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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC MIACI IMMEDIATE 0535

S E C R E T SAN SALVADOR 18791

MODIS

EYES ONLY - FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FROM THE
AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PCOV, KJUS, ES

SUBJECT: THE JESUIT CASE, ANOTHER BIG JOLI

EX

7-27-93

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. THIS IS A REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION. SEE FINAL PARAGRAPH.
3. SUMMARY:
 - STAFFDEL MOAKLEY, IN PERSONS OF JIM MCGOVERN STAFFER FOR CHAIRMAN MOAKLEY) AND BILL WOODWARD STAFFER FOR GERRY STUDDS, D-MAI, WAS GIVEN WHAT COULD BE BREATHTROUGH INFORMATION ON JESUIT SLAYING AND COVERUP JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE ON AUGUST 12. GIVEN RANK AND STATURE OF SOURCE OF THEIR INFORMATION, ONE OF ESAF'S MOST SENIOR AND RESPECTED OFFICERS, MCGOVERN/WOODWARD HAVE JUSTIFICATION FOR BELIEVING THAT THIS IS ACCURATE ACCOUNT. I AM NOT SO CERTAIN. BUT IF BASIC STORY IS TRUE OR IF CONGRESS BELIEVES IT TO BE OUR POLICY IS AT PERIL SINCE THE DIFFICULT TO DISMISS

IMPLICATIONS WOULD BE THAT (1) THE DECISION TO KILL THE JESUITS WAS A DELIBERATE ONE MADE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE ESAF. (2) COLONEL PONCE LATER SUGGESTED THAT HE TOOK CREDIT FOR THAT DECISION. (3) POSSIBLY HUNDREDS OF OFFICERS KNEW THE TRUTH AT THE TIME OF THE KILLINGS AND HAVE MAINTAINED A DESPERATE SILENCE SINCE. AND (4) PRESIDENT CRISTIANI WAS INFORMED OF THESE ALLEGATIONS BY THE STAFFDEL'S MILITARY SOURCE BUT HAS APPEARED TO TAKE NO ACTION TO VERIFY AND/OR ACT ON THE INFORMATION.

4. STAFFDEL HAS DEPARTED, BUT FIRST CONVEYED TO ME WHAT THEY HEARD AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION. THEIR SOURCE TOLD THEM THAT THE BASIC FACTS WERE COLLECTED FROM A NUMBER OF MILITARY SUB-SOURCES AT LIEUTENANT COLONEL LEVEL. APPARENTLY SUB-SOURCES HAVE TOLD OTHERS, MOST LIKELY INCLUDING JESUIT ORDER, THIS ACCOUNT. IF TRUE, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF WHEN AND HOW ACCUSATION COMES INTO PUBLIC VIEW. STAFFDEL REPORTEDLY FELT THAT CHAIRMAN MOAKLEY WILL BE COMPELLED TO GO PUBLIC, POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS MIDDLE OF THIS WEEK.

5. GIVEN EXPLOSIVE NATURE OF CHARGES, INABILITY AT THIS POINT TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY ARE IN PART OR ALL TRUE, POSSIBILITY THAT THIS IS ATTEMPT BY ONE OR MORE ALONG CHAIN OF INFORMATION TO PLAY MILITARY POLITICS, AND PERIL TO U.S. POLICY SHOULD STORY EMERGE UNDER CHAOTIC CIRCUMSTANCES, I REQUEST IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

6. BACKGROUND:

- THE LAST TWO MEMBERS OF STAFFDEL MOAKLEY, MCGOYER AND WOODWARD, DEPARTED SAN SALVADOR MORNING OF AUGUST 12. THEY ASKED

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DECLASSIFIED UNDER E.O. 12356 () IN FULL; () IN PART;
PORTIONS WITHHELD: CLASSIFIED () ; DELIBERATIVE () ;
LAW ENFORCEMENT () ; PRIVACY () ; STATUTORY () ;
NOT RELEVANT TO EL SALVADOR () .

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STRICTLY PROTECT) TO CONVEY TO ME THE CONTENTS OF AN INTERVIEW THEY HAD HAD DAY BEFORE. WITHOUT DETAILS OF WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO BEYOND INFORMING CHAIRMAN WOAKLEY AND PREDICTION THAT HE MIGHT BE COMPELLED TO GO PUBLIC SOON.

7. STAFFDEL'S SOURCE IS

CREDIBILITY ON THE HILL AMONG THOSE CONGRESSMEN AND STAFFERS WHO HAVE MET HIM NOTWITHSTANDING HIS TIES TO RIGHT, INCLUDING THIRTY YEAR FRIENDSHIP WITH ROBERTO D'AUBUSSON, A MEMBER OF SAME MILITARY SCHOOL TAMDA.

8. FYI - GIVEN PREVIOUS ACCUSATIONS THAT USG HAS "BURMED" ANYONE COMING FORWARD WITH INFORMATION ON JESUIT CASE THAT IMPLICATES ESAF, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO OUR RELATIONS WITH CHAIRMAN WOAKLEY AND OTHERS THAT . . . NOT BE IDENTIFIED AS PRIMARY SOURCE. STAFFDEL THAT WHAT HE PASSED TO THEM WAS KNOWN TO MANY OTHERS. SO ATTRIBUTION TO HIM IS NOT NECESSARY. I URGE THAT HIS IDENTITY BE PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS. END FYI.

9. . . . REPORTEDLY TOLD STAFFDEL THE FOLLOWING:

- HE ACQUIRED THE VERSION OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE JESUIT MURDER AND COVERUP FROM A MULTITUDE OF SOURCES. THE MAJORITY OF WHO ARE STUDENTS AT THE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

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(FYI. A NUMBER OF THE PRESENT STUDENT BODY AT THE SCHOOL ARE DISGRUNTLED SURVIVORS OF THE 1979 COUP THAT BROUGHT DOWN THE ROMERO MILITARY REGIME. THEY WERE JUNIOR OFFICERS AT THE TIME, AND HAVE SINCE PAID CAREER PENALTIES FOR ASSOCIATION WITH ADOLFO MAJANO. MOST OF THESE OFFICERS HARBOR INTENSE DISLIKE OF THE TANDONA AND PRESENT ESAF HIGH COMMAND. END FYI.) THE OSTSERSIBLE REASON FOR THE LIEUTENANT COLONELS' REVELATIONS TO THEIR COMMANDER WOULD BE FRUSTRATION AND ANGER THAT THE HIGH COMMAND'S PERFORMANCE THROUGHOUT THE JESUIT CASE PUTS THEIR INSTITUTION AT GREAT RISK.

RECOGNIZE THAT OTHER LESS NOBLE MOTIVES MIGHT BE INVOLVED.

AT CLOSE OF NOVEMBER IS MILITARY COMMANDERS MEETING VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS RETURNED TO THEIR UNITS, CALLED TOGETHER THEIR OFFICERS AND CONVEYED GIST OF THE JUST ATTENDED MEETING. SEVERAL THEM TOLD SMALLER CIRCLES OF MOST TRUSTED SUBORDINATES THAT THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO ELIMINATE THE JESUITS. ONLY ATTENDEES WHO IDENTIFIED BY NAME AS HAVING CONVEYED SPECIFIC INTENT TO KILL JESUITS IN THIS MANNER WERE COLOREL BENAYIDES AT MILITARY SCHOOL AND GENERAL JUAN BUSTILLO AT AIR FORCE.

AT LATER MEETING ON DECEMBER IS WITH RELATIVELY LARGE GROUP OF OFFICERS. COLOREL PORCE STATED THAT -IF I HAD NOT MADE THAT DECISION, I WOULD NOT BE HERE TODAY. WHILE NOT EXPLICITLY IDENTIFIED AS SUCH, CONTEXT OF HIS REMARKS STRONGLY IMPLIED

THAT DECISION HE WAS TALKING ABOUT WAS ONE TO KILL THE JESUITS. THIS, AT LEAST, WAS CONCLUSION OF OFFICERS CONVEYING STORY WHO WAS NOT HIMSELF PRESENT.

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- EXPECT EMBASSY TO DO WITH ALLEGATIONS?
- ANSWER WAS THAT MCGOVERN AND WOODWARD UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S INTENSE EFFORTS TO GET TO BOTTOM OF JESUIT CASE. BELIEVE MOST OF CRITICISM UNFAIR AND UNDESERVED. AND DO NOT WANT TO ADD TO BURDEN.
- IMPLICATION WAS THAT EMBASSY AND ADMINISTRATION WOULD EXAMINE VERACITY OF CHARGES. NOT BURN THE SALVADORAN BEARERS OF THE INFORMATION. AND TAKE WHATEVER ACTION THEREAFTER NECESSARY.

- THESE OCCURRENCES WERE BY DEFINITION KNOWN TO MANY OFFICERS AT THE TIME THEY HAPPENED. MANY MORE HAVE HEARD OF THEM SINCE. IT WOULD, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED], BE SURPRISING IF ONE OR MORE OFFICER HAS NOT TOLD FRIENDS AMONG JESUITS AND CIVILIAN SECTORS. THOSE OFFICERS PASSING THIS INFORMATION REPORTEDLY HAVE DONE SO AFTER CONCLUDING THAT PRESENT ESAF LEADERSHIP IS WILLING TO LET INSTITUTION OF ARMED FORCES DESTROY ITSELF RATHER THAN OWN UP TO ENORMITY OF THEIR CRIME.

11. WHAT TO DO?

- IMMEDIATE CONSULTATION WITH PRESIDENT CRISTIANI WOULD APPEAR NECESSARY. PROBLEM: A FURTHER REASON [REDACTED] GAVE AS TO WHY HE WAS TELLING THE STAFFDEL WHETHER TO STAFFDEL OR ONLY [REDACTED] I DO NOT KNOW) IS THAT HE HAD SAME THOUGHT. TOOK THE STORY TO PRESIDENT CRISTIANI SOME TWO WEEKS AGO. BUT FELT THE PRESIDENT WAS MORE INTERESTED IN MOTIVE BEHIND REVELATIONS THAN THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ALLEGATIONS THEMSELVES. A SECOND POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO USE THIS FOR A FURTHER DEMARCHE TO COLONEL PONCE ALONG LINES OF PREVIOUS. REPEATING THAT STORY MUST COME OUT. AND CONTINUED UNWILLINGNESS TO FACE UP TO CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES AGAINST ESAF IN JESUIT CASE WILL BE DEATH BLOW TO INSTITUTION. MY THINKING HAS NOT PROGRESSED BEYOND THESE TWO APPROACHES. I LEAVE IT

12. QUESTIONS I HAVE:

- WHY WOULD [REDACTED] TELL WHAT HE MUST REALIZE IS STORY THAT COULD DESTROY THE ESAF TO STAFFDEL WOKLEY?
- WHEN I ASKED INTERLOCUTOR COULD ONLY GUESS. SAYING THAT [REDACTED] BELIEVES STORY IS ABOUT TO COME OUT. POSSIBLY BY JESUITS. AND THAT DAMAGE IS THUS ALREADY UPON US. ASKED [REDACTED] FOR HIS SUB-SOURCES MOTIVES COULD BE INTERNAL MILITARY POLITICS. I.E. TO DELIVER FATAL BLOW TO PRESENT HIGH COMMAND. [REDACTED] AGREED WITH ME THIS POSSIBLY CANNOT BE DISMISSED. IF YI.
- GIVEN WHAT I KNOW [REDACTED] I WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO SUSPECT MOTIVES OF SUB-SOURCES THAT HIS. I.E. I TEND TO BELIEVE HE WAS TOLD WHAT HE SAYS HE WAS. END FYI)

- WOULD ANY OFFICER WHO ALLEGES KNOWLEDGE OF THESE EVENTS BE WILLING TO TESTIFY AND BRING CHARGES INTO OPEN PERMITTING CREDIBLE INVESTIGATION?

- THE REPLY HERE WAS MORE FORCEFUL - NO OFFICER [REDACTED] WOULD DARE PUBLICALLY BREAK THE [REDACTED] CODE OF SILENCE.

- WHY DID STAFFDEL GIVE ME HEADS UP. WHAT DID THEY

12. REQUEST FOR ACTION:

- THIS INFORMATION SHOULD QUICKLY BECOME AN INGREDIENT IN ALL ASPECTS OF JESUIT CASE DISCUSSION.

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INCLUDING ADMINISTRATION-CONGRESSIONAL 01-PARTISAN
ASSISTANCE EFFORTS. GIVE THE POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE
SHOULD THESE CHARGES COME OUT IN AN UNFAVORABLE MANNER.
I ASK FOR IMMEDIATE ANALYSIS BY WASHINGTON AND
INSTRUCTIONS.

WALKER

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