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RELEASE IN FULL

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ACTION ARA-01

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HA-09 H-01 INRE-00 INR-05 LAB-04 L-03 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 OMB-01 OPM-01 PA-01 PM-01 PRS-01 P-02
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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: ELAB, PTER, ES
SUBJECT: FENASTRAS CHANGES LEADERSHIP -
- A BOOST TO THE HARD LINERS ?

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SALVADORAN WORKERS (FENASTRAS) HAS REPLACED ITS QUIET, CALM SECRETARY GENERAL WITH A YOUNG CONFRONTATIONIST WITH A HISTORY OF LEADING VIOLENT ACTS, JUAN JOSE HUEZO. FENASTRAS LEADERSHIP DOES NOT OVERTLY ESPOUSE VIOLENCE BUT SAYS NO ONE CAN DISCOUNT VIOLENT REACTIONS TO GOES REPRESSION. DEMOCRATIC UNION LEADERS ARE SURPRISED BY THE CHANGE BUT SAY IT DEMONSTRATES THE FMLN'S DESIRE TO FURTHER PRESSURE ON THE GOES. FENASTRAS MAY BE
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READY TO BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE ONE YEAR AFTER ITS LEADERSHIP WAS KILLED IN A STILL UNSOLVED BOMBING.
END SUMMARY.

3. NOV. 19 POLOFF MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE DIRECTORATE OF FENASTRAS SELECTED AT THEIR NOV. 10 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE DIRECTORATE INCLUDES 4 NEW MEMBERS INCLUDING JUAN JOSE HUEZO WHO REPLACED GERARDO DIAZ AS SECRETARY GENERAL. HUEZO WAS INVOLVED IN A VIOLENT OCCUPATION OF THE LABOR MINISTRY IN 1988 (THE LABOR MINISTER WAS SLIGHTLY INJURED) AND WAS ARRESTED IN MARCH OF 1989 FOR PARTICIPATION IN A VIOLENT STREET PROTEST AND THROWING SPIKES ON THE STREETS OF SAN SALVADOR.

4. HUEZO TOLD LABOFF THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP WAS AN

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Janina Slattery, Senior Reviewer

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EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY BUT DID NOT REFLECT ANY BASIC CHANGE IN FENASTRAS OBJECTIVES OR METHODS. HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE "ELECTORAL" PROCESS LEADING TO HIS SELECTION AS SECRETARY GENERAL WAS FULL OF HOLES, HOWEVER. HE REQUIRED COACHING BY HIS COLLEAGUES AT THE MEETING TO DESCRIBE THE NOMINATING AND VOTING PROCEDURES AND EVEN GOT THE NUMBER OF "CANDIDATES" FOR SECRETARY GENERAL WRONG.

5. HUEZO AND COMPANY WERE CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN POLOFF ASKED THEM WHAT THEIR POLICY WAS VIS A VIS VIOLENT PROTESTS. HUEZO SAID IT WAS NATURAL FOR WORKERS TO BECOME VIOLENT IN THE FACE OF THE DETENTION, TORTURE, RAPE, AND ASSASSINATION OF THEIR LEADERSHIP. FENASTRA LEADERS DENIED SPECIFICALLY
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FAVORING VIOLENCE BUT SAID NO ONE COULD FORESEE HOW WORKERS WOULD REACT TO GOES REPRESSION IN THE FUTURE.

6. NATIONAL UNION OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS (UNOC) LEADERS TOLD POLOFF THEY WERE VERY SURPRISED THAT HUEZO HAD REPLACED DIAZ AS SEC GEN OF FENASTRAS. AMANDA VILLATORO SAID THIS UNUSUAL MOVE PROBABLY SHOWS THAT THE FMLN WANTS FENASTRAS TO TAKE A TOUGHER, MORE VISIBLE ROLE VS. THE GOES.

7. COMMENT: FENASTRAS' REPLACEMENT OF THE QUIET, LOW KEY GERARDO DIAZ WITH THE YOUNG, ENERGETIC, AND CONFRONTATIONAL HUEZO MAY SIGNAL PREPARATIONS FOR A RETURN TO THE BARRICADES. DIAZ WAS NOT AN EFFECTIVE OR INSPIRING SPEAKER AND SEEMED AFRAID TO EVEN RAISE HIS VOICE WHEN CRITICIZING THE GOES. HUEZO HAS DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO GET HIS HANDS DIRTY IN THE STRUGGLE, HOWEVER, AND SHOULD PROVIDE MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP, A YEAR AFTER FENASTRAS' LEADERSHIP WAS KILLED IN AN UNSOLVED BOMBING. VILLATORO'S IMMEDIATE REACTION TO THE CHANGE INDICATES THAT THIS COULD BE ANOTHER IRRITANT IN THE STRAINED ALLIANCE BETWEEN UNOC AND THE LEFTIST UNTS, TO WHICH FENASTRAS IS AFFILIATED.
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