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147

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PAGE 01
ACTION L-03

GUATEM 15523 282046Z

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	AID-01	ARA-01	CA-02	CG-00	CIAE-00
	CTME-00	FBIE-00	HA-09	INM-01	INRE-00	INR-05	IO-19
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OIG-01	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-01
	PPT-01	PRS-01	P-02	SP-01	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00

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O 281432Z DEC 90
 FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6047
 DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
 INFO RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM
 DEAHQS WASHDC
 DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 15523

STATE FOR L/LEI

JUSTICE FOR OIA (LYSTRA BLAKE)

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: SNAR, CJAN, PREL, PGOV, PINS, PHUM, GT
 SUBJECT: MAYOR OF ZACAPA ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING
 - ON US REQUEST FOR ARREST PENDING EXTRADITION

1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST, SEE PARA 4.
2. (U) ARNOLDO VARGAS ESTRADA, RECENTLY REELECTED MAYOR
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PAGE 02 GUATEM 15523 282046Z
 OF THE GUATEMALAN CITY OF ZACAPA (ZACAPA DEPARTMENT),
 WAS ARRESTED AT HIS HOME DECEMBER 27 FOR DRUG AND
 WEAPONS TRAFFICKING IN A COMBINED NATIONAL POLICE,
 TREASURY POLICE, MILITARY POLICE OPERATION INVOLVING
 SOME 100 MEN ACTING AS PART OF "SIPROCI" (CIVIL
 PROTECTION SYSTEM). VARGAS AND TWO COLLEAGUES, VICTOR
 MANUEL ESTRADA ARIAS AND OTTO EVELIO QUIROZ DAVILA, ALSO
 ARRESTED THE SAME DAY, ARE NOW JAILED IN GUATEMALA CITY
 IN THE "CENTRO DE DETENCION PREVENTIVA." THE ARRESTS

Page - 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: SAM A. MOSKOWITZ
 DATE/CASE ID: 28 SEP 1998 199502007

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CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANNEL: n/a

147

WERE MADE IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO OUR DECEMBER 20 REQUEST THAT THE THREE MEN BE ARRESTED FOR PURPOSES OF EXTRADITION. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, AUTHORITIES SEIZED 287 KGS. OF COCAINE AND SEVERAL VEHICLES IN THE COURSE OF THE OPERATION AGAINST THE THREE SUSPECTS.

3. (LOU) THE ARREST OF THE POWERFUL MAYOR OF ZACAPA HAS DRAWN EXTENSIVE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA PLAY. AS HE WAS BEING LED TO JAIL, VARGAS, REPORTEDLY A MAJOR FINANCIAL SUPPORTER OF UCN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JORGE CARPIO, MADE STATEMENTS TO TV REPORTERS DENYING ANY INVOLVEMENT IN COCAINE TRAFFICKING, "I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT COCAINE IS." AS EXPECTED, CARPIO'S NEWSPAPER, "EL GRAFICO," HAS CALLED VARGAS'S ARREST A "DIRTY POLITICAL MANEUVER" ARRANGED BY CARPIO'S OPPONENT, JORGE SERRANO OF THE MAS PARTY, IN LEAGUE WITH THE GOVERNING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. "GRAFICO" CHARGES VARGAS'S HUMAN RIGHTS WERE VIOLATED AS SEVERAL CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES WERE IGNORED BY ARRESTING OFFICERS. PRESS ACCOUNTS REFER TO THE US HAVING FILED AN EXTRADITION REQUEST FOR VARGAS FOR HIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG TRAFFICKING TO FLORIDA AND CALIFORNIA.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GUATEM 15523 282046Z

4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: THE GOG RESPONDED VERY WELL AND VERY QUICKLY TO OUR DECEMBER 21 REQUEST FOR THE ARREST OF VARGAS PENDING HIS EXTRADITION. THE GOG APPARENTLY FELT EMBOLDENED TO ACT AGAINST VARGAS, WIDELY HELD TO BE A MAJOR LEAGUE HOOD, BECAUSE OF OUR EXTRADITION REQUEST. THIS IS A SENSITIVE CASE COMING JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE JANUARY 6 ELECTION RUN-OFF BETWEEN CARPIO AND SERRANO. EMBASSY REQUESTS A FUND CITE ASAP SO THAT WE CAN ENGAGE A GUATEMALAN ATTORNEY TO EXPEDITE THE POTENTIALLY LENGTHY EXTRADITION PROCESS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET VARGAS, WHO IS APPARENTLY BOTH WEALTHY AND INCLINED TO VIOLENCE, OUT OF GUATEMALA QUICKLY.

TAYLOR

CONFIDENTIAL

Page - 2

UNCLASSIFIED