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MRN: 84 SAN SALVADOR 3847
Date/DTG: Apr 09, 1984 / 090000Z Apr 84
From: AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE; BOGOTA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE
E.O.: Unknown
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, PINS, ES, FARN, SETA, (VASQUEZ SOMETA, CARLOS), (LOPEZ NUILA, REYNALDO)
Reference: 84 SAN SALVADOR 3648, 84 SAN SALVADOR 3547
Subject: MEETING WITH ARRESTED LEFTIST LABOR LEADER

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EB-08 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SSO-00 SY-06 HA-08
LAB-04 PM-10 PA-01 MCT-03 STR-14 SIL-01 INRE-00
SAL-01 A-02 SYE-00 SP-02 SLPD-01 /072 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4467
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
USIA WASHDC 2690

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 03847

BRUSSELS FOR USEC LABATT
USIA FOR AR AND P/CENTAM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, PINS, ES
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ARRESTED LEFTIST LABOR LEADER

REF: (A) SAN SALVADOR 3648, (B) SAN SALVADOR 3547

1. ~~SECRET~~ ENTIRE TEXT.

Declassified in full/Release in Full
By Marvin Russell, Senior Reviewer
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
6/13/2023

2. ON APRIL 7, LABOFF RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR, COLONEL REYNALDO LOPEZ NUILA, TO VISIT CARLOS VASQUEZ SOMETA, THE JAILED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WATERS AUTHORITY WORKERS UNION (SETA) (REFTEL A).

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LABOFF'S VISIT WAS PROMPTED BY THE NEED TO ASCERTAIN RECENT (AND SO FAR PRIVATE) CHARGES MADE BY AN UCA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR TO THE EFFECT THAT THE DETAINEE, ARRESTED MARCH 27, HAD BEEN BEATEN AND TORTURED BY THE NATIONAL POLICE. COL. LOPEZ NUILA TOLD LABOFF THAT VASQUEZ SOMETA WILL BE RELEASED ON APRIL 9, ALTHOUGH THE POLICE ARE CONVINCED HE IS A MEMBER OF THE FARN GUERRILLA GROUP (AS INDICATED BY HIS CONFESSION, REPORTED REFTEL A). LOPEZ NUILA HAS DECIDED NOT TO PRESS CHARGES AGAINST HIM FOR MANY REASONS, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS THE PROXIMITY OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS RUNOFF AND THE THREAT OF ANOTHER SETA STRIKE.

3. LABOFF WAS ALLOWED TO TALK WITH VASQUEZ SOMETA FOR A HALF HOUR IN TOTAL PRIVACY AT THE NATIONAL POLICE DETENTION CENTER. VASQUEZ LOOKED HALE AND FIT. HE HAD NO VISIBLE MARKS OF TORTURE OR BEATINGS. VASQUEZ HIMSELF SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN PHYSICALLY ABUSED OR TORTURED IN ANY WAY AND HAD BEEN VISITED BY GOES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LABOR/CAMPESINO REPRESENTATIVE ON APRIL 5. HE CHARGED, HOWEVER, THAT HIS OFFICIAL CONFESSION HAD BEEN WRESTED FROM HIM UNDER THREATS OF PROLONGED IMPRISONMENT IN MARIONA PRISON, AS A SUBVERSIVE. VASQUEZ CHARGED THAT NATIONAL POLICE INTERROGATORS WERE ALSO EMPLOYING THREATS TO INDUCE HIM TO WORK FOR THEM AS AN UNDERCOVER AGENT WITHIN THE LEFTIST LABOR MOVEMENT. VASQUEZ APPEARED TO BE VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE SITUATION THE POLICE APPARENTLY WANTED TO PUT HIM IN. HE IS NOT AWARE OF HIS IMPENDING FREEDOM AND FEARS THAT FAILURE TO ACCEDE TO POLICE DEMANDS WILL DELAY HIS RELEASE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE WAS EVIDENTLY CONCERNED THAT DISCLOSURE OF HIS SIGNED CONFESSION WILL ELICIT THE WRATH OF HIS LEFTIST LABOR

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ASSOCIATES. NEVERTHELESS, VASQUEZ SAID HE WOULD REFUSE TO ACCEDE TO NATIONAL POLICE DEMANDS THAT HE BECOME A DOUBLE AGENT.

4. VASQUEZ TOLD LABOFF THAT HE WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE FARN GUERRILLA GROUP, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED TO HAVING

CONTACT WITH THE INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN HIS CONFESSION AND TO HAVING TRAVELED TO MEXICO CITY, HAVANA AND PRAGUE AS A FENASTRAS REPRESENTATIVE, THE LATTER TWO AT WFTU MEETINGS. ACCORDING TO VASQUEZ, A MEMBER OF THE FARN ONCE TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO RECRUIT HIM. WHEN THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS HIMSELF ARRESTED BY THE NATIONAL POLICE RECENTLY, HE GAVE VASQUEZ'S NAME TO THE POLICE.

5. TOWARDS THE END OF THE MEETING, VASQUEZ SURREPTITIOUSLY SLIPPED LABOFF A NOTE CONTAINING TWO NAMES. HE SAID THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE DETAINEES BEING KEPT INCOMMUNICADO BY THE NATIONAL POLICE. VASQUEZ WHISPERED THAT THESE INMATES WERE SECRETLY ARRESTED FIVE DAYS AGO AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE NOT BEEN NOTIFIED OF THEIR ARREST. ACCORDING TO VASQUEZ, THESE PRISONERS ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT; THEY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED UNDER GENERAL SUSPICION OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. THE NAMES ON THE LIST ARE JULIO PERDOMO RODRIGUEZ AND LORENZO MEJIA REYES.

6. VASQUEZ IS AWARE THAT HIS UNION, SETA, AND THE BANKWORKERS UNION (SITRABIF) RECENTLY THREATENED TO INITIATE ANOTHER WORK STOPPAGE ON APRIL 11, UNLESS HE IS FREED BY THEN. SETA, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, IS AFFILIATED TO THE FARN-LINKED FENASTRAS FEDERATION. VASQUEZ SAID HE BECAME SECRETARY GENERAL OF SETA IN 1980 AND IS ALSO SECRETARY OF ORGANIZATION WITHIN FENASTRAS.

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BRUSSELS FOR USEC LABATT
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7. COMMENT: THE NATIONAL POLICE IS HAPPY OVER THE INFORMATION VASQUEZ SOMETA HAS GIVEN THEM. NONETHELESS, LOPEZ NUILA SEEMS TO REALIZE THAT EVIDENCE AGAINST VASQUEZ IS NOT MUCH MORE THAN GUILT-BY-ASSOCIATION. THE POLICE ALSO APPEAR READY TO HOLD VASQUEZ'S LONG LIST OF SPILLED BEANS OVER HIS HEAD, TO ENSURE HIS ACQUIESCENCE TO THEIR DEMAND THAT HE BECOME THEIR INFORMER. IF LOPEZ NUILA DOES DECIDE TO RELEASE VASQUEZ ON APRIL 9, WE
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BELIEVE THAT THE LABOR LEADER, CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE, WILL SIMPLY LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

8. EMBASSY HAS CHECKED WITH THE FAMILY OF MEJIA REYES AND WAS TOLD THAT THEY HAD BEEN ADVISED BY THE NATIONAL POLICE OF THE ARREST OF THEIR RELATIVE. EMBASSY WILL ENSURE THAT ICRC CHECK WITH THE FAMILY OF PERDOMO RODRIGUEZ.

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