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UNCLASSIFIED GUATEMALA 013821/01
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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0831
BT
SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 13821

CLASS: SECRET
CHRG: PROG 12/21/93
APPRV: AMBASSADOR
DRFTD: POL:KUSNITZ
CLEAR: ADCM:GAC/POL:DK/LE
ATT:AC
DISTR: XDIS
ORGIN: WNG ID: 01354 LB

FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR ARA A/S WATSON,
DAS SKOL AND DAS PATTERSON

EXDIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PREL, PHUM, PGOV, GT
SUBJECT: CONCERNS OVER THE MILITARY

REF: GUAT 13800

1. SECRET -- ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: I AM CONCERNED OVER THE POTENTIAL
DECLINE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY. IF
THIS WERE TO OCCUR, IT COULD UNDERMINE BOTH PRESIDENT
DE LEON AND HIS FORWARD-LEANING MOD. THE BOTTOM LINE
IS WE MUST CAREFULLY CONSIDER EACH OF OUR ACTIONS
TOWARD THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY, NOT ONLY FOR HOW IT
PLAYS IN WASHINGTON, BUT FOR HOW IT IMPACTS HERE, AND
AVOID WORKING AT CROSS-PURPOSES TO OUR LARGER GOALS.
END SUMMARY.

3. AS REFLECTED IN REF, I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER
THE DIRECTION OF OUR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH
GUATEMALA AND THE POSSIBILITY WE MAY LOSE INFLUENCE
WITH THE INSTITUTION. ALWAYS SENSITIVE TO PERCEIVED
AND ACTUAL SLIGHTS, THE ARMY IS NOW SENDING US
SIGNALS OF THEIR DISPLEASURE OVER PERCEIVED SLIGHTS
ON THE E-IMET FT. BENNING COURSES AND THE UH-1
HELICOPTERS. THEY ALSO ARE OBVIOUSLY UNCOMFORTABLE
(AND UNHAPPY) WITH THE PRESSURE I AM PUTTING ON THEM
TO FIND CONTRERAS.

4. WHILE, TO US, ALL THESE DECISIONS/ACTIONS ARE
EXPLAINABLE AND JUSTIFIABLE, THE ARMY SEES THEM AS A
COORDINATED "SIGN" THAT ITS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ARE
UNAPPRECIATED, THE GOAL POSTS CONSTANTLY MOVING. I
AM NOT ONE TO SHY AWAY FROM A FIGHT AND HAVE NO
INTENTION OF BACKING DOWN ON PRESSURING THE ARMY TO
LOCATE AND ARREST CONTRERAS. THAT SAID, I BELIEVE IT
IMPORTANT TO FIND WAYS TO SHOW WE RECOGNIZE THE ARMY
HAS MADE POSITIVE STRIDES. TRUE, IT HAS A LONG WAY
TO GO, BUT IT IS ALSO LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF WHERE IT
WAS ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO.

GUATEMALA
AM EMBASSY
327223
Captioned Telegrams

United States Department of State
Office of FOI, Privacy, & Classification Review
Review Authority: OLSON, OSCAR
Date: 06/25/96
Case ID: 95122292

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5. MY GREAT FEAR IS THAT WE WILL UNDERCUT DEFENSE MINISTER ENRIQUEZ AND, BY EXTENSION, PRESIDENT DE LEON. THE LESS APPRECIATIVE OF CHANGE WE APPEAR TO BE (IN THE EYES OF THE OFFICER CORPS), THE MORE ENRIQUEZ IS UNDERMINED. THIS IS TROUBLESOME SINCE, FRANKLY, THERE IS NO ONE IN THE OFFICER CORPS WITH HIS ABILITY TO PUSH THE ARMY IN A PRO-DEMOCRATIC, PRO-PEACE AND PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTION. IF OUR PERCEIVED BEHAVIOR IS USED AGAINST HIM, AS WE BELIEVE QUILLO AND OTHER HARDLINERS MAY BE DOING, HIS POSITION COULD BE UNDERMINED.

6. POSITIVE PROGRESS BY THE ARMY, AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, IS KEY TO DISTANCING THIS COUNTRY FROM ITS TRAGIC PAST. IN BOTH DE LEON AND ENRIQUEZ, WE HAVE A COMMITTED AND FORWARD LOOKING TEAM WILLING TO WORK WITH US TO MEET THE GOALS WE ALL SHARE. IT WOULD BE A PYRRHIC VICTORY IF WE WERE TO "PUNISH" GUATEMALA FOR ITS INADEQUACIES AT THE COST OF ENRIQUEZ' JOB OR INFLUENCE, UNDERMINING DE LEON AT THE SAME TIME.

7. AS IMPLIED ABOVE, I AM WARY THAT PROBLEMS WITH THE MILITARY COULD SPILL OVER INTO OTHER AREAS. CERTAINLY, I BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEGOTIATED PEACE ACCORD, THEY ARE BETTER WITH ENRIQUEZ AS MOD. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ARMY AND PERCEPTIONS OF INORDINATE U.S. PRESSURE COULD AFFECT DE LEON'S ABILITY TO BE FORWARD-LEANING ON THE PAC'S AND THE PEACE PROCESS IN GENERAL.

8. THE BOTTOM LINE, I BELIEVE, IS WE MUST CAREFULLY CONSIDER EACH OF OUR ACTIONS TOWARD THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY, NOT ONLY FOR HOW IT PLAYS IN WASHINGTON, BUT FOR HOW IT IMPACTS HERE. WE MUST NOT/NOT WORK AT CROSS-PURPOSES TO OUR LARGER GOALS. AS NOTED REF, I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY OUR ENGAGING THE MILITARY (AFTER A YEAR SPENT IN WASHINGTON WAITING TO COME HERE, NOTHING COULD BE CLEARER TO ME). I ALSO INTEND TO CONTINUE DOING WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN IF IT RUBS THE ARMY THE WRONG WAY (E.G., THE DEVINE/CONTRERAS CASE). AT THE SAME TIME, THOUGH, WE MUST TRY TO CALIBRATE OUR ACTIONS TO BUILD AND RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ARMY.

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