

7

ACTION COPY

CONFIDENTIAL  
UNCLASSIFIED  
Department of State

6K  
INCOI  
TELE

PAGE 01 GUATEM 03095 01 OF 02 20:34:22 0151 AR42114  
ACTION AR4-00

GUATEM 03095 01 OF 02 20:34:22 0151

ACTION OFFICE GUAT-01  
INFO RF-01 ARA-04 OAS-01 PPA-01 RPPI-01 ECP-01 PPC-01 DCEN-02  
RPP2-01 STON-01 016 41

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 AOS-00 AID-00 IHR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00  
DOOE-00 H-01 10-15 NSC-01 NSAE-00 NH-08 L-03  
PR-09 PA-01 USIE-00 SP-02 SMP-01 PRS-01 /016 W  
-----271676 2104032 /70

R 202336Z APR 83  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4407  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELIZE  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USCINCSO GUARRY HTS PH

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03095

E.O. 12336: DECL: 4/20/89  
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, GT, SHUN  
SUBJECT: (U) CURRENT SITUATION IN SAN JUAN IXCAN  
AND XALBAL, EL QUICHE

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: AN EMBASSY TEAM VISITED THE DEPARTMENT OF EL QUICHE ON APRIL 19. EMBASSY USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE THE VILLAGE CO-OPERATIVES OF SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE AMERICAS WATCH COMMITTEE RECENTLY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN THESE VILLAGES, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHERS. SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL ARE BOTH DESERTED AND BOTH LOCATED IN THE NO-MAN'S LAND OF NORTHERN EL QUICHE. ON APRIL 17, SEVERAL FORMER VILLAGERS OF SAN JUAN IXCAN TURNED THEMSELVES IN TO THE ARMY; THEY TOLD EMBASSY TEAM OF THEIR VILLAGE'S SACR BY GUERRILLAS, OF A FULL YEAR OF RUNNING IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND FINALLY, OF STARVATION, DESPERATION AND EXASPERATION WITH GUERRILLAS WHO ATE WHILE THEY WENT HUNGRY. XALBAL IS SMALL, ISOLATED, DESTROYED AND DESERTED. ARMY OFFICERS TOLD MISSION MEMBERS THAT XALBAL WAS TAKEN BY GUERRILLAS SOMETIME IN LATE SPRING 1982, AND THAT THE VILLAGERS WERE FORCED INTO THE MOUNTAINS BY GUERRILLAS. THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF THIS LATTER ACCOUNT. END SUMMARY.

3. THE MISSION TEAM FIRST STOPPED IN PLAYA GRANDE, EL QUICHE, SITE OF MILITARY ZONE NO 22 HEADQUARTERS. THE LOCAL COMMANDER WAS INFORMED BY EMBOFF WHERE THE EMBASSY WISHED TO VISIT. AT THE MENTION OF SAN JUAN IXCAN, MISSION TEAM WAS TOLD THAT SEVERAL INHABITANTS OF THAT VILLAGE HAD RECENTLY TURNED THEMSELVES IN TO THE ARMY. THE VILLAGERS WERE DEBRIEFED BY THE EMBASSY VISITORS. THEY RELATED THE FOLLOWING FACTS:

4. THE GUERRILLAS BEGAN TO SERIOUSLY HARASS THE VILLAGE IN EARLY 1982. THEY TOLD THE

VILLAGERS THAT THE ARMY WOULD COME ONE DAY TO KILL THEM ALL. THE VILLAGERS DID NOT BELIEVE THIS AND THE MAYOR SENT A MESSAGE TO THE ARMY REQUESTING PROTECTION. THE GUERRILLAS RETURNED AND SEARCHED FOR THE MAYOR; THEY TOLD THE VILLAGERS HE WAS TO BE SHOT FOR BETRAYING THEM. THE INHABITANTS ASKED WHY ALL THIS WAS HAPPENING; THE GUERRILLAS TOLD THEM THEY WERE NOW UNDER "REVOLUTIONARY LAW." THE MAYOR RAN AWAY; THE ARMY NEVER CAME. ON MARCH 1, 1982, THE GUERRILLAS FORCED THE ENTIRE VILLAGE INTO THE MOUNTAINS. THE VILLAGERS HAD NO CHOICE AND EVENTUALLY CAME TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY MIGHT INDEED KILL THEM AS THEY WERE NOW "GUERRILLAS." FOR A YEAR THE VILLAGERS RAN IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE GUERRILLAS. FOOD WAS BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER TO COME BY, ALTHOUGH THE GUERRILLAS KEPT THEMSELVES DECENTLY FED. MALNUTRITION BECAME A SERIOUS PROBLEM. FINALLY, SOME OF THE VILLAGERS DECIDED TO RUN TO THE ARMY. ONE SAID HE DID NOT CARE WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM; HE DID NOT CARE IF THE ARMY KILLED HIM. IT WAS BETTER, HE SAID, THAN STARVING TO DEATH IN THE MOUNTAINS. HE WALKED TO PLAYA GRANDE AND TURNED HIMSELF OVER TO THE ARMY. HE WAS NOT KILLED, BUT FED. THE CHILDREN HE CAME WITH ARE CLOSE TO DEATH FROM HUNGER. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THE ARMY WILL BE ABLE TO SAVE ALL OF THEM; SOME ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO DIE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE ABOVE ACCOUNT WAS GIVEN IN BETWEEN SOBS, TEARS AND BITTER DENUNCIATIONS OF GUERRILLA BEHAVIOR.

5. NOTE: EMBASSY WAS FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 GUATEM 03095 02 OF 02 202J44Z 0001 ARA2134  
ACTION ARA-00

GUATEM 03095 02 OF 02 202J44Z

0024 48-2134

ACTION OFFICE GUAT-02  
INFO RF-01 ARA-04 OAS-01 PPA-01 RPP1-01 ECP-01 PPC-01 DCEN-02  
RPP2-01 STON-01 :016 41

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 AOS-00 AID-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 H-01 10-15 NSC-01 NSAE-00 HA-08 L-03  
PH-09 PA-01 USIE-00 SP-02 SHP-01 PRS-01 /086 V  
-----271677 210437Z /70

R 20236Z APR 83  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4405  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELIZE  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PH

MOUNTAINS, ALTHOUGH FAR MORE FOOD THAN WEAPONRY HAS BEEN CAPTURED BY THE SAN JUAN SOLDIERS. FOOD WAS TO BE DELIVERED BY HELICOPTER. WHEN SUPPLIES ARE LATE THE SOLDIERS LIVE ON ROOTS. LOCAL TASK FORCE COMMANDER TOLD MISSION TEAM THAT THESE SOLDIERS ARE INSTRUCTED TO SHOOT TO KILL ALL UNIFORMED GUERRILLAS AND THOSE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING THAT ARE BEARING AND USING ARMS AGAINST THEM. NON-COMBATANTS ARE ROUNDED UP FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THEIR ORIGINAL VILLAGES, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE TOLD THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAD RECENTLY FORCED SOME 30 SAN JUAN IXCAN FAMILIES ACROSS THE BORDER INTO MEXICO WITH THE IDEA OF FORCING THEM TO SPREAD HORROR STORIES ABOUT THE GUATEMALAN ARMY. THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF THIS ACCOUNT, EXCEPT FOR THE GENERALLY MISERABLE TREATMENT THE SAN JUAN IXCAN VILLAGERS RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE GUERRILLAS. AFTER VISITING SAN JUAN IXCAN THE MISSION TEAM RETURNED TO GUATEMALA CITY. CHAPIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03095

TO DEBRIEF THESE VILLAGERS. PERHAPS TOO FORTUNATE. NEVERTHELESS, WE REJECT THE IDEA OF AN ARRANGED SHOW, AND THIS FOR SEVERAL REASONS. THE ARMY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO ARRANGE SUCH AN EXHIBITION; EMBOFF PICKED SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL AT THE LAST MOMENT (IN THE AIR ON THE WAY TO EL QUICHE), HE COULD HAVE JUST AS EASILY PICKED SOME OTHER VILLAGES; ARMY OFFICERS IN PLAYA GRANDE HAVE NEVER BEEN UNWILLING TO ADMIT THAT THERE ARE DOZENS OF DESERTED VILLAGES IN THEIR AREA AND THAT THEY REALLY DO NOT KNOW WHERE ALL THE VILLAGERS ARE; THE SAN JUAN IXCAN VILLAGERS PRESENT IN PLAYA GRANDE WERE NOT PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND ALL MISSION MEMBERS PRESENT ON APRIL 19 HAD CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ACCOUNTS. IN ANY CASE, THE MALNUTRITION AND BITTERNESS WERE ALL TOO REAL AND IMPOSSIBLE TO FAKE. END NOTE.

6. AFTER SPEAKING WITH THE VILLAGERS FROM SAN JUAN IXCAN, EMBASSY TEAM AND LOCAL COMMANDER FLEW TO XALBAL AND SAN JUAN IXCAN. XALBAL IS IN NO-MAN'S LAND. GUERRILLAS TOOK THE VILLAGE IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1962 AND FORCED THE INHABITANTS INTO THE MOUNTAINS. THE ARMY HAS SINCE TRIED TO REBUILD A FEW OF THE HOUSES FOR USE AS A SEMI-PERMANENT BASE OF OPERATIONS. THE GUERRILLAS ALWAYS DESTROY THEM AGAIN. ON APRIL 19, THE VILLAGE WAS COMPLETELY DESERTED EXCEPT FOR A HORSE IN A NEARBY FIELD AND A SHUHL GRINNING FROM A SHATTERED WALL. GUERRILLAS STILL OPERATE IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA; XALBAL HAD TO BE SCOUTED BY AIR BEFORE LANDING AGAIN. THE ACCOUNT OF THE XALBAL VILLAGERS BEING FORCED INTO THE MOUNTAINS HAS NOT BEEN INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED (EMBASSY IS REPORTING HERE THE WORD OF LOCAL TASK FORCE COMMANDER

7. SAN JUAN IXCAN IS NOW HELD BY THE ARMY. A COMPANY IN TROOP'S RAJ. 11:111 THERE AND PATROLS THE IMMEDIATE AREA. ONE OF GUERRILLA CAMPS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE MOUNTAIN

**TRANSCRIBED COPY FOLLOWS**

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03095

E.O. 12356: DECL: 4/20/89

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, GT, SHUM

SUBJECT:

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: AN EMBASSY TEAM VISITED THE DEPARTMENT OF EL QUICHE ON APRIL 19. EMBASSY USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE THE VILLAGE CO-OPERATIVES OF SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE AMERICAS WATCH COMMITTEE RECENTLY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN THESE VILLAGES, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHERS. SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL ARE BOTH DESERTED AND BOTH LOCATED IN THE NO-MAN'S LAND OF NORTHERN EL QUICHE. ON APRIL 17, SEVERAL FORMER VILLAGERS OF SAN JUAN IXCAN TURNED THEMSELVES IN TO THE ARMY; THEY TOLD EMBASSY TEAM OF THEIR VILLAGE'S SACK BY GUERRILLAS, OF A FULL YEAR OF RUNNING IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND FINALLY OF STARVATION, DESPERATION AND EXASPERATION WITH GUERRILLAS WHO ATE WHILE THEY WENT HUNGRY. XALBAL IS SMALL, ISOLATED, DESTROYED AND DESERTED. ARMY OFFICERS TOLD MISSION MEMBERS THAT XALBAL WAS TAKEN BY GUERRILLAS SOMETIME IN LATE SPRING 1982. AND THAT THE VILLAGERS WERE FORCED INTO THE MOUNTAINS BY GUERRILLAS. THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF THIS LATTER ACCOUNT. END SUMMARY.

3. THE MISSION TEAM FIRST STOPPED IN PLAYA GRANDE, EL QUICHE, SITE OF MILITARY ZONE NO 11 HEADQUARTERS. THE LOCAL COMMANDER WAS INFORMED BY EMBOFF WHERE THE EMBASSY WISHED TO VISIT. AT THE MENTION OF SAN JUAN IXCAN MISSION TEAM WAS TOLD THAT SEVERAL INHABITANTS OF THAT VILLAGE HAD RECENTLY TURNED

PAGE 1 (continued)

THEMSELVES IN TO THE ARMY. THE VILLAGERS WERE DEBRIEFED BY THE EMBASSY VISITORS. THEY RELATED THE FOLLOWING FACTS.

4. EGP GUERRILLAS BEGAN TO [ILLEGIBLE] [ILLEGIBLE] THE VILLAGE IN EARLY 1982. THEY TOLD THE VILLAGERS THAT THE ARMY WOULD COME ONE DAY TO KILL THEM ALL. THE VILLAGERS DID NOT BELIEVE THIS AND THE MAYOR SENT A MESSAGE TO THE ARMY REQUESTING PROTECTION. THE GUERRILLAS RETURNED AND SEARCHED FOR THE MAYOR, THEY TOLD THE VILLAGERS HE WAS TO BE SHOT FOR BETRAYING THEM. THE INHABITANTS ASKED WHY ALL THIS WAS HAPPENING; THE GUERRILLAS TOLD THEM THEY WERE NOW UNDER

"REVOLUTIONARY LAW." THE MAYOR RAN AWAY; THE ARMY NEVER CAME. ON MARCH 1, 1982, THE GUERRILLAS FORCED THE ENTIRE VILLAGE INTO THE MOUNTAINS. THE VILLAGERS HAD NO CHOICE AND EVENTUALLY CAME TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY MIGHT INDEED KILL THEM AS THEY WERE NOW "GUERRILLAS." FOR A YEAR THE VILLAGERS RAN IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE GUERRILLAS. FOOD WAS BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER TO COME BY, ALTHOUGH THE GUERRILLAS KEPT THEMSELVES DECENTLY FED. MALNUTRITION BECAME A SERIOUS PROBLEM. FINALLY, SOME OF THE VILLAGERS DECIDED TO RUN TO THE ARMY. ONE SAID HE DID NOT CARE IF THE ARMY KILLED HIM. IT WAS BETTER, HE SAID, THAN STARVING TO DEATH IN THE MOUNTAINS. HE WALKED TO PLAYA GRANDE AND TURNED HIMSELF OVER TO THE ARMY. HE WAS NOT KILLED, BUT FED. THE CHILDREN HE CAME WITH ARE CLOSE TO DEATH FROM HUNGER. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THE ARMY WILL BE ABLE TO SAVE ALL OF THEM, SOME ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO DIE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE ABOVE ACCOUNT WAS GIVEN IN BETWEEN SOBS, TEARS AND BITTER DENUNCIATIONS OF GUERRILLA BEHAVIOR.

5. NOTE: EMBASSY WAS FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GUATEMALA 03095

TO DEBRIEF THESE VILLAGERS. PERHAPS TOO FORTUNATE. NEVERTHELESS, WE REJECT THE IDEA OF AN ARRANGED SHOW, AND THIS FOR SEVERAL REASONS. THE ARMY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO ARRANGE MUCH AN EXHIBITION; EMBOFF PICKED SAN JUAN IXCAN AND XALBAL AT THE LAST MOMENT (IN THE AIR ON THE WAY TO EL QUICHE), WE COULD HAVE JUST AS EASILY PICKED SOME OTHER VILLAGES; ARMY OFFICERS IN PLAYA GRANDE HAVE NEVER BEEN UNWILLING TO ADMIT THAT THERE ARE DOZENS OF DESERTED VILLAGES IN THEIR AREA AND THAT THEY REALLY DO NOT KNOW WHERE ALL THE VILLAGERS ARE; THE SAN JUAN IXCAN VILLAGERS PRESENT IN PLAYA GRANDE WERE NOT PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND ALL MISSION MEMBERS PRESENT ON APRIL 19 HAD CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ACCOUNTS. IN ANY CASE, THE MALNUTRITION AND BITTERNESS WERE ALL TO REAL AND IMPOSSIBLE TO FAKE. END NOTE.

6. AFTER SPEAKING WITH THE VILLAGERS FROM SAN JUAN IXCAN, EMBASSY TEAM AND LOCAL COMMANDER FLEW TO XALBAL AND SAN JUAN IXCAN. XALBAL IS IN NO-MAN'S LAND. GUERRILLAS TOOK THE VILLAGE IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1982 AND FORCED THE INHABITANTS INTO THE MOUNTAINS. THE ARMY HAS SINCE TRIED TO REBUILD A FEW OF THE HOUSES FOR USE AS A SEMI-PERMANENT BASE OF OPERATIONS. THE GUERRILLAS ALWAYS DESTROY THEM AGAIN. ON APRIL 19, THE VILLAGE WAS COMPLETELY DESERTED EXCEPT FOR A

HORSE IN A NEARBY FIELD AND A SKULL GRINNING FROM A SHATTERED WALL. GUERRILLAS STILL OPERATE IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA; XALBAL HAD TO BE SCOUTED BY AIR BEFORE LANDING. AGAIN, THE ACCOUNT

PAGE 2 (continued)

OF THE XALBAL VILLAGERS BEING FORCED INTO THE MOUNTAINS HAS NOT BEEN INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED. EMBASSY IS REPORTING HERE THE WORD OF LOCAL TASK FORCE COMMANDER

7. SAN JUAN IXCAN IS NOW HELD BY THE ARMY. A COMPANY OF TROOPS [ILLEGIBLE] [ILLEGIBLE] THERE AND PATROLS THE IMMEDIATE AREA [ILLEGIBLE] [ILLEGIBLE] GUERRILLA CAMPS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE [ILLEGIBLE] MOUNTAINS, ALTHOUGH FAR MORE FOOD THAN WEAPONRY HAS BEEN CAPTURED BY THE SAN JUAN SOLDIERS. FOOD HAS TO BE DELIVERED BY HELICOPTER. WHEN SUPPLIES ARE LATE THE SOLDIERS LIVE ON ROOTS. LOCAL TASK FORCE COMMANDER TOLD MISSION TEAM THAT THESE SOLDIERS ARE INSTRUCTED TO SHOOT TO KILL ALL UNIFORMED GUERRILLAS AND THOSE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING THAT ARE BEARING AND USING ARMS AGAINST THEM. NON-COMBATANTS ARE ROUNDED UP FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THEIR ORIGINAL VILLAGES, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE TOLD THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAD RECENTLY FORCED SOME 30 SAN JUAN IXCAN FAMILIES ACROSS THE BORDER INTO MEXICO WITH THE IDEA OF FORCING THEM TO SPREAD HORROR STORIES ABOUT THE GUATEMALAN ARMY. THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF THIS ACCOUNT, EXCEPT THE GENERALLY MISERABLE TREATMENT THE SAN JUAN IXCAN VILLAGERS RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE GUERRILLAS. AFTER VISITING SAN JUAN IXCAN THE MISSION TEAM RETURNED TO GUATEMALA CITY.  
CHAPIN

**NATIONAL  
SECURITY  
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)