

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 06709 061326Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SY-05 SYE-00 USSS-00 TRSE-00 AID-05

CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00

PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ANAE-00

A-02 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 /075 W

-----105036 061344Z /40

O 060850Z AUG 79

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7623

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHEC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS LA PAZ 6709

EO 12065: NA

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJECT: INITIATIVE TO NAME GUEVARA INTERIM PRESIDENT MAY PROSPER

1. AN INITIATIVE TABLED BY AN ADN SENATOR ON AUGUST 5 AIMED AT PERMITTING SENATE LEADER WALTER GUEVARA ARZE TO BE NAMED AS BOLIVIA'S INTERIM PRESIDENT HAS GAINED CONSIDERABLE MOMENTUM AND MAY BE NEAR IMPLEMENTATION. SUCH A COMPROMISE WOULD SEEM TO BE CONSONANT WITH THE CONSTITUION, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE HEAD OF THE SENATE TO PRESIDE OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ELECTED PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT.

2. THE GUEVARA ARRANGEMENT IS BEING BROKERED EXCLUSIVELY BETWEEN THE MNR ALLIANCE AND THE UDP. REPRESENTATIVES OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 06709 061326Z

BOTH THESE GROUPS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A POSSIBILITY HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SOME TIME AND THAT THE ADN THUS HAS NO CLAIM TO PATERNITY. AS A CONDITION PRIOR, VICTOR PAZ AND HERNAN SILES REPORTEDLY HAVE ALREADY RENOUNCED THEIR CLAIMS ON THE PRESIDENCY.

3. IN THE LATE EVENING OF AUGUST 5, AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

WAS REACHED, AND GUEVARA GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE TO DESCRIBE THE GOVERNMENT HE INTENDS TO HEAD. HE SAID HIS PURPOSE WOULD BE NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND THAT BOTH THE MNR AND THE UDP WOULD PLAY IMPORTANT ROLES. HE ADDED THAT HE EXPECTED TO HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH WOULD RETAIN THE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO. DURING HIS "TRANSITIONAL" TENURE, GUEVARA SAID, HE WOULD ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS SERIOUS BUT MANAGEABLE AND, WITH THE CONGRESS, ATTEMPT TO REWRITE THE ELECTORAL LAW SO AS TO AVOID A REPETITION OF THE 1979 IMPASSE. IN RECORDED REMARKS, PDC LEADER BENJAMIN MIGUEL SAID RENEWED ELECTIONS WOULD BE CALLED FOR MAY 1980, BUT GUEVARA HIMSELF IS REPORTED TO HAVE REMARKED THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE TO SLIDE UNTIL 1981.

4. THE COMPROMISE WAS EXPECTED TO HAVE BEEN FORMALIZED BY THE CONGRESS IN THE EARLY MORNING OF AUGUST 6. HOWEVER, AT THE LAST MOMENT SOME SNAGS DEVELOPED AND THE MNR ASKED FOR MORE TIME. AFTER SOME UNHELPFUL INTERVENTIONS BY PS-1 DEPUTY MARCELO QUIROGA, THE CONGRESS SUSPENDED SESSION UNTIL 10 AM ON AUGUST 6.

5. ALTHOUGH THE INAUGURATION WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IN THE MORNING AS SCHEDULED, OPTIMISM PERSISTS THAT THE GUEVARA COMPROMISE WILL BE FIRMED UP SOON--PERHAPS BEFORE AUGUST 7.

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PAGE 03 LA PAZ 06709 061326Z

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BL, (GUEVARA ARZE, WALTER)
To: STATE ASUNCION
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