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CONFIDENTIAL 772

PAGE 01 MEXICO 04765 01 OF 02 202209Z

81
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 4765

SUBJ: RESIGNATION OF ATTORNEY GENERAL SANCHEZ VARGAS

REF: MEXICO'S 4750

1. SUMMARY - ATTORNEY GENERAL SANCHEZ VARGAS RESIGNATION AUG 19 APPEARS DUE TO BASIC CONFLICT IN PHILOSOPHY AND STYLE WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, AND TO UNRESOLVED COMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE JUNE 10 STUDENT RIOT. BASED ON CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE DECISION TO REPLACE SANCHEZ VARGAS WAS TAKEN PRECIPITOUSLY AS LATE AS THE EVENING OF AUGUST 18. FINALLY, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT ECHEVERRIA HAS STRENGTHENED HIS POSITION WITH THIS RESIGNATION.

2. SEPTEL GIVES BIO DATA ON AND SPECULATES ON POSSIBLE REASONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF NEW ATTORNEY GENERAL PEDRO OJEDA PAULLADA TO REPLACE JULIO SANCHEZ VARGAS. THIS TELEGRAM SPECULATES ON POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS CHANGE, WHICH IS THE SECOND IN THE ECHEVERRIA CABINET SINCE ITS FORMATION DECEMBER 1, 1970, THE FIRST HAVING BEEN THE RESIGNATION OF FEDERAL REGENT ALFONSO MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ FOLLOWING THE HARSH REPRESSION OF STUDENT DISORDERS ON JUNE 10, 1971.

3. BACKGROUND ON SANCHEZ VARGAS - SANCHEZ VARGAS WAS THE ONLY REAL HOLDOVER FROM THE DIAZ ORDAZ CABINET, AS FINANCE MINISTER MARGAIN AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER AGUIRRE WERE

CONFIDENTIAL

Mexico 4765

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46

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Authority MM 969041
By 8 NARA Date 4-18-02

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 04765 01 OF 02 202209Z

APPOINTED LATE IN THAT REGIME. SANCHEZ VARGAS WAS APPOINTED ATTORNEY GENERAL IN MARCH 1968 AFTER HAVING SERVED IN AN ACTING CAPACITY FOR SOME MONTHS PRIOR. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAD THE FEWEST CHANGES OF ANY MINISTRY FOLLOWING THE INAUGURATION OF ECHEVERRIA. ALL ITS SENIOR OFFICIALS REMAINED IN PLACE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ELDERLY GENERAL WHO HAD BEEN HEAD OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL POLICE. DESPITE SANCHEZ VARGAS REFERENCE IN HIS LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO THE PRESSURE OF WORK AND HIS INABILITY TO TAKE A SINGLE DAY OFF SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF BEING AMONG THE LAST BUSY AMONG THOSE WITH WHICH THE EMBASSY IS IN REGULAR CONTACT. SANCHEZ VARGAS HIMSELF WAS 57 YEARS OLD AUG 17 AND HIS BACKGROUND HAS BEEN PRIMARILY IN THE LEGAL AND JUDICIAL FIELDS. HE HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING METICULOUS, PONDEROUS, INFLEXIBLE AND A MAN OF GREAT PERSONAL INTEGRITY.

4. SANCHEZ VARGAS POLITICAL VIEWS - SANCHEZ VARGAS IS KNOWN AS A "HARD-LINER" WHO BELIEVES IN TAKING STERN MEASURES AGAINST LEFTISTS, STUDENTS AND OTHERS WHO DISRUPT ORDER AND SEEK TO CHANGE THE LONG ESTABLISHED MEXICAN SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. SANCHEZ VARGAS BEARS SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLOODY REPRESSION OF THE STUDENTS AT TLATELOLCO IN OCTOBER 1968 AND HE WAS SPECIFICALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROSECUTING THE LEADERS, MANY OF WHOM RECEIVED LENGTHY JAIL TERMS. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT HE HAS NOT BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO ECHEVERRIA'S POLICY OF RELEASING ALMOST ALL OF THE 1968 STUDENT LEADERS IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN SUPPORT FROM THE LEFT AND FROM AMONG THE STUDENTS.

5. THE REPORT ON JUNE 10 - IN THE WAKE OF THE EVENTS OF JUNE 10 ECHEVERRIA GAVE SANCHEZ VARGAS THE DELICATE AND DIFFICULT TASK OF PRODUCING A FULL AND HONEST REPORT ON THE CAUSES OF THAT VIOLENT CLASH WHICH SAW THE STUDENTS HARSHLY REPPRESSED BY WHAT ARE GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED YOUNG TOUGHS, THE "HALCONES." THIS TASK WAS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE BECAUSE FEDERAL REGENT MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ BEFORE HE RESIGNED FLATLY DENIED ANY GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL



Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 04765 01 OF 02 202209Z

CONNECTION WITH THE "HALCONES," BECAUSE MANY SENIOR MEXICAN OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, WERE INVOLVED IN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, TRAINING AND ARMING OF THE "HALCONES," AND BECAUSE THE PRESS AND THE STUDENTS WERE GENERALLY AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS BEHIND THE "HALCONES." ON JULY 22 THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MADE A PRELIMINARY REPORT IN WHICH HE SAID HE COULD FIND NO EVIDENCE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEDERAL AUTHORITIES AND THE "HALCONES," BUT HE PROMISED TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION. WITH THE PRESIDENT'S TRADITIONAL STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE DUE ON SEPTEMBER 1, THE PRESSURE TO RELEASE A FULL REPORT ON THE JUNE 10 EVENTS HAS BEEN INCREASING. THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN LED BY NEW FEDERAL REGENT SENTIES AGAINST THE "PORRAS" (GROUPS OF RIGHT WING YOUNG TOUGHS OPERATING IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES) REPRESENTS AN ATTEMPT TO REDUCE SOME OF THE PRESSURE BUT THE STUDENTS, THE LEFT AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC NEVERTHELESS HOPE FOR A FULL REPORT ON THE JUNE 10 EVENTS.

6. ECHEVERRIA'S POLICIES - DURING HIS FIRST NINE MONTHS IN OFFICE ECHEVERRIA HAS SOUGHT TO PORTRAY HIS ADMINISTRATION AS BEING MORE OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC AND MORE RECEPTIVE TO THE VIEWS OF ALL SEGMENTS OF THE MEXICAN PEOPLE. THIS HAS INCLUDED ATTEMPTS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE STUDENTS AND THE LEFT, AND TO SHOW THAT IT IS MORE FLEXIBLE AND WILLING TO COMPROMISE, AND MORE CANDID WITH THE PEOPLE. HE HAS ALSO TRIED IN MANY WAYS, BOTH IN STYLE AND SUBSTANCE, TO SHOW THAT HIS REGIME HAS MADE A CLEAR BREAK WITH THE PAST AND ITS MORE AUTHORITARIAN METHODS. THESE POLICIES HAVE NOT BEEN POPULAR WITH THE OLD GUARD, WHICH VIEWS THEM AS PRESENTING DANGEROUS POSSIBILITIES FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MEXICAN SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. IN THIS SENSE SANCHEZ VARGAS CAN BE CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF THE OLD GUARD, THOUGH HE IS NOT BY ANY MEANS A POLITICIAN. ECHEVERRIA'S STYLE HAS ALSO CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF SANCHEZ VARGAS, SINCE THE FORMER IS HARD-DRIVING, ENERGETIC, SOMETIMES IMPETUOUS, AND FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED FOR POLITICAL CONCILIATION AND COMPROMISE.

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