

171841Z SEP 85

DIST: 17 SEPTEMBER 1985
COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR/HONDURAS
SUBJ: MILITARY CONCERN OVER PDC PUBLICITY CONNECTING THE MILITARY WITH THE BOGUS CONFESSION CONCERNING INSURGENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE 1980 MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO
DOI: EARLY SEPTEMBER 1985

SUMMARY: IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1985, ECMFA C-V CHIEF COLONEL PENA WAS THREATENING TO ASK TO BE RELIEVED OF DUTY OVER PUBLICITY CONNECTING HIM WITH A BOGUS CONFESSION CONCERNING THE 1980 MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO WHICH ARENA LEADER D'AUBUISSON USED IN THE 1984 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. PENA INDICATED THAT, IF NECESSARY, HE WOULD IMPLICATE THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE MATTER. PENA ALSO DESCRIBED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH ROBERTO SALAZAR, WHO HAD FABRICATED THE CONFESSION TO ROMERO'S MURDER. PRESIDENT DUARTE AND HIS SECRETARY OF INFORMATION LE CHEVALIER HAVE INDICATED THAT THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE MATTER IS INTENDED TO BUILD A CASE AGAINST D'AUBUISSON. LE CHEVALIER HAS INFORMED PENA AND THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND THAT THEY ARE GUILTY OF NOTHING MORE THAN BEING DUPED. DUARTE, HOWEVER, IS DISPLEASED THAT SENIOR MILITARY WERE AWARE THAT THE CONFESSION WAS FALSE BUT DID NOTHING ABOUT IT. AS OF 4 SEPTEMBER, MOST SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS CONTINUED TO BE CONCERNED THAT THE CASE WILL GET OUT OF HAND.

2. AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER 1985, COLONEL RICARDO ((PENA)) ARBAIZA, THE CHIEF OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR SECTION (C-V) OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES JOINT GENERAL STAFF (EMCFA), WAS THREATENING TO ASK TO

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BE RELIEVED OF DUTY OVER PUBLICITY CONNECTING HIM WITH A BOGUS CONFESSION REGARDING THE 1980 MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR OSCAR ARNULFO ((ROMERO)) USED BY NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE ((ARENA)) LEADER ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON)) ARRIETA IN THE 1984 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. PENA HAD DRAFTED A LETTER TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND PUBLIC SECURITY GENERAL CARLOS EUGENIO ((VIDES)) CASANOVA DENOUNCING THE ACCUSATIONS BEING MADE AGAINST HIM IN THIS RESPECT BY SECRETARY OF INFORMATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLD GERARDO ((LE CHEVALIER)) AND THREATENING TO GO TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE MATTER. PENA SAID THAT IF HE DID GO TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, HE WOULD STATE THAT HIS ACTIONS IN THIS CASE WERE CARRIED OUT ON ORDERS FROM CHIEF, EMCFA, GENERAL ADOLFO ONECIFERO ((BLANDON)).

3. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE TAPE IN QUESTION SHOWS ROBERTO ADALBERTO ((SALAZAR)) COLLIER CLAIMING TO BE "COMANDANTE LOBO" OF THE POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES (FPL) AND TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO. D'AUBUISSON USED THE TAPE IN 1984 AS PROOF THAT THE LEFT, NOT THE RIGHT, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDER. SALAZAR HAS NOW STATED THAT HE WAS PAID TO MAKE THE TAPE. THE SALVADORAN PRESS HAS BEEN CARRYING FULL-PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS BY THE "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC WORKER MOVEMENT" (MODC) USING THE GOVERNING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S (PDC) SYMBOL WHICH LABEL SALAZAR'S CURRENT STATEMENTS AS TRUTH AND D'AUBUISSON'S 1984 ASSERTIONS AS LIES AND WHICH CALL FOR D'AUBUISSON TO SUBMIT TO A PUBLIC TRIAL ON THE MATTER. A SOURCE WITH GOOD ACCESS HAS EXPLAINED THAT THE NAME "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC WORKER MOVEMENT" IS A [REDACTED] CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS JULIO ADOLFO ((REY)) PRENDES AND REY'S VICE MINISTER ROBERTO EDMUNDO ((VIERA)) WHEN THEY PREFER NOT TO PUT AN OFFICIAL STAMP ON THEIR WORK.)

[REDACTED] COMMENT: SALAZAR IS A COMMON CRIMINAL, WHO, WHILE IN PRISON, BECAME FAMILIAR WITH MANY NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH SUBVERSION IN EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS. WITH THESE NAMES, HE CONSTRUCTED HIS TALES IN ORDER TO DUPE THE FIRST NAIVE PERSON WILLING TO PLAY THE ROLE OF INVESTIGATOR.)

4. PENA RECOUNTED HOW HE HAD BECOME INVOLVED IN SALAZAR'S CASE IN 1983 WHEN HE WAS SALVADORAN MILITARY ATTACHE IN HONDURAS. SALAZAR HAD BEEN POINTED OUT TO HIM AS AN FPL LOGISTICS OFFICER DURING A VISIT BY MILITARY ATTACHES TO HONDURAS' CENTRAL PRISON TO WHICH SALAZAR HAS BEEN SENTENCED FOR A COMMON CRIME. ALTHOUGH SALAZAR WOULD NOT SPEAK WITH PENA AT THE TIME, HE REQUESTED THAT PENA VISIT HIM TWO WEEKS LATER. DURING THE VISIT, SALAZAR TOLD PENA THAT HE WAS AN FPL LOGISTICS OFFICER AND THAT IN THIS CAPACITY, HE HAD PAID THE HONDURAN MILITARY CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE (C-11) \$1,500,000 TO PERMIT THE DELIVERY OF ARMS TO SALVADORAN INSURGENTS, AND THAT THE FPL HAD CONSENTED TO THE HONDURAN C-11'S REQUEST THAT HE BE PERMITTED TO CAPTURE TWO TRUCKS CARRYING ARMS FOR THE INSURGENTS TO COVER HIS COOPERATION IN THE ARMS SHIPMENT. SALAZAR ASKED PENA FOR HELP IN LEAVING HONDURAS BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID THAT THE HONDURAN C-11 WOULD HAVE HIM KILLED WHEN HE LEFT PRISON. PENA

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PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION TO SALVADORAN MINISTER VIDES, WHO TOLD HIM TO FORGET SALAZAR BECAUSE SALAZAR COULD BE LYING.

5. PENA SPOKE AGAIN WITH SALAZAR, WHO CLAIMED TO KNOW HOW THE ASSASSINATION OF ROMERO WAS CARRIED OUT AND HOW ROBERTO ((VIERA)), DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF AGRARIAN REFORM (ISTA), AND TWO U.S. ADVISORS FROM THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD) WERE KILLED IN THE SHERATON HOTEL IN SAN SALVADOR IN 1982. PENA WAITED FOR SOME TIME BEFORE DOING ANYTHING FOR SALAZAR. HE THEN ASKED A SALVADORAN MILITARY DOCTOR ATTENDING A MEDICAL CONGRESS IN HONDURAS TO SPEAK TO GENERAL BLANDON ABOUT SALAZAR. BLANDON SET ORDERS THAT PENA BRING SALAZAR TO EL SALVADOR.

6. PENA CONSEQUENTLY BROUGHT SALAZAR TO SAN SALVADOR AND TURNED HIM OVER TO THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE (DNI). THE DNI INTERROGATED SALAZAR AND, IN RESPONSE TO HIS CLAIM THAT HE HAD HIDDEN IN GUATEMALA INCRIMINATING PHOTOGRAPHS OF HONDURAN MILITARY MEMBERS, HAD PENA TAKE HIM TO GUATEMALA, WHERE THEY FOUND NOTHING. PENA THEN TOOK SALAZAR TO HONDURAS AND THE DNI INSTRUCTED PENA TO LET SALAZAR GO. PENA, HOWEVER, WAS AFRAID THAT IF SALAZAR WERE KILLED, HE, PENA, WOULD BE ACCUSED. HE THEREFORE ASKED THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY ATTACHE FOR HELP IN MAKING A VIDEO TAPE OF SALAZAR TO TURN OVER TO JOURNALISTS WHO COULD THEN TESTIFY THAT PENA HAD LET SALAZAR GO FREE AND HAD ALSO PROTECTED HIM FOR SOME TIME. THE TAPE WAS THEREFORE MADE IN THE HOME OF THE VENEZUELAN ATTACHE IN THE PRESENCE OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS. ACCORDING TO PENA, THAT WAS THE EXTENT OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SALAZAR. PENA REMARKED THAT IN HIS OPINION, THE PUBLICITY WHICH LE CHEVALIER AND OTHERS WERE PROMOTING IN THIS CASE WAS NOT DESIGNED AS MUCH TO IMPLICATE D'AUBUISSON AS TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR BLANDON AND VIDES, THEREBY OPENING THE WAY TO APPOINTING CURRENT VICE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY COLONEL CARLOS REYNALDO ((LOPEZ)) NULLA AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND PUBLIC SECURITY. (COMMENT: WHEN SALAZAR WAS INTERROGATED BY DNI, SENIOR DNI OFFICIALS EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT HIS TRUTHFULNESS.)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SATD THAT BOTH DUARTE AND LE CHEVALIER HAVE INDICATED THAT THE PUBLICITY BEING GIVEN TO SALAZAR'S CASE IS INTENDED TO BUILD A CASE AGAINST D'AUBUISSON FOR COMPLICITY, IF NOT ACTUAL PARTICIPATION IN ARCHBISHOP ROMERO'S DEATH. LE CHEVALIER HAS INFORMED PENA, WHO HAS CALLED ON MEMBERS OF HIS MILITARY SCHOOL GRADUATION CLASS OR TANDA FOR ASSISTANCE, THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE SALVADORAN HIGH COMMAND ARE GUILTY OF ANYTHING EXCEPT BEING DUPED BY SALAZAR. LE CHEVALIER HAS ASKED PENA TO CONVEY THESE COMMENTS TO MEMBERS OF HIS TANDA TO ELIMINATE FEARS OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMAND

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

AND THE GOVERNMENT. LE CHEVALIER ALSO TOLD PENA THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR HIM TO ASK TO BE RELIEVED OF DUTY.

ARRESTED IN SAN SALVADOR IN APPROXIMATELY MID-APRIL 1985 FOR ATTEMPTING TO STEAL A MOTORCYCLE BELONGING TO AN ACTIVE PDC MEMBER. THE OWNER RECOGNIZED SALAZAR FROM ARENA'S TAPE OF SALAZAR AND IMMEDIATELY INFORMED THE PDC OF SALAZAR'S ARREST. BY EARLY MAY, PDC LEADERS, WITH DUARTE'S APPROVAL AND LED BY LE CHEVALIER IN THIS INSTANCE, HAD DECIDED TO ATTEMPT TO BRING D'AUBUISSON TO TRIAL OVER SALAZAR'S TAPED STATEMENTS CONCERNING ROMERO'S KILLING.

10. DUARTE HAS INDICATED THAT HE IS DISPLEASED WITH THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND OVER ONE PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE CASE. THIS IS THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND PUBLIC SECURITY AND THE EMCFA WERE AWARE THAT THE INFORMATION ON THE VIDEO TAPE WHICH ARENA USED IN THE 1984 CAMPAIGN WAS FALSE BUT MADE NO EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE INFORMATION OR INFORM ANYONE, ESPECIALLY DUARTE AND THE PDC. DUARTE HAS VOICED HIS DISPLEASURE TO VIDES.

[REDACTED]

12. AS OF 4 SEPTEMBER, THE MOST SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR (ESAF), INCLUDING VIDES, CONTINUED TO BE CONCERNED THAT THIS CASE COULD GET OUT OF HAND. PENA HAS INFORMED BLANDON THAT, IF NECESSARY TO SAVE HIS OWN REPUTATION, HE WOULD IMPLICATE THE ENTIRE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THIS SCANDAL. PENA'S THREAT HAS BEEN INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT PENA WOULD BLAME BLANDON FOR THE WHOLE SCANDAL. IN TURN, BLANDON WOULD PASS RESPONSIBILITY TO VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL RAFAEL ((FLORES)) LIMA; AND FLORES WOULD BE OBLIGED TO KICK THE MATTER UP TO VIDES. TO PREVENT THIS, VIDES HAS BEEN ADVISING DUARTE TO LET THE MATTER DROP. DUARTE HAS ASSURED VIDES THAT HE WOULD NOT ALLOW THE MILITARY HIERARCHY SUFFER SUCH A FATE AND WOULD SEE TO IT THAT THE INCIDENT IS PUT TO REST.

13. [REDACTED] COMMENT: D'AUBUISSON HAS RESPONDED PUBLICLY BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, DESCRIBING THE CHARGES AS A FARSE AND A LIE MOUNTED BY AN INCOMPETENT GOVERNMENT. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THIS ISSUE IS GOING TO FADE AWAY IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.)

14. [REDACTED] COMMENT: BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] COL PENA APPEARS TO BE CONSIDERABLY UNDERSTATING HIS OWN ROLE IN CREATING THE SALAZAR MYTH. THIS IS BECAUSE PENA WAS IN PART MISLEAD BY SALAZAR, WHOSE INITIAL CONTACT WITH PENA WAS ON THE BASIS OF A CALCULATEAD APPEAL TO PENA'S EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FAITH. SALAZAR ESSENTIALLY CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN AND TO REQUIRE COL PENA'S SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE. THIS RESULTED IN PENA DEVELOPING AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH IN SALAZAR'S TRUTHFULNESS, WHICH HE SUSTAINED FAR BEYOND THE POINT WHERE A MORE OBJECTIVE OBSERVER WOULD HAVE DROPPED THE MATTER.)

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