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Printed: 12/10/1997 DOC\_NUMBER: 85 GUATEM 03351

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ACTION ARA-00

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| INFO | LOG-00  | COPY-01 | ADS-00  | INR-10  | EUR-00  | SS-00  | CIAE-00 |
|      | DODE-00 | H-01    | NSCE-00 | NSAE-00 | SSO-00  | SY-06  | HA-08   |
|      | L-03    | LAB-04  | TRSE-00 | PM-10   | PA-01   | MCT-03 | OMB-01  |
|      | SIL-01  | INRE-00 | A-02    | SYE-00  | USIE-00 | SP-02  | SNP-01  |
|      | PRS-01  | SLPD-01 | SPD-02  | /058 W  |         |        |         |

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O 092306Z APR 85  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7611  
INFO CONTADORA COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR THE VATICAN

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PINR, PINS, PREL, SHUM, SOCI, GT  
SUBJ: MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP (GAM) UPDATE

REF: (A) GUATEMALA 3217 (B) GUATEMALA 3229

SUMMARY

(U)

THE GUATEMALAN NEWS MEDIA HAS CARRIED COMMENTS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES ON THE DEATH OF MARIA GODOY DE CUEVAS (GUATEMALA 3229). ANOTHER NEWS ARTICLE SPOKE OF A SENSE OF THREAT FELT BY GAM MEMBERS. THE MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP HAS ALSO ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION ON APRIL 13 IN GUATEMALA CITY.

END SUMMARY  
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GUATEMALAN REACTION TO THE DEATH OF MRS. MARIA

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1/14/98  
 DECLASSIFIED BY: [Signature]  
 DATE: 1/14/98  
 AUTHORITY: 50 USC 1702  
 ( ) DECLASSIFY IN PART  
 ( ) EXCISE  
 ( ) DENY  
 ( ) RELEASE  
 ( ) STATEMENT OF STATE  
 ( ) CONFIDENTIALITY  
 ( ) EXEMPTIONS  
 ( ) CLASSIFY as ( ) S or ( ) C Sec.  
 ( ) DOWNGRADE TS to ( ) S or ( ) C  
 ( ) TS authority to  
 ( ) PA Exemptions  
 ( ) FA Exemptions

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GODOY DE CUEVAS, BOARD MEMBER OF GAM (GUATEMALA 3229)  
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1(U) ON APRIL 7, THE TELE-PRENSA TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAM INTERVIEWED MRS. CUEVAS' MOTHER. SHE GAVE ONLY A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS AND DID NOT OFFER AN OPINION ON THE CAUSE OF DEATH OF HER FAMILY MEMBERS.

(U)

ON THE SAME BROADCAST ARCHBISHOP PROSPERO PENADOS SAID THAT THE RECENT EVENTS, INCLUDING THE CUEVAS DEATHS, HAD GIVEN GUATEMALA A BAD IMAGE. HE SAID THE EVENTS HAD CONTRIBUTED TO A "HOLY WEEK OF SHAME AND FEAR" IN GUATEMALA. THE ARCHBISHOP SPOKE OF THE DEATH OF THE CUEVAS FAMILY AS A "BLOODY ACT", BUT WAS NOT MORE SPECIFIC.

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COMMENT  
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2(U) THE GUATEMALAN DAILY NEWSPAPER, PRENSA LIBRE, ON APRIL 9 SAID THAT THE ARCHBISHOP HAD CONSIDERED THE CUEVAS DEATHS AS A "TRIPLE ASSASSINATION". THE ARCHBISHOP DID NOT MAKE THIS COMMENT DURING HIS TELE-PRENSA INTERVIEW, ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S VIDEO COPY. HOWEVER, THE TELE-PRENSA NEWS REPORTER DID CALL THE DEATHS "ASSASSINATIONS".  
END COMMENT.

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3(U) ON THE SAME TELE-PRENSA BROADCAST, MARIO RAMIREZ RUIZ, SPOKESMAN FOR THE GUATEMALAN NATIONAL POLICE, SAID THAT POLICE FORENSIC SPECIALISTS HAD DETERMINED THAT THE CAUSE OF DEATH OF THE CUEVAS FAMILY WAS TRAUMA DUE TO THE AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT.

COMMENT  
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(C)

THE MATTER OF THE CUEVAS AUTOPSY IS UNCLEAR. EMBASSY WAS TOLD (GUATEMALA 3229), THAT NO AUTOPSY HAD BEEN PERFORMED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CUEVAS FAMILY.

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IT IS UNCLER WHAT EXAMINATION WAS COMPLETED BY "POLICE FORENSIC SPECIALISTS". AN EMBASSY SOURCE SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT THE VICTIMS HAD DIED OF ASPHYXIATION AND THAT A "BOGUS AUTOPSY" HAD BEEN PERFORMED. HE HAD NO DETAILS. ANOTHER RUMOR CIRCULATING SAID THAT THE VICTIMS HAD DIED FROM GUNFIRE. BUT AGAIN NO DETAILS OR PROOFS HAVE BEEN OFFERED. END COMMENT.

4(U) IN THE APRIL 9 GUATEMALAN PRESS, GOG SECRETARY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, RAMON ZELADA CARRILLO, SAID THAT WITHOUT AN INVESTIGATION THE CASES COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED ASSASSINATIONS AND THAT HE BELIEVED THE GOG WOULD SOON BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT THE DEATHS WERE THE RESULT OF A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.

5(U) GUSTAVO ADOLFO SANDOVAL, GOG MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT, SAID HE HAD THE OFFICIAL REPORT THAT SHOWED THE CUEVAS CASE TO HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT. SANDOVAL SAID THE INFORMATION WAS IN THE HANDS OF A GUATEMALAN JUDGE

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7612  
INFO CONTADORA COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY ROME

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 02 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03351

ROME FOR THE VATICAN

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PINR, PINS, PREL, SHUM, SOCI, GT  
SUBJ: MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP (GAM) UPDATE

WHO HAD THE AUTHORITY TO OPEN FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS IF HE FELT IT TO BE NECESSARY. THE MINISTER SAID IT WAS UNJUST TO CALL THE CUEVAS DEATHS MURDERS, WHEN THE OFFICIAL REPORT HAD SHOWN THAT TO NOT HAVE BEEN THE CASE. HE ASKED RHETORICALLY OF WHAT BENEFIT WOULD IT HAVE BEEN TO THE GOG TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SUCH AN ACT WHEN IT HAS BEEN THE POLICY OF THE MEJIA GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE OPENING FOR DEMOCRACY?

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6(U)DANILO PARINELLO, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE AUTHENTIC NATIONALIST CENTER (CAN), A RIGHTIST POLITICAL PARTY, SPOKE OF THE DEATHS IN THE SAME NEWSPAPER EDITION. HE SAID THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA HAS

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ELEVATED THE INTERNATIONAL IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS AND NOW GUERRILLA GROUPS WANT TO BLAME THE GOG FOR ALL THE BAD THAT OCCURS IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT THE MILITARY REGIME. PARINELLO SAID THE DEATHS WERE OF BENEFIT TO "THOSE WHO WISH TO INTERRUPT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT COULD ALLOW A POPULAR INSURRECTION OR EVEN ANOTHER COUP D'ETAT".

7(U)CONFREGUA, THE GUATEMALAN CONFERENCE OF MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS ORDERS, SPONSORED A NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENT ON APRIL 9 IN WHICH IT EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH THE GAM AND SAID THAT IT "CONDEMNED ALL OPERATIONS AGAINST THE STRUCTURE AND WORK OF THE GAM".

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Printed: 12/10/1997

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REPORT OF SENSE OF THREAT TO GAM MEMBERS  
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8(U) EMBASSY REPORTED (GUATEMALA 3217), THAT GAM MEMBERS HAD RECENTLY BEGUN TO RECEIVE ANONYMOUS THREATS BY LETTER AND TELEPHONE. ANOTHER ARTICLE, CARRIED MARCH 30 IN LA RAZON, A GUATEMALAN DAILY NEWSPAPER, ALSO SPOKE OF THE ANONYMOUS THREATS AND IDENTIFIED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GUATEMALA, THE REGION OF GUATEMALA CITY, AS "AN OFFICIAL SECTOR THAT HAD LAUNCHED STERN WARNINGS TO INHIBIT THE ORGANIZATION FROM CONTINUING ITS PROTESTS". THE ARTICLE EXPLAINED THAT THE "STERN WARNINGS" REFERRED TO GOG NOTICE TO THE GAM THAT THE GROUP MEMBERS WOULD BE FACED WITH ARREST IF THEY PERSISTED IN HAVING RALLIES WITHOUT HAVING ADVISED THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

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COMMENT  
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(C)  
ON APRIL 8 A SOURCE TOLD POLOFF THAT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS GAM MEMBERS HAD NOT FELT THAT THEY WERE BEING WATCHED OR FOLLOWED. END COMMENT.

GAM ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR A "PUBLIC MANIFESTATION"  
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9(C) ON APRIL 8 THE GUATEMALAN PRESS CARRIED A GAM ANNOUNCEMENT FOR A "PUBLIC MANIFESTATION" TO BE HELD IN THE CENTRAL PART OF GUATEMALA CITY ON APRIL 13. A MARCH, ENDING AT THE NATIONAL PALACE, IS PLANNED. POLOFF WAS TOLD BY A PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL (PBI) MEMBER ON APRIL 5 THAT THE ROUTE, AND THE FORM, OF THE EVENT HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOG. POLOFF WAS TOLD THAT ADDITIONAL PBI MEMBERS INTEND TO ARRIVE IN GUATEMALA TO AID IN THE DEMONSTRATION.

COMMENT  
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(C)  
ON APRIL 8 POLOFFS WERE TO HAVE MET WITH BOARD

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MEMBERS OF GAM (GUATEMALA 3229). THE GAM MEMBERS DID NOT ATTEND THE SCHEDULED MEETING. SUBSEQUENTLY A SOURCE TOLD POLOFFS THAT THE GAM DIRECTORS HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE APPOINTMENT, BUT COULD NOT ATTEND BECAUSE THEY WERE BUSY WITH PREPARATION FOR THE APRIL 13 MANIFESTATION. SPECIFICALLY, THEY WERE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF UNION GROUPS IN ORDER TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION.

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