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DEXA/LLD
INCOMING

FRP: .2,3,

STATE



25X1

83 1945006 SCR

PAGE 001
TOR: 191734Z AUG 83

NC 1945006

25X1

RR RUEAIB
 ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
 UTS2324
 RR RUEHC
 DE RUEHGT #6885 2302213
 ZNY CCCCC ZZH
 R 182210Z AUG 83
 FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6394
 INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BELIZE 3658
 RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 9842
 RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2954
 RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 6404
 RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0286
 RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0526
 RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0684
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2134
 RUEOEA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
 BT
 C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 06885

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PARM, PGOV, PINS, GT
 SUBJECT: NO FORMAL ARMS REQUEST MADE DURING
 - CODEL WILSON VISIT

REF: GUATEMALA 6829

1. (U) ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL HECTOR MARIO LOPEZ FUENTES IS QUOTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF GUATEMALA'S AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER "LA RAZON" IN ITS AUGUST 17 ISSUE AS SAYING THAT GUATEMALA "MADE TO SENATOR PETER(SIC) WILSON...A FORMAL PETITION FOR MILITARY AID". WHEN ASKED WHAT KIND OF AID WAS REQUESTED HE IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT "THE MILITARY AID CONSISTS MOSTLY OF AVIATION ITEMS SUCH AS HELICOPTERS, PLANES AND PARTS". THE AID WAS NEEDED TO COMBAT THE GUERRILLAS BECAUSE THE TERRITORY WHERE THEY ARE NOW OPERATING "IS VERY MOUNTAINOUS AND THE DISTANCES LONG. THERE ARE PLACES TO WHICH ONE CANNOT GET BY NORMAL MEANS. THERE ARE NOT EVEN ROADS AND ONE HAS TO TRAVEL ON FOOT OR MULE TO RESUPPLY UNITS SENT OUT TO THOSE AREAS."

2. (C) COMMENT: THE ISSUE SEEMS TO BE A SEMANTICAL ONE. DURING GENERAL LOPEZ FUENTES' BRIEFING FOR SENATOR WILSON, GUATEMALA'S MATERIAL NEEDS WERE A RE-OCCURRING THEME AND THE OFFICERS PRESENT ARGUED THAT THE TERRAIN AND THEIR EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES PREVENTED THEM FROM FULLY IMPLEMENTING THEIR PLANS TO DEFEAT THE INSURGENTS. THE STAFFERS REVIEWED GENERALLY THE KIND OF EQUIPMENT WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. WHILE SENATOR WILSON AND HIS AIDES WERE SYMPATHETIC TO GUATEMALA'S PREDICAMENT (AND AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE WAS

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83 1945006 SCR

PAGE 002
TOR: 191734Z AUG 83

NC 1945006

PERSONALLY PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE RESUMPTION
OF MILITARY AID TO GUATEMALA), NOTHING
APPROACHING A "FORMAL" REQUEST WAS MADE
DURING ANY OF THE MEETINGS WHICH THE SENATOR
ATTENDED. FROM A GUATEMALAN PERSONALISTIC
PERSPECTIVE, A LISTING OF THEIR NEEDS IN A
BRIEFING ORCHESTRATED BY THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF
FOR A REPUBLICAN SENATOR FROM THE PRESIDENT'S
HOME STATE MIGHT CONSTITUTE AN OBLIQUE "REQUEST"
FOR SUCH ITEMS. FOR THE PRESENT, HOWEVER, THERE
HAS BEEN NO FOLLOW-UP FROM THE GOG.

CHAPIN
END OF MESSAGE

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