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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AMAD-01	ACQ-01	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FBIE-00	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00
	CIO-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SGHD-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-10	PRME-01	DRL-04	G-00	SAS-00

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R 061823Z FEB 98

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8677

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

DIA WASHINGTON DC

DIA WASHINGTON DC//NMJIC-J2//

USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCCC/SCJ3/SCJ2/JOIC/HSE//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 000541

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/10/03

TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PINR, DR

SUBJECT: LITTLE PROGRESS IN NARCISO INVESTIGATION

CLASSIFIED BY L.E.WATT, CHARGE. REASON 1.5(D).

SUMMARY

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1. (C) THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE LITTLE PROGRESS

INVESTIGATING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR NARCISO GONZALEZ SINCE HEARINGS BEFORE THE INTERAMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IACHR) IN WASHINGTON LAST NOVEMBER. MEMBERS OF THE LEONEL FERNANDEZ ADMINISTRATION AND THE NONGOVERNMENTAL TRUTH COMMISSION WILL ATTEND FOLLOW-UP HEARINGS FEBRUARY 25. IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT RESOLVE THE CASE BY THE MAY CONGRESSIONAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, TRUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS SAY THEY WILL TURN TO MORE AGGRESSIVE PRESSURE TACTICS. END SUMMARY.

 THE LAST POLITICAL MURDER OF THE BALAGUER YEARS?

2. (U) NARCISO GONZALEZ DISAPPEARED ON THE MORNING OF MAY 26, 1994 ON HIS WAY TO WORK AT THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF SANTO DOMINGO (UASD). A FEW WEEKS BEFORE, NARCISO ALLEGED IN AN ARTICLE THAT FORMER PRESIDENT JOAQUIN BALAGUER WAS ONE OF THE MOST CORRUPT LEADERS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND THAT HE WON THE 1994 ELECTIONS THROUGH FRAUD. THE BALAGUER GOVERNMENT PROMISED IT WOULD INVESTIGATE THE DISAPPEARANCE, BUT NEVER BROUGHT EVIDENCE TO LIGHT.

3. (U) WHEN FERNANDEZ REPLACED BALAGUER IN AUGUST 1996, THE NEW PRESIDENT INSISTED HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONDUCT ITS OWN INVESTIGATION INTO THIS LIKELY POLITICAL MURDER. FERNANDEZ APPOINTED AN INVESTIGATIVE JUDGE WHO BEGAN TO CALL WITNESSES AND CHASE LEADS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT INSIST THAT MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY HIERARCHY AND
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 OFFICIALS FROM THE FORMER BALAGUER GOVERNMENT COOPERATE WITH THE JUDGE. THE INVESTIGATION SLOWED TO A STANDSTILL BY SEPTEMBER 1997.

 TRUTH COMMISSION GROWS IMPATIENT

4. (U) FRUSTRATED BY THE FERNANDEZ ADMINISTRATION'S SEEMINGLY HALF-HEARTED SUPPORT FOR THE INVESTIGATION, THE TRUTH COMMISSION -- FORMED BY CONCERNED DOMINICANS IN

1994 TO LOBBY FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING OF THE NARCISO DISAPPEARANCE -- TOOK THEIR CASE TO THE IACHR. IN NOVEMBER'S HEARINGS, THE IACHR INSTRUCTED THE GODR AND TRUTH COMMISSION TO FORM A JOINT COMMITTEE, INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENT TOGETHER, AND REPORT ON PROGRESS THIS MONTH.

5. (C) TRUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY THEY WILL TESTIFY ON FEBRUARY 25 THAT THE GODR STILL REFUSES TO COOPERATE WITH THEM. THE GODR HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO GRANT THE JOINT COMMITTEE SUFFICIENT POWERS TO CALL WITNESSES OR ISSUE DIRECTIVES TO THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGE, THEY SAID. THUS FAR, THE GODR HAS ARGUED THE DOMINICAN CONSTITUTION DOES NOT PERMIT THE JOINT COMMITTEE TO EXERCISE INVESTIGATIVE POWERS.

 INFORMANTS FEAR REPRISALS

6. (C) NARCISO'S WIDOW ALTAGRACIA RAMIREZ AND SEVERAL OTHER TRUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS HAVE TOLD US THEY REGULARLY RECEIVE ANONYMOUS TIPS FROM GOVERNMENT WORKERS
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 AND MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY ABOUT NARCISO'S SUPPOSED MURDER. MOST WHISTLE-BLOWERS SAY THEY ARE UNWILLING TO GO PUBLIC WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME FOR FEAR OF REPRISALS AGAINST THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES. ALL SOURCES ALLEGE THE SECURITY FORCES KILLED NARCISO AND DUMPED HIS CORPSE IN A RIVER, TRUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS SAY.

7. (C) RAMIREZ ALSO TOLD US THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION CONTACTED HER FOR REASONS THAT REMAIN UNCLEAR TO DISCUSS CONFIDENTIALLY THE POSSIBLE SENATORIAL CANDIDACY OF JUAN ROJAS TABAR FOR EX-PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S SOCIAL CHRISTIAN REFORMIST PARTY IN THE MAY ELECTIONS. RUMOR HAS FREQUENTLY LINKED ROJAS TABAR TO THE CRIME. HE WAS SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER BALAGUER AND INITIALLY SECRETARY OF THE ARMED FORCES UNDER FERNANDEZ.

 THREATS TO ESCALATE PRESSURE ON GOVT

8. (C) IF THE STALEMATE CONTINUES, TRUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS INFORMED THE EMBASSY THEY WILL EMPLOY MORE AGGRESSIVE XESSURE TACTICS AGAINST THE GODR IN MAY, THE MONTH OF ELECTIONS AND NARCISO'S DISAPPEARANCE FOUR YEARS AGO. AS TACTICS BEING CONSIDERED, THEY MENTIONED A HUNGER STRIKE BY MEMBERS OF NARCISO'S FAMILY, PROTESTS BY

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STUDENTS AT UASD AND A NON-STOP VIGIL IN FRONT OF THE
PRESIDENTIAL PALACE OR PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ'S RESIDENCE.
(NOTE: THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY REMAINS
INTERESTED IN THE INVESTIGATION, AND THE EMBASSY STILL
RECEIVES QUERIES ABOUT NARCISO FROM INTERNATIONAL HUMAN
RIGHTS GROUPS.)

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