

[REDACTED]

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Case Number: S200200010

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PTQ4439

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	INL-01	DODE-00	DOEE-00	ANHR-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W	

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O 062212Z JUN 00
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4704
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.5(D)

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/30/05
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PREL, PE

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SUBJECT: SALAZAR LEAVES, INVESTIGATION CONTINUES, AND
DOUBTS LINGER ABOUT JOURNALIST'S CLAIMS OF TORTURE

REF: LIMA 3204

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JOHN HAMILTON FOR REASONS 1.5 B AND D.
2. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: FABIAN SALAZAR, THE JOURNALIST WHO ACCUSED NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIN) AGENTS OF BRUTALLY TORTURING HIM, DEPARTED PERU MAY 31, LEAVING BEHIND AD HOC PROSECUTOR LIZARDO SUAREZ'S ONGOING INVESTIGATION, A PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT HIM, AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS THAT HAVE RALLIED TO HIS CAUSE. AN INTERNAL REPORT

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BY THE HIGHLY RESPECTED HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, HOWEVER, POINTS TO INCONSISTENCIES IN SALAZAR'S ACCOUNT OF HOW SIN AGENTS TIED HIM DOWN AND SAWED HIS ARM TO THE BONE TO COERCE HIM INTO NAMING SOURCES OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION. DESPITE THE GOP'S ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT SALAZAR COMPLETELY, WE AGREE WITH OMBUDSMAN'S INITIAL JUDGEMENT THAT SALAZAR WAS PROBABLY SUBJECT TO INTIMIDATION OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND COULD HAVE BEEN INTERROGATED, BUT THAT HE EXAGGERATED CERTAIN ASPECTS OF HIS STORY TO SMEAR THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

3. [REDACTED] FABIAN SALAZAR, JOURNALISTIC COLLABORATOR AND ASSOCIATE OF FORMER TV BARON BARUCH IVCHER, DEPARTED PERU MAY 31 TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION IN THE UNITED STATES, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS. SOURCES CLOSE TO SALAZAR CONFIRMED HIS DEPARTURE AND SAID HE HAD BEEN THREATENED SEVERAL TIMES, AND THAT HE FELT HE HAD TO LEAVE PERU TO AVOID RISKING HIS FAMILY'S SAFETY. (NOTE: EARLIER [REDACTED])

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CONVERSATIONS WITH SAME SOURCES INDICATED THAT SALAZAR WAS CONSIDERING LEAVING THE COUNTRY BUT HAD SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE IN MIND. NO ONE COULD SAY WHETHER SALAZAR PLANNED TO APPLY FOR ASYLUM.)

4. [REDACTED] ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, SALAZAR DEPARTED THE DAY BEFORE HE WAS SCHEDULED TO GIVE HIS STATEMENT TO AD HOC PROSECUTOR LIZARDO SUAREZ. (SALAZAR HAD ALREADY POSTPONED HIS APPOINTMENT WITH SUAREZ SEVERAL TIMES.) MEANWHILE, SUAREZ PLANNED TO INTERVIEW PERU'S ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES AND DE FACTO SIN CHIEF VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS TO CHECK OUT SALAZAR'S CLAIMS THAT SIN AGENTS ACCOSTED HIM BECAUSE HE HAD EVIDENCE THESE TOP OFFICIALS HAD BEEN MEETING.

5. [REDACTED]

B1

[REDACTED] SALAZAR'S CLAIMS THAT HIS LEFT ARM WAS SAWED TO THE BONE DO NOT TRACK WITH NOTES TAKEN BY THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN WHO EXAMINED SALAZAR THE NIGHT HE ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL. THE DOCTOR'S WRITTEN REMARKS INDICATE SALAZAR'S ARM WAS CUT ON THE TOP OF THE WRIST, TENDONS WERE EXPOSED, BUT HE HAD NOT LOST ANY MOBILITY. THE DOCTOR ALSO INDICATED THAT PARAMEDICS HAD BANDAGED THE WOUND AND THAT IT WAS NOT A LIMB THREATENING

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INJURY. THE OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT ALSO SAYS THAT IT HAS NOT YET GAINED ACCESS TO RECORDS THAT COULD SUBSTANTIATE OR DISCREDIT SALAZAR'S CLAIM THAT THE INJURY REQUIRED RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY. RAISING OTHER ISSUES, THE REPORT

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NOTES INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN SALAZAR'S ACCOUNT OF WHEN HE LEFT HIS OFFICE TO RECEIVE VIDEOS FROM HIS SOURCES IN A NEARBY PARKING LOT AND THE TESTIMONY OF PARKING LOT ATTENDANTS WHO SAID THEY DID NOT SEE SALAZAR AT THE TIME HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE BEEN THERE. FINALLY, THE REPORT NOTES (WITHOUT DIRECTLY QUESTIONING HIS MOTIVE) SALAZAR'S CONCERTED EFFORT TO HYPE HIS STORY WITH THE PRESS.

6. [REDACTED] B1
[REDACTED] CONFIDED THAT THE SIN, AND PARTICULARLY MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (SIE), HAD A REPUTATION FOR THE TYPE OF STRONG ARMED TACTICS CLAIMED BY SALAZAR, BUT A FEW THINGS DID NOT ADD UP. ALTHOUGH [REDACTED] BELIEVED SALAZAR HAD NOT INJURED HIMSELF, HIS DOCUMENTED MEDICAL CONDITION DID NOT CORRESPOND TO THE GRAVITY OF THE INJURIES HE CLAIMS HE SUSTAINED. AN INTERVIEW WITH SALAZAR'S DOCTOR AND ACCESS TO ALL OF HIS MEDICAL RECORDS WOULD HELP CLARIFY THE SITUATION. [REDACTED] B1
CAREFULLY CAVEATING THAT HIS GUT JUDGEMENT WAS BASED ON INITIAL EVIDENCE OBTAINED TO DATE, SURMISED THAT SALAZAR WAS PROBABLY A VICTIM OF INTIMIDATION AND COULD HAVE BEEN INTERROGATED, BUT HAD EXAGGERATED HIS INJURIES FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

7. [REDACTED] THE PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS CONTINUES TO HARP ON INCONSISTENCIES IN SALAZAR'S STORY. STAUNCH PRO-GOVERNMENT WEEKLY SI MAGAZINE DEDICATED HALF AN ISSUE TO HIGHLIGHTING

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	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00

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PRM-01 DRL-02 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /011W
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O 062212Z JUN 00
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4705
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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USCINCSO MIAMI FL

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APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS AMONG VARIOUS PRESS ACCOUNTS OF SALAZAR'S STORY. WHILE SI REPORTERS FOCUSED FOR THE MOST PART ON MINUTE DETAILS THAT DO NO REAL DAMAGE TO SALAZAR'S CREDIBILITY (BUT DO POINT OUT POSSIBLE MISTAKES MADE BY OPPOSITION-MINDED REPORTERS), THE NET EFFECT IS TO SUGGEST THAT SALAZAR FABRICATED THE WHOLE INCIDENT TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT AT THE BEHEST OF HIS EMPLOYER BARUCH IVCHER. PARTISAN MOTIVES ASIDE, SI DID PUBLISH A STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SAN FELIPE CLINIC (WHERE SALAZAR STAYED BEFORE TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER FACILITY) SAYING PRESS COVERAGE OF SALAZAR'S CASE HAD DISRUPTED TREATMENT OF OTHER PATIENTS, THAT THE CLINIC HAD NO MEDICAL REASON TO HOLD SALAZAR FOR MORE THAN TWO DAYS OF OBSERVATION, AND THAT THE DECISION TO REMAIN WAS SALAZAR'S.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS HAVE NOT ABANDONED SALAZAR, WHOM THEY SEE AS THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF THE LENGTHS TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GO TO STAY IN POWER. OPPOSITION GROUP PRENSA LIBRE, FOR EXAMPLE, SUCCESSFULLY PETITIONED THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO ISSUE A STATEMENT TO THE GOP ASKING IT TO ENSURE SALAZAR'S SAFETY AND TO REPORT ON ITS INVESTIGATION OF SALAZAR'S CLAIMS. HOWEVER, REPUTABLE JOURNALISTS WHO KNOW AND HAVE WORKED WITH

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SALAZAR ARE LESS WILLING TO JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SALAZAR'S CLAIMS. SEVERAL CONFIDED TO POLOFF, AFTER COMMENTING ON THE CONTINUING LIMITS OF PRESS FREEDOMS IN PERU, THAT SALAZAR'S EXPLOITATION OF HIS PUBLICITY TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT SEEMED JUST A LITTLE TOO OPPORTUNISTIC. ONE REPORTER WORRIED THAT SALAZAR'S TENDENCY

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TO EXAGGERATE WOULD GRAVELY DAMAGE HIS CREDIBILITY, AND THIS COULD HAVE THE NET EFFECT OF UNDERMINING THE CLAIMS OF PRESS ABUSES MADE BY MORE SERIOUS JOURNALISTS. OTHERS HAVE DESCRIBED SALAZAR AS MORE OF A GOFER OR ADVANCE MAN FOR IVCHER THAN A PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST.

9. COMMENT: THE TONE OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SALAZAR WITH PRESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTACTS HAS CHANGED FROM INITIAL OUTRAGE AT THE GOVERNMENT'S THUGGERY TO MORE MEASURED SUGGESTIONS THAT SALAZAR MIGHT HAVE SHADED PARTS OF HIS STORY FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT. UNFORTUNATELY, OUR PRESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTACTS ADD, THE GOVERNMENT WILL USE WHATEVER IT CAN TO DISCREDIT SALAZAR COMPLETELY. THE HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN'S INITIAL FINDINGS ARE MOST LIKELY ON TARGET: SALAZAR PROBABLY SUFFERED INTIMIDATION, COULD HAVE SUSTAINED INJURY, BUT HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HAVING HIS ARM SAWED TO THE BONE DO NOT TRACK WITH MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION. HOW THIS WILL AFFECT THE AD HOC PROSECUTOR'S INVESTIGATION REMAINS UNCLEAR.

HAMILTON
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