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HA-06 TRSE-00 PM-09 PA-01 DCT-02 OMB-01 HHS-04
FDRE-00 AGRE-00 SP-02 SR-05 SPRS-02 /113 W
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R 172242Z JUN 81
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3490
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

RELEASED IN FULL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 4341

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/17/87 (SHAW, DAVID P.) OR-P
TAGS: SREF, SHUM, ES, HO
SUBJ: VISIT OF STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS ON REFUGEE AFFAIRS

REF: STATE 126460

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. IN ONE DAY OF MEETINGS AND THREE DAYS OF FIELD VISITS, STATE DEPARTMENT VISITORS (REPRESENTATIVES OF HA AND RP) AND POLOFF SPOKE WITH RELIEF AGENCY PERSONNEL AND IMMIGRATION DIRECTOR IN TEGUCIGALPA AND MADE INSPECTIONS TO REFUGEE SITES ON BORDER. LIVING CONDITIONS AND INFRA-STRUCTURE OF CAMPS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE BUT THOSE REFUGEES LIVING IN VILLAGE COMMUNITIES ARE PRESENTING PROBLEMS. NEITHER MILITARY NOR RELIEF PERSONNEL HAVE MUCH CONTROL OVER FOOD SUPPLIES, OR IN AND OUT MIGRATION. FOOD DIVERSION STILL APPEARS SLIGHT BUT VILLAGES ARE PROVIDING GUERRILLAS WITH EASILY ACCESSIBLE R&R POINTS. END SUMMARY.

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3. COLOMONCAGUA. THE SIX CAMPS OF COLOMONCAGUA ARE THE BEST MAINTAINED OF THE BORDER REGION. THERE IS A STABLE POPULATION OF ABOUT 4,200 REFUGEES, THE SITES HAVE ADEQUATE WATER, LAND AND WOOD AND THEY ARE LOCATED ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS FROM THE BORDER, MAKING THEM MORE SECURE. THE CAMPS ARE WELL SERVED BOTH BY DEDICATED REFUGEE RELIEF PERSONNEL AND SALVADORAN CAMP COORDINATORS. HEALTH CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED, WITH VERY FEW DEATHS REPORTED AND ILLNESSES NOW DUE MOSTLY TO POOR DIET AND RAIN. IMPROVEMENT OF WATER SUPPLIES, DRAINAGE DITCHES AND ACCESS

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Donna M. DiPaolo, Senior Reviewer

ROAD CONTINUES. CAMP RELATIONS WITH MILITARY HAVE IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY WITH THE STATIONING OF A NEW LIEUTENANT WHO HAS PUT HIMSELF AT THE SERVICE OF RELIEF WORKERS.

4. TWO PROBLEMS OF PAST SEVERAL WEEKS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. IN EARLY MAY, 2,000 REFUGEES WERE LOCATED IN THE TOWNS OF SAN ANTONIO AND SANTA LUCIA, CLOSE TO THE BORDER. THEY HAD ARRIVED WITH ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS, INCLUDING FOOD SUPPLIES FOR SIX MONTHS AND CATTLE. IMMIGRATION GAVE THEM 15 DAYS TO EITHER REPORT TO THE CAMPS OR RETURN TO EL SALVADOR. MOST CHOSE THE LATTER ALTERNATIVE. THE SECOND PROBLEM HAD MORE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. TWO WEEKS AGO, GOH SOLDIERS REMOVED THREE MEN FROM THE CAMPS AND ESCORTED THEM TO AND PUT THEM ACROSS THE BORDER. THEY WERE SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED DEAD. THE UNHCR FORMALLY PROTESTED THIS VIOLATION OF REFUGEE STATUS TO THE GOH. THE HONDURAN LIEUTENANT IN CHARGE WAS REPLACED AND A MORE EXPERIENCED OFFICER POSTED. THERE HAVE BEEN A COUPLE OF ISOLATED INCIDENCES OF HO MILITARY FORCEFULLY REPATRIATING SUSPECTED GUERRILLAS TO EL SALVADOR, BUT THE GENERAL POLICY IS TO DEPORT THEM TO NICARAGUA OR GUATEMALA. THIS INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS THE

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LATITUDE GIVEN LOCAL GARRISON COMMANDERS, BUT ALSO SHOWS THAT THE GOH IS RESPONSIBLE TO CRITICISM OF INHUMANE TREATMENT.

5. LA VIRTUD. THE PROVISIONAL CAMP AT LA VIRTUD HOLDS 4,000 REFUGEES. AT ITS CURRENT LOCATION ON THE BANK OF A RIVR, IT IS A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH HAZARD, BUT THE PERMANENT CAMP WILL BE BETTER LOCATED. OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN IS TO IMPROVE THE 13 KILOMETER STRETCH OF ROAD BETWEEN LA VIRTUD AND VALLADOLID. ROAD MACHINERY HAS ARRIVED IN VALLADOLID BUT THE PROJECT WILL TAKE AT LEAST A MONTH TO COMPLETE. ONCE COMPLETED, TRACTORS WILL DIG AN ACCESS ROAD FOR THE PERMANENT CAMP. THE NEW SITE IS FARTHER FROM THE BORDER AND CAN ACCOMMODATE MANY NEW REFUGEES. THE PROVISIONAL CAMP IS A MODEL OF SALVADORAN INGENUITY. FLAG STONES HAVE BEEN LAID FOR PATHS, DRAINAGE DITCHES DUG, AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS BEGUN USING TERRACING CONTOUR PLOWING AND IRRIGATION.

6. THE VILLAGES. 12,000-14,000 REFUGEES ARE LIVING OUTSIDE OF CAMPS, INTEGRATED INTO HONDURAN VILLAGES. TO BOTH REFUGEES AND RELIEF PERSONNEL THIS IS A PREFERRED SITUATION AS IT CAUSES LESS DISRUPTION AND MOST CLOSELY APPROXIMATES LIFE IN EL SALVADOR. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH THIS APPROACH. CONTROL OVER BOTH PEOPLE AND SUPPLIES IS WEAK. FOOD IS DELIVERED TO THE VILLAGES ONCE A WEEK AND HEADS OF FAMILIES

FROM FAR FLUNG SETTLEMENTS PICK IT UP. THE VILLAGES ARE LOCATED CLOSE TO THE BORDER IN AREAS WHICH CAN BE PATROLLED WITH DIFFICULTY AND ONLY DURING THE DAY. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THREE FAMILIES, WE SPOKE WITH A MAN WHO WAS PROBABLY A GUERRILLA AND HAD BEEN WOUNDED IN THE RIO LEMPA CROSSING, AND TWO WOMEN WHO SAID THEIR HUSBANDS HAD CROSSED TO VISIT WITHIN THE LAST MONTH. ONE FAMILY HAD A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY WHO SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO JOIN THE GUERRILLAS SHORTLY. THE HOUSING
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SITUATION IN THE VILLAGES IS ALSO DEFICIENT. MOST ARE LIVING IN SHANTIES OF GRASS AND PLASTIC. UNHCR-CEDEN PLAN TO BUILD CINDER BLOCK BARRACK-LIKE STRUCTURES TO HOUSE THE FAMILIES BUT HAVE BEEN HELD UP BECAUSE THE ROAD IS TOO POOR TO MOVE CEMENT. THIS TYPE OF HOUSING WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, IMPROVE THE SECURITY SITUATIONS.

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THE MILITARY COMMANDER AGREED THAT THESE WERE GUERRILLA FAMILIES BUT OPINED THAT FOOD DIVERSION WAS NEVERTHELESS MINIMAL.

7. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, HE AGREED THAT THE VILLAGES PRESENTED A SERIOUS PROBLEM AND HE DID NOT WANT THE UNHCR PUT IN THE POSITION OF AIDING THE GUERRILLAS EVEN IF ONLY IN APPEARANCE. HE AGREED THAT THE SOLUTION MIGHT LIE IN PUTTING ALL BUT THE PEOPLE IN THE MOST REMOTE VILLAGES INTO CAMPS. HE ESTIMATED THAT AN ADDITIONAL 4 MILLION DOLLARS WOULD BE NEEDED.

8. CONVERSATION WITH IMMIGRATION DIRECTOR COL. GUTIERREZ FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEMS THE GOH WAS HAVING WITH BOTH THE REFUGEES AND THE RELIEF PERSONNEL. HE ACCUSED THE UNHCR OF PARTIALITY TO LEFTIST REFUGEES AND OF ALL BUT IGNORING THE NICARAGUANS AFTER THE FALL OF SOMOZA AND NOW THE MISKITOS. HE ALSO ACCUSED THE RELIEF WORKERS OF BEING SYMPATHETIC OR ACTIVELY AIDING THE
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LEFT.

9. COMMENT: THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF PROVIDING REFUGE TO GUERRILLAS IS TO PUT EVERYONE IN CAMPS AND THUS INCREASE CONTROLS. THE COST WILL BE HIGH. THE ONLY OTHER POSSIBILITY IS TO MOVE THE REFUGEES MUCH FURTHER INSIDE HONDURAS, BUT THE GOH FEARS THAT THE SALVADORANS WOULD THEN NOT WANT TO GO BACK.
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