

Peru's PM pleads for aid in wake of quake

by UPI

PISCO, Peru -- Peru's prime minister pleaded for emergency aid in the wake of the strongest earthquake to hit the country in 35 years, the Miami Herald reported Friday. The toll climbed Thursday to 510 dead, more than 1,550 hurt and tens of thousands homeless. "We need everything, even coffins," said Peruvian Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo, who was viewing the damage in Pisco with President Alan Garcia. Across the street from where he stood, 49 bodies were laid out in the city's main square, the Herald said. With both local hospitals destroyed, two dozen people were being treated for injuries on a concrete soccer field. Officials said 80 doctors have been sent to Pisco and injured people are being flown to Lima from Ica, the southern province nearest to the quake's epicenter. Police were on the streets to discourage looting and the government was sending food, water and gas stoves, as well as eight large electric generators and a Peruvian hospital ship loaded with food and other supplies. The White House announced a U.S. team in Peru would assess the damage and arrange aid. Also sending assistance are Mexico, Panama, Chile, Guatemala and Colombia.

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