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~~SECRET~~ (When Filled In)



# Intelligence Information Cable

● ROUTINE

IN 035667

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CITE [redacted]

(b)(3)

DIST 10 SEPTEMBER 1976

REPORT CLASS ~~S E C R E T~~--WARNING NOTICE--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE  
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COUNTRY: VENEZUELA

DOI: [redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

SUBJECT: FURTHER EFFECTS OF THE DEATH OF JORGE RODRIGUEZ ON THE  
POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF OCTAVIO LEPAGE AND THE VENEZUELAN  
SECURITY SETUP

ACQ: [redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

SOURCE: SEE BELOW

1. [redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

2. IN ADDITION TO THE MORE PUBLIC ASPECTS OF THE CASE INVOLVING  
THE DEATH OF JORGE R O D R I G U E Z, UNTIL HIS DEATH THE SECRETARY  
GENERAL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE, THE PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS OF  
OCTAVIO L E P A G E, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, HAVE BEEN HURT BY THE LOSS  
OF FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS BECAUSE OF HIS DISMISSAL OF ARISTIDES  
L A N D E R AS DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE FOR THE SERVICES OF  
INTELLIGENCE AND PREVENTION (DISIP). LANDER WAS GIVEN THE POSITION OF

3508-372-4

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[Redacted]

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**SECRET**

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DISIP DIRECTOR AT THE URGING OF A GROUP OF WEALTHY BUSINESSMEN BASED IN ANZOATEGUI STATE. THESE BUSINESSMEN HAD MADE LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE 1973 ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES P E R E Z AND HAD AGREED TO BACK LEPAGE TO OBTAIN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (AD) IN 1978 AND ULTIMATELY THE PRESIDENCY.

3. WHEN RODRIGUEZ WAS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE KIDNAPPING OF THE UNITED STATES BUSINESSMAN WILLIAM F. NIEHOUS, LEPAGE WARNED LANDER AGAINST HARMING RODRIGUEZ PARTIALLY AS A PROTECTION FOR LANDER'S OWN POSITION. LANDER, HOWEVER, TURNED RODRIGUEZ OVER TO HUMBERTO G I F F U N I, WHO WAS THEN DISIP'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR. GIFFUNI, IN TURN, ORDERED THAT RODRIGUEZ BE BEATEN. [Redacted] COMMENT: FOR AN EARLIER (b)(1) (b)(3) REPORT ON RODRIGUEZ' DEATH ON 25 JULY 1976 WHILE IN DISIP CUSTODY

SEE [Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

4. WHEN THE NEWS OF RODRIGUEZ' DEATH WAS RECEIVED, LEPAGE WAS AWARE THAT SOME ACTION AGAINST LANDER WAS NECESSARY; HOWEVER, HE FEARED THAT ANY SUCH ACTION WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE SUPPORT OF THE ANZOATEGUI GROUP. LEPAGE, THEREFORE, DISCUSSED THIS POSSIBILITY WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ WHO INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT RUNNING FOR

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[Redacted]

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RE-ELECTION IN 1978 AND DID NOT CARE ABOUT THE LOSS OF THIS SUPPORT. FURTHERMORE, PEREZ ORDERED LEPAGE TO PREPARE LANDER'S WRITTEN RESIGNATION AND HAVE IT READY FOR LANDER'S IMMEDIATE SIGNATURE.

5.

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

6. THE FOUR DISIP OFFICERS ACCUSED OF BEATING RODRIGUEZ TO DEATH DID NOT, IN FACT, COMMIT THE CRIME. THESE OFFICERS, HOWEVER, HAVE AGREED TO STAND TRIAL AND BE SENTENCED FOR THE CRIME IN RETURN FOR A PAYMENT OF BS. 250,000 (APPROXIMATELY U.S. 58,411) TO EACH OFFICER. THEY HAVE FURTHERMORE BEEN ASSURED THAT THEY WILL BE RELEASED FROM ANY PRISON SENTENCE WITHIN 12 TO 18 MONTHS.

7. THIS OFFER WAS MADE BY GIFFUNI AT THE DIRECTION OF ERASTO FERNANDEZ, HEAD OF ONE OF THE SEVERAL EXTRA-OFFICAL PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE UNITS. FERNANDEZ, WHO AT THAT TIME WAS IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION OF THE NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING, HAS ACCESS TO LARGE AMOUNTS OF OFFICIAL FUNDS AND IS SUPPLYING THE MONEY FOR THE PAYOFFS. THE IDENTITY OF RODRIGUEZ' KILLER IS

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[Redacted]

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NOT KNOWN, AT LEAST PART OF THE BEATING WHICH RESULTED IN HIS DEATH  
WAS ADMINISTERED IN A HOUSE IN THE EL CAFETAL AREA OF CARACAS WHICH  
BELONGS TO FERNANDEZ.

8.

COMMENT:

[Redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

PRESIDENT PEREZ IS UNHAPPY WITH FERNANDEZ' HANDLING OF  
THE NIEHOUS/RODRIGUEZ AFFAIR. AS A RESULT, FERNANDEZ' INFLUENCE WITH  
THE PRESIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE CONSIDERABLY DIMINISHED. THE RECENT  
APPOINTMENT OF RETIRED BRIG. GENERAL RAUL G I M E N E Z GAINZA, ONE  
OF FERNANDEZ' CHIEF RIVALS FOR PRESIDENTIAL FAVOR IN THE SECURITY/  
INTELLIGENCE FIELD, AS LANDER'S REPLACEMENT IS A SIGNIFICANT SETBACK  
TO FERNANDEZ WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE NOMINATION OF LANDER AS  
DIRECTOR OF DISIP.)

9.

[Redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

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