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TO: FBI/OA - Mr. Richard C. Stever,  
Unit Chief, Foreign Police Cooperation/Interpor  
FROM: Mr. Peter F. Romero  
Director, Office of Central American Affairs  
Department of State

SUBJECT: FBI Participation In Interrogation of Alvaro Saravia

I am writing to request FBI participation in the interrogation of a Salvadoran citizen who may have information relevant to criminal activities in the United States.

Alvaro Saravia, a Salvadoran national, is currently subject to a deportation order. Saravia has appealed the order. The hearing on his case is scheduled for May 31, 1991. Saravia has contacted the legal officer at our Embassy in San Salvador and offered to provide us with information about political violence in El Salvador and violations of law in the United States in exchange for permanent residence here. Our legal officer held several preliminary meetings with Saravia. Based on these discussions, and our knowledge of Saravia's relationship to the Salvadoran ultraright, we believe he may have information that could be of use to us.

Saravia, a former Salvadoran air force officer, was an intimate of Salvadoran politician Roberto D'Aubuisson from 1979-1985. D'Aubuisson has been implicated in ultrarightist political violence in El Salvador in numerous public and confidential reports, although he has never been charged or convicted of any such crimes. Saravia served as D'Aubuisson's private secretary in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and was therefore familiar with all his activities. Saravia subsequently served D'Aubuisson and his ultrarightist circle in other capacities, including as an official of the security force of the Constituent Assembly in 1983 and 1984. A death squad reportedly operated out of the security force.

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Saravia may have information on the following cases which could involve a violation of U.S. law:

-- Threats to official Americans:

-- Plot to Assassinate Ambassador Pickering: D'Aubuisson blamed presumed U.S. intervention for his defeat in the 1984 Salvadoran presidential election. Credible contemporary reporting indicated that D'Aubuisson hired two Cuban assassins to kill then-Ambassador Pickering to punish the United States for intervention in Salvadoran affairs.

-- Drive-by shootings: Saravia acted as D'Aubuisson's personal secretary during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a time when D'Aubuisson was harshly critical of U.S. policy toward El Salvador. There were several drive-by shootings of the U.S. Embassy, including one in May 1981 about which then-U.S. Charge to El Salvador Chapin said, "this has all the hallmarks of a D'Aubuisson operation."

-- Death Squad Support in the United States: Reporting from the early 1980s indicated that several wealthy Salvadoran oligarchs resident in Miami financed the operation of ultrarightist death squads which killed thousands of suspected leftists. Support from the United States for political violence, including the provision of money and arms, could involve violations of U.S. law. Since Saravia is a pilot, he could have specific information about the physical movement of men and materiel in support of death squad activity.

-- Other Activities in Support of Death Squads: Saravia has intimated that he has information, including current information, regarding the involvement of ultrarightists in narco-trafficking from Latin America to the United States and counterfeiting of U.S. currency.

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In addition, Saravia has provided our legal officer with a brief but convincing summary of D'Aubuisson's direction of the March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero. There is no prospect for a U.S. or a Salvadoran prosecution in this case, but the evidence Saravia has could be of important political value to the United States.

If Justice and State agree that Saravia's information is of use to us, we could offer him parole into the United States. The first step is to find out what Saravia knows. We request FBI involvement in this effort for two reasons. First, as our goal is a possible prosecution in the United States, we want to have the appropriate U.S. law enforcement agency involved in his debriefing. Second, we want to confine Saravia's contacts to law enforcement personnel. All of Saravia's contacts to date have been with the legal officer. In part because of Saravia's lack of discretion, the fact that he is in contact with the legal officer is becoming known in El Salvador. We believe that continuing contacts between the legal officer and Saravia could jeopardize their lives. FBI involvement in the case would eliminate face-to-face contacts between the two, and lessen the legal officer's overall involvement in the case.

I ask that you address this request as soon as possible. We have credible information that the ultrarightists who have learned of our contacts with Saravia may have reacted by sending, or planning to send, someone to the United States to investigate and possibly to threaten or kill Saravia. Quick involvement by the FBI and Justice will enable us to assess and deal with this potential threat.

I have attached contemporary cable traffic which may assist you in better understanding Saravia's role in these activities, and our interest in his information.

Attachments: as stated

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