 80 PA

[Text] Lima, 15 Feb (PL)--The Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) has voiced a strong protest at the arrest of journalist Augusto Zimmermann, who will be court-martialed on charges of insulting the armed forces and inciting to mutiny.

Describing his arrest as arbitrary, a communique released by the PCP Political Committee states that "Zimmermann will be tried for having exercised his right to air his views and make use of press freedom."

The military government is clearly showing its absolute partiality in favor of the rightwing parties and newspapers (?against) democratic sectors that do not share its views, the document adds.

After demanding the immediate release of the former press secretary of deceased president Juan Belasco Alvarado, the communique warns that the government's repressive methods constitute a fraudulent framework for the general election slated for 18 May.

Leftist unity presidential candidate Genaro Ledesma Izquieta has also criticized Zimmermann's arrest Friday.

Others who have protested Zimmermann's arrest include People's Democratic Union President Alfonso Barrantes Lingan, Alberto Ruiz-Eldredge, former ambassador to Brazil and former deputy of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the National Journalists Association.

Zimmermann will be tried because his weekly KAUSACHUN published charged by police and civil guards against the top echelons of their institution. The magazine also published a report on a strike in Cusco by police demanding wage increases.

According to the leftist magazine MARKA, Zimmermann's arrest--a measure it terms censurable--constitutes a show of force by the military sectors in favor of holding the election on the announced date and a defeat of the currents in favor of a postponement.

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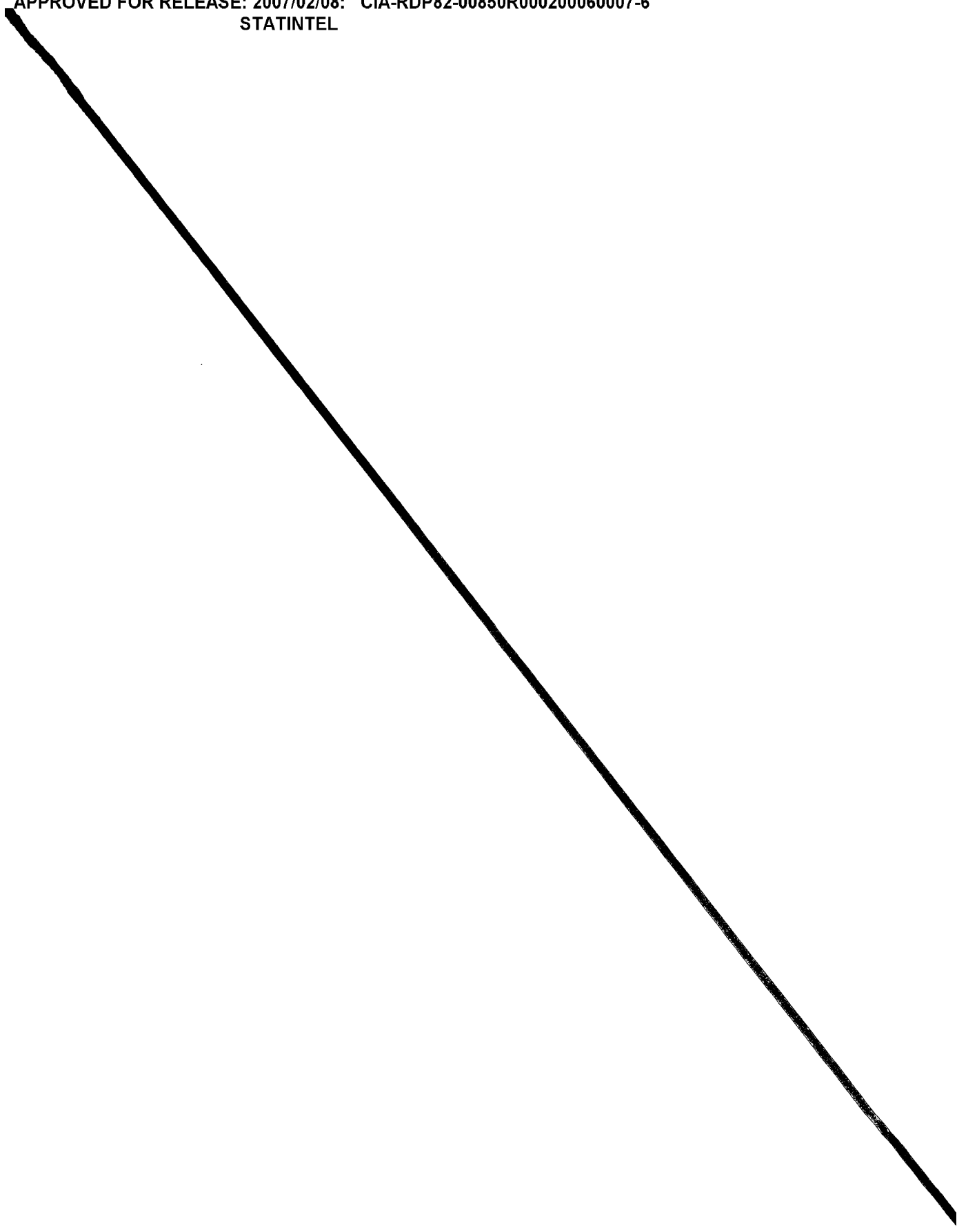
According to MARKA, this is due to the fact that Zimmermann advocates a continuation of the line begun by the armed forces in 1968 and has been calling for a return to such a line by the military chiefs who supported Gen Juan Velasco Alvarado at the time.

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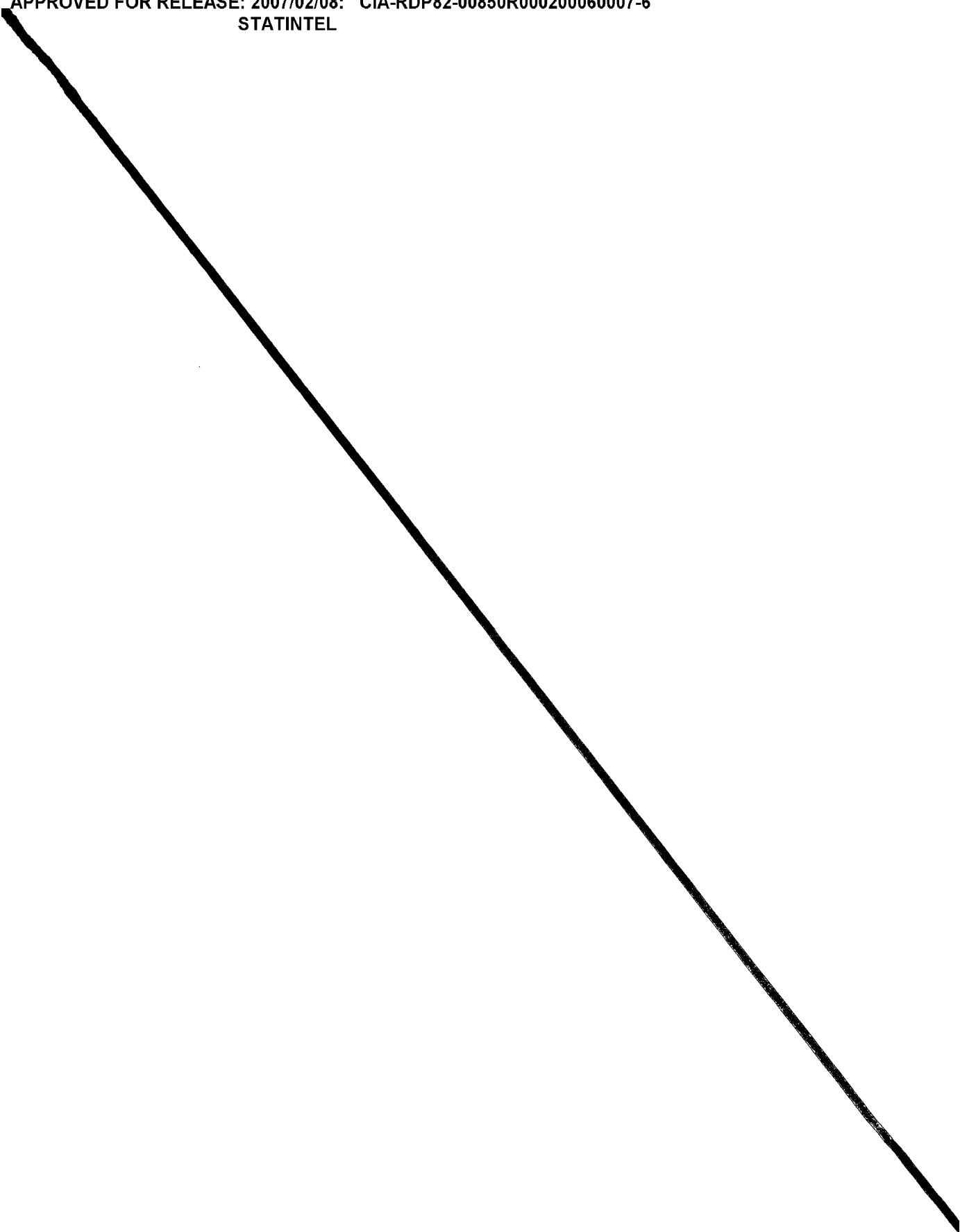
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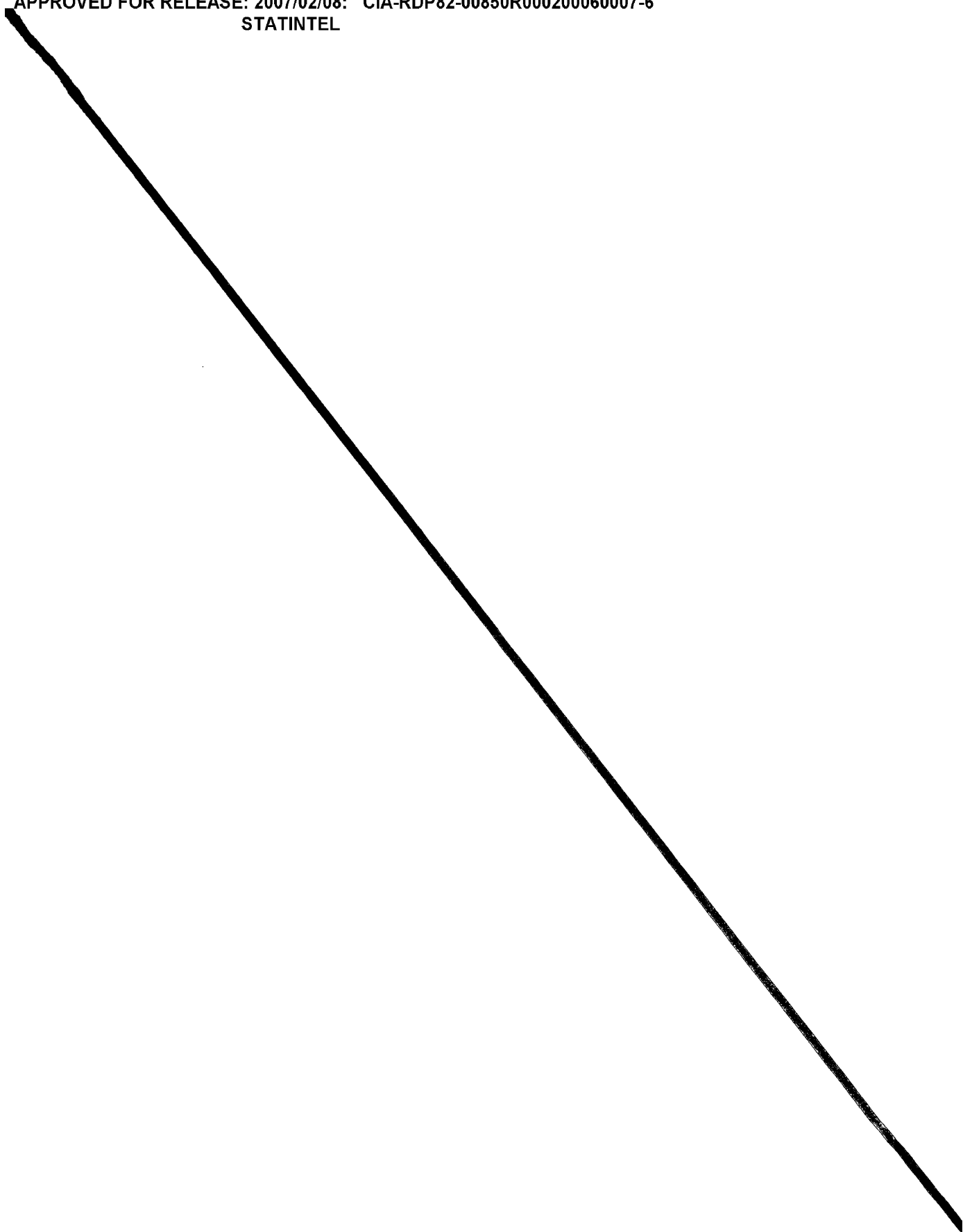
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