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1982/10/28

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO	OCT-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-07	INR-10	EUR-12	SS-10
	CIAE-00	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SY-06	HA-08	L-03
	PM-09	PA-01	MCT-02	INRE-00	SAL-01	SYE-00	SP-02
	/088 W						

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O 282239Z OCT 82
 FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1680
 INFO AMEMBASSY BELIZE
 AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY PANAMA
 AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
 AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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 IN PART
 DATE: 1/14/98
 EO Citations: _____

FOIA Exemptions: B1 TS authority to
 CLASSIFY or S or C Sec.
 DOWNGRADE TS to S or C

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E.O. 12356: DECL: 10/28/88
 TAGS: PINS, PINT, PINR, PGOV, SHUM, GT
 SUBJECT: FURTHER ON CHOATALUM

EXCISE

- REFS: (A) GUATEMALA 7825
 - (B) GUATEMALA 7938
 - (C) GUATEMALA 7939
 - (D) GUATEMALA 7963

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. BACKGROUND ON MARIO CARPIO, CITED IN OCTOBER 18 AFP ARTICLE FROM MANAGUA. CARPIO WAS AFP CORRESPONDENT AND DIRECTOR OF INFORPRESS IN GUATEMALA UNTIL 1980 WHEN HE LEFT THE COUNTRY PROBABLY UNDER THREAT. HE AND HIS WIFE VIOLETA

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WERE DESCRIBED AS "EXTREME LEFTIST VERY SYMPATHETIC TO THE SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENT AND PROBABLY SUPPORTING THEM." THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY WERE SO IN-

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VOLVED IS NOT KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY. MARIO CARPIO IS WELL CONNECTED IN GUATEMALA, WHERE ONE BROTHER IS PUBLISHER OF EL GRAFICO AND ANOTHER, ROBERTO CARPIO, WAS DCG VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN THE ABORTED NATIONAL ELECTIONS. NEITHER BROTHER, HOWEVER, REFLECTS THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF MARIO.

3. THE CHOATALUM STORY WAS ALSO HEARD IN GUATEMALA CITY ON OCTOBER 22 IN A REPORT BY BYRON BARRERA ON RADIO HAVANA. BARRERA WAS INTERVIEWED AS A GUATEMALAN JOURNALIST AND A MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION OF GUATEMALA (APG), THE SAME ORGANIZATION OF WHICH CARPIO IS LISTED IN THE MANAGUA STORY AS THE COORDINATOR. BARRERA REPEATED THE CHOATALUM STORY IN INTERVIEW OF APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES ON RADIO HAVANA. HE ALSO LEFT GUATEMALA APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS AGO, PROBABLY UNDER THREAT AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN IN CUBA SINCE. WHILE THE THREAT TO BOTH REPORTERS BECAUSE OF THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS AND ACTIVITIES IS PROBABLY REAL, THEIR VIEWS OF THE GUATEMALAN SITUATION CANNOT THEREFORE BE EXPECTED TO BE NON-BIASED.

4. REF D REPORTED CDHG AND AI CLAIMS OF MILITARY MASSACRE IN CHUATALUN (SIC), ALSO SEPARATELY SPELLED CHUATATLUN (SIC), AS INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED IN BOTH MARCH AND APRIL 1982. THESE REPORTS MAY HAVE

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BEEN THE ORIGIN OF THE ONE THAT SURFACED IN OCTOBER. OTHER THAN THE AMBASSADOR'S VISIT OF OCTOBER 21, THERE HAVE BEEN VISITS ON OCTOBER 17 BY THE SWEDISH EMBASSY DCM, ACCOMPANIED BY A SWEDISH REPORTER, AND A SECOND SWEDISH REPORTER WAS SEPARATELY IN CHOATALUM THE SAME DAY. THE CHARGE OF THE CANADIAN EMBASSY WAS INSTRUCTED TO VISIT SAN MARTIN JILOTEPEQUE AND DID SO OCTOBER 25. THE CANADIAN CHARGE DID NOT GO TO CHOATALUM BECAUSE HE WAS NOT INSTRUCTED TO DO SO. NEITHER THE SWEDISH NOR THE CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS OBTAINED ANY INFORMATION THAT INDICATED THERE WAS A MASSACRE.

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ONE OF THE SWEDISH JOURNALISTS ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HIS NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED THE CHOATALUM MASSACRE STORY WITHOUT CONSULTING HIM ALTHOUGH HE HAD BEEN ON THE SPOT. THIS LATTER INFORMATION WAS FURNISHED TO THE REPORTING OFFICER BY A BRITISH NATIONAL RESIDENT IN ANTIGUA WHO TALKED TO THE SWEDISH REPORTER AND CALLED THE EMBASSY TO SO ADVISE.

5. THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTED ON OCTOBER 25 THAT THE DELEGATION FROM THE AMERICAS WATCH COMMITTEE HAD VISITED CHOATALUM OCTOBER 23. AS EMBASSY HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO DEBRIEF THIS GROUP, WE CANNOT CONFIRM THIS VISIT. THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT A NUMBER OF THE REFUGEES IN THE SAN MARTIN, JILOTEPEQUE MUNICIPALITY HAVE BEEN

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1681
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RETURNED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ALDEAS.

6. THE EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ABOUT CHOATALUM BUT REMAINS CONVINCED THAT A MASSACRE DID NOT HAPPEN IN CHOATALUM ON OCTOBER 5 NOR WERE THE REFUGEES WHO HAD GATHERED THERE THREATENED BY THE ARMY. THE STORY IS CONSIDERED BY EVERY OBSERVER WE HAVE CONSULTED TO HAVE BEEN A DELIBERATE FABRICATION AND ONE THAT SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO SERVE THE MARXIST CAUSE. CHAPIN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~