

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 SP-03 L-03 H-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01

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P 162252Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2783

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E.O. 11#52: N.A

TAGS: PBOR, MX, US

SUBJECT: MEXICAN PRESS FOCUSES ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT
PROBLEM

REF: (A) MEXICO 5678

(B) MEXICO 5723

1. SUMMARY: RECENT PRESS REPORTS ON THE NUMBER AND TREATMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. HAVE BROUGHT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF HEAT BUT VERY LITTLE LIGHT TO THIS SUBJECT. EMBASSY BELIEVES EARLY ACTION NECESSARY TO CORRECT THE PUBLIC RECORD. END SUMMARY.

2. AN EFE WIRE REPORT QUOTING THE NEW HEAD OF THE INS, LEONARD CHAPMAN AS SAYING THERE ARE BETWEEN 11 AND 13.5 MILLION ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. ATTRACTED PROMINENT, FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN MOST PAPERS HERE ON JULY 12 AND SUBSEQUENTLY HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS UNFAVORABLE EDITORIALS. SINCE THESE FIGURES ARE CONSIDERABLY GREATER THAN ANY EMBASSY HAS SEEN PREVIOUSLY, IT APPEARS THAT CHAPMAN HAS BEEN MISQUOTED.

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3. EL SOL EDITORIALIZED ON JULY 13: "THE INSOLENT WORDS

OF LEONARD CHAPMAN DO NOTHING BUT SOW DOUBTS AND MISTRUST IN MEXICO. APPARENTLY IN NORTH AMERICA THEY SAY ONE THING AND DO ANOTHER. WASHINGTON ASSURES US THAT RELATIONS WITH MEXICO ARE AT THEIR BEST LEVEL AND THAT THERE ARE

PRACTICALLY NO PROBLEMS.' IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, A REPRESSIVE SYSTEM IS BEING INSTALLED AND BORDER GUARDS, IT SEEMS, ARE DEVOTED TO 'HUNTING' ILLEGAL MEXICANS AND TO ARREST AND CONFINEMENT IN STINKING DUNGEONS THAT OFFEND HUMAN DIGNITY, BEFORE OUSTING THEM."

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS OBVIOUS MISQUOTE OF CHAPMAN SHOULD BE CORRECTED SOONEST. ACTION: REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT CONSULT INS RE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS.

5. EXCELSIOR RAN SERIES OF VERY CRITICAL AND MISLEADING ARTICLES ON PROBLEMS AND PLIGHT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. THIS SERIES BY MIGUEL LOPEZ SAUCEDO, WHO CLEARLY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO BE OBJECTIVE, CONSISTED OF FOUR FRONT PAGE STORIES BETWEEN JULY 8 AND 12.

6. SALIENT FEATURES OF THE EXCELSIOR ARTICLES ARE: (A) THE USG WILL GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO CAPTURE PERSONS ILLEGALLY IN THE U.S. INCLUDING USING SENSORS DEVELOPED BY THE ARMY IN VIETNAM AND "ACCORDING TO A REPORT FROM MRS. TRINIDAD CAMPOS, THEY EVEN CAPTURED PATIENTS OF THE LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL"; (B) DETAINEES ARE UNDERFED (LOPEZ QUOTES PATRICO FLORES, THE AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SAN ANTONIO AS SAYING, "WHEN I GO TO THE JAILS, THE FIRST CRY I HEAR FROM THE INMATES IS I AM HUNGRY."); (C) DETAINEES ARE TREATED "LESS THAN HUMAN" (ONE FORMER DETAINEE ACCUSED A GUARD OF HAVING STRUCK AND MALTREATED MEXICANS IN THE SAN ANTONIO JAIL); (D) DORMITORIES IN THE CENTERS ARE TERMED OVENS WHERE THE HEAT IS SUFFOCATING AND (E) THE MEN IN THE CENTERS ARE DESCRIBED AS BEING SO HUNGRY, BORED AND FILLED WITH ANXIETY, THAT IT SAPS THEIR STRENGTH AND VIGOR.

7. ADDITIONALLY, LOPEZ AND HIS COMPANIONS ALLEGED THAT THEY ASKED MR. L.M. HATTENBACH, DIRECTOR OF THE INS REPATRIATION CENTER IN LOS FRESNOS, WHY THEY WERE PROHIBITED FROM TALKING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE DETAINEES IN THE CENTER AND HE REPLIED, "BECAUSE IT IS AN ORDER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE." EMBASSY UNAWARE OF BASIS FOR ABOVE STATEMENT. IN FACT, IT WAS EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING (REF A, PARA

13) THAT PRESS VISITS

TO INS FACILITIES ARE WELCOME AND THIS PRESUMABLY INCLUDED FREEDOM TO TALK

TO DETAINEES. ACTION: REQUEST

DEPARTMENT

CONSULTANTS IN ORDER TO CLARIFY POLICY ON THIS MATTER.

8. EMBASSY POUCHING CLIPPINGS.

9. IN ADDITION TO ACTION REQUESTED IN PARAS 3 AND 7, EMBASSY BELIEVES RECENT DEVELOPMENTS UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROMPT, FIRM, BUT DELIBERATE REPLY TO RABASA'S NOTE COUPLED WITH A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE USG POSITION (REF B). WHILE SOME CRITICISM OF USG POLICY TOWARD AND TREATMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IS INEVITABLE, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT A CLEAR-CUT, CAREFUL EXPLANATION COUPLED WITH A WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW PRESS VISITS TO INS FACILITIES WILL MAKE A FAVORABLE

IMPRESSION ON OBJECTIVE ELEMENTS OF MEXICAN PRESS. (TWO MEXICO CITY TELEVISION STATIONS BROADCAST OBJECTIVE PROGRAMS ON THE REPATRIATION CENTERS AT EL PASO AND LOS FRESNOS EARLIER THIS MONTH).

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