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From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	(U) CODEL HARKIN VISIT, FEBRUARY 16-19
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MRN: [82 SAN SALVADOR 1490](#)
Date/DTG: Feb 23, 1982 / 230000Z Feb 82
From: AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: Unknown
TAGS: PINS, PINT, OREP, ES, US, (HARKIN, TOM)
Reference: n/a
Subject: (U) CODEL HARKIN VISIT, FEBRUARY 16-19

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 SS-10 NSC-01 ARA-10 /024 W
-----306464 240004Z /67

R 232005Z FEB 82
 FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8080
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY PANAMA
 AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
 AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PAN/INTAFF

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E. O. 12065: GDS 2/22/88 (SENKO MICHEAL J) OR-P
 TAGS: PINS, PINT, ES
 SUBJECT: (U) CODEL HARKIN VISIT, FEBRUARY 16-19

1. ~~(C)~~ ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: CODEL HARKING SPENT THREE DAYS QUESTIONING WHETHER GOES HAD COMPLIED WITH THE CONDITIONS CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS SET DOWN BY CONGRESS FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF MILITARY AID. BECAUSE THE CODEL FELT THAT THE PRESENCE OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL MIGHT INHIBIT SOME OF ITS CONTACTS, CODEL MET ALONE WITH ARCHBISHOP RIVERA Y DAMAS, PROMINENT AMERICAN NEWS REPORTERS, MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, SOCORRO JURIDICO, AND GREEN CROSS REPRESENTATIVES. THEY ALSO WENT ALONE TO SAN ANTONIO ABAD, THE DOMUS MARIA REFUGEE CAMP, AND MARIONA PRISON. EMBOFFS ACCOMPANIED CODEL TO DEFMIN BRIEFING, ON A CALL ON PRESIDENT DUARTE, AND AN IMPROMPTU TOUR OF NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS. AFTER THE VISIT CODEL MEMBERS TOLD THE PRESS THAT GOES HAD

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NOT MET THE CONDITIONS SET DOWN BY CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

3. AFTER AN EARLY MORNING COUNTRY TEAM BRIEFING, CODEL SPOKE WITH POLOFF ABOUT THE CHURCHWOEMN'S CASE. CODEL WAS BASICALLY INTERESTED IN SPECIFIC PIECES OF EVIDENCE THE STATUS OF THE CASE, AND WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN AN ATTEMPTED COVERUP BY GOES. CODEL WAS ALSO BRIEFED ON THE SULLIVAN CASE BY CONSUL. CODEL WAS GIVEN COPIES OF THE MORAN LETTER AND THE FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO THE WASHINGTON POST.

4. SEVEN HOUR VISIT WITH PRESIDENT DUARTE:

ON FEBRUARY 17 CODEL, ACCOMPANIED BY THE AMBASSADOR, VISITED JRG PRES. DUARTE. HARKING AND DUARTE HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR SEVERAL YEARS. HARKING EXPLAINED THE CONCERN IN THE U.S. FOR THE CONTINUED HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR. DUARTE TALKED ABOUT THE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN BRINGING UNDER CONTROL AN INSTITUTION THAT HAS A 50 YEAR HISTORY OF ABUSES. AFTER THE ELECTION, HE HOPES HE WILL BE ABLE TO REFORM THE ARMED FORCES, ESPECIALLY THE SECURITY FORCES, BY GRADUALLY MAKING THEM MORE PROFESSIONAL. BUT THIS PROCESS WILL TAKE TIME; A LEGITIMATELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT COULD SUPERVISE IMPLEMENTATION.

DUARTE THEN EXPLAINED THAT U.S. ASSISTANCE BUYS TIME TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS. WITHOUT MILITARY AID THERE WOULD FIRST BE A COUP FROM THE RIGHT, FOLLOWED IN A FEW MONTHS BY A MILITARY VICTORY BY THE INSURGENTS.

CODEL MEMBER MCAWARD ASKED IF DUARTE WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE FMLN WITHOUT CONDITIONS AFTER THE ELECTIONS. DUARTE REFUSED TO TAKE A POSITION AND NOTED THAT FIRST HE WOULD HAVE TO BE NAMED PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. THEN HE WOULD HAVE TO EVALUATE THE SITUATION.

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CODEL ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO VISIT A CUARTEL OR DETENTION CENTER. DUARTE SAID HEY COULD WORK THAT OUT WITH GARCIA. CODEL ASKED IF THEY COULD GO WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. DUARTE THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE INADVISABLE. CODEL SAID IN THAT CASE VISIT WOULD NOT BE MEANINGFUL. DUARTE SAID OK, IF YOU FEEL THAT WAY THERE IS ONE WAY IT CAN BE DONE. I'LL TAKE YOU. WANT TO GO? WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO? YOU NAME IT.

AFTER SOME HESITANT DISCUSSION, CODEL OPTED FOR NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS TO WHICH DUARTE, AMBASSADOR, CODEL AND OTHERS PROCEEDED FORTHWITH.

SURPRISED BUT AMIABLE POLICE COMMANDER COL. LOPEZ NUILA WAS PERFECT COMPLIANT HOST, ESCORTING CODEL OVER ENTIRE BUILDING, WHICH OCCUPIES CITY BLOCK, FROM TARGET RANGE ON ROOF TO BASEMENT CELLS WHERE DUARTE SAID HE HAD BEEN HELD AND BEATEN IN 1972.

MCAWARD PRODUCED A HAND-DRAWN MAP PURPORTING TO SHOW THE LOCATION OF "TORTURE CELLS." NO SUCH CELLS WERE FOUND, BUT MANY LOCKED DOORS WERE UNLOCKED AT MCAWARD'S INSISTENCE, AND WALLS WERE SEARCHED FOR SCRATCHED MESSAGES FROM THE TORTURED. ALL TO NO AVAIL, EVEN CODEL MEMBERS ACKNOWLEDGED "MCAWARD WAS A BIT MUCH." HARKIN ALSO SAID HE WOULD TELL PRESS OF SEARCH AND GIVE NATIONAL POLICE A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH. SOMEHOW THAT SLIPPED HIS MIND WHEN PRESS CONFERENCE TIME ARRIVED.

AT ONE POINT HARKIN TOOK THE POLICEMEN OFF AS A TRANSLATOR TO QUESTION SOME PRISONERS IN A CELL. ONE TURNED OUT TO BE A PETTY THIEF AND THE REST WERE NATIONAL POLICEMEN DOING TIME FOR BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE. MCAWARD FOUND SOLDIERS SIMILARLY DETAINED*

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
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TOUR ENDED IN POLICE BOMB DISPOSAL SECTION, WHERE CODEL SAW SAMPLES OF GRENADES, BOMBS, MORTARS AND WHAT HAVE YOU USED BY TERRORISTS, INSPECTED PHOTO ALBUMS OF DAMAGE AND DEATH SOWN, AND PAUSED TO NOTE PLAQUE TO SOME FIFTY ODD POLICEMEN KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY.

AFTER THE AMBASSADOR LEFT FOR ANOTHER COMMITMENT, DUARTE AND THE CONGRESSMEN WALKED THROUGH THE STREETS, TALKING TO PEOPLE AND KISSING BABIES. THEY WENT INTO A MARKET PACKED WITH PEOPLE. THE RECEPTION WAS VERY WARM. DUARTE SAID A FEW WORD ABOUT DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND THE NEED FOR VOTING. THERE WERE CHEERS FROM THE CROWD. AFTER GOODBYE HUGS THE CODEL WENT TO DUARTE'S HOUSE FOR A BULL SESSION WHICH LASTED UNTIL TEN IN THE EVENING. CONGRESSMAN COYNE, WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED IN COUNTRY, JOINED THE CODEL THERE.

COMMENT: DUARTE HANDLED CODEL HARKIN VERY WELL. HIS OFFER OF AN IMPROMPTU VISIT TO THE NATIONAL POLICE WAS WELL RECEIVED. THE CODEL COULD NOT HOPE BUT NOTICE THE WARMTH OF THE PEOPLE IN THE STREET AND IN THE MARKET TOWARD DUARTE.

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BY MAKING THE TIME AVAILABLE, DUARTE WAS ABLE TO TALK EXTENSIVELY WITH THE CODEL. HE MAY NOT HAVE CHANGED MINDS, BUT HE MAY HAVE CREATED SOME DOUBTS IN A CODEL THAT HAS SOME SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT U.S. POLICY IN EL SALVADOR.

5. MEETING WITH DEFMIN AND GENERAL STAFF:

CODEL MET FOR THREE HOURS WITH GOP MEMBERS OF THE SECURIO FORCES. THE SALVADORAN OFFICERS WERE GENERALLY WELL PREPARED AND WERE ABLE TO SUPPLY THE CODEL WITH DATA

ON DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST SECURITY FORCE MEMBERS DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.M

SEVERAL OFFICERS COMMENTED THAT THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WAS NOT WORKING. SECURITY FORCE PERSONNEL DISCHARGED AND REMANDED TO CIVILIAN COURTS WERE NOT BEING TRIED; NEITHER WERE TERRORISTS. THE OFFICERS EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WILL BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

THE ONLY UNCONVINCING PERFORMANCE WAS THAT OF COL. PALACIOS, COMMANDER OF THE TROOPS (1ST BRIGADE) INVOLVED IN THE ALLEGED MASSACRE IN SAN ANTONIO ABAD. CODEL NOTED THAT COL. PALACIOS' STORY THAT THE VICTIMS DIED IN A CROSSFIRE WAS CONTRADICTED BY EMBASSY REPORTING. THE CODEL DID NOT BELIEVE A WORD COL. PALACIOS SAID.

CONGRESSMAN OBERSTAR ASKED GENERAL GARCIA IF HE WOULD ACCEPT AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE KEEPING FORCE. THE GENERAL RESPONDED YES - IF IT WAS NOT STATIONED IN EL SALVADOR. GARCIA ALSO TOLD THE CODEL THAT GOES DOES NOT WANT, IN FACT WILL NOT ACCEPT, THE INTRODUCTION OF U.S. COMBAT TROOPS. NEITHER DO THEY WANT ANY ADDITIONAL MILITARY TRAINERS.

IN RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN HARKIN'S INQUIRY AS TO WHAT AID WAS NEEDED, GEN. GARCIA LISTED AIR POWER, SMALL ARMS,

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COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT, PATROL BOATS, AND ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS. THE GENERAL THEN WAXED WISHFUL AND STATED THAT IDEALLY, THE MILITARY WOULD LIKE ENOUGH HELICOPTERS TO LIFT TWO BATTALIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY. GOES ALSO NEEDS AT LEAST TEN A-37'S AND SOME C-123'S, THE GENERAL ADDED.

LASTLY, THE OFFICERS REITERATED THEIR NEUTRALITY IN THE ELECTIONS AND SPECULATED THAT THE MILITARY STRUCTURE WILL REMAIN THE SAME UNDER THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

COMMENT: THE MEETING WENT WELL. DISCUSSIONS WERE FRANK BUT CONGENIAL. THE CODEL LATER TOLD THE PRESS THAT BY THEIR CALCULATIONS GARCIA HAD ASKED FOR 182 HELICOPTERS. HOWEVER, CONGRESSMAN COYNE ADMITTED, GARCIA MAY HAVE BEEN TALKING TONGUE-IN-CHECK. HE WAS.

6. ACCOMPANIED BY POLCOUNS, CONGRESSMAN COYNE MADE A 20-MINUTE CALL ON PRESIDENT DUARTE. ECONOMIC AID WAS DISCUSSED, AND DUARTE SAID HE HAD HOPES THAT AN IDB MASTER ECONOMIC PLAN FOR CENTRAL AMERICA WILL BE DRAFTED SOON. DUARTE ALSO SAID THAT ONE REAL SOLUTION FOR THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WOULD BE TO LET EL SALVADOR'S MANUFACTURED GOODS ENTER THE U.S. MARKET WITHOUT DIRECT OR INDIRECT TARIFFS.

CONGRESSMAN COYNE COMMENTED ON EL SALVADOR'S BAD IMAGE ABROAD, AND ADVISED DUARTE TO KEEP SAYING THAT HE DOES NOT WANT U.S. TROOPS IN EL SALVADOR.

7. THE CODEL WANTED TO TALK TO THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN IMPLICATED IN THE MURDER OF THE CHURCHWOMEN. EMBASSY GOT PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHORITIES BUT THE GURADSMEN DID NOT WANT TO TALK.

8. ON FRIDAY, CODEL VISITED MARIONA PRISON AND ASKED TO SEE THE FOUR GUARDSMEN THAT ARE INCARCERATED THERE. AUTHORITIES REITERATED THAT THE GUARDSMEN DID NOT WANT TO TALK. CODEL MET INSTEAD WITH SOME POLITICAL
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PRISONERS.

8. THIS MESSAGE WAS PREPARED AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF CODEL. HINTON

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