

DECLASSIFIED

817

E2117

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82NEXIC0004326

ADP473
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 04326 01 OF 03 302301Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 SSO-00 SVC-00 /025 W
-----110635 302321Z /61

O 302253Z MAR 82
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9294
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 04326

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/29/88
TAGS: MX GT, ES, HO, PINT, PINS
SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO INSURGENTS IN EL SALVADOR AND
- GUATEMALA FROM MEXICAN TERRITORY

REF: STATE 79395

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. IN MEXICO CITY THE GOM PERMITS AND ASSISTS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF OFFICES REPRESENTING EXILES AND INSURGENT GROUPS, PARTICULARLY SALVADORANS. WE SUSPECT BUT CANNOT PROVE THAT PRI/COPPPAL MAY FURNISH SOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. GOM MAY LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHEN INSURGENTS USE THE CAPITAL FOR OPERATIONAL NEEDS, POSSIBLY EVEN ACQUIRING ARMS. WE NOTE THAT PUBLIC DISCLOSURES OF ANY SUCH TRANSACTIONS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE A SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOM. IN THE BORDER AREAS, THERE IS MORE EVIDENCE OF MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO INSURGENTS, PARTICULARLY GUATEMALANS. HERE, HOWEVER, GOM MAY NOT BE FULLY AWARE OF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL LEFTIST GROUPS AND CLERGY, AND IN REMOTE AREAS MAY NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 04326 01 OF 03 302301Z

BORDER. IN THE MORE POPULATED AREAS THE ARMY COULD DO A BETTER JOB OF PATROLING, DESPITE CONCERN ABOUT BORDER EXPRESSED PRIVATELY BY MEXICAN SECDEF. GOM ASSOCIATION WITH LEFTIST INSURGENTS MAY DECLINE UNDER DE LA MADRID, ESPECIALLY IF THE LEFT PROSPERS EITHER IN GUATEMALA OR EL SALVADOR. BUT LONG-STANDING MEXICAN SYMPATHY FOR LEFTIST CAUSES IN LATIN AMERICA WILL CONTINUE. FURTHER REPORT ON SOUTHERN BORDER REGION WILL BE SUBMITTED LATER THIS WEEK ON COMPLETION OF FIELD TRIP BY TWO EMBOFFS.

RELEASED

DECAPIIONED

United States Department of State
Office of FOI, Privacy, & Classification Review
Review Authority: LANFAIR, WILLIAM E
Date: 05/20/94
Case ID: S940034B

DECLASSIFIED

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82MEXIC0004326

END SUMMARY.

3. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

MEXICO IS DIVIDED ON SUPPORT TO INSURGENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. THE POLITICAL LEFT AND SOME CHURCH LEADERS FAVOR ASSISTANCE AND EVEN ENGAGE IN IT MORE OR LESS OVERTLY. THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND AT LEAST THE MAJORITY OF THE MILITARY LEADERS OPPOSE ASSISTANCE AND ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT ON MEXICO OF THE RADICALIZATION OF CENTRAL AMERICA. THE PRI AND THE GOM TRADITIONALLY SEEK THE MIDDLE WAY BETWEEN SUCH POLITICAL POLES, AND IN THIS CASE HAVE NOT SURPRISINGLY ADOPTED AN AMBIGUOUS STANCE. ON THE ONE HAND, FOLLOWING THE GOSPEL OF "NON-INTERFERENCE," THE GOM PROCLAIMS AN OFFICIAL POLICY OF ALLOWING POLITICAL REFUGEES TO ENTER MEXICO, BUT ONLY IF THEY ARE DISARMED AND DO NOT OPENLY USE MEXICAN TERRITORY TO ORGANIZE MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICA. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOM HAS BENIGNLY ENCOURAGED PRO-INSURGENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON ITS TERRITORY, AND IN A FEW CASES MAY EVEN HAVE TURNED A BLIND EYE TO OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY.

4. AS THE DEPARTMENT NOTES, OUR ESTIMATES ON MORE SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND WHAT FACTIONS MAY BE INVOLVED (\$)
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 04326 01 OF 03 302301Z

BASED ON RELATIVELY FEW PIECES OF HARD INFORMATION. HOWEVER, THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS BY REGION MAY HELP THE DEPARTMENT FORM AN OVERALL IMPRESSION.

5. SITUATION IN THE CAPITAL

PRO-INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN MEXICO CITY IS PROBABLY MORE SIGNIFICANT FROM A POLITICAL STANDPOINT THAN ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. HERE THE FMLN/FDR MAINTAINS A LARGE AND WELL-ORGANIZED POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC LOBBYING ORGANIZATION. IN AN EFFORT TO GENERATE MEXICAN PUBLIC SUPPORT AND INTERNATIONAL SYMPATHY, THE ORGANIZATION OPENLY ADVERTISES, PROMOTES COLLOQUIUMS AND PARTICIPATES IN DEMONSTRATIONS. THE GOM AND PRI OVERTLY FACILITATE THESE ACTIVITIES BY THE SALVADORAN OPPOSITION. GUATEMALAN GROUPS IN MEXICO CITY HAVE SO FAR BEEN FRACTIONALIZED AND LESS VISIBLE THAN THE FMLN/FDR, BUT THE GOM IS CERTAINLY AWARE OF GUATEMALAN OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES. WE SUSPECT BUT CANNOT PROVE THAT PRI/COPPPAL MAY PROVIDE SOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF BOTH SALVADORAN AND GUATEMALAN REPRESENTATIVES. THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT PRI/GOM OFFICIALS HAVE INTERVENED ON BEHALF OF VARIOUS REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS WHO HAVE RUN AFOUL OF MEXICAN AUTHORITIES. THERE ARE FREQUENT AND OPEN CONTACTS BETWEEN SALVADORAN AND GUATEMALAN INSURGENT REPRESENTATIVES AND

PAGE NO. 2

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82MEXIC0004326

817

MEXICO CITY'S VERY LARGE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY. SIMILARLY,
THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON CONTACT BETWEEN THE DIPLOMATIC
CORPS AND INSURGENT REPRESENTATIVES. WE ASSUME THAT
FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE LEFT ALSO PASSES THROUGH THESE
CHANNELS.

NOTE BY DC/T: (\$) TEXT GARBLED; CORRECTIONS TO FOLLOW.

CONFIDENTIAL

MW

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

ADP478
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 04328 02 OF 03 302304Z
ACTION 55-25

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 SSO-00 /025 W
-----110857 302323Z /62

O 302253Z MAR 82
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9295
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MEXICO 04328

EXDIS

6. WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION ON ACTUAL OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MEXICO CITY AREA. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF EITHER GUATEMALAN OR SALVADRAN INSURGENTS HAVE SAFEHOUSES IN THE MEXICO CITY AREA, ALTHOUGH SECDEF GALVAN TOLD DEFATT ON MARCH 4 THAT ARMY HAD ACTED ON PAST ALLEGATIONS AND FAILED TO TURN ANYTHING UP. IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT SOME LIGHT ARMS MAY CHANGE HANDS IN THE CAPITAL OR NEARBY. MEXICAN AUTHORITIES HAVE REACTED WHEN TIPPED OFF BY OTHERS ABOUT POSSIBLE ARMS TRANSACTIONS, BUT WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE OF SELF-GENERATED MEXICAN EFFORTS TO PRECLUDE THEM. ON THE OTHER HAND, FOREIGN MINISTER CASTANEDA HAS PUBLICLY INSISTED THAT MEXICO PROVIDES NO ARMS TO ANY GOVERNMENT OR FACTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE LOPEZ PORTILLO GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSED IF THIS ASSERTION WERE PUBLICLY DISPROVEN. DESPITE GUATEMALAN OFFICIAL ASSERTIONS, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF ANY TRAINING CAMPS IN THE MEXICO CITY AREA. THE ONLY REPORT WE HAVE OF TRAINING CAMPS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY IS FROM GUTIERREZ ESPINOSA'S CONFESSION TO SALVADRAN SECURITY OFFICIALS. FOR THE MOMENT, WE ARE RESERVING JUDGMENT ON THAT REPORT.

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 04328 02 OF 03 302304Z

7. SITUATION ON THE BORDER

THE SITUATION IN THE MEXICAN-GUATEMALAN BORDER REGION IS MORE COMPLEX, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IN OUR VIEW OF LESS SIGNIFICANCE POLITICALLY AS AN INDICATOR OF GOM POLICY. (I.E., THERE MAY BE ISOLATED LOCAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE UNKNOWN TO MEXICAN CENTRAL AUTHORITIES OR THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL EVEN IF KNOWN.) IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CROSS-BORDER

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN CHIAPAS. THE PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAY ALONG THE COAST IS HEAVILY TRAVELED, AND LIMITED AMOUNTS OF SMALL ARMS OR AMMUNITION DESTINED EITHER FOR GUATEMALA OR EL SALVADOR MAY WELL CROSS THE BORDER HERE, WITH THE PAYMENT OF A "MORDIDA" TO THE CUSTOMS INSPECTOR. WE HAVE HAD A FEW REPORTS OF SUCH SHIPMENTS, BUT OUR REPORTS DO NOT SUGGEST GOM PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR APPROVAL. THERE ARE STRONGER INDICATIONS OF SAFEHOUSES AND/OR SUPPLY OPERATIONS IN CHIAPAS FOR GUATEMALAN GUERRILLAS, AND WE SUSPECT THAT SOME MEXICAN CLERGY AND/OR LEFTIST GROUPS IN THE AREA ARE ACTIVELY COLLABORATING WITH INSURGENT LEADERS. HOWEVER, IN THE RELATIVELY OPEN, WELL-POPULATED AREA OF CHIAPAS BETWEEN TAPACHULA AND COMITAN, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THERE ARE ANY IMPORTANT SANCTUARIES FOR GUATEMALAN GUERRILLAS. SOME 50,000 TO 100,000 MIGRANT SEASONAL COFFEE AND COTTON PICKERS HAVE NOW LARGELY RETURNED OR ARE RETURNING TO GUATEMALA; APPROXIMATELY 5,000 GUATEMALAN INDIAN REFUGEES REMAIN IN TEMPORARY SETTLEMENTS WITHIN A KILOMETER OR TWO OF THE BORDER, LIVING ON SUBSISTENCE SUPPLIES FURNISHED BY THE GOM COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES. THESE INDIANS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO RETURN TO GUATEMALA SOON IN TIME TO PLANT THEIR ANNUAL CORN CROPS. WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THE GOM VIEW THAT THESE MOVEMENTS ARE CYCLICAL, WITH THE NUM-

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 04326 02 OF 03 302304Z

BERS OF GUATEMALANS PERHAPS SLIGHTLY AUGMENTED BY TENSIONS IN GUATEMALA, AND THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE ANY MAJOR POLITICAL/MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE. (IN OTHER WORDS, NEITHER THE MIGRANT WORKERS NOR THE REFUGEES ARE BEING EXPLOITED IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY BY GUATEMALAN INSURGENTS FOR SAFEHAVEN OR SOURCES OF SUPPLY.) TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE CURRENTLY COMPLETING A FIELD TRIP WHICH COVERED THIS BORDER AREA. WE WILL SUBMIT THEIR SUPPLEMENTARY FINDINGS LATER THIS WEEK.

8. FURTHER EAST IN CHIAPAS, THE COMBINATION OF HEAVY JUNGLE AND MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN MEANS THAT THE AREA IS VIRTUALLY INACCESSIBLE FROM THE MEXICAN SIDE. WE DO NOT DOUBT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN INCURSIONS INTO THE PICO DE ORD AREA IN SOUTHEAST CHIAPAS BY GUATEMALAN GUERRILLAS AND PURSUING CONTINGENTS OF GUATEMALAN SECURITY FORCES. (OFFICIALS IN CIUDAD PEMEX CONFIRMED TO THE REPORTING OFFICER ON MARCH 23 THAT THE PEMEX EXPLORATION TEAM IN THIS REMOTE AREA WAS RECENTLY PULLED OUT, SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE OF THE SECURITY RISKS.) AS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE BORDER AREA (IN TABASCO, CAMPECHE, AND QUINTANA ROO), THIS POST HAS HEARD NO MORE THAN OCCASIONAL RUMORS THAT ARMS ARE CROSSING THE FRONTIER, WITHOUT ANY SPECIFICS. THE LONG AND HAZARDOUS HAUL THROUGH THE SWAMPS OF THE PETEN REGION OF GUATEMALA TO THE WESTERN GUATEMALAN AREAS OF GOG-GUERRILLA CONFRONTATION WOULD MAKE THIS

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82MEXIC0004326

817

ROUTE A LESS LIKELY ONE FOR INSURGENT SUPPLIES THAN THE
ROUTE THROUGH CHIAPAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ROUTE
WOULD BE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO OBSERVATION AND THEREFORE
MORE SUITABLE FOR CLANDESTINE SHIPMENTS OF MILITARILY
SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

AOP480
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 04326 03 OF 03 302305Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 SSO-00 /025 W
-----110666 302323Z /61

O 302253Z MAR 82
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9296
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MEXICO 04326

EXDIS

9. ROLE OF MEXICAN ARMY

FROM THE ABOVE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GOM WOULD BE AT PAINS TO PUT A COMPLETE STOP TO ALL ILLEGAL SUPPORT TO CENTRAL AMERICAN INSURGENCIES FROM THE MEXICAN BORDER REGION, WHATEVER THE OFFICIAL POLICIES AND ATTITUDES OF THE MEN AT THE TOP. THE QUESTION REMAINS, ARE THE MEXICAN SECURITY FORCES DOING EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO CURTAIL SUCH SUPPORT? OUR ANSWER IS PROBABLY NOT. THE COMMENTS OF REFUGEE COORDINATOR ORTIZ MONASTERIOS TO THE REPORTING OFFICER ON MARCH 17 ARE ILLUSTRATIVE: "WE (THE GOM) ARE TRYING TO AVOID OVERREACTING TO THE SITUATION ON THE GUATEMALAN BORDER, SO WE DON'T CREATE MORE TENSIONS THAN ACTUALLY EXIST." DESPITE THE CONCERN EXPRESSED PRIVATELY BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GALVAN TO DEFATT ABOUT THE SITUATION ON THE BORDER IN EARLY MARCH, GALVAN HAS BEEN SAYING TO OTHERS THAT THE BORDER AREA IS STABLE. ECHOING THISLINE, TABASCO ZONE COMMANDER MURILLO TOLD COUNTRY DIRECTOR CRIGLER AND REPORTING OFFICER ON MARCH 23 THAT "YOU WILL SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES THERE IS NOTHING HERE TO WORRY ABOUT." IN SHORT, THE SECURITY FORCES ARE GETTING POLITICAL DIRECTION TO "COOL IT." AS A RESULT, THE
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 04326 03 OF 03 302305Z

MILITARY IN THE AREA SEEM TO BE STAYING PRETTY MUCH IN THEIR GARRISONS. SEVERAL RECENT OBSERVERS HAVE SEEN NO SIGNS OF BORDER PATROL ACTIVITY.

10. WHILE THE MEXICAN ARMY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT POLICING THE BORDER AREA, WE HAVE NEVERTHELESS NOTED A CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN ITS CAPABILITY TO DO SO. UNITS OF REGIMENTAL/BATTALION SIZE HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN COMITAN (SOUTHERN CHIAPAS), TENOSIQUE (EASTERN TABASCO)

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

AND ESCARCEGA (SOUTHERN COMPECHE) IN THE LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS. MANNING LEVELS OF ALL UNITS IN THE BORDER MILITARY ZONES ARE AT LEAST AT FULL STRENGTH AND POSSIBLY ABOVE. AND, AS HAS BEEN NOTED IN EARLIER REPORTING, THE PRI NOMINEE FOR GOVERNOR OF CHIAPAS (GENERAL CASTELLANOS) IS A HIGHLY RESPECTED FORMER 31ST MILITARY ZONE COMMANDER. (SEE ALSO SEPTEL ON SITUATION IN CHIAPAS BEING SENT BY DAO IN DEFENSE CHANNELS.)

11. PROJECTION

IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, ANY SHIFT IN THE GOM'S CAUTIOUS AND AMBIGUOUS POLICY ON ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALAN AND SALVADORAN INSURGENTS WILL DEPEND ON THE DIRECTION TAKEN BY THE NEW GUATEMALAN JUNTA AND ON POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS IN EL SALVADOR. GIVEN MOVEMENT TOWARDS ACCOMMODATIONS WITH THE LEFT IN EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE COUNTRIES, THE GOM MAY BE MORE INCLINED TO REDUCE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF INSURGENT REPRESENTATIVES IN MEXICO CITY, AND/OR TO SHOW A FIRMER MILITARY HAND ON THE BORDER. EVEN IF THERE IS NO SUCH MOVEMENT IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, WE HAVE REPORTED RECENT SIGNS THAT DE LA MADRID MAY BE MORE CONSERVATIVE ABOUT ASSOCIATING THE GOM WITH CENTRAL AMERICAN RADICALS. (SEE MEXICO 3447.)

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 04326 03 OF 03 302305Z

HOWEVER, THERE SHOULD BE NO EXPECTATION THAT THE MAIN-STREAM OF GOM/PRI THINKING WILL SHIFT MORE THAN A DEGREE OR TWO TO THE RIGHT. IN HIS MOST RECENT FOREIGN POLICY REMARKS (MARCH 26) DE LA MADRID STRESSED THAT MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES WILL NOT CHANGE. THUS, WE SHOULD NOT HARBOR THE ILLUSION THAT MEXICAN COOPERATION WITH LEFTIST CAUSES IN CENTRAL AMERICA, OR FOR THAT MATTER ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA, IS MERELY A PASSING PHENOMENON THAT WE NEED NOT CONTINUE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT. WE ARE PLACING THIS PHENOMENON IN PERSPECTIVE IN A SEPARATE REPORT TO BE FORWARDED SHORTLY ON HISTORICAL TRENDS IN MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY.

12. EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS OF INFO POSTS.
(DRAFTER: T. S. WILKINSON) GAVIN

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED