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SECRET
 PROG 5-17-90
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Never sent as cable.

El Sal 1990

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AEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 SECSTATE WASHDC

FOR ARA AS ARONSON, ARA/CEN ROMERO

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, KJUS, ES

SUBJECT: SARAVIA REVELATIONS

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SECRET ENTIRE TEXT

2. ON MAY 14 LEGAL OFFICER MET WITH ALVARO SARAVIA IN THE OFFICES OF MIAMI ATTORNEY NEAL SONNET. SARAVIA PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS AN INDICATION OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE USG IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS IN EL SALVADOR; IN RETURN FOR FUTURE COOPERATION HE REQUESTS USG ASSISTANCE IN FORMALIZING HIS IMMIGRATION STATUS, THAT OF HIS FAMILY AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR SECURITY. DURING THIS INITIAL INTERVIEW SARAVIA WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE ROMERO ASSASSINATION. HE WAS ASKED TO LIMIT DISCUSSION ONLY TO WHAT HE COULD BEAR PERSONAL WITNESS TO. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMATION OF THE RELEVANT POINTS:

3. ROMERO CASE:

SARAVIA CONFIRMED THAT D'AUBUISSON GAVE THE ORDER TO MURDER ARCHBISHOP ROMERO ON MARCH 24, 1980. HE HAS NO

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FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE HOWEVER ON WHAT MEETINGS IF ANY TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO 24 MARCH TO DISCUSS THE MURDER OF ROMERO.

- ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 24, 1980 THERE WAS A MEETING OF TEN PERSONS INCLUDING ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON, CAPT. AVILA, AND "NEGRO" SAGRERA AT A HOUSE IN ESCALON.

- CAPT. AVILA ARRIVED FOR THE MEETING WITH A DAILY NEWSPAPER AND POINTED OUT THAT ROMERO WOULD BE GIVING A MASS THAT AFTERNOON AT THE CHURCH OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE. HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO KILL HIM.

- D'AUBUISSON AGREED AND ASKED IF A GUNMAN COULD BE FOUND. ONE OF THE TEN, ONLY IDENTIFIED AS THE SON OF AN EX-PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR, SAID HE KNEW OF A GUNMAN AND WAS ORDERED BY D'AUBUISSON TO CONTACT HIM.

- D'AUBUISSON PUT SAGRERA IN CHARGE OF THE OPERATION THEN LEFT FOR SAN MIGUEL TO ATTEND PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED MEETINGS.

- SAGRERA, THE GUNMAN AND TWO OTHERS MET IN THE PARKING LOT OF THE CAMINO REAL HOTEL A HALF HOUR BEFORE THE MURDER TO FINALIZE THE PLAN. FROM THIS MEETING THE GUNMAN WENT TO THE CHURCH AND MURDERED ROMERO.

- THE GUNMAN WAS PAID 1000 COLONES, APPROXIMATELY U.S. \$200. SARAVIA DOES NOT KNOW IF THE MONEY CAME FROM D'AUBUISSON.

- THE WEAPON USED WAS AN M-16.

4. COMMENT: THERE ARE SOME CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN SARAVIA'S VERSION AND THAT GIVEN EARLIER BY GARAY GARAY, THE ALLEGED CHAUFFEUR. AMADO STATED HE TOOK

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SARAVIA TO D'AUBUISSON'S HOUSE AFTER THE MURDER WHERE HE OVERHEARD SARAVIA REPORT THE SUCCESS OF THE MISSION. D'AUBUISSON CLAIMED THAT AT THE TIME WHEN SARAVIA ALLEGEDLY WAS REPORTING TO HIM HE (D'AUBUISSON) WAS OUTSIDE OF SAN SALVADOR. D'AUBUISSON COULD BE TELLING THE TRUTH AND STILL BE GUILTY OF ORDERING THE MURDER.

5. IT IS HARDLY PLAUSIBLE THAT THE MURDER OF ROMERO WAS DECIDED ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. SARAVIA HOWEVER, COULD BE TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN HE SAYS HE IS NOT AWARE OF ANY PRIOR PLANNING; HE WAS ASKED TO LIMIT DISCUSSION TO FACTS HE COULD ATTEST TO. IT IS MORE PROBABLE THAT THE DECISION TO KILL ROMERO WAS MADE ELSEWHERE BUT THE DETAILS OF WHEN AND HOW WERE LEFT TO D'AUBUISSON. AVILA'S SUGGESTION WAS MERELY OPPORTUNE.

6. EMILIO CHARUR KIDNAPPING (1981):

- EMILIO CHARUR WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE SALVADORAN FOOTBOL (SOCCER) FEDERATION.
- D'AUBUISSON ORDERED THE KIDNAPPING OF CHARUR AT A MEETING HELD IN THE HOUSE OF THE CURRENT MAYOR OF SAN SALVADOR CALDERON SOL.
- SANDY ZACAPA CARRIED OUT THE ACTUAL KIDNAPPING.
- THE MAN WHO COLLECTED THE RANSOM WAS RICKY VALDIVIESO, CURRENT VICE-MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS.

7. OTHER INFORMATION SARAVIA MIGHT KNOW:

THE DETAILS PROVIDED ABOVE ARE INCOMPLETE AND WOULD BE EXPANDED UPON ONLY AFTER REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH SARAVIA AS TO HIS IMMIGRATION STATUS AND ABILITY TO SAFEGUARD HIS FAMILY. IN ADDITION SARAVIA MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITIES

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FROM THE PERIOD OF HIS ASSOCIATION WITH D'AUBUISSON IN THE EARLY 1980S. HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON HOW THE SALVADORAN COURT DECISION IN HIS EXTRADITION PROCEEDING WAS MANIPULATED. IT MIGHT BE THAT THE CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE COURT, MAURICIO GUTIERREZ, WAS INVOLVED IN THAT DECISION. GUTIERREZ IS CERTAINLY D'AUBUISSON'S MAN AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE PREVIOUS COURT.

8. NEAL SONNET:

SONNET WAS HELPFUL IN CONVINCING SARAVIA TO COOPERATE. WHILE PROTECTIVE OF HIS CLIENT'S INTERESTS HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD AND COUNSELED SARAVIA THAT THIS COULD BE HIS LAST OPPORTUNITY TO COOPERATE WITH THE USG. SONNET HAS A LOT OF INFLUENCE OVER SARAVIA AND COULD BE HELPFUL IN ESTABLISHING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS CLIENT AND USG.

9. NEXT STEPS:

IF WE ARE TO EXPLOIT SARAVIA'S FULL POTENTIAL TO CLEAR UP MISSING PIECES OF THE ROMERO ASSASSINATION, AND POSSIBLY OTHER CASES, WE WILL HAVE TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH HIM. WE ARE ASKING HIM TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY WHICH WILL IMPLICATE, BY EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY, D'AUBUISSON IN MURDER. D'AUBUISSON COULD RESORT TO THREATS OR USE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST SARAVIA AND HIS FAMILY. SARAVIA BELIEVES THAT HIS LIFE WILL BE IN DANGER AS SOON AS D'AUBUISSON IS AWARE OF HIS COOPERATION. SARAVIA'S CONCERNS ARE:

- HE WANTS HIS IMMIGRATION STATUS AND THAT OF HIS FAMILY LEGALIZED.
- HE WANTS ASSURANCES THAT THE USG WILL PROVIDE FOR HIS SECURITY.

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10. OUR FIRST STEP WOULD BE IS TO DELAY SARAVIA'S 14 JUNE HEARING BEFORE THE IMMIGRATION JUDGE. THIS SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE (COMMENT: DONE.). THE ADDITIONAL TIME WILL ENABLE US TO WORK WITH SARAVIA AND DEVELOP HIS INFORMATION; IT ALSO WILL BE PROOF OF OUR GOOD FAITH. THE NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH IMMIGRATION BUT COULD INCLUDE NOT OPPOSING THE ASYLUM REQUEST FOR HIS FAMILY AND WORKING OUT AN APPROPRIATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENT. IF WE AGREE TO LEGITIMIZE HIS IMMIGRATION STATUS IT SHOULD BE OUR LAST ACT AFTER WE ARE CERTAIN THAT HE HAS COOPERATED FULLY WITH US. FULL COOPERATION ULTIMATELY WILL INCLUDE VERIFYING THE TRUTH OF HIS DECLARATIONS BY POLYGRAPH. ONE OPTION FOR LEGALIZING HIS STATUS COULD INCLUDE A PRE-PAROLE REQUEST TO IMMIGRATION SHOULD WE WANT SARAVIA TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT HE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN.

11. NO PROMISES WERE MADE TO SARAVIA IN RETURN FOR THE INFORMATION HE PROVIDED ON MAY 14. HE WAS TOLD THAT IF HE WANTED ANY KIND OF DEAL WE WOULD NEED SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT WOULD INDICATE HIS SINCERITY. HE HAS TAKEN THAT STEP.

12. WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE INFORMATION:

THE DIFFICULT QUESTION IS WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE INFORMATION THAT SARAVIA HAS ALREADY PROVIDED AND WILL AMPLIFY IF WE DECIDE TO WORK OUT A DEAL WITH HIM. THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR PREMISES:

- THE PRESENT SALVADORAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM IS INCAPABLE OF USING THE INFORMATION TO INDICT AND PROSECUTE D'AUBUISSON.

- THE USG'S TALKS WITH SARAVIA WILL EVENTUALLY . TOO MANY PEOPLE WERE NEEDED TO ESTABLISH THE INITIAL CONTACT.

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- THE USG WOULD BE OBLIGATED TO SHARE THE INFORMATION SARAVIA PROVIDES WITH THE GOES ONCE IT IS VERIFIED.

13. OUR OPTIONS FOR USE OF THE INFORMATION ARE:

- BRING SARAVIA BACK TO SALVADOR AND HAVE HIM PROVIDE HIS JUDICIAL DECLARATION TO THE COURT. THE PRESIDING JUDGE IN THE CASE IS RICARDO ZAMORA.

- PROVIDE THE INFORMATION TO PRESIDENT CRISTIANI AND LEAVE IT UP TO HIM HOW TO USE IT. CRISTIANI ALSO WOULD BE TOLD THAT WE WILL BE OBLIGED TO MAKE THE INFORMATION PUBLIC AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME.

- PRESENT THE INFORMATION TO CRISTIANI BUT IN A JOINT MEETING WITH ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES INCLUDING THE HIGH COMMAND.

14. COMMENT: WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT CRISTIANI ALONE CAN TAKE ON D'AUBUISSON. THERE ARE ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY WHO HAVE GRUDGES AGAINST D'AUBUISSON AND RESENT HIS OVERT MOVES TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF THE ESAF. WE HAVE TO DEVISE A WAY TO BRING THESE COMMONALITY OF INTERESTS TOGETHER. THE LAST OPTION APPEARS THE MOST FEASIBLE.

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