

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 BUNDY-SMITH

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CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

FILE COPY

COUNTRY HONDURAS

SUBJECT COMMENTS OF COL OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELIANO, HEAD OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, REGARDING HONDURAN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES
 DATE DISTR. 13 NOVEMBER 1963
 PRECEDENCE PRIORITY

DATE OF INFO. 50X1 and 6, E.O.13526
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 FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE

50X1 and 6, E.O.13526

1. ON 11 NOVEMBER 1963 COL. OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELIANO, HEAD OF THE NEW HONDURAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT, SAID THAT IT WAS USELESS TO HAVE ANY FURTHER TALKS WITH OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN HONDURAS BECAUSE THEY WANTED DEFINITE AND IMMEDIATE COMMITMENTS FROM HIM, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO A DATE FOR HOLDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. LOPEZ SAID THAT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE, SINCE HE HAD TO ESTABLISH SEVERAL CONTROLS AND PUT THE MACHINERY IN MOTION FOR RETURNING TO A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT BEFORE GIVING AN ELECTION DATE THAT HE WOULD BE HONOR-BOUND TO SUPPORT. LOPEZ SAID THAT HE CANNOT PREDICT AT THE PRESENT TIME HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS; THE LIBERAL PARTY AND THE COMMUNISTS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A SITUATION,

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GROUP 1
 Excluded from automatic
 downgrading and
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CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~ []

IN 59062

PAGE 2

CREATED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIXED DATE, TO AGITATE AND CAUSE TROUBLE AND CONFUSION IN THE COUNTRY.

2. LOPEZ, WHO PROTESTED BITTERLY AGAINST THE WITHDRAWAL OF UNITED STATES AID AND PERSONNEL, SAID THAT THE ABRUPT MANNER IN WHICH THIS WAS DONE WAS AN AFFRONT TO HIMSELF AND HONDURAS.

3. LOPEZ COMPARED THE TREATMENT OF HONDURAS BY THE UNITED STATES WITH SIMILAR CASES IN GUATEMALA, ANOTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY, AND RECENTLY IN SOUTH VIETNAM, WHERE BOTH MILITARY GOVERNMENTS WHICH SEIZED POWER BY COUP D'ETAT WERE RECOGNIZED QUICKLY. HE SAID IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO TREAT HONDURAS AS LITTLE AND UNIMPORTANT.

4. LOPEZ FINALLY SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT CRAWL ON HIS KNEES AND BEG FOR RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED STATES. IF THE UNITED STATES WAS READY TO CONSIDER RECOGNITION WITHOUT STRINGS, HE WOULD WELCOME TALKING AGAIN WITH UNITED STATES OFFICIALS.

5. [] COMMENT. THE HARDENED ATTITUDE OF LOPEZ PROBABLY RESULTS FROM THE INFLUENCE OF RICARDO ZUNIGA, A CLOSE ADVISOR TO LOPEZ. ZUNIGA PROBABLY IS TELLING LOPEZ WHAT ATTITUDE TO ASSUME; IN FACT, ZUNIGA SEEMS, IN EFFECT, TO BE RUNNING THE COUNTRY, WITH LOPEZ HAVING LITTLE AUTHORITY. ZUNIGA'S OFFICE IS A BEEHIVE OF ACTIVITY, WHILE LOPEZ SITS BEHIND AN EMPTY DESK AND SEES ONLY THE PEOPLE THAT ZUNIGA PERMITS HIM TO SEE. MRS. LOPEZ CONSTANTLY REFERS TO ZUNIGA SAYING "RICARDO WANTS THIS OR THAT; RICARDO WOULD NOT APPROVE OF THAT; I WILL HAVE TO CHECK WITH RICARDO...." NO CIVILIAN MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE LEAST VESTIGE OF AUTHORITY OR POWER TO CARRY OUT ANY ACTIVITY. NO ONE CAN ACT WITHOUT ZUNIGA'S APPROVAL. MOST ARMY LEADERS

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FORM 10-1
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50X1 and 6, E.O.13526

Withheld under statutory authority of the
Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50
U.S.C., section 403g)

CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

S E C R E T /

IN 59064

PAGE 3

AND MOST OF THE CIVILIAN MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT ARE INTERESTED IN THE COUNTRY AND WANT TO DO AWAY WITH THE ILLS OF THE PAST AND BUILD A NEW AND BETTER HONDURAS. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ARE BITTER TOWARD ZUNIGA. ZUNIGA IS AN UNSCRUPULOUS PERSON WHO WANTS ONLY TO EXERCISE POWER WHICH HE ALREADY HAS ATTAINED BY HIS COMPLETE CONTROL OVER LOPEZ AND WHICH HE WILL USE TO HIS OWN ENDS. COL. ARMANDO ESCALON, CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE, IS A MUCH STRONGER PERSON THAN LOPEZ AND PERHAPS WILL STAND UP TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.)

6. ([] COMMENT. ZUNIGA'S POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY APPEAR TO BE GROWING, AND HE IS FANATICALLY JEALOUS OF THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO LOPEZ. HE IS TRYING TO ISOLATE LOPEZ FROM HIS FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS. ZUNIGA'S DESIRE FOR POWER IS NO SECRET, AND MANY PEOPLE HAVE EXPRESSED A FEAR OF THE OUTCOME OF THIS STRANGE AND UNFATHOMABLE SITUATION. IT APPEARS THAT LOPEZ HAS NOW ADOPTED AN INTRANSIGENT POSITION TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ZUNIGA. []

[] HAVE REPORTED ZUNIGA'S ANTI- UNITED STATES FEELINGS. ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT MOST OF LOPEZ' SUPPORTERS WOULD BE WILLING TO BACK HIS POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND FOLLOW A LINE OF ACTION WHICH WOULD PLACE HIM IN THE POSITION OF THE LEADING CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, THESE FOLLOWERS PROBABLY WOULD NOT SUPPORT THIS MOVEMENT IF IT ENDED WITH LOPEZ A MERE PUPPET PRESIDENT AND ZUNIGA THE REAL POWER BEHIND THE THRONE. AT THE PRESENT TIME IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT ZUNIGA ALREADY HAS ESTABLISHED A GREAT DEAL OF CONTROL OVER LOPEZ, WHICH HAS MYSTIFIED AND CHAGRINED HIS FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS.)

7. [] DISSEM. STATE, CINCSO, CINCLANT.

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