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Department of State

**TELEGRAM**

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 OMB-01 SY-03

RSR-01 /080 W

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R 050045Z AUG 72  
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2412  
INFO AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ UNN  
AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA UNN  
AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO UNN  
AMCONSUL MAZATLAN UNN  
AMCONSUL MERIDA UNN  
AMCONSUL MEXICALI UNN  
AMCONSUL MONTERREY UNN  
AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO UNN  
AMCONSUL TIJUANA UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 4341

SUBJ: INTERNAL SECURITY; ARREST OF GUERRERO AMBUSH SUSPECTS  
AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

REF: MEXICO 3462  
Pol 23-9 Mex

1. SUMMARY: MEXICAN ARMY HAS CAPTURED AND AT LENGTH HANDED OVER TO JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES A NUMBER OF SUSPECTS IN JUNE 25 AMBUSH OF ARMY TRUCK IN GUERRERO. SOME OF SUSPECTS EVIDENTLY LINKED TO LUCIO CABANAS GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION BUT APPEAR TO BE LOW-LEVEL TYPES. MEANWHILE, LAST TEN DAYS OF JULY SAW VARIETY OF OTHER VIOLENT INCIDENTS APPARENTLY UNRELATED TO FOREGOING AND TO EACH OTHER. PAN ATTEMPT TO BLAME FEDERAL GOVT FOR CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE HAS SET OFF TYPICAL ROUND OF PARTISAN NAME-CALLING. END SUMMARY.

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2. AS REPORTED REFTEL, MEXICAN ARMY TRUCK WAS AMBUSHED IN RUGGED AREA OF GUERRERO STATE JUNE 25 WITH TEN OF TWELVE ARMY PERSONNEL ABOARD KILLED. IMMEDIATE SPECULATION WAS THAT

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AMBUSH STAGED BY GUERRILLA GROUP KNOWN AS "PARTY OF THE POOR" UNDER COMMAND OF LUCIO CABANAS BARRIENTOS. AUTHORSHIP HAS SINCE BEEN AMPLY CONFIRMED BY VARIETY OF SOURCES, INCLUDING CABANAS HIMSELF IN STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN FAR-LEFT WEEKLY "POR QUE?" (WHICH EDITORIALY CALLED AMBUSH BIGGEST GUERRILLA ACHIEVEMENT IN "NEW ERA" SINCE DEATH OF GENARO VAZQUEZ ROJAS EARLY THIS YEAR).

3. FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS, CIVIL AND MILITARY, HAVE GENERALLY STUCK TO ESTABLISHED GOM POSITION THAT AMBUSH WAS NOT POLITICAL IN MOTIVATION SINCE MEXICO HAS ONLY BANDITS, NOT GUERRILLAS. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, GOM HAS SHOWN IT KNOWS WHERE AND FOR WHOM TO LOOK, BY CONTINUING EXTENSIVE MILITARY SEARCH OPERATION (REPTEL) AND DETAINING VARIOUS CABANAS RELATIVES FOR QUESTIONING.

4. WITH PASSAGE OF TIME AND ABSENCE OF DEVELOPMENTS, STORY HAD VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM LOCAL PRESS UNTIL AUG 1, WHEN MOST PAPERS REPORTED HANDING OVER TO JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES IN GUERRERO OF ABOUT 20 SUSPECTS PICKED UP EARLY JULY BY ARMY OR OTHER AGENCIES IN ATOYAC DE ALVAREZ REGION OF GUERRERO. PRESS AUG 2 AND 3 CARRIES ACCOUNTS OF COURT APPEARANCES BY SEVERAL OF SUSPECTS, MAINLY ILLITERATE CAMPESINOS IN LATE TEENS OR 20'S. SOME ADMITTED MEMBERSHIP IN "PARTY OF POOR", BUT DENIED KNOWING CABANAS PERSONALLY. ONE, HOWEVER, CLAIMED THAT HE HAD BEEN PRESSED INTO MEMBERSHIP BY CABANAS AND OTHERS. AT LEAST TWO ADMITTED BEING PRESENT AT SCENE OF AMBUSH BUT CLAIMED TO HAVE FIRED INTO AIR RATHER THAN AT ARMY TRUCK. SOME SUSPECTS WHEN APPEARING BEFORE JUDGE REPUDIATED EARLIER WRITTEN STATEMENTS, CLAIMING STATEMENTS EXTRACTED BY MEANS OF TORTURE.

5. WHOLE PICTURE THUS CONFUSED AS RESULT OF CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS, REPUDIATED CONFESSIONS, ETC. JUDGING FROM LOW EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF SUSPECTS SO FAR BROUGHT INTO COURT AND APPARENTLY RECENT AFFILIATION OF SEVERAL OF THEM WITH CABANAS GROUP, HOWEVER, WE RELIEVE THEY ARE OF ONLY MARGINAL IMPORTANCE IN HIS ORGANIZATION. ALSO, THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THEY REPRESENT ONLY FRACTION OF THOSE ACTUALLY DETAINED IN GUERRERO. (MEXICO CITY DAILY EL UNIVERSAL ALLEGES THERE IS "GREAT ALARM" AMONG CAMPESINOS IN ATOYAC AREA, WHO RISK BEING "DETAINED AND SUBJECTED TO TORTURE" IF THEY GO

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OUT TO WORK THEIR FIELDS, AND "DOZENS" HAVE THEREFORE LEFT FOR ACAPULCO "IN SEARCH OF WORK AND PROTECTION".)

6. OTHERWISE, LATE JULY SAW UNUSUAL NUMBER OF PROMINENT KILLINGS, NONE OF THEM SO FAR CLARIFIED, WHICH APPEAR UNRELATED TO GUERRERO AMBUSH OR TO ONE ANOTHER. PRINCIPAL ONES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

7. NIGHT OF JULY 20-21, ARCHITECT JOEL ARRIAGA NAVARRO, HEAD OF A PREPARATORY SCHOOL IN PUEBLA, WAS SHOT AND KILLED BY STILL-UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN. ARRIAGA REPORTEDLY STUDIED AT PATRICE LUMUMBA UNIV IN MOSCOW 1962-63 AND WAS ACTIVE MEMBER MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY. IMPRISONED FOR ROLE IN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, HE WAS RELEASED NOVEMBER 1971 (SEE A-658, 71 DEC 15), REPORTEDLY AT INSTANCE LEFTISTS WHO PRESENTLY CONTROL UNIV OF PUEBLA, AND HIS DEATH BELIEVED RELATED TO LONG-TIME LEFT-RIGHT ANTAGONISMS IN PUEBLA WHICH HAVE OFTEN INVOLVED UNIVERSITY AND ITS PREPARATORY SCHOOLS (SEE A-143, MARCH 29). DESPITE PRESENCE OF FEDERAL INVESTIGATING TEAM HEADED BY DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL DAVID FRANCO RODRIGUEZ WHICH SENT IN AT REQUEST OF STATE AUTHORITIES, AND REPORTEDLY WITH PRESIDENTIAL ORDERS NOT TO RETURN UNTIL CASE SOLVED, NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE. IN THIS CLIMATE, ALL SORTS OF THEORIES FLOURISHING, INCLUDING ONE THAT ARRIAGA KILLED BECAUSE HE HAD DECIDED TO ARANDON PCM. MCBRIDE

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