

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. CHARLES TAFT
MR. ROBERT FINCH

FROM MRS. RICHARD NIXON

On Sunday, May 31, an earthquake struck the country of Peru with such strength that the resulting disaster in human cost was greater than any recorded in recent times in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States quickly came to the aid of its Latin American neighbor with the offer of the USS Guam, its complement of medical and emergency supplies, surgeons, and helicopters. Public health teams were dispatched, portable disaster hospitals were sent, and \$10,000,000 was allocated for disaster relief through AID. In addition, the many voluntary agencies in the United States lent their full support in providing aid and assistance raising almost \$2.6 million in supplies and services.

The President ^{appointed} Counselor Robert Finch as Disaster Relief Coordinator and his work coordinated both the efforts of the public and private sector.

I felt, however, that more attention needed to be drawn to the plight of the Peruvians affected by ~~this~~ this disaster and the work the voluntary agencies and individuals could do to alleviate the situation. Therefore, I decided to fly to Peru on Sunday, June 28 to visit the stricken area to carry supplies to the survivors, witness the extent of the damage and determine the needs of the people.

Attached find a copy of my report on this trip, my conclusions, a statement of the needs of the people, and several recommendations.

Report to Mr. Charles Taft
Chairman
Peru Earthquake Voluntary Assistance Group

From Mrs. Richard Nixon

July 9, 1970

On Sunday, June 28, 1970, I left El Toro Marine Air Station on board the President's aircraft 26000 for Lima, Peru. We were followed by a second aircraft, a C-135. Both of these planes were loaded with a total of over 9 tons of supplies consisting of:

blankets	9,569 pounds (235 boxes, 10 items to a box)
tents	642 pounds (44 tents)
heavy	
clothing	7,879 pounds (249 boxes (approximately 15 items to a box))
children's	
clothing	390 pounds (11 boxes, 20-25 items to a box)
TOTALS	
	<u>18,480</u> <u>539</u>

These supplies were collected from the western part of the United States by voluntary organizations and had been accumulating at the Los Angeles International Airport. The supplies were trucked from Los Angeles on Saturday, July 27, and loaded that same afternoon.

With the announcement of my trip to Peru, many small individual contributions started to pour in, and although I knew the shortness of time would not permit me to collect a large sum of money to take to Peru, I felt these individual contributions should be recognized to encourage more people to give to the relief effort. Therefore, I also had on board gifts of checks from \$5 to \$10,000, and cash, plus a number of letters and telegrams pledging help and assistance.

I have long felt that the strength in the American people lies in the small individual effort our people make to help themselves and to help others. There were many small efforts that came to my attention which, to me, are typical of what is good in this country and perhaps by drawing attention to them, I can encourage others to do the same.

In the town where the President and I first met, Whittier, California, the joint leadership of the Mayor, the Honorable Keith Miller, and

the Peruvian Consul of Los Angeles, the Honorable Albert MacLean, "Operation Peruquake" was formed. This group will receive and coordinate money, goods, volunteers to be sent to Peru. They have marshalled the aid of more than 3,000 Southern California churches, the Board of Rabbis, students, community centers, doctors, teamsters, AAUW, girl and boy scouts, YMCA, etc.

At the White House, members of the staff and Cabinet instituted a quick two-day drive to gather blankets and money. A total of over 350 blankets, plus supplies of tents, building materials, and tools resulted from the effort, and these items were flown to California on Saturday to be included in the supplies sent to Peru.

At the gate to our home in San Clemente, local citizens dropped off anonymous contributions in checks and cash on the Friday and Saturday prior to my departure.

Souix City, Iowa, sister city to Callao, sent a telegram to say they were not able to send contributions in time for my trip to Peru BUT THAT THEY HAD INITIATED A DRIVE TO SUPPLY relief to ~~Peru~~ in addition to what they had already done for their sister city on their own.

LC
CALLAO

Five hundred families in Provo, Utah, offered to adopt Peruvian children, and the members of the American Press Corps who accompanied me each made a ^{voluntary} cash contribution. Many, many other Americans wrote or telegraphed with offers of money or their services as technicians, doctors, and volunteers. To all of these people I offer my deepest and most sincere thanks and appreciation.

My reception at the Jorge Chavez Airport early that evening by the President's wife, Mrs. Consuelo Velasco, and the officials of the Peruvian government was extremely warm, and I was most appreciative of the open, heart-felt greeting by thousands of the Peruvians who had come to the airport.

Later that evening at a briefing held at the residence of Ambassador Taylor Belcher for me and members of the Peruvian volunteer agencies, I began to fully realize the extent of the damage to the Peruvian towns affected by the earthquake and the cost in human suffering. Ambassador Belcher introduced Mr. Augusto Zimmerman, Director, National Information Office, who explained the nature of the disaster and highlighted its most tragic aspects with the use of aerial photographs. It is estimated that over 50,000 people lost their lives, 100,000 were injured and over 800,000 are homeless.

Mr. Carson Crocker, Embassy Director, Disaster Relief Co-ordinator's Office, followed Mr. Zimmerman with an explanation of the relief work already done. He concluded with the plea that although the immediate medical crisis had been met, a tremendous effort still lay ahead in the areas of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Mr. Crocker placed particular emphasis on the need for construction tools and materials, particularly tin, asbestos, and roofing.

On Monday, following a moving Mass at the Cathedral of Lima in honor of the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul and in memorium to the victims of the earthquake disaster, Mrs. ~~Velasco~~ ^{Velasco} and I set out on a trip that was to be one of the most ~~sadening~~ ^{sadening} experiences I have encountered in my travel throughout the many countries of the world.

Mrs. Velasco and I were flown in a C-130 into the Callejon de Huaylas, a magnificently beautiful valley almost 10,000 feet above sea level, crowned by the majestic snow-capped Andes mountains which reach 22,000 feet in height. Threading its way through the valley is the beautiful Santa River. This valley is truly one of the loveliest in the world and has been called the

"Swiss Alps of Peru." The ~~beauty~~ ^{beauty} of the mountains rose in stark contrast to the tragedy that lay below. We landed at Anta, where a rough airstrip had been expanded just recently to accommodate an aircraft the size of the C-130. The landing is a difficult one and provided a few tense moments, but the competence of the pilot and crew ~~set~~ ^{set} had us at ease.

At the edge of the airstrip, ~~some~~ ^{were stacked} of the goods we had brought, ~~were~~ ^{which} stacked. ~~It~~ had been transported early that morning. I was able to see that what had been flown in were those materials which were most desperately needed, construction materials, tools, and blankets.

We were met by General Ferreyres, Peruvian head of the relief efforts in the valley. He escorted us to a group of international helicopter pilots who were waiting to greet us. A special word of commendation is due these men. As soon as word of the disaster reached the American Department of Defense, the USS Guam was dispatched to the area to serve as a relief and hospital ship. Her fifteen helicopters, including 11 chinooks were the first to arrive and have been in continuous use, lifting medical teams to

villages and bringing medical evacuation cases for treatment on the Guam or to Peruvian hospitals. In addition to the American support, helicopters and crews from Brazil, France, and several other countries have participated in continuous relief efforts. These crews have flown hours on end and often at great risk. Unfortunately, ^{scattered} two helicopters and their crews were lost in rescue operations. The helicopters visited over 50 towns and villages, many two and three times for resupply.

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Mrs. Velasco and I boarded an American Army helicopter for an aerial view of some of the disaster. We flew over the village of Yungay, which lies at the foot of a great peak called Huascarán. On the day of the earthquake, this mountain loosed an avalanche of ice and mud which moved 30 miles in four minutes and completely buried the town of Yungay. A group of children were attending a circus on one of the hillsides. They were the only ones to escape the destruction. Yungay was a town of 20,000 people and all that now remains are the tops of four Royal Palms which towered 90 feet above the town plaza, and the cemetery on the hill with its statue of Christ.

A smaller town, Ranrircá was also wiped out. Four thousand of its inhabitants had been buried in a slide in 1962 and the people of the town had rebuilt on the same spot. This time there is no one to rebuild.

We then flew on to the town of Huaraz, a town near the southern higher end of the valley. Here we landed and were greeted by the officials and people of the town. I was touched by the spirit of these people who had suffered so much. They do not want to leave their town and are determined to rebuild. Once a town of over 25,000 people, Huaraz⁰² has only been able to properly bury 1,000 of the estimated 10,000 who died in the earthquake.

We set out to inspect the town and to visit the many volunteers working in relief efforts all over the city. In the town square we saw the effects of the earthquake which literally shook the town to pieces. The houses and buildings in Huaraz--many two and three stories high-- are constructed of adobe bricks and tile roofs with weak structural support. When the tremors hit, the adobe walls crumbled and roofing tiles flew. Many people were buried beneath the collapsing walls while others were struck with flying pieces of tile. Two girls in the Peace Corps were killed during the earthquake and were buried on the hill overlooking the ruined city.

The devastation was saddening, but the effort of the relief workers was heartening. In one area, international relief workers are teaching the Peruvians how to construct temporary shelter out of bamboo matting, metal frameworks, and plastic sheeting. Tent cities have sprung up and are providing temporary shelter for hundreds of families. Peace Corps workers, Peruvian relief leaders and international volunteers are assisting in these towns to provide clothing, food, and other supplies.

The immediate needs of the people are being met, but the problem of reconstruction and rehabilitation looms large. In September the heavy winter rains will come in addition to the cold nights that are now a part of the relief problem. Permanent shelter must be provided for these people and the need for material and supplies is high.

As I left Huaraz I could see that the destruction had far exceeded what I had anticipated and that the needs of these people continues to be desperate.

We returned to Anta where I met with a group of Americans who are serving in a variety of jobs. Some were the support teams for the helicopters, some were American Red Cross workers helping with the work of providing medical supplies. Some were doctors, others technicians, all doing a tremendous job with a high degree of spirit.

On the return flight to Lima we took aboard 15 refugees. Each of the flights that takes supplies to the Anta airfield always returns with refugees on board rather than return empty. The refugees are met at the airport by Peruvian relief agency workers and sent to centers where they can be cared for.

That evening prior to dinner, President Velasco showed me the relief headquarters set up at the palace. He expressed the gratitude of the Peruvian people for the aid received so far but re-emphasized that crisis is far from over. The Lima military government's response to the disaster was a six per cent military pay cut. All officers and enlisted men donated half a month's pay to relief. It was also decreed that everyone in the stricken provinces would be exempt from taxes. Few challenged these decisions of the revolutionary government which came to power in 1968 and there is general public support of their actions during the crisis.

On Tuesday morning at breakfast in the Ambassador's residence I met with the heads of 18 American volunteer agencies. Each of them took a minute or two to explain the work that they were doing in the disaster areas. I was impressed with how quickly these agencies had coordinated their efforts so there was little or no duplication of programs. Mrs. Velasco agreed that the efforts of all the volunteers had been well coordinated and that the cooperation among groups was good.

After breakfast I met Mrs. Velasco at the headquarters of the National Assistance Organization known as JAN. Mrs. Velasco is the honorary president of this organization and has been working steadily at JAN centers assisting and directing the efforts to sort supplies and material and give out goods to refugees. She guided me through the JAN center explaining the work that was being done. She then accompanied me to a children's hospital where small children are under treatment in psychiatric, surgical wards. Perhaps the thousands of orphaned and homeless children are the most pitiful survivors of the catastrophe. Some do still not comprehend that their parents are gone or that their entire family has been wiped out. These children will continue to need care, medical attention, food, and clothing.

From the hospital we left for the airport and the return trip home to California.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The devastation far exceeded what I had read and therefore what I had anticipated.
2. The first phase of the crisis, the need for medical aid and supplies is over, but a crisis still exists in reconstruction and rehabilitation.

NEEDS

3. The greatest need is for permanent shelter building supplies and the related tools necessary for the construction of such shelter.
4. Food and clothing are still vitally needed, but the problem lies in shorting and distributing the goods as opposed to obtaining them.
5. A great amount of money will be needed to carry out the work yet ahead. It is estimated that the destruction of homes, land ports, roads and other public facilities totals over 300,000 and that \$520 million will be needed for reconstruction. Although

many nations have already generously contributed, the help and assistance of others will be needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(To be drafted)