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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 04487

E.O. 12356: DECL: 05/16/93
TAGS: OVIP, ES
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MARLENEE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior Reviewer

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. CONGRESSMEN RONALD MARLENEE (R-MONT) AND WILLIAM CARNEY (R-NY) VISITED EL SALVADOR APRIL 29-MAY 1. ON ARRIVAL, THEY JOINED A SMALL RECEPTION IN PROGRESS AT THE DAO'S RESIDENCE. THEIR ONE FULL DAY IN COUNTRY WAS TAKEN UP WITH BRIEFINGS BY THE COUNTRY TEAM; A CALL ON MINISTER OF DEFENSE VIDES CASANOVA; A FIELD TRIP BY HELICOPTER WHICH INCLUDED VISITS TO REFUGEE CAMPS, DAMAGED INFRASTRUCTURE (POWER LINES, BRIDGES, ETC.), AND AGRARIAN REFORM PROJECTS ARRANGED BY THE AID MISSION, AND DINNER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. THEY EVIDENCED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE DAMAGE INFLICTED BY THE GUERRILLAS ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND IN AGRARIAN REFORM, PARTICULARLY IN WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO GIVE BENEFICIARIES A SENSE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LAND. END SUMMARY.

3. IMMEDIATELY ON ARRIVAL, THE CODEL JOINED A SMALL RECEPTION IN PROGRESS AT THE DAO'S RESIDENCE FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (THE COMMANDER, COL. LOPEZ NUILA, NOT PRESENT AS HE WAS IN THE U.S.). THE CONGRESSMEN INQUIRED ABOUT:
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-- THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY. EMBOFF STAPLES ASSURED THEM THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD COOPERATE IF THE GOVERNMENT COULD IMPROVE THE SECURITY; SALVADORANS ARE HARDWORKING PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENDURED ADVERSITY WELL.

-- THE STATUS OF TWO SALVADORANS WORKING WITH LUTHERAN RELIEF SERVICES RECENTLY PICKED UP BY THE POLICE (DR. ANGEL MARIA IBARRA AND REV. MEDARDO GOMEZ). LTC. YANES

LOPEZ, SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL PRESENT, SAID THERE WAS SOLID EVIDENCE THAT IBARRA WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FAL, BUT GOMEZ WOULD PROBABLY BE RELEASED SOON. HE SAID "ANYONE HERE AT THIS PARTY" WAS FREE TO VISIT THE TWO MEN "RIGHT NOW."

-- IMMIGRATION. CONGRESSMAN MARLENEE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT GROWING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION OF HISPANICS, INCLUDING SALVADORANS, ESPECIALLY TO THE EASTERN SEABOARD OF THE U.S. DRASTIC MEASURES MAY HAVE TO BE TAKEN.

4. FOLLOWING A BRIEFING BY THE COUNTRY TEAM AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, EARLY APRIL 30 THE CODEL VISITED MINISTER OF DEFENSE VIDES CASANOVA, WHO GAVE THE CONGRESSMEN A RUNDOWN ON TROOP DEPLOYMENTS, NOTING 40 PERCENT IS INVOLVED IN DEFENSE OF STRATEGIC POSITIONS (DAMS, BRIDGES, OIL REFINERY, GEOTHERMAL PLANT, ETC.). MORE TROOPS ARE NEEDED TO GUARD ELECTRICAL TOWERS, AND LARGE NUMBERS REQUIRE TRAINING. HE DESCRIBED HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS FORTHCOMING SPEECH TO THE ESCUELA MILITAR GRADUATION CEREMONIES (REPORTED DIA CHANNEL). HE THOUGHT REAGAN'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS HAD GIVEN THE ESAF A BIG BOOST, ESPECIALLY FOR THE BADLY NEEDED MORAL SUPPORT; HE HOPES THAT ES WILL
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CONTINUE TO BE WORTHY OF THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS.

5. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE SANDINISTAS WERE BEING HURT BY ACTIVITIES OF THE CONTRAS, RECENT NEGATIVE PRESS COVERAGE IS HARMFUL BOTH TO THE CONTRAS AND THE U.S.; HE WARNED THE U.S. MAY HAVE ANOTHER BAY OF PIGS ON ITS HANDS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE SUPERIOR USE OF PROPAGANDA BY THE SALVADORAN GUERRILLAS. THEY DESTROY A BRIDGE IN A FEW MINUTES AND ARE ASSUMED TO BE MASTER TACTICIANS; THE POINT LOST ON JOURNALISTS IS THAT IN THIS TYPE OF WAR IT IS EASIER TO DESTROY THAN TO DEFEND, WHICH IS WHY THE ESAF NEEDS MORE TROOPS.

6. VIDES PROFESSED TO BE NEUTRAL ON AGRARIAN REFORM, AND SAID HE WOULD SUPPORT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, KEEPING THE MILITARY OUT OF POLITICS. ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ, VIDES SAID NO ACTIONS WERE PLANNED AGAINST HIM. HE WILL REMAIN AT THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE, AND IF THE NEED FOR HIS PROFESSIONAL TALENTS SHOULD ARISE, HE WILL BE CALLED HOME--PROBABLY NOT SOON.

7. FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING WITH GENERAL VIDES CASANOVA, USAID PROVIDED A GUIDED FIELD TRIP WHICH INCLUDED AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE DAMAGED POWER LINES AND ELECTRICAL TOWERS, A BRIEF STOP AT SAN VICENTE TO VISIT A REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROJECT, AND A SHORT VISIT AT THREE

DIFFERENT AGRARIAN REFORM LOCATIONS. IN FLYING OVER THE DAMAGED ELECTRICAL TOWERS, THE CONGRESSMEN WERE IMPRESSED BY THE ABILITY OF THE GUERRILLAS TO WREAK SUCH DAMAGE

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CLOSE TO THE CAPITAL, BY THE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTY OF DEFENDING THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM, AND ALSO BY THE INGENUITY DISPLAYED BY CEL (THE ELECTRICITY COMPANY) IN KEEPING THE SYSTEM OPERATIONAL. THEY ALSO NOTED WITH MUCH INTEREST THE DAMAGE INFLICTED ON THE MAIN BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIO LEMPA; DAO IS FORWARDING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE CONGRESSMEN THROUGH MILITARY ESCORT MAJOR SAM BROOKS. BOTH CONGRESSMEN WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE DISPLACED PERSONS' WORK PROJECT AND WERE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH THE WORKERS AND LOCAL CITIZENS. THEY NOTED THAT THEY WERE PLEASED TO SEE FOREIGN AID GETTING DOWN TO THE PEOPLE IT WAS INTENDED FOR

8. THE CODEL VISITED TWO PHASE I COOPERATIVES, SANTA CLARA AND SANTO TOMAS, AND A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 20 PHASE III BENEFICIARIES LOCATED AT EL SUNZAL. AT PHASE I COOPERATIVES, THE CODEL DISCUSSED CHANGES PERCEIVED BY COOPERATIVE MEMBERS BETWEEN LIVING CONDITIONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORM. COOPERATIVES MEMBERS TOLD THE CODEL THAT THEIR SITUATION HAD IMPROVED FROM THAT BEFORE THE

REFORM ESPECIALLY IN PROVIDING PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT. COOPERATIVE MEMBERS STRESSED THAT THEY ARE MANAGING THE ENTERPRISE AND GAINING MORE EXPERIENCE EVERY YEAR. THEY WERE POSITIVE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE PROFITS OF THE ENTERPRISE SO THAT MEMBERS COULD RECEIVE INCREASED BENEFITS. REPRESENTATIVE CARNEY INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN AGRARIAN REFORM AS CARRIED OUT UNDER
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PHASE I OF THE REFORM, BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAIN EQUITY POSITION OF THE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS. THE ACCOMPANYING AID OFFICIAL NOTED THAT CURRENT AGRARIAN REFORM LAW WAS FAIRLY RESTRICTIVE CONCERNING THE TYPE OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE THE REFORMED FARMS COULD USE. AID STRATEGY IS TO ENCOURAGE THE GOES TO ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN THE TYPES OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES PERMITTED SO THAT THE MEMBERS CAN CHOOSE THE ONE MOST APPROPRIATE TO THE ENTERPRISE. CONGRESSMAN MARLENEE SAW PHASE I AS A PROCESS WHICH HAD JUST BEGUN, HAD FLAWS, BUT HELD HOPE, AND TRIED TO ENCOURAGE CARNEY TO SEE THE POSITIVE SIDE AS WELL. (COMMENT: CONGRESSMAN MARLENEE'S MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE AGRARIAN REFORM WAS ALL THE MORE INTERESTING BECAUSE HE HIMSELF IS THE OWNER OF A LARGE COMMERCIAL FARM. END COMMENT.) BOTH CONGRESSMEN APPEARED TO BE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE PHASE III FARMS.

9. ON SATURDAY EVENING, THE CONGRESSMEN DINED AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WITH THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, MIGUEL MUYSHONDT AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. CONGRESSMAN CARNEY AGAIN QUESTIONED WHETHER THE USG SHOULD BE SUPPORTING PHASE I OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM. WHILE VARIOUS VIEWS WERE EXPRESSED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RATIONALE FOR AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REFORM, ALL SALVADORANS CONCEDED THAT IT HAD BEEN POLITICALLY NECESSARY AT THE TIME, AND THAT WHAT WAS DONE COULD NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE UNDONE. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION NOW WAS HOW TO MAKE AGRARIAN REFORM WORK, AND HOW TO MAKE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTIVE. CONGRESSMAN CARNEY EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN THAT MEMBERSHIP IN A COOPERATIVE DID NOT IN ITSELF GIVE THE CAMPESINO A SENSE OF OWNING ANYTHING, AND THAT WITHOUT THAT SENSE, THEY WERE NOT ANY BETTER OFF THAN THEY WERE BEFORE. AID DIRECTOR DAGATA
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AGREED THAT THERE WAS SOME AMBIGUITY WITH REGARD TO THE QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP AND ADVISED THAT THE ISSUE HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AND THAT AID WOULD BE SUPPORTING THE GOES IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE. HE OFFERED TO FORWARD

A COPY OF THE RECENT CHECCHI ANALYSIS ON THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM TO THE CONGRESSMEN. IN ADDITION, DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING AID'S APPROACH TO DEALING WITH THIS POLICY ISSUE IN A PROGRAM FRAMEWORK MAY BE FOUND IN THE AGRARIAN REFORM SUPPORT PROJECT PAPER RECENTLY PRESENTED IN WASHINGTON. MISSION REQUESTS AID OFFICERS FOLLOW UP, PARTICULARLY WITH CONGRESSMAN CARNEY.

10. COMMENT. CONGRESSMEN MARLENEE AND CARNEY INDICATED THAT THEY ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLICIES, BUT CARNEY IN PARTICULAR WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SOME ASPECTS OF OUR PROGRAMS HERE. ASIDE FROM HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE AGRARIAN REFORM (ALTHOUGH WE THINK WE WERE ABLE TO ALLAY SOME OF HIS CONCERNS), CARNEY INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO GO HALF WAY; THAT IS, UNLESS THE USG IS PREPARED TO GIVE EL SALVADOR THE FULL SUPPORT NEEDED TO DO THE JOB, HE THOUGHT WE SHOULD NOT BE IN EL SALVADOR AT ALL. WE BELIEVE THAT HE CAN BE PERSUADED TO DO THE RIGHT THING WHEN THE VOTES ARE CALLED. MARLENEE WAS LESS VOCAL IN HIS OPINIONS. HE APPEARED TO APPRECIATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE SITUATION. HE TOO SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN VOTING WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. HINTON

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