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TOT: 210307Z NOV 85

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: POLITICAL COSTS OF THE DUARTE KIDNAPPING

DOI: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1985

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SUMMARY: IN MID-NOVEMBER 1985, AN FDR OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT THE CONTINUING SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL COSTS TO THE FDR-FMLN CAUSED BY THE DUARTE KIDNAPPING HAVE NOT CONVINCED FMLN LEADERS TO CEASE SUCH OPERATIONS. A FEW FMLN OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, HAVE RETURNED TO THINKING MORE OF PURELY MILITARY OPERATIONS AFTER THE SUCCESS OF THE ATTACK ON THE LA UNION MILITARY BASE. THE FDR DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO EXPLOIT THE DETERIORATION OF DUARTE'S RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY--ONE OF THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THE KIDNAPPING.

TEXT: 1. IN MID-NOVEMBER 1985, A RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT (FDR), THE POLITICAL WING OF THE FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FMLN), SAID THAT THE NEGATIVE "POLITICAL COSTS" TO THE FDR-FMLN CAUSED BY THE KIDNAPPING OF INES GUADALUPE ((DUARTE)) DURAN, DAUGHTER OF THE SALVADORAN PRESIDENT, CONTINUE TO BE "VERY SUBSTANTIAL," BUT

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HAVE NOT CONVINCED THE FMLN COMANDANTES TO DESIST FROM SUCH OPERATIONS.

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2. ACCORDING TO THE FDR OFFICIAL, FDR REPRESENTATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA, NORTH AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE HAVE DETAILED TO THE FDR POLITICO-DIPLOMATIC COMMISSION (CPD) THE ALIENATION OF FORMERLY SUPPORTIVE OFFICIALS OF ESSENTIALLY PRO-FMLN GOVERNMENTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, LABOR ORGANIZATIONS AND CHURCH GROUPS. FUNDS FROM THESE SOURCES HAVE VIRTUALLY DRIED UP. SUPPORT HAS BEEN VITIATED WITHIN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND FORMER FRIENDS OF THE FDR AT THE UNITED NATIONS--WHICH THE FDR CONSIDERS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT TARGET FOR THE CPD--HAVE CUT OFF CONTACT WITH FDR REPRESENTATIVES. IN LETTERS TO AND PRIVATE TALKS WITH FDR LEADERS, ARGENTINE PRESIDENT RAUL ((ALFONSIN)) HARSHLY CONDEMNED THE KIDNAPPING, AS HAVE, TO A LESSER EXTENT, VENEZUELAN AND URUGUAYAN POLITICAL-GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS WHO USUALLY SYMPATHIZE WITH THE SALVADORAN OPPOSITION.

3. THE FDR OFFICIAL STATED THAT EVEN FMLN ALLIES CHASTISED FDR AND FMLN LEADERS FOR THE OPERATION. CUBAN LEADER FIDEL ((CASTRO)) RUZ PERSONALLY AND WITH "WARMTH" TOLD FDR LEADERS IN HAVANA THAT HE HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN TRYING TO JUSTIFY THE KIDNAPPING OF A DEFENSELESS WOMAN TO GENERATIONS OF CUBANS WHO HAVE NEVER KNOWN VIOLENCE. THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT THE SOVIETS HAD TOLD LEADERS OF THE FAL, WHO PERPETRATED THE KIDNAPPING, AND LEADERS OF THE PCES THAT THE KIDNAPPING HAD BEEN TOTALLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE FOR SOVIET-BACKED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE FMLN. A NICARAGUAN COMANDANTE TOLD THE FDR OFFICIAL THAT "THE WHOLE THING WAS STUPID, NO MATTER WHAT THE YIELD."

4. THE REACTION OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY TO DUARTE'S HANDLING OF THE KIDNAPPING HAS ALSO GIVEN PRESIDENT DUARTE THE "PERFECT EXCUSE" TO TURN DOWN FDR REQUESTS FOR PLANNING TOWARD A THIRD ROUND OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FDR-FMLN. SINCE THE KIDNAPPING, THE FDR OFFICIAL SAID THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE REFUSED EVEN TO LISTEN TO FDR PROPOSALS FOR CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE WHICH WERE PASSED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALS AND VIA MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY.

5. THE FDR OFFICIAL STRESSED THAT FDR LEADERS RESENT

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HAVING TO CLEAN UP THE FMLN "MESS" AFTER NOT EVEN HAVING BEEN WARNED OF THE OPERATION. HE SAID THAT THE KIDNAPPING WAS PLANNED BY AN INNER CIRCLE OF FAL MILITARY COMMANDERS AND CARRIED OUT BY A FAL TEAM KEPT SEPARATED FROM OTHER FAL AND FMLN UNITS. FAL ADVISED OTHER FMLN LEADERS OF THE OPERATION FOR THE FIRST TIME 24 TO 48 HOURS AFTER THE KIDNAPPING AND LEISURELY INFORMED THE FDR ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE OPERATION.

THE FAL SPECIAL FORCES (U-24) CARRIED OUT THE KIDNAPPING OF INES DUARTE. ONCE THEY HAD ACCOMPLISHED THE KIDNAPPING, THE U-24 ALLOWED VERY FEW PERSONS TO ENTER THE CAMP IN WHICH THEY HELD HER. IN THAT SENSE, U-24 PERSONNEL WERE KEPT SEPARATE FROM OTHER FAL AND FMLN UNITS. NORMALLY, HOWEVER, FAL U-24 PERSONNEL CIRCULATE AMONG OTHER FAL AND FMLN UNITS IN THE AREA TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY OTHER FMLN COMBAT UNIT WOULD.)

6. DESPITE THE BACK-LASH, THE FDR HAS YET TO CONVINCE FMLN COMANDANTES AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES THAT SUCH TERRORISM SETS BACK THE STRUGGLE. THE FDR OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE HAS

PARTICIPATED IN TALKS BETWEEN LEADERS OF THE FDR AND THE FMLN, WHICH FOR PURPOSES OF SECURITY ARE BEING HELD IN NICARAGUA. THE COMANDANTES CONTINUE TO FAVOR DE FACTO TERRORISM AS THE NEED TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE. THE FDR OFFICIAL EXPLAINED THAT OVER TWO YEARS AGO, THE FDR BEGAN PRESSING THE FMLN TO IMPLEMENT "DUALITY OF POWER" AS THE MAIN FMLN PROPAGANDA THRUST. THE FMLN WAS URGED TO PROVE TO THE MEDIA AND THUS TO THE WORLD THAT THE FMLN NOT ONLY WINS BATTLES AND WITHDRAWS, BUT THAT IT BETTER CONTROLS AND ADMINISTERS VAST SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY, DENOMINATED "LIBERATION ZONES." THE FMLN HAS FAILED TO CAPITALIZE PROPAGANDA-WISE. IN FINALLY ACCEPTING THE DUALITY OF POWER CONCEPT, THE FMLN HAS CHOSEN TO COPY THE WORST ELEMENTS OF THE OTHER POWER, I.E., THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT, BY DUPLICATING DISAPPEARANCES, KILLINGS AND KIDNAPPINGS OF CIVILIANS.

7. THE FDR OFFICIAL SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL PROGRESS IN THE FDR EFFORT TO DEFINE, AND THEREFORE, LIMIT NON-MILITARY OPERATIONS AND PREDICTED THAT THE TALKS BETWEEN FDR AND FMLN LEADERS WOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. COMMENT: IN OCTOBER, ANOTHER FDR OFFICIAL WHO ALSO HAD PARTICIPATED IN SOME OF THE TALKS BETWEEN FDR AND FMLN REPRESENTATIVES SAID THAT THE FDR HAD PROPOSED THAT FMLN OPERATIONS MUST RESPECT CIVILIAN LIFE, BE DIRECTED AT PRIMARILY MILITARY OR ECONOMIC TARGETS AND MUST ASSIST FDR WORK WITH THE MASSES.)

8. ONE OR TWO (UNIDENTIFIED) FMLN OFFICIALS HAVE

RETURNED TO THINKING MORE OF PURELY MILITARY OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF THE SUCCESS OF THE FMLN ATTACK ON THE "LA UNION" MILITARY BASE. WHEN FDR REPRESENTATIVES ATTEMPTED TO EMPHASIZE THE POINT IN THE CURRENT TALKS, THE FMLN REPRESENTATIVES CRITICIZED THE FDR FOR FAILING TO EXPLAIN THAT "LA UNION" IS A BASE FOR THE ADVANCED TRAINING OF COMBAT VETERANS AND NOT A BASIC TRAINING CAMP FOR RAW RECRUITS, AS SUCCESSFULLY DEPICTED IN THE PRESS BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE FDR LEADER ADDED THAT THE RAID WAS NOT MADE POSSIBLE BY INFILTRATING BASE PERSONNEL, BUT BY THE PENETRATION OF A SAPPER SQUAD WHICH MADE TWO DRY RUNS BEFORE THE ATTACK. THE SQUAD REPORTED THE PRESENCE OF A DOZEN U.S. ARMY ADVISORS WHOM THEY FAILED TO KILL BECAUSE HALF OF THE CHARGES DID NOT EXPLODE. COMMENT: THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES MILITARY TRAINING CENTER (CEMFA) IN LA UNION IS MAINLY A BASIC TRAINING CENTER.

INDICATE THAT THE FACILITY WAS IN FACT INFILTRATED BUT THAT NO DRY RUNS WERE MADE BY SAPPER SQUADS BEFORE THE ATTACK. IN ADDITION, THE INSURGENTS WERE AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF U.S. MILITARY ADVISERS IN THE FACILITY WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE ACTUAL ATTACK; THE U.S. ADVISERS WERE DESCRIBED AS A PRINCIPAL TARGET DURING THE PLANNING FOR THE ATTACK.)

9. ACCORDING TO THE FDR OFFICIAL, THE FDR DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO EXPLOIT THE DETERIORATION OF PRESIDENT DUARTE'S RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY RESULTING FROM THE KIDNAPPING. HE SAID THAT THE FMLN AND THE FDR HAVE FAILED TO COME UP WITH A PLAN TO BENEFIT FROM AND EXACERBATE MILITARY OFFICERS' CRITICISM OF DUARTE'S NEGOTIATIONS. THE OFFICIAL DISMISSED TALK OF POSSIBLE COUPS FROM WITHIN THE SALVADORAN MILITARY, NOTING THAT EVEN COLONEL SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ REALIZES THAT IF DUARTE IS DEPOSED, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL RETALIATE SO AS TO JEOPARDIZE THE LIVELIHOOD OF SALVADORAN MILITARY LEADERS.