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DEA NO. S-ZK-89-0076

DEA FOR AD/BURKE, A/LAWN, OF/HIGDON, DO/GREENE, OC/WHITE
MIAMI PLS PASS TO AUSA - PAT SULLIVAN
STATE FOR L - JUDGE SOFAER AND ARA/DAS SKOL
STATE PLS PASS TO DOJ FOR MARK RICHARD

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2001 2007

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT
TAGS: BL, SNAR, KJUS
SUBJECT: ARCE ARREST SPARKS UNIVERSAL APPLAUSE IN BOLIVIA

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

2. BOLIVIANS ARE SURPRISED AND PLEASED AT THE ARREST
OF LUIS ARCE GOMEZ, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST DESPISED
MEN. IN ADDITION TO HIS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES WHILE
INTERIOR MINISTER FOR GEN. GARCIA MEZA (1980-81), IN
WHICH MANY POLITICIANS--INCLUDING MIR LEADERS, LABOR
LEADERS AND OTHERS--WERE TORTURED, KIDNAPPED AND KILLED,

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ARCE WAS ONE OF THE PRIME MOVERS OF BOLIVIA FROM A COCA PASTE PRODUCING COUNTRY TO A COCAINE PRODUCER/EXPORTER, WORKING WITH HIS COUSIN. ROBERTO SUAREZ GOMEZ AND INTERIOR HENCHMEN TO CONTROL AND PROFIT FROM THE DRUG TRADE. AS MUCH AS ANY MAN, HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MARRIAGE OF GOVERNMENT AND NARCOTRAFFICKING IN BOLIVIA IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THIS DECADE. ALTHOUGH BOLIVIANS MAY DISAGREE AS TO WHETHER ARCE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TRIED FIRST IN THE U.S. OR BOLIVIA, MOST ARE HAPPY THAT HE WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, AND BELIEVE THAT IS MORE LIKELY IN THE UNITED STATES THAN AT HOME WHERE THERE IS--WITH GOOD REASON--LITTLE FAITH IN JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES. END SUMMARY.

ARCE GOMEZ ARREST: ABOUT TIME

3. BOLIVIANS OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS HAVE EXPRESSED WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS JUBILATION AND ASTONISHMENT AT THE UNEXPECTED ARREST LAST SUNDAY OF LUIS ARCE GOMEZ, THE 51-YEAR-OLD FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER DURING THE BRIEF BUT BLOODY REIGN OF GENERAL LUIS GARCIA MEZA (1980-81). WHILE MANY POLITICIANS, JOURNALISTS, LABOR LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PREDICTABLY HAVE OPENED FIRE ON THE GOVERNMENT FOR SENDING ARCE TO THE UNITED STATES FOR TRIAL BEFORE BOLIVIAN COURTS HAD THEIR TURN, ALL APPLAUD HIS DETENTION AND PROSPECT THAT HE WILL--AT LONG LAST--BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE SOMEWHERE.

FRONT PAGE NEWS

4. THE LOCAL PRESS IS FULL OF INTERVIEWS, EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARY ABOUT THE ARREST. ON THE EVENING NEWS HIS DETENTION RELEGATED PRESIDENT PAZ ZAMORA'S DEPARTURE FOR ARGENTINA TO NEGOTIATE TERMS OF A NEW GAS CONTRACT--ESSENTIAL TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE WELL-BEING--TO A SECONDARY LEVEL. IN THE BOLIVIAN LEGISLATURE, CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS HEATEDLY DEBATED THE LEGALITY OF THE BOLIVIAN EXPULSION IN THE AISLES AND OVER COFFEE, WHILE SPECULATING ABOUT DETAILS OF HIS CAPTURE AND HIS EXPECTED TIME OF ARRIVAL IN MIAMI. CLEARLY, THE ARCE CAPTURE HAS RIVETED THE NATION'S ATTENTION AS FEW STORIES HAVE THIS YEAR.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSER PAR EXCELLENCE

5. ALL THIS ATTENTION IS JUSTIFIABLE GIVEN ARCE'S ROLE IN ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S BLOODIEST RECENT PERIODS. EVEN THOUGH ARCE IS NO HOUSEHOLD NAME IN THE UNITED STATES OR IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, HE HAS BEEN ON MANY BOLIVIAN MINDS FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS. IN FACT, THERE IS PERHAPS NO BOLIVIAN AS DESPISED BY HIS COUNTRYMEN AS ARCE GOMEZ. IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE RICH AND POWERFUL ARE RARELY ARRESTED, LET ALONE JAILED FOR LONG FOR OFFENSES COMMITTED IN OFFICE, THE ARREST OF ARCE HAS

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FLABBERGASTED AND SATISFIED THE JADED MAN ON THE STREET.

FROM DEATH SQUAD LEADER TO INTERIOR MINISTER

6. ARCE FIRST CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE NATION ON JULY 18, 1980, WHEN, AS AN OBSCURE LT. COLONEL AND HEAD C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 LA PAZ 16066

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OF THE PRESIDENT'S SECURITY GUARD, HE HELPED OVERTHROW THE CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF LIDIA GUEILER TEJADA. THE LEADER OF THE MILITARY COUP THAT DAY THAT BEGAN IN TRINIDAD AND QUICKLY SPREAD TO GARRISONS IN LA PAZ AND SANTA CRUZ WAS GENERAL LUIS GARCIA MEZA. UNLIKE THE FREQUENT COUPS THAT HAD PLAGUED BOLIVIA FOR DECADES, GARCIA MEZA PLANNED AND USED UNACCUSTOMED VIOLENCE AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, EMPLOYING GANGS OF ARGENTINE, ITALIAN AND GERMAN FAR RIGHT PARAMILITARY THUGS THAT HAD BEEN HIRED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTIMIDATING THE OPPOSITION AND LIQUIDATING "LEFTISTS" IN LABOR, THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELSEWHERE. ARCE GOMEZ WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND GIVEN OVERSIGHT OF THE PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS.

TORTURE AND MURDER OF CONGRESSMEN

7. THE DAY OF THE COUP, PARAMILITARY PERSONNEL DRESSED IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES LED BY ARCE, AND ADVISED BY GERMAN WAR CRIMINAL AND NAZI **KLAUS ALTMAN-BARBIE**, STORMED OUT OF THE BACK OF THREE AMBULANCES AND FOUR UNLICENSED JEEPS AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BOLIVIAN LABOR CENTRAL (COB) IN LA PAZ, WHERE SOME 35 LABOR LEADERS, POLITICIANS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY WERE MEETING IN EMERGENCY SESSION TO PLAN THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE GROWING COUP. WHILE 30 STOOD GUARD OUTSIDE, TWENTY PARAMILITARY OPERATIVES ENTERED THE BUILDING FIRING. IN THE ENSUING CHAOS, 18 PARTICIPANTS ESCAPED (INCLUDING OSCAR EID, SECOND IN THE CURRENT MIR HIERARCHY), BUT A MINING LEADER WAS KILLED AND TWO CONGRESSMEN, CARLOS FLORES BEDREGAL AND MARCELO QUIROGA SANTA CRUZ, WERE WOUNDED AND TAKEN AWAY WITH THE OTHERS. DURING THE FOLLOWING DAYS, QUIROGA, SANTA CRUZ DEPUTY AND LEADER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY-1, WAS TORTURED AND FINALLY KILLED,

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AS WAS FLORES. QUIROGA'S DEATH WAS A PARTICULARLY SHOCKING BLOW TO THE LEFT. A PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT AND THE LEFT'S MOST POPULAR AND CHARISMATIC SPEAKER AND REPRESENTATIVE, QUIROGA WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE MOST BRILLIANT OF HIS GENERATION AND THE BEST HOPE FOR THE LEFT'S POLITICAL FUTURE.

MASSACRE OF MIR LEADERS

8. IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED THE COUNTRY'S 159TH COUP AND THE ARREST AND EXILE OF PRESIDENT GUEILER, ARCE AND HIS MEN ARRESTED HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, LABOR LEADERS, MINERS AND POLITICIANS. MANY WENT UNDERGROUND OR ABROAD. THE COB HEADQUARTERS WAS DEMOLISHED FOR A PARKING LOT, THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES WERE CLOSED INDEFINITELY, AND LABOR ACTIVITY WAS DECLARED ILLEGAL. ARCE TOLD THE PRESS THAT OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME HENCEFORTH "BETTER CARRY THEIR LAST WILLS AND TESTAMENTS UNDER THEIR ARMS--THERE WILL BE NO PARDONING." HE CREATED AN ELITE GROUP KNOWN AS THE SERVICIOS ESPECIALES DE SEGURIDAD (SES), OR SPECIAL SECURITY FORCES, TO ARREST, TORTURE AND, IF NECESSARY, KILL OPPONENTS. ON JANUARY 15, 1981, SES FORCES RAIDED THE CLANDESTINE HEADQUARTERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF THE LEFT (MIR)--THE PARTY FOUNDED BY NOW PRESIDENT PAZ ZAMORA--ON CALLE HARRINGTON IN LA PAZ, MASSACRING EIGHT TOP MIR LEADERS ON THE SPOT. AMONG OTHER ATROCITIES ATTRIBUTED TO ARCE AND HIS ASSOCIATES IS THE MURDER OF PADRE LUIS ESPINAL, EDITOR OF THE LA PAZ DAILY NEWSPAPER "HOY," WHO WAS TORTURED AND HAD HIS TONGUE CUT OUT BEFORE FINALLY BEING MURDERED.

COCAINE, INC.

9. IN ADDITION TO COMMITTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES OF A MAGNITUDE UNKNOWN IN RECENT BOLIVIAN HISTORY, ARCE AND HIS HENCHMEN ALSO HELPED CREATE--IF ONLY MOMENTARILY--
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A NARCOTGOVERNMENT UNLIKE ANYTHING BOLIVIA HAD WITNESSED UNTIL THAT TIME. EVEN BEFORE TAKING CONTROL OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY, AS FAR BACK AS MARCH 1980, ARCE AND HIS COUSIN ROBERTO SUAREZ GOMEZ HAD BEGUN INSERTING

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TRUSTED PERSONS INTO KEY ANTI-NARCOTICS POSITIONS, PUTTING INTO PLACE A DRUG NETWORK THAT EVENTUALLY WOULD SHIP COKE TO CLIENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. ONCE IN GOVERNMENT, ARCE AND HIS LIEUTENANTS IN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY BEGAN EXTORTING MONEY FROM TRAFFICKERS FOR PROTECTION. THEY TOOK CONTROL OF THE MOVEMENT OF COCA LEAF, EXACTING TRIBUTE FOR PASSAGE OF EACH TRUCK FROM THE FIELDS TO PROCESSING LABORATORIES. THE SES WAS PRESSED INTO SERVICE TO COLLECT DRUG MONEY AND OVERSEE THE BUSINESS.

10. DURING HIS TENURE AS INTERIOR MINISTER, ARCE GOMEZ HELPED MOVE BOLIVIA FROM A MERE EXPORTER OF COCA PASTE AND BASE INTO A PRODUCER AND TRAFFICKER OF FINISHED COCAINE, WORKING WITH COUSIN ROBERTO SUAREZ AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS EXTENDED FAMILY. HE SET UP HIS OWN AIRLINE IN SEPTEMBER 1980 (TURBO BOLIVIAN AIRWAYS) TO TRANSPORT DRUGS FOR HIS OWN ACCOUNT, AND ALSO WORKED CLOSELY WITH COUSIN JUAN RENE ARCE MOSCOSO (TRABAJOS AEREOS ORIENTALES-TAO) TOWARD THAT SAME END.

EXILE AND RETURN

11. FOLLOWING THE FALL OF THE GARCIA MEZA REGIME, ARCE WENT INTO HIDING IN ARGENTINA AND LATER RETURNED TO LIVE WITH HIS FAMILY CLANDESTINELY IN THE SANTA CRUZ AREA. HE MAY HAVE ALSO LIVED IN PARAGUAY AND TRAVELED TO BRAZIL DURING THAT PERIOD. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IS THAT HE HAS CONTINUED HIS INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.

COMMENT

12. MUCH MORE THAN A RUN-OF-THE-MILL BOLIVIAN DRUG TRAFFICKER, ARCE GOMEZ' BRUTAL METHODS AND USE OF FOREIGN MERCENARIES TO SUPPRESS BOLIVIAN CITIZENS DURING HIS BRIEF TENURE AS INTERIOR MINISTER CLEARLY MADE HIM NUMEROUS ENEMIES THROUGHOUT BOLIVIAN SOCIETY. IN PARTICULAR, HE ALIENATED MIR LEADERS SUCH AS OSCAR EID AND JAIME PAZ ZAMORA, WHO WERE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SEE HIM DETAINED AND BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS MANY FRIENDS FROM THE GARCIA MEZA REGIME AND IN THE POLITICAL RIGHT WHO HAVE PROTECTED HIM DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS. IN FACT, HE WAS FARMING LAND RENTED TO HIM BY COCHABAMBA CIVIC COMMITTEE LEADER (AND EX-COLONEL) FAUSTINO RICO TORO, A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE NATIONALIST DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (ADN).

13. ALTHOUGH NATIONALISTS AND LEGALISTS COMPLAIN THAT ARCE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TRIED HERE, IN FACT MOST ARE PRAGMATIC ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT HE WOULD USE THREATS AND OTHER MEANS TO ENSURE EARLY RELEASE IF BROUGHT TO

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TRIAL IN BOLIVIA. HE MIGHT ALSO TELL TOO MANY TALES
ON FORMER COLLEAGUES AND MEMBERS OF THE CONSERVATIVE
PARTIES AS WELL IF RETURNED TO BOLIVIA.

GELBARD

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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