PASS BILL DOHERTY, AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, OTRA, PGOV, PINR, PINS, GT
SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: MARCH 25-29 VISIT OF U.S. TRADE-UNION DELEGATION

REF: A) GUATEMALA 3063, B) GUATEMALA 2737, C) GUATEMALA 1874, D) GUATEMALA 2701

1. SUMMARY. ON MARCH 25, A U.S. TRADE-UNION DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE INTERNATIONAL UNION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

OF FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS' ASSOCIATION (IUF) ARRIVED IN GUATEMALA TO INVESTIGATE THE
February 17 Coca Cola plant closure in Guatemala City and its consequences for the workers and the trade union. After their arrival, the delegation also asked for information about several missing trade-union leaders from a list supplied by Pat Derian. All of these abducted union leaders are from the leftist CNT (Central Nacional de Trabajadores), and from the trade union at the Cavispa glass factory. The Cavispa union is an affiliate of the Communist trade-union federation FASGUA (Federación Autónoma Sindical de Guatemala).

During their sojourn in Guatemala, the delegation met with the foreign minister, the minister of labor, officers of CUSG (Confederation of Syndicalist Unity of Guatemala), trade-union leaders from Coca Cola and some twenty other unions, the minister of the interior, a private-sector representative, embassy officers, and the AIFLD director. Their verdict was that while they were convinced that the personal security of the Coca-Cola workers was not in jeopardy and that the company had indeed suffered from bad management, recent disappearances of numerous trade-union leaders demonstrated a basically negative environment for the trade-union movement in Guatemala. Although the embassy arranged for some of the appointments for this private delegation (see ref tel A), embassy officers were present only at the embassy briefing, the meeting with CUSG leaders, and

At a debriefing by Pat Derian and Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union international representative Bill Patterson. With the exception of Mr. Patterson, the delegation departed Guatemala on March 29. Mr. Patterson subsequently met with the AIFLD director and indicated that the delegation's next step would be to meet with Coca-Cola officials in Atlanta. End summary.

2. Trade union delegation.
THE TRADE-UNION DELEGATION CONSISTED OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

RICHARD PLUMB: HEAD OF DELEGATION
- INTERNATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT
- UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

LUIS HERNANDEZ: INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
- BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY AND TOBACCO WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

STANLEY GACEK: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
- INTERNATIONAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

BILL PATTERSON: INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

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ACTION ARA-00
INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-10 EUR-00 OIC-02
CIAE-00 EB-08 IO-15 NSAE-00 COME-00 HA-08 LAB-04
PA-01 STR-14 SIL-01 INRE-00 USIE-00 PRS-01 /065 W
0 030007Z APR 84
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0760
INFO AMEMBASSY BELIZE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
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NON-TRADE-UNION MEMBERS ACCOMPANYING THE DELEGATION:

PAT DERIAN: FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

REVEREND CAROL SOMPLATSKY-JARMAN: INTERFAITH CENTER ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

NANCY PECKENHAM: TRANSLATOR

3. EMBASSY BRIEFING.

MOVEMENT IN GENERAL, AND IN PARTICULAR ABOUT A LIST OF EIGHT ABDUCTED TRADE-UNION LEADERS WHICH MS. DERIAN HAD SUPPLIED TO THE DELEGATION. LATER IN THE WEEK, EMBOFF PROVIDED THE DELEGATION WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EIGHT INDIVIDUALS ON THE LIST, AND THREE OTHER MISSING TRADE-UNIONISTS:

(1) JULIO ZERMÉ, DIRECTOR OF CNT AND CNUS, DISAPPEARED ON NOVEMBER 17, 1983. WE HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS CASE.

(2) JOSE LOPEZ BRAN, MEMBER OF PANTALEON SUGAR MILL WORKERS UNION. RELATIVES, AND THE EMPLOYERS, DENOUNCED HIS ABDUCTION WITH MIGUEL GOMEZ, ALSO IDENTIFIED AS LABOR LEADER. THEY WERE LAST SEEN ON NOVEMBER 27, 1983 IN SANTA LUCIA COTZUMALGUAPA, ESCUINTLA. THEY ARE STILL MISSING.

(3) JOSE GUILLERMO GARCIA, MIRANDILLA SUGAR MILL WORKERS UNION, ESCUINTLA. MISSING SINCE JANUARY 26, 1984. RELATIVES DENOUNCED HIS KIDNAPPING TO PRESS ON JANUARY 30, 1984. STILL MISSING.

(4) ALEJANDRO DEL CID, DIRECTOR MIRANDILLA SUGAR MILL WORKERS UNION, ESCUINTLA. MISSING SINCE JANUARY 26, 1984. HIS RELATIVES CHARGED UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS WITH HIS ABDUCTION ON JANUARY 30. THEY ALLEGED THAT HE AND JOSE GUILLERMO GARCIA WERE KIDNAPPED TOGETHER.

(5) ALFONSO ALVARADO PALENCA, CNT LABOR LEADER, WAS KIDNAPPED IN GUATEMALA CITY ON JANUARY 26, 1984. CNUS, IN A REPORT FROM HAVANA, ASSERTED THAT HIS BODY AND THAT OF A GLASS FACTORY WORKER (SEE NO. 7 BELOW) WERE FOUND TORTURED AND SHOT. LOCAL PRESS STILL HAS HIM AS MISSING.

(6) AMANCIA SAMUEL VILLATORO, CNT LEADER, WAS

THE GUATEMALAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN MEXICO IN A REPORT CARRIED ON HAVANA RADIO ON FEBRUARY 14 ALLEGED THAT "VILLATORO AND ALFONSO"

VILLATORO AND ALFONSO

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(7) EDGAR FERNANDO GARCIA, SECRETARY OF RECORDS

n/a
OF THE CENTRAL AMERICA GLASS INDUSTRY WORKERS

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UNION (CAVISA), WAS KIDNAPPED IN GUATEMALA CITY ON FEBRUARY 18, 1984. (CAVISA IS A FASGUA AFFILIATE.) GARCIA IS STILL MISSING.

(8) LIC. SANTIAGO LOPEZ AGUILAR, LABOR LAWYER, WAS KIDNAPPED IN GUATEMALA CITY ON FEBRUARY 16, 1984. HIS BODY -- WHICH EXHIBITED SIGNS OF TORTURE -- WAS FOUND ON FEBRUARY 21 WITH A NOTE: "EXECUTED FOR TREASON - PGT".

(9) ON FEBRUARY 2, UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS ABDUCTED SERGIO MANFREDO BELTETON DE LEON. (NOTE. EMBASSY ASSUMES THIS IS THE "SERGIO" MENTIONED IN THE GUATEMALAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT (SEE NO. 6 ABOVE). IN ADDITION TO BEING A LAW STUDENT, THIS REPORT IDENTIFIED HIM AS A CNT LEGAL ADVISER. HIS ABDUCTORS RELEASED HIM ON FEBRUARY 17.

ON MARCH 1, FASGUA LEGAL COUNSEL VICTOR HUGO QUINTANILLA WAS ABDUCTED; HIS WHEREABOUTS REMAIN UNKNOWN.

ON MARCH 8, INTERNATIONAL PRESS (EFE) REPORTED THAT THE CENTRAL SUGAR FEDERATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HELD A PROTEST RALLY IN FRONT OF THE GUATEMALAN EMBASSY IN SANTO DOMINGO TO DENOUNCE THE KIDNAPPING IN GUATEMALA OF FIVE SUGAR WORKERS (JOSE GUILLERMO GRAN, MIGUEL ANGEL GOMEZ, JOSE GUILLERMO GARCIA, ALEJANDRO DEL CID, AND SERGIO MANFREDO HERNANDEZ).

IN THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY, UNIDENTIFIED MEN KIDNAPPED SERGIO ALDANA GALVEZ, SECRETARY

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DECONTROLLED/UNCLASSIFIED
GENERAL OF THE UNION AT THE PRENSA LIBRE NEWSPAPER. THEY RELEASED HIM ON FEBRUARY 14.

THE EMBASSY ALSO PROVIDED THEM WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON THE TRADE-UNION CONNECTIONS OF THE GENTLEMEN IN QUESTION:

FASGUA (FEDERACION AUTONOMA SINDICAL DE GUATEMALA/AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNION FEDERATION OF GUATEMALA) IS THE COMMunist TRADE-UNION FEDERATION IN GUATEMALA; IT IS A LEGALLY RECOGNIZED FEDERATION. IT WAS THE TRADE-UNION ARM OF THE OFFICIAL GUATEMALAN COMMUNITY PARTY (PGT) WHEN THAT PARTY WAS LEGAL. THE CAVISA UNION IS A FASGUA AFFILIATE.


CNUS (CONSEJO NACIONAL DE UNIDAD SINDICAL/NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TRADE UNION UNITY) IS AN UMBRELLA TRADE-UNION ORGANIZATION. FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, IT IS NOT FUNCTIONING.

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WITHIN GUATEMALA: IT OCCASIONALLY ISSUES PRESS BULLETINS THROUGH HAVANA ON TRADE UNION CONDITIONS IN GUATEMALA. THE CNT AND THE FASGUA FOUNDED THE CNUS IN 1976. ALMOST ALL OF THE ORGANIZATIONS BELONGING TO IT ARE MARXIST IN ORIENTATION.

4. MEETING WITH DEMOCRATIC TRADE-UNION LEADERS.

AT THE SUGGESTION OF EMBOFF, THE DELEGATION MET WITH LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC TRADE-UNION CONFEDERATION CUSG (CONFEDERATION OF SYNDICALIST UNITY OF GUATEMALA). THE CUSG DELEGATION CONSISTED OF SECRETARY GENERAL JUAN FRANCISCO ALFARO, ADJUNCT SECRETARY GENERAL ADOLFO HERNANDEZ, AND ORGANIZING SECRETARY ISMAEL BARRIOS. IN RESPONSE TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS FROM THE AMERICAN DELEGATION, CUSG LEADERS MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:
THE COCA-COLA UNION WAS NOT A PART OF CUSG AND HAD REBUFFED ALL CUSG OVERTURES;

THE COCA-COLA UNION HAD RESPONDED TO CUSG INITIATIVES BY REITERATING ITS DESIRE TO REVIVE THE CNT AND THE CNUS;

THE CUSG, IN SPITE OF SUCH REJECTIONS, HAD PUBLICLY EXPRESSED ITS SUPPORT OF THE COCA-COLA WORKERS AND UNION AFTER THE FEBRUARY PLANT CLOSURE;

CUSG LEADERS COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE COCA-COLA UNION IN GUATEMALA CITY HAD NOT ORGANIZED THE OTHER NON-UNION COCA-COLA PLANT (THERE ARE TWO COCA-COLA PLANTS OUTSIDE GUATEMALA CITY; ONE IS UNIONIZED AND CURRENTLY IN AFFILIATION DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUSG; THE OTHER IS NON-UNION);

CUSG LEADERS COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE UNION AT THE GUATEMALA CITY PLANT WAS SO UNAWARE OF THE POOR FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE COMPANY; AND

TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE, MANAGEMENT-LABOR RELATIONS AT THE COCA-COLA PLANT HAD BEEN GOOD SINCE THE 1980 FRANCHISE CHANGE (LABATT HAD MADE THIS SAME POINT IN EMBASSY BRIEFING).

WITH RESPECT TO THE TRADE-UNION SITUATION IN GUATEMALA, THE CUSG LEADERS PAINTED A BLEAK PICTURE. THEY NOTED THE RECENT DISAPPEARANCES OF NUMEROUS LEFTIST TRADE-UNION LEADERS WHICH, THEY SAID, CREATED A CLIMATE OF FEAR AND MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR ALL TRADE-UNION LEADERS AND ORGANIZING EFFORTS. THE CUSG, THEY POINTED OUT, HAD VIGOROUSLY PROTESTED THESE DISAPPEARANCES TO THE GOG AND IN PUBLIC ADS. ANOTHER NEGATIVE TRADE-UNION FACTOR, THEY NOTED, WAS THE ANTIVELI
UNION ATTITUDE OF MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE
CONFLICT AREAS: THEY CITED THE THREATS AGAINST
THE LIVES OF LIGA CAMPESINA LEADERS IN
CHICHICASTENANGO BY A MILITARY OFFICER
STATIONED IN SANTA CRUZ DEL QUICHE (SEE REFTEL D).
IN CLOSING, THEY ASKED THE DELEGATION TO QUESTION
THE MINISTER OF LABOR ABOUT THE ILLEGAL DISMISSAL
OF EIGHT WORKERS AT THE SAN BERNARDINO BOTTLING
COMPANY FOR ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE A CUSG-
AFFILIATED UNION.

5. DEBRIEFING BY B. PATTERSON AND PAT DERIAN

NNN
Toward the end of their visit, Bill Patterson and Pat Derian came to the embassy to discuss their findings with Emboffs. With respect to the Coca-Cola workers, Mr. Patterson said that the delegation felt reassured about their personal security, even though the minister of interior had confirmed that the government had the plant and workers' homes under surveillance. Both of them expressed admiration for the disciplined manner in which the workers went about their business of occupying the plant and said there were no overt politics in evidence there; the workers, they said, were keeping the plant in beautiful condition and it appeared that Coca-Cola production could be resumed in short order. Ms. Derian expressed concern that many management-labor problems in Guatemala had been solved by violence in the past; she cited the history of the violence in the Coca-Cola plant in Guatemala where eight workers had lost their lives in plant disputes. Emboff asked for clarification on this point and noted that these deaths had occurred in 1980 and before the present franchise owners had begun operating the plant. She replied that fragmented authority amongst security forces often led to undisciplined acts of violence by subordinates, who nevertheless were then protected by the top. The delegation had asked the interior minister, she said, to make sure, when the Coca-Cola plant problem was resolved, that the security forces were made to understand that the workers had not been charged with any crime and were not subversives. If the problem has a peaceful resolution, she added, it will be a hopeful sign of an improvement in management-labor relations in Guatemala.
BILL PATTERSON EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE

ATMOSPHERE FOR THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT IN
GUATEMALA IS NEGATIVE BECAUSE OF THE RECENT
DISAPPEARANCES OF TRADE-UNION LEADERS.
MANY PEOPLE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT WITH WHOM THE
DELEGATION TALKED ARE PESSIMISTIC AND DATE THE
DOWNTURN FROM THE AUGUST COUP; MOST OF THESE
TRADE-UNION LEADERS, HE STATED, FELT THE MEJIA
GOVERNMENT WAS MORE REPRESSIVE THAN THE RIOS
GOVERNMENT. MR. PATTERSON EXPRESSED DISAPPOINT-
MENT AT THE MINISTER OF LABOR’S POINT OF VIEW
THAT THE WORKERS’ OCCUPATION OF THE COCA-COLA
PLANT WAS AN ACT OF REBELLION. HE WENT ON TO
SAY THAT HE THINKS THE LABOR MINISTER DOES NOT
HAVE A VERY SUBTLE NOTION OF LABOR RELATIONS
AND DOES NOT APPEAR ABLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN
TRADE UNION ORGANIZING EFFORTS AND OPPOSITION
TO THE GOVERNMENT.

WITH RESPECT TO RECENTLY-DISAPPEARED TRADE-
UNION LEADERS, THE DEBRIEFERS ASKED THAT THE
EMBASSY INQUIRY ABOUT THEIR WHEREABOUTS.
INFORMATION LED THEM TO BELIEVE THAT THE
ARMY WAS HOLDING FERNANDO GARCIA (CAVISA
UNION OFFICER) AND THAT HE WAS ALIVE AND WELL.
IN ADDITION TO MR. GARCIA AND THE OTHER
ABDUCTED TRADE-UNIONISTS ON THE DELEGATION’S
LIST, MR. PATTERSON ASKED THE EMBASSY TO LOOK
INTO THE SITUATIONS OF TRADE-UNIONIST JOSE
LUIS VILLAGRAN, WHO DISAPPEARED ON
FEBRUARY 11, 1984 IN ZONE 11 AND THE CASE OF
FRANCISCO ENRIQUE MOYA LUCAS (16 YEAR-OLD
BROTHER OF A COCA-COLA WORKER), WHO DISAPPEARED
ON MARCH 9 WHILE ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL. THE
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GRAVITY WITH WHICH THE CASE IS VIEWED IN THE UNITED STATES. MS. DERIAN STATED THAT THIS WAS A SHAME BECAUSE IN HER TENURE AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION THE POLICY HAD BEEN TO MAKE "REPRESENTATIONS" TO HOST GOVERNMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS CASES AND TO REMIND THEM OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THAT CORPUS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW TOUCHING ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE CHARGE RESPONDED THAT IN THE GUATEMALAN CONTEXT WE ARE LIKELY TO HAVE MORE SUCCESS IN PURSUIT OF OUR CLEAR OBJECTIVES IN FAVOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS IF WE APPEAL TO GUATEMALANS' SELF-INTEREST IN HAVING A GOOD INTERNATIONAL IMAGE THAN IF WE SIMPLY DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT MEET ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW.

6. COMMENT. THE COCA-COLA COMPANY CASE IS NOW IN LITIGATION BEFORE THE GUATEMALAN LABOR COURT. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT ANOTHER GUATEMALAN COMPANY HAS PURCHASED THE COCA-COLA FRANCHISE AND WILL RESUME PRODUCTION IN GUATEMALA CITY; PURPORTEDLY, IT IS NOT INTERESTED, HOWEVER, IN REHIRING THE OLD WORKERS. IF THIS IS TRUE, IT WILL ONLY FUEL SPECULATION THAT THE WHOLE FEBRUARY 14 BANKRUPTCY MOVE WAS A UNION-BUSTING TACTIC.

GOVERNMENT. DOMESTIC CRITICS OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY VIS-A-VIS GUATEMALA MIGHT TRY TO SEIZE ON THESE ABDUCTIONS TO DEMAND THE RECONSIDERATION OF GUATEMALA'S CBI STATUS. WHETHER GOVERNMENT FORCES SEIZED ALL THESE TRADE-UNIONISTS HAS YET TO BE DEMONSTRATED. IF THE GOV HAS PICKED THEM UP, IT IS ALMOST CERTAINLY FOR MATTERS OTHER THAN THEIR TRADE-UNION ACTIVITIES. END COMMENT.

TAYLOR