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ate Printed: 11/14/1997

DOC NUMBER: 8500AFEM09228

CHANNEL: n/a

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7552

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03228

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR
TAGS: PINS, PINR, SHUM, SOCI, PREL, GT
SUBJ: BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE
- MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP (GAM)

- REF: (A) 84 GUATEMALA 6866 (B) 84 GUATEMALA 7120
- (C) 84 GUATEMALA 8575 (D) 84 GUATEMALA 9247
- (E) 84 GUATEMALA 9727 (F) 84 GUATEMALA 10345
- (G) 84 GUATEMALA 10684 (H) 84 GUATEMALA 10898
- (I) 84 GUATEMALA 11174 (J) 84 GUATEMALA 12278
- (K) 84 GUATEMALA 12716 (L) 84 GUATEMALA 13092
- (M) GUATEMALA 388 (N) GUATEMALA 797
- (O) GUATEMALA 1198 (P) GUATEMALA 1668
- (Q) GUATEMALA 2421
- (R) SCHIVELEY/SCHOFIELD TELCONS MARCH 27 AND 28
- (S) GUATEMALA 3116

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR Date: 3/17/98

RELEASE DECLASSIFY

EXCISE DECLASSIFY EO Citations

DENY IN PART

(C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

SUMMARY

FOIA Exemptions _____ TS authority to

PA Exemptions _____ CLASSIFY as S or C Sec. _____

DOWNGRADE TS to S or C

MESSAGE SUMMARIZES PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING ON GAM
THROUGH EARLY MARCH. A SUMMARY OF GAM ACTIVITIES

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IN MARCH IS ALSO PROVIDED WITH SOME EMPHASIS ON ITS
ACTIVIST ACTIVITIES (BLOCKING TRAFFIC, OCCUPATION
OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES, ETC.) AND THE GOG REACTION

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TO THOSE ACTIVITIES. MESSAGE ENDS WITH REFERENCE TO MESSAGE REPORTING ON HECTOR GOMEZ'S MURDER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ABOVE LIST OF 20 REFTELS/REFTELCONS DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH ACRONYM, GAM) FOR THE REAPPEARANCE OF RELATIVES. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES THOSE MESSAGES, AS WELL PROVIDES UP-TO-DATE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

2. INSOFAR AS EMBASSY IS ABLE TO ASCERTAIN, THE FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE OF THIS GROUP WAS IN EARLY JULY, 1984, WHEN A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS ASKING FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DISAPPEARANCES OF SEVERAL DOZEN PERSONS AND CALLING UPON RELATIVES OF MISSING PERSONS TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP. THE ADDRESS GIVEN IN THE ADVERTISEMENT WAS THAT OF THE PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL'S (PBI) GUATEMALA OFFICE. (REFTEL A). SHORTLY THEREAFTER, MEMBERS OF THE GAM APPROACHED THE EMBASSY ASKING FOR OUR ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF 67 MISSING PERSONS. (REFTEL B).

3. ON SEPTEMBER 13, GAM REPRESENTATIVES WERE RECEIVED BY THE CHARGE (GAMBLE), AT THEIR REQUEST, AND AGAIN REPEATED THEIR REQUEST FOR OUR INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE MISSING PERSONS. LATER THAT DAY THE CHARGE MET WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER MARROQUIN, TOLD HIM ABOUT THE MEETING, STRESSED USG CONCERN ABOUT MISSING PERSONS AND REITERATED

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THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT THE U.S. PLACES ON HUMAN RIGHTS. (REFTEL E). IN AUGUST 1984, THE GAM MET UNHRC SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR LORD COLVILLE (REFTEL C). DURING HER LATE SEPTEMBER VISIT TO GUATEMALA, DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER FOR GUATEMALA, MARIANNE GUSTAFSON, ALSO MET WITH THE GROUP (REFTEL F).

4. IN MID-OCTOBER 1984, GAM ORGANIZED A PEACEFUL 21 KM MARCH FROM NEARBY SAN LUCAS TO GUATEMALA CITY, WHICH CULMINATED IN A SHORT RALLY IN FRONT OF THE NATIONAL PALACE, FOLLOWED BY A MASS CELEBRATED AT THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL. THE MARCHERS NUMBERED BETWEEN

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150 TO 750 (REFTELS G AND I). EMBASSY REPORTING OF THE MARCH NOTED THE LINKAGE OF PBI AND GAM. IN ADDITION, AN EARLIER REPORT (REFTEL D) REPORTED ON THE POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN SOME OF THE DISAPPEARED AND THE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS.

5. IN LATE NOVEMBER 1984, MEMBERS OF THE GAM ORGANIZED ANOTHER PUBLIC EVENT, A "SYMBOLIC JOURNEY" TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. MEMBERS MET WITH THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AND AGAIN DEMANDED ACTION IN LOCATING THEIR MISSING RELATIVES. A FEW DAYS LATER THEY WERE RECEIVED BY CHIEF OF STATE GEN. MEJIA AND THEY REPEATED THEIR DEMANDS (REFTEL J). A SECOND MEETING WITH GEN. MEJIA ON NOVEMBER 30 LED TO THE FORMATION OF A GOVERN-

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7553

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E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR

TAGS: PINS, PINR, SHUM, SOCI, PREL, GT

SUBJ: BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE

MENT COMMISSION WHOSE COMMISSION WAS TO INVESTIGATE AND REPORT ON ALL THE GAM CHARGES (REFTEL K). IN MID-DECEMBER 1984, GAM MET WITH THE GOG TRIPARTITE COMMISSION (REFTEL L).

6. IN EARLY JANUARY 1985, ABOUT 115 MEMBERS OF GAM HELD A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION ON THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE EMBASSY. THEY PRESENTED EMBOFF WITH A SHORT MESSAGE FOR AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN, WHICH REQUESTED THAT HE USE HIS GOOD OFFICES IN FINDING THEIR MISSING RELATIVES (REFTEL M). THROUGHOUT JANUARY, GAM HELD SEVERAL MORE SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS AND MEETINGS DESIGNED TO PUBLICIZE THEIR CAMPAIGN. THEY MET AGAIN WITH UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON GUATEMALA, LORD COLVILLE (REFTELS N AND O).

7. IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1985, GAM LEADERS MET WITH STATE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HA/HR, JAMES THYDEN DURING HIS VISIT TO GUATEMALA. OFFICE DIRECTOR THYDEN LISTENED

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TO THEIR PLEAS AND SUGGESTED TO THEM THAT A HIGH INTERNATIONAL PROFILE WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES, SINCE PUBLICITY COULD BE THEIR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL (REFTEL P). ON MARCH 20 THE DCM HOSTED A RECEPTION FOR GUATEMALA DESK OFFICER JAMES CASON, TO WHICH THE TWO MAJOR LEADERS OF GAM WERE INVITED. THEY MADE EXCELLENT USE OF THE RECEPTION TO DISCUSS THEIR POSITION WITH A WIDE RANGE OF GOVERNMENT, MILITARY AND PRIVATE SECTOR OFFICIALS.

8. THROUGHOUT MARCH OF THIS YEAR, GAM HELD MORE PUBLIC ACTIONS TO EMPHASIZE THEIR OBJECTIVES. ON MARCH 1, APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED GAM MEMBERS OCCUPIED THE OFFICE OF THE GUATEMALAN ATTORNEY

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GENERAL, PROTESTING BOTH THE LACK OF ACTION BY THE GOG TRIPARTITE COMMISSION AND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S FAILURE TO MEET WITH THEM. ON MARCH 6, GAM AGAIN APPEARED BEFORE THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. ON MARCH 19, GAM MEMBERS EFFECTED A SYMBOLIC OCCUPATION OF THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS, SHOUTED DOWN SOME OF ITS MEMBERS, AND AGAIN DEMANDED THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S ACTION ON THE MISSING AND POLITICAL PRISONERS.

9. BEGINNING IN MID-MARCH OF THIS YEAR, THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT BEGAN TO EXPRESS DISAPPROVAL OF THE TACTICS CHOSEN BY GAM TO PURSUE THEIR OBJECTIVES. BETWEEN MARCH 15-20, BOTH THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, RAMON ZELADA CARRILLO AND THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, GUSTAVO ADOLFO LOPEZ SANDOVAL, WARNED THE GAM AGAINST HOLDING ANY FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS THAT RESULTED IN BLOCKING TRAFFIC. (NOTE: THE OCCUPATION OF THE ASSEMBLY (PARA 8)

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ALSO RESULTED IN GOVERNMENT WARNINGS AGAINST ILLEGAL ACTIONS BY GAM.) COUPLED WITH THESE WARNINGS WAS A STATEMENT REPORTEDLY MADE BY THE CHIEF OF STATE, GENERAL OSCAR HUMBERTO MEJIA VICTORES, ("LA PALABRA", MARCH 15, 1985), IN WHICH HE CHARGED THAT THE GAM WAS BEING MANIPULATED BY THE INSURGENTS AND QUESTIONED THE SOURCE OF THE GROUP'S FUNDS. IN REACTION, MEMBERS OF GAM SHARPLY DENIED ANY LINKAGE TO THE EXTREME LEFT.

10. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ANY PUBLIC ACTIVITIES BY GAM FROM APPROXIMATELY MARCH 22 UNTIL THE FIRST DAYS OF APRIL.

11. ON MARCH 25, DEPARTMENT INFORMALLY ADVISED EMBASSY THAT A HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP IN WASHINGTON HAD PROVIDED THE DEPARTMENT WITH THE NAMES OF FOUR MEMBERS OF GAM WHO HAD ALLEGEDLY RECEIVED VARIOUS THREATS FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES. HECTOR ORLANDO GOMEZ CALITO WAS INCLUDED ON THAT SHORT LIST. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL S, GOMEZ WAS NOT THEN KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY IN ANY CAPACITY RELATED TO GAM. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE SPECIFICS OF GOMEZ'S MURDER HAVE BEEN PROVIDED

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