

DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
Bolivia—Civil Strife
August 19-23, 1971

Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523

Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Coordinator acknowledges assistance received in the preparation of this and other case reports from the many public and private organizations in the United States and abroad engaged in foreign disaster relief.

BOLIVIA

Civil Strife

In the period August 19-23, 1971, an estimated 200 people were killed and more than 700 were injured during a coup d'etat.

VALUE OF U.S. ASSISTANCE \$21,500

An army revolt brought a new government to power with the overthrow of General Juan José Torres, leader of a 10-month old regime and former army chief of staff. He had come to power on October 7, 1970 replacing General Alfredo Ovando Candia who had seized the presidency in a military coup in 1969.

Armed support for General Torres came from the Presidential Guard Battalion, the only army unit to remain loyal, and from a variety of commando groups. These groups were composed of university students, rebel priests, intellectuals, white collar professionals and other middle class factions — but not the "masses". The Indian peasants, a majority in this Andean country of over 4,800,000 people, took no part in the uprising.

More than 200 people were killed and an estimated 700 were injured as fighting in the streets extended far beyond the capital city of La Paz to Santa Cruz and Oruro. By the time the shooting had stopped on August 23, some 400 casualties, wounded by small arms fire, had been hospitalized. Some were in serious condition requiring extensive medical care.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BOLIVIA:

The new administration was not prepared to cope with some of the relief needs of the victims of the conflict. The Bolivian Red Cross was very active in distributing emergency relief in the form of medical supplies. The Bolivian Foreign Minister appealed to the U.S. Government for emergency assistance to treat the more seriously wounded persons confined to the local hospitals.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

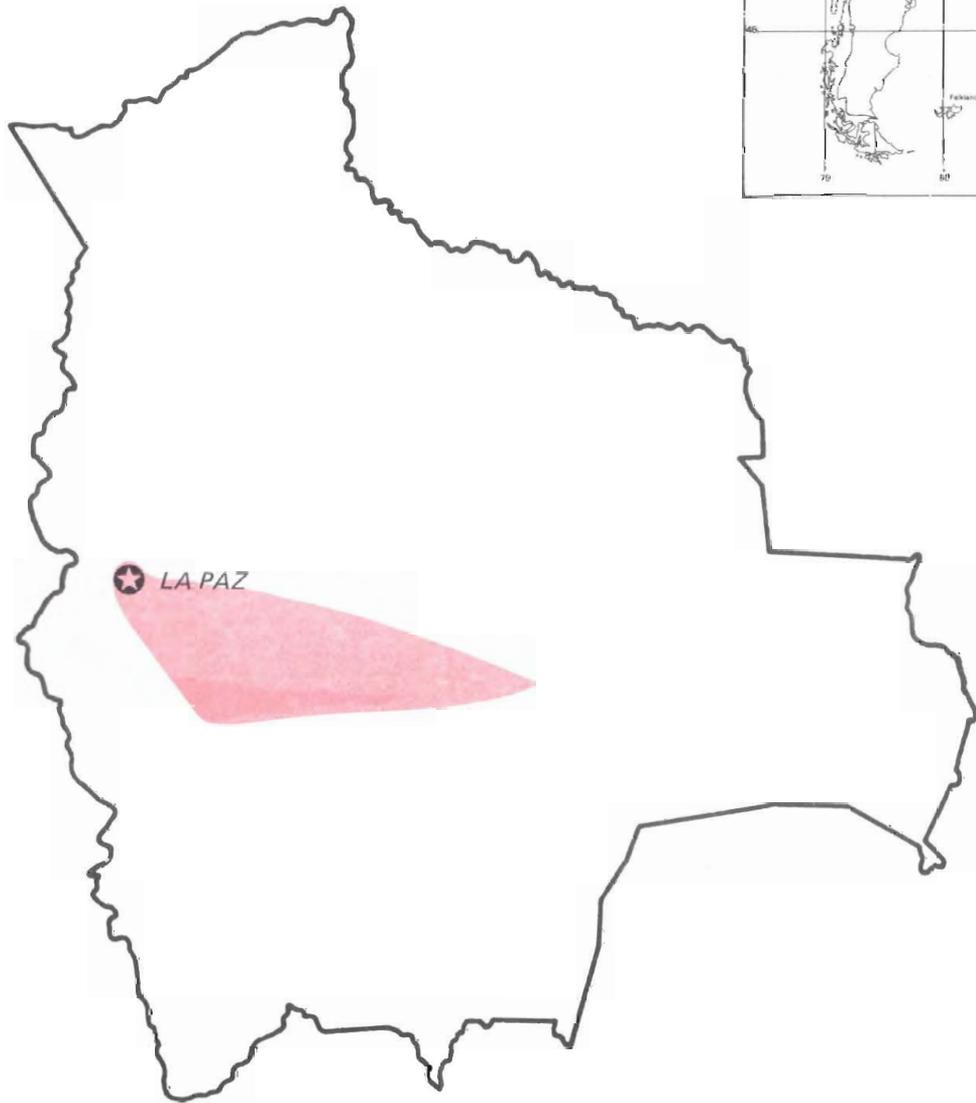
Responding to the needs of the country, Ambassador Ernest V. Siracusa exercised his disaster relief authority and called for air shipment of medicines, valued at \$2,500, for treatment of the injured and wounded. The use of a U.S. Air Force Hercules C-130 permitted rapid and effective transportation of this urgently needed assistance. An additional \$19,000 was available under the same authority for treatment of ten severely wounded victims who would require treatment not available in Bolivia.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS:

Urgently needed medical supplies and blankets for treatment of the casualties were provided by the following countries:*

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Paraguay

*Value of the supplies, unknown.



BOLIVIA