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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 SAN SALVADOR 15030

USIA FOR AR AND P/CENTAM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: ELAB, PINS, PTER, ES
SUBJECT: DISCORD WITHIN LEFTIST LABOR FEDERATION

REF: (A) SAN SALVADOR 14675 (B) SAN SALVADOR 14309
- (C) SAN SALVADOR 13081

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO A LEFTIST LABOR CONTACT, LABOR LEADERS SYMPATHETIC TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR (PCES) AND TO ITS GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION (FAL), CLAIM THAT A "STRUGGLE OVER HEGEMONY" IS A FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE OF DISCORD AMONG SEVERAL FMLN MEMBER GROUPS. REPORTEDLY, THIS INTERNECINE FMLN STRIFE

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HAS HAD REPERCUSSIONS ON THE LARGEST OF THE LEFTIST-LED URBAN LABOR FEDERATIONS, THE FEDERACION NACIONAL DE SINDICATOS DE TRABAJADORES SALVADORENOS (FENASTRAS). PRO-PCES/FAL AND PRO FAPU/FARN LABOR LEADERS ARE AT PRESENT ENGAGED IN A FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF FENASTRAS (TRADITIONALLY A FAPU ENCLAVE WITH SUBSTANTIAL PCES INFLUENCE). THE PRO-PCES LEADERS ACCUSE THE FAPU/FARN OF BEING TOO SOFT-LINE ON THE DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR (GOES). THE PRO-PCES LABOR LEADERS ARE ALSO WORRIED THAT THE HARDLINE MILITARIST

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Donna M. DiPaolo, Senior Reviewer

ERP GUERRILLA GROUP IS ATTACKING COFFEE MILLS WHOSE WORKERS ARE ORGANIZED BY A PRO-PCES UNION WITHIN FENASTRAS. END SUMMARY.

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3. LABOFF SPOKE ON DECEMBER 7 WITH A LEFTIST LABOR FIGURE WHO ASKED FOR THE MEETING TO RELAY A SERIES OF MESSAGES FROM SEVERAL PRO-PCES LABOR LEADERS. ACCORDING TO THE LABOR CONTACT, WHO HAS PROVED RELIABLE IN THE PAST, HIS INTERLOCUTORS WERE FIDEL PALACIOS, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COFFEE MILL WORKERS' UNION (SICAFE), AND TWO LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF TRANSPORTATION WORKERS (SNTIT), MAX CASTRO AND EMILIO ALONZO. BOTH UNIONS ARE AFFILIATED TO THE LARGEST LEFTIST-LED LABOR FEDERATION IN EL SALVADOR, FENASTRAS. ACCORDING TO CONTACT, THESE LEADERS SEEM TO BE ANXIOUS TO MEET WITH LABOFF AND EXPLAIN THEIR VERSION OF EVENTS SURROUNDING CURRENT SPATS BETWEEN THE PCES/FAL AND THE FAPU/FARN AND ERP GUERRILLA GROUPS. ALTHOUGH THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE PCES/FAL VERSION IS TENDENTIOUS AND SELF-SERVING, WE ARE REPORTING IT IN FULL.

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4. ACCORDING TO THE PRO-PCES/FAL SPOKESMEN,
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DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS WITHIN THE FMLN WORSENEED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE LA PALMA PEACE PROCESS LAST OCTOBER. BASICALLY AT ISSUE IS WHAT THE REST OF THE FMLN SEEMS TO PERCEIVE AS THE FAPU/FARN'S "SOFTLINE" APPROACH TOWARDS DIALOGUE WITH THE DUARTE ADMINISTRATION. ACCORDING TO ABOVE SOURCES, THERE ARE THREE BASIC POSITIONS TOWARD THE PEACE DIALOGUE WITHIN THE FMLN. DEBATE OVER THESE POSITIONS BY FMLN GROUPS SEEMS TO BE REACHING A DEAD END AND, IN FACT, DEGENERATING INTO WHAT THE PRO-PCES'RS CALLED "A STRUGGLE FOR HEGEMONY" AND FOR POLITICAL INFLUENCE VIS-A-VIS THE GOES. THE PCES REPORTEDLY CONSIDERS THE ERP POSITION TO BE STAUNCHLY HARDLINE AND HARDHEADEDLY MILITARISTIC (AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL) IN OUTLOOK. WHILE THE PCES SPOKESMEN TYPIFIED THE ERP AS BASICALLY ANTI-DIALOGUE, THEY SAW THE PCES/FAL, THE FPL AND THE PRTC AS BEING TENUOUSLY IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING DIALOGUE. THEY CLAIMED THEY MAY EVENTUALLY CONSIDER ACCEPTING A TRUCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MARCH, 1985 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OR IN SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD INSIST ON KEEPING THEIR WEAPONS AND RETAINING THEIR PRESENT HOLD OVER THEIR "LIBERATED" TERRITORIES. THEY DISMISSED THE FARN/FAPU AS AN IDEOLOGICALLY ERRATIC AND INCOHERENT BUNCH OF INTELLECTUAL THEORISTS WHO MAY END UP ACCEPTING A SEPARATE PEACE WITH THE DUARTE ADMINISTRATION.

5. ALL THIS IS HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE LEFTIST LABOR SCENE. THE PCES NO DOUBT RESENTS THE REST OF THE LEFT AS A MIXED BAG OF HERETICAL VULGARIANS. UP TO NOW, THE FAPU/FARN GROUP HAS EXERTED THE GREATEST EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER FENASTRAS, WITH THE PCES RUNNING A CLOSE SECOND THANKS TO ITS CONTROL OVER SUCH UNIONS AS THE

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LARGE SICAFE AND THE TRANSPORTATION WORKERS' UNION.
ACCORDING TO OUR LEFTIST LABOR CONTACT, FAPU/FARN
LABOR ACTIVISTS (CIRILO HUEZO, FELIX VANEGAS, MARIO
CABRERA AND CARLOS ERNESTO VASQUEZ SOMETA) CONVOKED

AN "ILLEGAL" FENASTRAS CONVENTION A FEW WEEKS AGO AND NEGLECTED TO INVITE THE PCES-CONTROLLED UNIONS. HE SAID PRO-PCES LEADERS (OF THE TRANSPORTATION WORKERS' UNION) INVITED VASQUEZ SOMETA TO EXPLAIN WHY THE UNION HAD NOT BEEN INVITED TO THE CONVENTION. VASQUEZ SOMETA LAMELY EXPLAINED TO THE UNION LEADERSHIP THAT HE HAD TAKEN IT UPON HIMSELF TO REPRESENT THE TRANSPORTATION

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WORKERS' UNION AND SICAFE DURING THE RECENT FENASTRAS AFFAIR. ACCORDING TO OUR LEFTIST LABOR CONTACT, VASQUEZ SOMETA WAS THEN INVITED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES, AMID JEERING CATCALLS. THE PCES ACTIVISTS, OUR CONTACT CLAIMS, SEE THE FENASTRAS CONVENTION AS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE FAPU/FARN LABOR ACTIVISTS ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF FENASTRAS, LEAVING THE TWO INFLUENTIAL PRO-PCES UNIONS IN THE LURCH.

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6. OUR CONTACT SAID THE PRO-PCES LABOR LEADERS ALSO CHARGED THAT CIRILO HUEZO AND FELIX VANEGAS OF FENASTRAS "MADE A DEAL" WITH THE DUARTE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE TWO RECENT STRIKES BY FAPU/FARN-CONTROLLED FENASTRAS UNIONS. ACCORDING TO THIS VERSION, THE STRIKE OF THE MULTIPESCA, S.A. FISHERY WORKERS (REFTEL A) WAS DECLARED TO BE LEGAL BY THE LABOR COURTS SIMPLY BECAUSE HUEZO HAD MADE A DEAL (A TRADE-OFF) TO MAKE DUARTE LOOK GOOD BY CONSENTING TO THE SETTLEMENT--THROUGH DUARTE'S MEDIATION--OF THE CIRCULO DEPORTIVO (CDI) STRIKE LAST MONTH (REFTEL B). THE PRO-PCES SPOKESMEN TERMED THIS AFFAIR TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF DUARTE/FAPU COLLUSION: FENASTRAS ALLOWED DUARTE A PERSONAL COUP BY APPEARING TO SOLVE THE CDI STRIKE AND RECEIVED A BOOST TO ITS OWN PRESTIGE AS A LABOR FEDERATION BY HAVING THE FISHERY WORKERS STRIKE DECLARED LEGAL BY THE LABOR COURTS (COMMENT: IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH LABOFF, VICE MINISTER OF LABOR MIGUEL ALEJANDRO GALLEGOS INDEED EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE MULTIPESCA STRIKE WAS DECLARED LEGAL. WE BELIEVE THIS STRIKE TO HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF FAPU/FARN BULLYING OF THE UNION'S RANK AND FILE. THERE MAY BE SOMETHING TO THE PCES CHARGE OF A TRADE-OFF DEAL INVOLVING THE GOES).

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7. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THE MOST IMPORTANT PRO-PCES LABOR LEADER, FIDEL PALACIOS OF SICAFE, CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN PLACED IN DIRE STRAITS BY YET ANOTHER

FMLN MEMBER GROUP. PALACIOS REPORTEDLY CLAIMS THAT THE MILITARISTIC ERP HAS VOWED TO CONTINUE ATTACKING COFFEE MILLS (BENEFICIOS). THIS IS PART OF THE ERP'S MILITARY CAMPAIGN TO SABOTAGE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND CREATE DISCONTENT AMONG THE MASSES BY DESTROYING SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT (COFFEE, COTTON). PALACIOS IS SAID TO BE DUMBFOUNDED AT THE ERP'S PLAN TO ATTACK ONLY THOSE BENEFICIOS WHOSE WORKERS ARE ORGANIZED BY HIS UNION, SICAFE. DURING A RECENT MEETING WITH PCES/FAL COMMANDERS, PALACIOS SUPPOSEDLY LEARNED THAT THE ERP WAS PLANNING THE ATTACKS. TWO OF THEM, AGAINST THE EL TAZUMAL (SANTA ANA) AND SAN AMBROSIO (USULUTAN) BENEFICIOS, HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE. THE ERP PLANS TO ATTACK SEVERAL OTHER BENEFICIOS; THOSE BELONGING TO THE ALVAREZ, GOLDTREE LIEBES AND PANAMA FIRMS. PALACIOS' SICAFE ORGANIZES THE WORKERS IN ALL OF THEM AND RECENTLY WON A STRIKE (REFTEL C) FOR BETTER SALARY LEVELS TO ALL COFFEE MILL WORKERS AND COFFEE PICKERS. PALACIOS REPORTEDLY CLAIMS THAT HIS PCES/FAL FRIENDS COULD NOT EXPLAIN TO HIM WHY THE ERP HAD TRAGETTED "HIS" BENEFICIOS. PALACIOS WAS ALLEGEDLY TOLD TO BITE THE BULLET, SINCE THE PCES/FAL, ALREADY FACING THE FAPU/FARN'S ENMITY, FEELS CONSTRAINED TO TOLERATE THE ERP'S MILITARISTIC PRIORITIES FOR UNITY'S SAKE.

8. COMMENT: THE PCES/FAL IS COMMITTED TO A STRUGGLE OVER FENASTRAS. THEY HAVE INSTRUCTED THEIR CADRES TO PRIORITIZE WRESTING AWAY THIS FEDERATION FROM THE

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GREEDY CLUTCHES OF THE FAPU/FARN. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE, THE FAPU/FARN HAS GATHERED TOGETHER ITS FENASTRAS UNIONS AND SEVERAL "INDEPENDENT" UNIONS UNDER ITS TUTELAGE INTO THE NEW "UNIDAD AMPLIADA DE SINDICATOS" (AMPLIFIED UNION OF LABOR UNIONS). FAPU MAY THUS BE PREPARING ITSELF FOR THE TIME IT MAY HAVE TO LEAVE THE MUSYGES CONFEDERATION TO THE PCES/FAL AND FPL LABOR FRONT FEDERATIONS (FESTIAVTSCES, FUSS, FSR). IT WOULD THEN BE FREE TO DEAL MORE OPENLY WITH THE DUARTE ADMINISTRATION, AT LEAST ON LABOR ISSUES. ALTHOUGH THE SCENE IS STILL UNCERTAIN, IT SEEMS AT LEAST

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CLEAR THAT THE PCES LABOR ACTIVISTS WERE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD DURING THE LAST FENASTRAS CONVENTION. TO THE DEGREE THAT THIS REPRESENTS A REAL LABOR-LEVEL RIFT BETWEEN THE PCES AND THE FAPU, THE ADVANTAGE FOR THE GOES IS OBVIOUS.

9. IF PALACIOS' MOOD HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO US ACCURATELY, IT COULD BE THAT HE WANTS TO ABSOLVE HIMSELF BEFORE THE EMBASSY AND THE GOES OF ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ERP CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE COFFEE MILLS. HE HAS REASON TO TRY TO COVER HIS DERRIERE: IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT PALACIOS' SICAFE IS A SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE PCES/FAL GUERRILLA EFFORT. SINCE THE PCES/FAL HAS ALLEGEDLY SANCTIONED THE ERP ATTACKS, PALACIOS MAY BECOME THE ODD MAN OUT AND A TARGET OF THE GOES' OR PRIVATE INTERESTS' WRATH OVER ATTACKS AGAINST COFFEE MILLS. WE LOVE TO SEE 'EM SQUIRM.
END COMMENT.

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