

00636

1980/03/25

1423

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

PAGE 01 GUATEM 01957 01 OF 02 290901Z
ACTION ARA-15

UNCLASSIFIED

R

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 SY-05 DCT-02 /081 W

-----115650 290902Z /13/66

R 251423Z MAR 80
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8877
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 1957~~

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING EO TAGS AND SUBJECT)

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ASEC, SHUM, GT
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE SURGES IN MARCH

1. SUMMARY. CURRENT MONTH HAS REGISTERED MORE THAN THE USUAL LEVEL OF VIOLET POLITICAL DEATHS AS NOTED IN GUATEMALA 1498, 1558, 1579, 1612, 1759 AND 1760. THE PAST WEEK SURPASSED EARLIER ONES WITH THE DISCOVERY OF A CLANDESTINE GRAVEYARD WHERE SOME 26 DECAYED BODIES SHOW PHYSICAL SIGNS OF A "DEATH SQUAD" TYPE EXECUTIONS, ALTHOUGH THE FEW TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED VICTIMS WERE NOT KNOWN CRIMINALS. ADDITIONAL KILLINGS OF ARMY EX-COLONEL, DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF, LEFTIST GUERRILLA, THREE STUDENTS, THREE LAWYERS, A UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL, POLICE GUARD, TWO POLITICIANS, AND A COMISIONADO MILITAR ADD TO APPALLING COUNT. END SUMMARY.

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

PAGE 02 GUATEM 01957 01 OF 02 290901Z

2. NEHEMIAS CUMEZ, AN INDIAN LEADER FROM COMALAPA, CHIMALTENANGO DEPARTMENT, DEVELOPING LOW COST HOUSING PROJECTS, WAS ABDUCTED ON MARCH 15. ON MARCH 19 SEARCHERS

Page - 1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE *1/20/98*
 RELEASE DECLASSIFY
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY EO Citations _____
 DENY IN PART

UNCLASSIFIED

FOIA Exemptions _____ TS authority to
PA Exemptions _____ CLASSIFY as () S or () C Sec. _____
 DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C

UNCLASSIFIED

FOUND A CLANDESTINE CEMETERY DEEP IN THE RECESSES OF A 50 METER CREVASS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A VILLAGE NEAR COMPALAPA. TO DATE SOME 26 BODIES IN ADVANCED STAGES OF DECAY HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE LOCALE. FEW HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND THEN ONLY TENTATIVELY. ONE MAY BE A YOUNG BRICKLAYER, ANOTHER A FACTORY WORKER, AND A THIRD, A UNIVERSITY STUDENT. ALL THREE WERE PREVIOUSLY ABDUCTED: THE FIRST ON DECEMBER 3, THE SECOND ON FEBRUARY 17, AND THE THIRD ON MARCH 7. THE STUDENT, RODOLFO PALENCIA RUIZ, ACCORDING TO A PRESS ACCOUNT OF HIS WIFE'S ACCUSATIONS, (LATER RETRACTED BY HER), WAS PREVIOUSLY "ABDUCTED" LAST DECEMBER AND HELD ON "TRUMPED UP CHARGES" BY COL. MAXIMO RUANO, DEPARTMENTAL CHIEF OF POLICE. HE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED.

3. PRESIDENT LUCAS' PRESS SECRETARY ISSUED A STATEMENT EXPRESSING THE FORMER'S INDIGNATION UPON LEARNING OF THE CEMETERY AND NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ORDERED A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION. THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED THE CRIMES TO CLANDESTINE GANGS AND EXTREMISTS. A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TOLD US HE BELIEVED THE DUMPING GROUND WAS OF EXTREME LEFT ORIGIN. WE CONSIDER THIS UNLIKELY.

4. IN MID-MARCH THE CHIEF OF COMISIONADOS MILITARES (UNPAID ARMY RECRUITERS AND INFORMANTS) FOR IXCAN, EL QUICHE DEPARTMENT, VICENTE CHUN PEREZ, WAS KILLED, PRESUMABLY BY GUERRILLAS JUDGING BY AN UNSIGNED NOTE ON THE BODY. ABOUT THE SAME TIME AN EX-COMISIONADO MILITAR AND PID (COALITION PARTNER IN LUCAS GOVERNMENT) CANDIDATE FOR COUNCILMAN IN UPCOMING MAYORAL ELECTIONS, BRAULIO EMILIO GONZALEZ, WAS ASSASSINATED IN RANCHO BOJON, SAN MARCOS DEPARTMENT. RANCHO BOJON HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN MILITARY FORCES AND THE LEFTIST ORPA (REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE IN ARMS) GUERRILLAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03

GUATEM 01957 01 OF 02 290901Z

AND BETWEEN THEIR PRESUMED SYMPATHIZERS AND RIGHTIST EXTREMISTS (GUATEMALA A-7 AND A-18).

5. TWO LAWYERS, MANUEL ROBERTO SISNIEGA MENDEZ AND JAVIER ATILIO DUKE SANDOVAL, WERE SHOT AND KILLED EARLY EVENING OF MARCH 19 IN DOWNTOWN GUATEMALA CITY ON EDGE OF CENTRAL PLAZA ACROSS FROM THE NATIONAL PALACE. BOTH HAD TIES TO THE POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL SAN CARLOS UNIVERSITY (USAC). (RUMOR HAS IT THAT SISNIEGA AND ANOTHER LAWYER, AXEL DONALDO CORADO, KILLED ABOUT MARCH 12, WERE INVOLVED IN THE GARCIA GRANADOS KIDNAPPING (79 GUATEMALA 6796).) ON MARCH 20 A NATIONAL POLICE GUARD WAS SHOT DOWN IN FRONT OF THE PID HEADQUARTERS IN GUATEMALA CITY. HE DIED EN ROUTE TO THE HOSPITAL.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

6. ON MARCH 21 IN A CLASH BETWEEN THE ARMY AND ORPA TERRORISTS, ONE TERRORIST WAS KILLED AND TWO WOUNDED ACCORDING TO AN ARMY BULLETIN. ON MARCH 22 RETIRED COL. MAXIMO ZEPEDA MARTINEZ, FORMER G-2, NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF AND GUATEMALAN CONSUL IN TAPACHULA, MEXICO, WAS ASSASSINATED NEAR VILLA NUEVA ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF GUATEMALA CITY. THE PGT (COMMUNIST PARTY) TOOK CREDIT.

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

NNN

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

PAGE 01 GUATEM 01957 02 OF 02 290032Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 SY-05 DCT-02 /081 W

-----113022 290044Z /66

R 251423Z MAR 80
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8878
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMALA 1957~~

(ZEPEDA REPORTEDLY WAS INVOLVED IN EXECUTION OF 28 PGT LEADERS DURING THE PERALTA AZURDIA GOVERNMENT IN THE MID-SIXTIES.) THAT SAME EVENING, THREE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE KILLED AND A FOURTH HOSPITALIZED. THE PHANTOM SECRET ANTI-COMMUNIST ARMY (ESA) ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE STATING IT WOULD KILL 20 COMMUNISTS FOR EVERY ANTI-COMMUNIST KILLED. THEY CLAIMED THEIR KILLING OF THE STUDENTS AVENGED THE DEATH OF COL. ZEPEDA AND THREATENED TO KILL 17 MORE COMMUNITSTS. STUDENTS WERE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ZEPEDA KILLING.

7. MORNING RADIO MARCH 24 REPORTS KILLING OF HEAD OF SAN CARLOS UNIVERSITY'S LEGAL DEPARTMENT, HUGO ROLANDO MELGAR. HIS NAME

UNCLASSIFIED

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

Date Printed: 01/08/1998 DOC_NUMBER: 80GUATEM01957

CHANNEL: R/S

4

~~APPEARED ON AN EARLIER ESA LIST.~~

UNCLASSIFIED

8. COMMENT. THE ESA BULLETIN AND THE SECRET CEMETERY ARE ESPECIALLY OMINOUS. THE LATTER INDICATES THAT MANY OF THE DISAPPEARANCES REPORTED IN RECENT MONTHS ENDED IN MURDER. REMAINS OF THE VICTIMS INDICATED THEY HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN AND DISPATCHED WITH A "COUP D'GRACE." THOSE TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED SUGGEST THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

PAGE 02 GUATEM 01957 02 OF 02 290032Z

ASSASSINS WERE FROM THE FAR RIGHT. THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A HARD TIME DISPELLING THE IMPRESSION OF OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT. THE ESA THREAT MAY SIMPLY BE ONE MORE PRONOUNCEMENT BY THIS FRONT FOR VARIOUS RIGHTIST FORCES. IT COULD ALSO SIGNAL A RETURN TO THE SIXTIES WITH WHOLESAL KILLINGS DAILY BY BOTH EXTREMES. ORTIZ

~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~

NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** ONLY
*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page - 4

UNCLASSIFIED