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ACTION ARA-00

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7601

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E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: SHUM, GT
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)
2. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE APRIL 8 VISIT OF AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN TO GENERAL MEJIA AND FOREIGN MINISTER ANDRADE, AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION I TOOK GENERAL MEJIA ASIDE AND PRIVATELY EXPRESSED TO HIM OUR GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE RECENT EVENTS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IN GUATEMALA, ESPECIALLY THE DEATH OF MARIA ROSARIO GODOY DE CUEVAS OF THE MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP. I STRESSED THE FACT THAT SUCH TRAGEDIES WOULD ONLY HURT GUATEMALA'S IMAGE AND PLACE THE GOVERNMENT IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION. I INDICATED THAT EVEN IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MATTER, PUBLIC OPINION ABROAD WOULD DEFINITELY BLAME THE MILITARY. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ALL THIS, IT WAS BECOMING VERY DIFFICULT FOR US TO DEFEND GUATEMALA'S POSITION, ESPECIALLY IN CONGRESS, AND THIS WOULD ENDANGER OUR EFFORTS TO HELP GUATEMALA BY INCREASING THE AID PROGRAM.

3. THE CHIEF OF STATE AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH [REDACTED] IAL
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ME AND REPEATED WHAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID, THAT IT WAS OF GREAT CONCERN TO HIS GOVERNMENT, THAT

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SAM A. MOSKOWITZ
DATE/CASE ID: 24 NOV 1999 199504668

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SUCH EVENTS HURT THEM MORE THAN THEY HURT US. THUS, HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER, IN HIS OWN INTEREST, TO TRY TO STOP THESE EVENTS FROM OCCURRING. HOWEVER, HE DID SAY THAT WE MUST REALIZE THAT THESE INCIDENTS MAY BE TRIGGERED BY FORCES THAT DID NOT WANT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS TO PROCEED ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE. ACCORDING TO HIM THERE ARE CERTAIN SECTORS OF GUATEMALAN SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY THE EXTREME LEFT, WHO ARE DETERMINED THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS NOT TAKE PLACE.

4. AFTER THAT I ALSO TOOK ASIDE THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND REPEATED TO HIM WHAT I HAD TOLD THE CHIEF OF STATE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS EVEN MORE EMPHATIC IN HIS STATEMENT THAT HE AND THE ENTIRE POLICY THAT HE WAS TRYING TO CARRY OUT WERE PLACED IN DANGER BY SUCH TRAGIC EVENTS. HE INDICATED, AGAIN, THAT I MUST REALIZE THAT HE MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE WAS AGAINST THE CONTINUANCE OF THESE TYPES OF CRIMES. HE ADDED THAT I SHOULD PERSIST IN STRESSING THESE POINTS TO ALL SECTORS OF GUATEMALAN SOCIETY, AND IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY TO THE MILITARY.

PIEDRA

[REDACTED]

NNN