

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 4817

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJ: ARREST OF MAJOR GARY PRADO

1. MINISTER OF INTERIOR PEREDA ANNOUNCED JULY 24 THAT EXILED MAJOR GARY PRADO WAS ARRESTED IN LA PAZ ON THE PREVIOUS EVENING, WHILE ENGAGED IN A SUBVERSIVE MEETING. PEREDA CLAIMED THAT THE GOB HAS PROOF THAT PRADO HAD JOINED FORCES WITH LEFTIST EXILES TO OVERTHROW THE BANZER GOVERNMENT. FIFTEEN OTHER PERSONS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED WITH PRADO, INCLUDING SECOND LIEUTENANT CARLOS PRADO YEPEZ AND TWO PROFESSORS AT SAN ANDRES UNIVERSITY IN LA PAZ. ACCORDING TO PEREDA, GARY PRADO WILL BE SENT INTO EXILE ONCE AGAIN WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

2. AT THE SAME PRESS CONFERENCE, MININTERIOR PEREDA ALSO REVEALED THE CONTENTS OF AN ALLEGED LETTER FROM EXILED PDC CHIEF BENJAMIN MIGUEL TO HIS FOLLOWERS INSIDE BOLIVIA, IN WHICH MIGUEL DESCRIBES THE PETTY RIVALRIES AND PERSONALITY CLASHES WHICH DIVIDE THE LEFTIST GROUPS IN EXILE IN BUENOS AIRES. ACCORDING TO THIS LETTER, RECENT MEETINGS OF MIGUEL AND PRA CHIEF WALTER GUEVARA ARCE WITH SUCH EXILED BOLIVIA POLITICIANS AS HERNAN SILES ZUAZO, JUAN LECHIN, EX-PRESIDENTS JUAN JOSE TORRES AND ALFREDO OVANDO, ETC., REVEALED THE ANARCHIC STATE OF THE LEFTIST OPPOSITION RESIDENT IN BUENOS AIRES: IN PARTICULAR, THE MIGUEL LETTER COMMENTS SHARPLY ON THE COMPETING ASPIRATIONS OF SILES, CONFIDENTIAL

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TORRES AND OVADO, EACH OF WHOM HARBORS PERSONAL AMBITIONS TO

PRESIDE OVER A FUTURE LEFTIST GOVERNMENT IN LA PAZ. THE LETTER ALSO INDICATES THAT MIGUEL, GUEVARA AND OTHER EXILES HAVE ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH ARMY OFFICERS EXILED FOLLOWING JUNE 5 1970 ATTEMPT.

3. RESPONDING TO NEWSMENS' QUESTIONS, PEREDA STATED THAT THE CURRENT STATE OF SIEGE WILL NOT BE EXTENDED BEYOND ITS PRESENT JULY 28 TERMINATION DATE.

4. COMMENT: WHETHER AUTHENTIC OR FICTITIOUS, THE MIGUEL LETTER COMES AT A CONVENIENT MOMENT FOR THE GOB FOR SEVERAL REASONS. BY PORTRAYING THE LEFTIST EXILES AS A GROUP OF PETTY CAUDILLOS COMPETING SELFISHLY FOR ABSOLUTE POWER OVER THE OPPOSITION TO THE BANZER GOVERNMENT, THE LETTER DISCREDITS THESE FORCES AT A TIME WHEN THE GOB IS SEEKING TO FORTIFY ITSELF FOR THE 1975 ELECTORAL CONTESTS. AT THE SAME TIME, PUBLICATION OF THE LETTER WILL HELP TO ENSURE FURTHER DISSENSION AND CONFUSION IN THE ALREADY DIVIDED RANKS OF THE EXILE MOVEMENT. FINALLY, THE ALLUSIONS IN THE LETTER TO CONTACTS WITH THE JUNIOR OFFICER MOVEMENT REINFORCE THE CASE WHICH THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR SEEKS TO MAKE AGAINST GARY PRADO, WHILE DISCREDITING THE POLITICAL MOTIVES OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE "GENERATIONAL" OFFICERS' MOVEMENT AS WELL. STEDMAN

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