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United States Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
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Department of State IS/FPC/CDR El Salvador 8P Date 9-22-93
Declassified under EO 12360 (X) in full: () in part:
portions withheld: classified (); deliberative ();
law enforcement (); privacy (), statutory ();
not relevant to El Salvador ().

TO: The Secretary
FROM: ARA - Bernard Aronson
SUBJECT: Discussions with D'Aubuisson Accomplice

We have been in contact with Alvaro Saravia, formerly an accomplice of ultrarightist Salvadoran politician Roberto D'Aubuisson. Saravia -- who faces deportation from the United States -- wants to trade information about D'Aubuisson's involvement in political violence for U.S. resident status. Saravia has already told us that he was present when D'Aubuisson ordered the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero. While unsurprising, Saravia's story is convincing. We believe that Saravia knows more about the Romero case and may have additional information about D'Aubuisson's involvement in death squads and kidnapping-for-profit.

Obviously, we would prefer that his information be used in Salvadoran prosecution, but there is little prospect for this at this time. D'Aubuisson appears to have significant control over the Salvadoran judiciary.

Thus, the most effective use for Saravia's information would be in a potential U.S. prosecution of D'Aubuisson. Of particular interest would be evidence that D'Aubuisson was involved -- as suspect -- in a 1984 plot to kill then-Ambassador to El Salvador Thomas Pickering. Evidence of D'Aubuisson's involvement in illegal movement of cash, people, or arms out of the United States in support of death squad activity would also be of interest.

We have asked the Justice Department to assist in continuing our discussions with Saravia, who is now in Miami. We have also requested that the CIA search thoroughly for all intelligence information about D'Aubuisson which might be of use in this case. We propose to meet again with Saravia as soon as we can coordinate Justice participation to explore any additional information he may have to offer.

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DECL: OADR

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DECL:OADR

On May 14, 1990, a U.S. Government official met with Alvaro Saravia, who provided information on the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero as an indication of his willingness to cooperate with the USG. He requested that the U.S. assist him in formalizing his immigration status in exchange for the information. Saravia used this initial meeting to establish his bona fides and limited himself to information he could personally attest to in the Romero assassination. The following is a summation of the relevant points:

- o Saravia confirmed that D'Aubuisson gave the order to murder Archbishop Romero on March 24, 1980. He had no first hand knowledge of what meetings, if any, took place prior to the March 24 discussion.
- o 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.
- o Capt. Avila arrived at 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.
- o 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.
- o D'Aubuisson put Sagrera in charge of the operation and then left for San Miguel to attend previously arranged meetings.
- o 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.
- o The gunman was paid 1000 colones (\$200). Saravia did not know if the money came from D'Aubuisson.
- o The weapon used was an M-16.

No further questioning of Saravia took place.

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