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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PE  
SUBJECT: GOP FIRES POLICE HEAD

1. (U) IN AN AUGUST 30 SPEECH MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CIVIL GUARD (CG) POLICE, GC COMMANDER GENERAL CARLOS BARRETO SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE GOP FOR PROVIDING INADEQUATE RESOURCES TO POLICE AND FOR CARRYING OUT A POLICE REORGANIZATION SCHEME WITHOUT SUFFICIENT POLICE CONSULTATION. THE REMARKS DEEPLY OFFENDED VICE PRESIDENT (AND ACTING PRESIDENT) LUIS ALBERTO SANCHEZ, WHO LATER BERATED BARRETO FOR AIRING HIS COMPLAINTS PUBLICLY AND MADE CLEAR THAT BARRETO WOULD BE FIRED FOR "INSUBORDINATION." INTERIOR MINISTER ABEL SALINAS ANNOUNCED BARRETO'S DISMISSAL SEPTEMBER 2, AND LATER THAT DAY SWORE IN GENERAL ALBERTO BERNEDO AS THE NEW GC DIRECTOR, THE

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FOURTH TO OCCUPY THAT POST SINCE JULY 1985. DURING THE SWEARING IN CEREMONY, SALINAS UNDERSCORED THE GOP'S

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COMMITMENT TO UPGRADE POLICE EQUIPMENT AND SALARIES, AND STATED HIS "RESPECT" FOR THE OUTGOING POLICE CHIEF.

2. (U) SEVERAL APRISTA LEADERS BACKED UP THE DISMISSAL IN A SERIES OF HEAVILY PUBLICIZED STATEMENTS. SENATOR GUILLERMO LARCO COX, HEAD OF THE SENATE DEFENSE COMMISSION AND A MEMBER OF APRA'S OLDER GENERATION, MADE CLEAR THAT "THE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS THE POLICE, ARE NOT ... DELIBERATIVE BODIES. THAT IS THE PRINCIPAL GUARANTEE OF STABILITY: THE MILITARY DISCIPLINE THAT PRECLUDES (THEM) FROM ENTERING POLITICAL AFFAIRS."

3. (C) COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT BARRETO, UNTIL NOW CONSIDERED A WEAK-KNEED INDIVIDUAL, CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO GO OUT IN A BLAZE OF GLORY. HIS DEPARTURE IS A SIGN OF HOW MUCH POLICE MORALE HAS DROPPED DURING THE GARCIA ADMINISTRATION. AS BARRETO STATED IN HIS SPEECH, THERE IS DEEP RESENTMENT ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOP HAS FIRED OVER 1,000 POLICEMEN, ALLEGEDLY FOR CORRUPTION AND INEFFICIENCY, BUT ALSO--ACCORDING TO POLICE--FOR PARTISAN MOTIVES. FURTHER COMPLICATING THE SITUATION IS GARCIA'S APPARENT DECISION TO PLACE THE BLAME FOR THE JUNE EXECUTIONS OF LURIGANCHO PRISON INMATES ON THE GR POLICE, NOT ON THE ARMY OFFICIAL WHO COMMANDED THE OPERATION. IN AUGUST, THE TRANSFER OF THE 40 ACCUSED GR POLICEMEN FROM THEIR HEADQUARTERS TO A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON SPARKED OUTCRIES FROM SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS. THE GOP HAS TRIED TO GIVE THE POLICE SOME CARROTS AS WELL AS STICKS; IT HAS INCREASED PAY AND

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RESOURCES, AND HAS GONE OUT OF THE WAY TO PRAISE SUCCESSFUL POLICE OPERATIONS AGAINST TERRORISTS AND KIDNAPPERS. THE GOP RESPONDED QUICKLY, HOWEVER, WHEN A POLICEMAN ALLEGEDLY KILLED A BUSINESSMAN IN AUGUST, DISMISSING HIM FROM THE POLICE IN A PUBLIC CEREMONY BEFORE HE WAS EVEN TRIED.

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4. THE GOP CORRECTLY VIEWED BARRETO'S REMARKS AS A CHALLENGE TO ITS AUTHORITY. ITS QUICK RESPONSE (WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WAS COORDINATED WITH GARCIA BY TELEPHONE) REAFFIRMS THE PRINCIPLE OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY OVER THE POLICE AND--ACCORDING TO LARCO COX--

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OVER THE MILITARY. OUR OWN READING IS WHILE CIVILIAN  
AUTHORITY (EVEN AT THE SUB-MINISTERIAL LEVEL) OVER THE  
POLICE IS A FACT OF LIFE, EFFECTIVE CIVILIAN  
AUTHORITY OVER THE MILITARY IS MORE TENUOUS. APRA  
LEADERS, INCLUDING LARCO COX, KNOW THIS, AND THUS THEIR  
REMARKS MAY BE INTENDED FOR CONSUMPTION BY THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC. YOULE

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