

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1985GUATEM03333

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ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 SS-00 HA-08 SLPD-01 /010 W
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R 092119Z APR 85
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7601

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E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: SHUM, GT
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE
- ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE APRIL 8 VISIT OF
AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN TO GENERAL MEJIA AND FOREIGN
MINISTER ANDRADE, AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION I
TOOK GENERAL MEJIA ASIDE AND PRIVATELY EXPRESSED
TO HIM OUR GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE RECENT EVENTS
WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IN GUATEMALA, ESPECIALLY THE
DEATH OF MARIA ROSARIO GODOY DE CUEVAS OF THE
MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP. I STRESSED THE FACT THAT
SUCH TRAGEDIES WOULD ONLY HURT GUATEMALA'S IMAGE
AND PLACE THE GOVERNMENT IN AN EMBARRASSING
POSITION. I INDICATED THAT EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT
HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MATTER, PUBLIC OPINION
ABROAD WOULD DEFINITELY BLAME THE MILITARY. AS A
CONSEQUENCE OF ALL THIS, IT WAS BECOMING VERY
DIFFICULT FOR US TO DEFEND GUATEMALA'S POSITION,
ESPECIALLY IN CONGRESS, AND THIS WOULD ENDANGER
OUR EFFORTS TO HELP GUATEMALA BY INCREASING THE AID
PROGRAM.

3. THE CHIEF OF STATE AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH
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ME AND REPEATED WHAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID, THAT
IT WAS OF GREAT CONCERN TO HIS GOVERNMENT, THAT

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SAM A. MOSKOWITZ
DATE/CASE ID: 24 NOV 1999 199504668

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SUCH EVENTS HURT THEM MORE THAN THEY HURT US. THUS, HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER, IN HIS OWN INTEREST, TO TRY TO STOP THESE EVENTS FROM OCCURRING. HOWEVER, HE DID SAY THAT WE MUST REALIZE THAT THESE INCIDENTS MAY BE TRIGGERED BY FORCES THAT DID NOT WANT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS TO PROCEED ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE. ACCORDING TO HIM THERE ARE CERTAIN SECTORS OF GUATEMALAN SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY THE EXTREME LEFT, WHO ARE DETERMINED THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS NOT TAKE PLACE.

4. AFTER THAT I ALSO TOOK ASIDE THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND REPEATED TO HIM WHAT I HAD TOLD THE CHIEF OF STATE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS EVEN MORE EMPHATIC IN HIS STATEMENT THAT HE AND THE ENTIRE POLICY THAT HE WAS TRYING TO CARRY OUT WERE PLACED IN DANGER BY SUCH TRAGIC EVENTS. HE INDICATED, AGAIN, THAT I MUST REALIZE THAT HE MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE WAS AGAINST THE CONTINUANCE OF THESE TYPES OF CRIMES. HE ADDED THAT I SHOULD PERSIST IN STRESSING THESE POINTS TO ALL SECTORS OF GUATEMALAN SOCIETY, AND IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY TO THE MILITARY.

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