

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LA PAZ 06049 01 OF 02 132315Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 MC-02
ACDA-12 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /071 W
-----039081 132328Z /61

O R 132225Z JUL 79
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7251
INFO CINCSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ
USAFSO HOWARD AFB CZ/LA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LA PAZ 6049

E.O. 12065: GDS 7/2/85 (BOEKER, PAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: MASS, BL
SUBJECT: MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR BOLIVIA

REF: (A) STATE 207984 310241Z AUG 77
(B) STATE 252478 DTD 211400Z OCT 77
(C) STATE 47743 DTD 240237Z FEB 78
(D) LA PAZ 5726

1. CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.
2. THE BOLIVIA AIR FORCE (BAF) HAS REQUESTED A LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE FOR THE FOLLOWING AIR DEFENSE WEAPONS SYSTEM AND RELATED SUPPORT ITEMS:
 - 10 F-5E AIRCRAFT
 - 2 F-5B'S
 - SPARE PARTS FOR 2 YEARS
 - RELATED GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT
 - RELATED PILOT AND CIRCAFT MECHANIC TRAINING IN THE USA
 - RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN BOLIVIA
 - RELATED APPROPRIATE AIR DEFENSE MUNITIONS

3. THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO PARA 5E, REFERENCE A.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LA PAZ 06049 01 OF 02 132315Z

A. THE BAF HAS NO VIABLE AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY. THE BAF DEFENSIVE AIR ORDER OF BATTLE INCLUDES EIGHT VERY OLD AND marginally ARMED AND MAINTAINED F-86 AIRCRAFT OF WHICH POSSIBLE 4 COULD BE LAUNCHED SIMULTANEOUSLY AND THIRTEEN EVEN OLDER T-33 AND TF-33 AIRCRAFT, OF WHICH 6 OR 7 COULD BE LAUNCHED SIMULTANEOUSLY. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ONLY 50 PERCENT

OF THESE AIRCRAFT COULD BE TURNED TO A SECOND SORTIE. THE BAF CL-
EARLY AND SERIOUSLY RECOGNIZES ITS PRIMARY MISSION TO DEFEND, IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE OTHER BOLIVIAN ARMED
FORCES, THE TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY OF BOLIVIA. AT THE SAME TIME,
THE BAF, AND ALL OF BOLIVIA'S NEIGHBORS (EXCEPT PERHAPS PARAGUAY).
REALIZE THAT THE BAF DOES NOT POSSESS A DETERRENT DEFENSIVE CAP-
ABILITY. THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL TENSIONS STEMMING FROM HIS-
TORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY TERRITORIAL
DISPUTES PROVIDE THE BAF A BONA FIDE REQUIREMENT TO PURCHASE
A LIMITED NUMBER OF MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. THE BAF (AND ALSO THE
OTHER ARMED FORCES) BELIEVE THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFLICT
WITHIN THE REGION IS REAL. THIS
VIEW IS HELD NOT ONLY BY THE HIGH COMMAND, BUT ALSO THE COMPANY
AND FIELD GRADE OFFICERS. THE GOB HAS NOT EXPENDED
FUNDS TO MODERNIZE THE BAF FIGHTER FLEET SINCE THE
MODEST ACQUISITION OF THE KOREAN WAR VINTAGE F-86 AIRCRAFT FROM
VENEZUELA IN THE EARLY 1970'S.
FURTHER, THE IMPENDING WITHDRAWAL OF THE ARMED FORCES FROM DIRECT
INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE AVOWED PURPOSE OF
RETURNING TO THE BARRACKS, HAS
PLACED VERY HEAVY INTERNAL PRESSURES ON THE BAF LEADERS TO INITIATE
A TOKEN (ALBET COSTLY) MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. BOLIVIAN LEADERS CANNOT

IGNORE OR DISCOUNT SUCH PRESSURES IN LIGHT OF THE
IMMINENT RETURN TO NON-MILITARY GOVERNMENT, NOR SHOULD WE. IN
ADDITION TO THE F-5, BAF ACQUISITION STUDIES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LA PAZ 06049 01 OF 02 132315Z

ARE KNOWN TO INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF MIRAGE AND JAGUAR AIRCRAFT.

(B) ACQUISITION OF THE F-5 AIRCRAFT WOULD PERMIT THE BAF TO
ORGANIZE AND TRAIN A MODEST AIR DEFENSE FORCE. WHILE THE EFFECTIVE-
NESS OF SUCH A FORCE IS DEBATABLE IN LIGHT OF THE OVERWHELMING
MATERIEL SUPERIORITY OF BOLIVIA'S
NEIGHBORS (EXCEPTING PARAGUAY), IT WOULD PROVIDE BOLIVIA
WITH A MARGINAL AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY. THE PROVISION OF F-5
AIRCRAFT TO BOLIVIA WOULD NOT EXACERBATE THE ARMS IMBALANCE
OF THE REGION. IN FACT, IT WOULD
SERVE TO REDUCE THE PRESENT IMBALANCE. NEITHER WOULD SUCH AN
ACQUISITION SERVE TO INTRODUCE FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS WEAPON SYSTEM
TO SOUTH AMERICA.

(C) THE BAF, WITH APPROPRIATE TRAINING, SHOULD BE ABLE TO
EMPLOY AND MAINTAIN THE F-5 SYSTEM. WE ESTIMATE THAT TWO OR THREE
CIVILIAN TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THE FIRST 2
YEARS AFTER ACQUISITION. THIS WOULD ENABLE THE BAF TO INITIALLY
MAINTAIN AND SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOP A SATISFACTORY
MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY. THE BAF HAS PILOTS WHO, WITH NORMAL
FAMILIARIZATION TRAINING IN CONUS, WOULD BE FULLY QUALIFIED
TO PILOT THE F-5.

(D) GOB HAS REQUESTED USG FINANCING OR SALE APPROVAL WITH
SUBSEQUENT COMMERCIAL FINANCING. THE BAF DESIRES THE MOST REASON-
ABLE INTEREST RATES POSSIBLE WITH A 2 YEAR GRACE PERIOD FOLLOWED
BY AN EXTENDED REPAYMENT SCHEDULE (15 TO 20 YEARS TOTAL. THE BAF
COMMAND EXPRESSED VERBALLY, IN
CONVERSATIONS WITH US AMBASSADOR BOEKER AND MEMBERS OF THIS
MILGP, THAT THE REPAYMENT OF SUCH LOANS WOULD COME FROM THE
NORMAL BAF YEARLY BUDGET,
SUPPLEMENTED IF AND AS NECESSARY BY INCOME DERIVED FROM COMMERCIAL
UTILIZATION OF THE BAF FLEET OF C-130S AND F-27S.

(E) WE BELIEVE BOLIVIA WILL ATTEMPT TO FINANCE SUCH A PURCHASE
THROUGH SOME MEDIUM TERM BORROWING ARRANGEMENT FROM
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LA PAZ 06049 01 OF 02 132315Z

COMMERCIAL SOURCES REPAYMENTS, NOT TO BEGIN BEFORE 1981,
WHICH, IF THE CASE, WOULD POSTPONE ANY IMMEDIATE IMPACT
UPON THE BOLIVIAN ECONOMY. AMORTIZATION WOULD DERIVE
FROM THE REGULAR AIRFORCE BUDGET WHICH BAF SOURCES
INDICATE WILL NOT REQUIRE ANY APPRECIABLE INCREASE
BECAUSE OF INTER ALIA INCREASED REVENUES FROM THEIR AIR
CARGO SERVICE. MOREOVER, IF BOLIVIA IS DETERMINED TO GO
THROUGH WITH THIS AIRFORCE UPGRADING, PURCHASE OF THE
F-5'S WOULD CONSTITUTE A BURDEN OF CONSIDERABLY LESS
DIMENSION THAN WOULD PURCHASE OF KNOWN ALTERNATIVE
AIRCRAFT (I.E., A PURCHASE OF \$75-100 AS OPPOSED TO
APPROXIMATELY \$200 MILLION).

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LA PAZ 06049 02 OF 02 132254Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 MC-02
ACDA-12 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /071 W
-----038964 132330Z /61
O R 132225Z JUL 79
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7252
INFO USCINCSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

USAFSO HOWARD AFB CZ LA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LA PAZ 6049

(F) THIS PROPOSED SALE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY IN THAT IT (A) PROMOTES THE SECURITY OF A NATION TRADIIONALLY FRIENDLY TO THE USG, (B) WILL NOT INTRODUCE ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS WHICH WOULD CREATE A NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER COMBAT CAPABILITY AND (D) PROVIDES TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO ESTABLISH ELECTED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, WITH THE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY RETURNING TO CONVENTIONAL FUNCTIONS.

(G) BOLIVIA HAS JUST HELD ITS FIRST ELECTIONS IN SOME TWELVE YEARS, AND PROBABLY THE CLEANEST IN ITS HISTORY. A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED ON AUGUST 6, 1979. MOREOVER, ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY AND ONE OF THE BEST IN LATIN AMERICA, AND AUGURS EXTREMELY WELL FOR THE FUTURE. THERE ARE NO KNOWN POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND BASIC FREEDOMS HAVE BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED FOR MANY MONTHS NOW. HUMAN RIGHTS POSE NO PROBLEM IN THE SALE OF THESE AIRCRAFT.

(H) THE CURRENT BAF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT ARE OLD AND OBSOLETE. THEY ARE NOT CAPABLE OF MEETING THE LEGITIMATE DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS OF BOLIVIA. THE BAF HAS CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THIS SITUATION AND IS DETERMINED TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LA PAZ 06049 02 OF 02 132254Z

AQUIRE LIMITED NUMBERS OF MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. THEIR STUDIES HAVE CENTERED IN THE US F-5, THE FRENCH MIRAGE AND THE BRITISH JAGUAR. THE FACT THAT THE BAF IS CONSIDERING OTHER CANDIDATE AIRCRAFT SHOULD NOT BE CONSTURED AS A PLOY ON THEIR PART TO PRESSURE US INTO APPROVING THIS SALE. THE MERITS OF THIS CASE SHOULD BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF A CLIENT NATION WITH A VALID NATIONAL DEFENSE REQUIREMENT APPROACHING ITS TRADITIONAL AND PREFERRED SOURCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT (THE US). THE FACT THAT THE BAF WITH CURRENT GOB BACKING, HAS MADE A BASIC DECISION TO BUY SOME TYPE OF MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT IS IMPORTANT. OF THE THREE CANDIDATE AIRCRAFT, ONLY THE F-5 IS A DEFENSE ORIENTED FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. THE OTHER TWO CANDIDATES ARE DUAL CAPABLE FIGHTER BOMBERS. THE F-5 ALSO PRESENTS THE LOWEST COST OPTION. WHEN VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS DEFENSIVE ORIENTATION, THE EXTREME WEAKNESS OF THE BAF, AND FACT THAT ALL OF BOLIVIA'S NEIGHBORS EXCEPT PARAGUA POSSESS MORE POWERFUL AIR ARMS, THE ACQUISITION BY BOLIVIA OF A SMALL NUMBER OF F-5'S IS NOT LIKELY TO RAISE MORE THAN THE PASSING CONCERN OF NEIGHBOR NATIONS. IT WILL NOT EXACERBATE THE ARMS IMBALANCE IN THE REGION. THE SALE WOULD DEFINITELY INCREASE OUR INFLUENCE

WITH THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES AND WOULD PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT AND LONG TERM IMPETUS TO THE ATTAINMENT OF US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES HERE.

4. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE USG TO APPROVE THE SALE OF TWELVE F-5 AIRCRAFT TO BOLIVIA. FURTHER, DUE TO THE URGENCY WHICH THE GOB ATTACHES TO THE ACQUISITION OF MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO PROVIDE AN EARLY AND AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE (IN CONCEPT) TO THIS REQUEST. THE BOLIVIAN BAF COMMANDER AND THE BAF CHIEF OF STAFF HAVE ALL EMPHASIZED THAT THEY DESIRE A PROMPT RESPONSE. THEY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LA PAZ 06049 02 OF 02 132254Z

SEEK A COMMITMENT OF SOME TYPE PRIOR TO THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT (6 AUGUST).
BOEKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jul 1979
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1979LAPAZ06049
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS 19850713 BOEKER, PAUL H
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D790317-0546
Format: TEL
From: LA PAZ OR-M
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1979/newtext/t19790775/aaaacjtm.tel
Line Count: 245
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ce064186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 79 STATE 207984, 79 STATE 252478, 79 STATE 47743, 79 LA PAZ 5726
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 mar 2006
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2303933
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MODERN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR BOLIVIA
TAGS: MASS, BL, US
To: STATE CINCOS J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ce064186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014