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GUATEMALTECA
GUATEMALA: A LIMITED POLITICAL SPACE NARRCWS FURTHER
New York, 20 May 1989

Guatemala: A limited political space narrows further

1. Introduction. The Representacion Unitaria de la Qqgsicion Guatemalteca, RUOG, has attended various meetings of UN human rights bodies since September 1982, in order to denounce the appalling situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Guatemala. Through its participation in debates and negotiations leading to resolutions on this issue, and its representation of the interests of the popular and democratic sectors of Guatemala, RUOG has evolved into a political-diplomatic team. The international community views RUOG as an authentic representative of a very large proportion of the Guatemalan population. Members of RUOG were forced into exile for almost 8 years after repression hit all sectors of the Guatemalan society in 1980 and 1981. However, following an invitation made by the Ambassador of Guatemala at the 44th session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, RUOG visited the country for the first time from April 18 to 23, 1988. RUOG's analysis of this first Visit determined that after an initial contraction of the political space at the beginning --two members of RUOG were arbitrarily arrested at the airport-- there was later an expansion, thanks to demonstrations by the popular movement and urgent expressions of concern by the international community and political and social forces within Guatemala. Less than three weeks after this visit, on 11 May 1988, there was a military coup attempt. Despite its being called unsuccessful, the coup attempt produced a shrinking of the political space. The political space was further contracted with a second military coup attempt on 9 August 1988. After this, increasing repression produced again massacres in the rural areas of the country, such as the one in El Peten, in late October, and the massacre of "El Aguacate" in Chimaltenango, at the end of November. In November 1988, the National Reconciliation Commission (CNR), called into existence by the Esquipulas II Agreement signed by the five Central American Presidents, convened a National Dialogue, a provision also of the Agreement, to try to find political solutions to the internal armed conflict and the serious social, economic and political crisis in Guatemala. This action alone somewhat expanded the political space, since there could be no dialogue if there were persecution of the persons participating in it. It meant, then, the possibility for RUOG to visit Guatemala again. There was a second visit from 28 February to 8 March 1989, in order to establish the terms of our presence in the National Dialogue with the CNR. we were accepted as "special guests", with the right to speak but not to vote. Once the work in specific commissions started, RUOG travelled to Guatemala on 18 April 1989, with the purpose of having a permanent presence in the country as long as the National Dialogue demanded. Unfortunately, as will become clear in this document, death threats and harassments which began half an hour after the most recent military coup attempt on 9 May escalated in an intolerable way, up to the point where RUOG could no longer stay in the country. On 18 May, after just one month of work, RUOG was forced to make the decision to leave Guatemala.

2. The National Dialogue. The National Dialogue, despite its limitations, is a historic opportunity to openly and frankly discuss the fundamental problems of Guatemala, as well as to search for political solutions to its internal crisis.

The limitations are quite clear: the main actors in the internal armed conflict --the fundamental problem of the Guatemalan society-- are not present. The URNG, Guatemala's unity of 4 insurgent organizations, was not accepted, and the army decided not to participate. Further, the private sector excluded itself from the DN; popular sectors are under-represented (very few representatives of the indigenous people in a country with more than 65% indigenous population; workers and campesinos are a minority; victims of the repressive policies of the State have a very constrained participation); and RUOG itself has only the right to speak.

When we joined the work of the National Dialogue, there was little public interest and no clear orientations, a sense of urgency or time frame. 80 many times before had the DN "officially" started without producing any significant work that both the population and the media had stopped paying attention to it. Many of the participants were unclear about its fundamental objective, that is to identify, discuss and try to solve the problems that impede peace and reconciliation in the country. For many of them the DN was to be an exercise in discussing all sort of problems and to act as an advisory body for the Government. we were amazed to hear Jorge Serrano, one of the members of the CNR, say that the DN could last from two months to two years, with no sense of urgency at all. There was no deadline for the DN, implying the risk of becoming meaningless once the electoral campaign for the presidency started next November.

we had to face all these obstacles, and we started intense work within the specific commissions and through bilateral contacts, in order to energize the DN. Specific commissions were being installed at a pace of 2 a week. For that reason we could start working only in five of the ones we were going to attend personally (Democratization and Political Affairs, Natural Resources and the Environment --where the land problem was to be discussed-- Human Rights, Peace and Security, and People Affected by Violence were the ones begun; Labor Relations and Ethnic Groups were the ones pending). As we announced from the very beginning, we decided to take the Dialogue beyond the framework set by the DN: we visited trade union federations, some particular trade unions, Church groups, human rights groups and organizations, political parties, student assemblies and university authorities. In all places we called for participation in and support for the DN. we had four important meetings with the CNR to transmit our concerns with respect to the DN and we always found a great deal of receptiveness to our proposals.

By the time we had to leave the country, the DN had been reoriented towards the most serious problems of Guatemala, it had a sense of urgency and a definite deadline --September 15, 1989-- and it had become meaningful for the media and the population. Popular organizations, religious groups and political parties had started to present proposals and discuss documents. In

addition to our general document to the DN, we presented particular documents to the commissions of Democratization and Political Affairs, Human Rights, People affected by Violence, and Ethnic Groups (we will present documents to all 15 specific commissions). All of them were received very positively by participants in the DN and by other organizations not present nor represented there.

Although we worked extremely hard for the DN to become a viable instrument for discussion and for the search for agreements and consensus, we have avoided being over-optimistic about it. We understand that the most important agreements cannot be reached by the DN, in view of its restricted participation. In very few matters will it be possible to reach a consensus, less so on a coherent proposal to the present government or the government to come. Nevertheless, this is a unique experience for Guatemala, a country where the dominant power has assassinated thousands of citizens for expressing their viewpoints. We have to realize also that if the DN fails, the idea of a general attempt to discuss our problems will be buried for, at least, the next five years. That is why we have put so much energy and effort into the DN. It is also why we strongly regret our decisions to leave Guatemala and suspend our physical presence in the specific commissions. In this sense, we look forward for the improved conditions needed to go back to Guatemala as soon as possible, a situation that will largely depend upon international pressure on the Guatemalan Government.

3. Military coups in Guatemala. One cannot understand the current events in Guatemala without a short historical review, at least the three and a half years of Cerezo's Government. We have indicated in several documents that the transition to civilian government in Guatemala was both a stage of a military counterinsurgency strategy and the result of widespread rejection of military rule by the Guatemalan people. Precisely because of its national and international isolation, the Guatemalan army needed to establish a civilian government and take on a democratic facade, while keeping total control of the popular and democratic movement and continuing its war against the URNG. On the other hand, the population freely chose the candidate who had been in some sort of opposition to the military regime. The Guatemalan people, by giving strong electoral support to President Cerezo, demanded that he challenge the military power.

We can identify three stages in Cerezo's government: 1) the period of expectations; 2) the period of concertation between Cerezo and the powerful sectors; and 3) the period of the military coup attempts. For almost a year President Cerezo enjoyed the benefit of the doubt by the Guatemalan people: no one attacked him, organizations were willing to negotiate, the media supported the administration, political parties were respectful of the new government, and even the URNG publicly offered not to create any obstacles to a democratization process in Guatemala, as long as it was a legitimate one, that is, one that responded to the needs of the majority of the population. There were bad signs from the very beginning though, such as the unwillingness of the civilian government to challenge the army's self-amnesty for violators of human rights or the official speech on 30 June 1986 projecting the army as the Champion of democracy in Guatemala. At the end of

the first year it was evident that President Cerezo could do nothing for the majority of the population. Violations of human rights and restrictions to fundamental freedoms continued unabated (the numbers of killings, cases of torture and forced disappearances were lower, but the practices continued in the form of State terrorism, carried on by the army); the popular sectors and middle classes had become 25% poorer during the year; demands by campesinos, workers and urban dwellers were ignored; and the army continued with its campaign to inflict a military defeat on the insurgent movement. The second stage of Cerezo's term reflected the integration of the military power, the economic elites and the civilian government. A concertation process of the Christian Democratic government and the dominant sectors of the Guatemalan society took place. President Cerezo changed his position vis a vis the militarization of the country and became an advocate of military aid to Guatemala. The biggest offensive ever against the guerrilla organizations was launched at the same time the government was having the first and only round of talks with the URNG. And all sorts of obstacles were put in front of all popular and democratic organizations demanding significant changes.

Several factors led to the third stage, the period of military coup attempts: 1) the intensive use of the limited political space (the URNG had become a central figure in the national debate, criticisms and opinions were being aired in the media, diplomatic approaches had been made by socialist countries, refugees had claimed their right to go back to the country under certain guarantees, and the RUOG had made its first appearance in Guatemala after 8 years in exile); 2) the failure of the military offensives against the URNG; 3) the dissatisfaction of the US government with the role of the civilian government in the Central American peace process; and most important, 4) the growth and development of the popular and democratic movement (increase of trade union activities and deepening of unity processes, the emergence of campesino movements, the rejection of the system of civilian patrols by the rural population, and the strengthening of human rights work inside the country).

we must state very clearly that the military coup attempts, despite the fact that they are fought with handkerchiefs instead of bullets --the small handkerchiefs wars-- are real. That is, they are the expression of deep contradictions inside the army. We have to make it very clear too that these coup attempts are not meant for overthrowing President Cerezo. In pure cost-benefit analysis, no fraction of the army could have any good reason to jeopardize the access to the international community that a Civilian government provides. The coups are orchestrated to produce negotiations with respect to the main governmental policies.

A year after the first coup attempt, one may conclude that confronted with the growing influence of the URNG on one side, and the growth and development of the popular and democratic movement on the other, the army entered into a debate in May 1988 that resulted in the decision to close the political space and increase repression. The second coup attempt, at the beginning of August, had the purpose of readjusting that decision by

escalating violations of human rights, up to the point of producing massacres, and carrying on psychological war against the popular and human rights movements.

The purpose of the most recent military coup attempt was to further close the political space and, most probably, to increase the levels of repression. The army expected that a year after the first coup attempt it would find itself in control of the situation in the country. The facts were quite different: the trade-union and popular movement had continued to grow and consolidate (there is now an umbrella organization for most trade-unions and popular groups, the UASP; the number of participants and the quality of demands during the May 1st march were by far superior with respect to 1988; people rejecting forced participation in the civilian patrols have organized themselves; widows and orphans have organized themselves, too); the political opposition had profited from the political space provided by the UN; and the URNG had dealt military blows to the army in the areas of conflict, showing that it is a force the government has to recognize and deal with.

In Guatemala, where we were at the moment of this coup attempt, people talked of a self-coup on one hand, and a profound dissension within the military on the other. We believe there is room to believe both interpretations, which are not necessarily contradictory. First, it is true, because we were able to verify it, that this coup attempt was an "announced coup" and, therefore, under control by the clique that directs the army. In an interview with the Minister of Defense two weeks before the coup, a journalist asked him if a highly rumored coup was a matter of concern for the army. The response was that this was under control and that the only concern was insurgent infiltration in Guatemalan society (referring as such any sort of political opposition). Two days before the attempt, the air space of Guatemala City was closed, because there was information of a coup about to begin. The US State Department and other circles in Washington D.C. knew of the coup attempt a week before 9 May. On 7 May, there was an interview in one of the newspapers with a rebel officer who participated a year before and he practically announced the coming action.

Second, the only one who could benefit out of this failed coup (and there was no chance to make it successful with 300 soldiers) was the civilian government, which was under heavy attack by the political right, organizations on strike and the media. In effect, immediately after the coup was over, the whole media and all political organizations had to pronounce themselves in support of the political system (and the government). A big demonstration was orchestrated by the Christian Democratic party in front of the National Palace and public employees were given the day off to participate. Internationally; countries from all over the world sent messages of support to President Cerezo, and Venezuela called for and coordinated an urgent response by the Organization of American States. The government was able with this to break the momentum of criticism against it and to retake the political initiative.

On the other hand, it is true that there is discontent amongst the ranks of the army. Casualties have been heavy in the internal armed conflict: one plane and two helicopters were shot down in the period we were there; the colonel second in command in the Huehuetenango base was killed in an ambush; and persons coming from the areas of conflict have reported up to 40 dead soldiers in one day. Attacks by the URNG have reached the urban areas (the Quezaltenango base, located in the second largest city, was attacked with mortar fire while we were in Guatemala, and there was a military action in Guatemala City itself just before we went to the country). There is evidence of corruption within the government and within the army. The civilian government is in an advanced state of deterioration, jeopardizing not only the Christian Democratic project, as happened in El Salvador, but also the army's project to have a civilian facade. The "officers of the mountain" who claim to have 70% of all army officers blame Vinicio Cerezo for creating conditions for the resurgence of the leftist insurgence, because he has "propiciated a state of anarchy and social decomposition which has put Guatemala on the edge of a civil war." Finally, officers in the field dislike risking their lives against the URNG at the same time RUOG--which they see as subversive-- makes use of the political space opened up by the National Dialogue.

With these sorts of contradictions, the army as a whole needed to restrict the political space even further, but this could not be done by decree or through congressional bills. It had to be done through armed negotiation, in order to force the civilian society to accept the results without legal opposition. In this sense it did not matter whether the coup had any chance of success or not (that is why it could be called a self-coup). Rather it was a show of military force that made it possible to bring discontent officers to sit down at the table and reshape policies in a way that could give the impression that concessions were made to their demands. The army's high command can now claim to have saved democracy and at the same time justify the final results. We know negotiations took place between 7:00 and 10:00 in the morning of 9 May, as reported by the press. It is very illustrative that by 10:30 death threats started against us, members of RUOG, and that they mounted during a period of 60 hours, without any action by the civilian government to impede or control them. It was not until 72 hours after this terrorist campaign was initiated that the Minister of the Interior offered us some sort of police protection.

4. Sixty hours of pressure against RUOG members. When RUOG entered Guatemala on 18 April 1989, there was one main concern: whether Raul Molina Mejia, the only member who had not previously returned to the country, would be detained at the airport. In 1988, Rolando Castillo Montalvo and Rigoberta Menchu had been detained because of an accusation against the three of them of being guerrilla trainers. Rolando Castillo and Rigoberta Menchu were released for lack of evidence (although the government has always claimed that they were amnestied), but the case was still open against Raul Molina. The third visit, however, like the second, began with no legal problems. No attempt to arrest Raul Molina was made, although it was evident that we were being watched permanently. We had reason to believe as well that all of our

telephone conversations were being tapped. A plainclothed man, who identified himself to the security guard of our hotel --Hotel Plaza-- as a member of the army's intelligence section (G-2), asked numerous questions on several occasions as to the exact location of Rigoberta Menchu. A black van with two persons using walkie-talkies was seen several times, and two men on a motorcycle followed our vehicle frequently. A whole network of street vendors, car washers, shoe-shiners, garbage collectors and gardeners were visible to us. We accepted this constant vigilance on the grounds that the intelligence apparatus wanted to know exactly what we were doing: we found no reason to denounce these actions.

The day of the coup, though, half an hour after the negotiations between the opposing parties in the army had finished, we received the first threatening phone call. The voice said that we had 48 hours to abandon the country or else we would be killed. Calls continued that day to several people who had been in touch with us, with the same message but with additional threats to them if we did not leave the country. The Hotel Plaza, where we had stayed the first two weeks was told not to lodge us in the future or it would be punished. The International Peace Brigades were threatened because of the company they were providing us. A human rights group was told to deliver the message to us or else they would be subject to repression. The same thing happened to a trade union.

During the afternoon of May 9, Frank LaRue's mother was called to tell her that we had 48 hours to leave the country, until noon on Thursday, May 11. If we did not comply with the terms she would also be subject to assassination. The same message was received by Raul Molina's sister at his former house in Guatemala; five minutes later, there was a second call saying that they should remember they had little children. Needless to say, the effect on the families was to make them feel completely defenseless before the apparatus of terror. During this first day, no organization nor group took responsibility for the threats, but the voice sounded very much like an officer's to persons who know the Guatemalan army. Meanwhile, vigilance surrounding our residence was increased with more plainclothed men. Wednesday, May 10 was Mother's Day in Guatemala. Before noon, Rigoberta Menchu received a bouquet of flowers with a card and a short letter. The card said that she had to leave the country not later than Thursday noon or else she would be killed together with all the members of RUOG. The letter said the same thing, and both were signed by the PGT-January 6, a fraction of the Communist Party that is not a member of the URNG. It is important to note that neither this fraction nor any other leftist organization has the desire nor the capacity to organize or carry on such a threatening campaign; there is no leftist organization that would cause any harm to RUOG, as it is considered as a representative of the interests of the popular and democratic sectors. Later during the day, both Frank LaRue's mother and Raul Molina's mother received flowers and cards with similar death threats (see annex). In the late afternoon and early evening more calls were received at the International Peace Brigades and at our residence, reminding us that at noon the following day the period of 48 hours would expire.

On Thursday Rigoberta Menchu left for Milan, Italy, as planned originally, to participate in the Congress of the Socialist Party. In the afternoon RUOG members were being taken to the National University of San Carlos (USAC) to participate in a conference on human rights, when a heavy red pick-up, with a camper and polarized windows, started to follow our vehicle in a menacing manner. RUOG members tried to ascertain whether this was a dangerous situation or not, and concluded this was the case. Our vehicle escaped and returned to our residence, where RUOG held an urgent meeting to analyze the situation. we decided to go ahead with the activity at the university, considering the persecution had just been an intimidating action.

After we got back from the university, where we had a wonderful warm reception and a lot of interest, we continued to analyze the situation, trying to imagine what would be the next move by the threatening forces. Somehow we expected to hear gun shots that night at our apartment. At 10:30 p.m. we received another phone call. We were told that we had 12 additional hours to leave the country or else we would start to die. Soon after we were told by the receptionist that a package had been left at the front desk for us. we asked two of our companions (a trade unionist from Canada and a Swiss student working for the International Peace Brigades) to go down and check. When they got back, they told us that a strange car was parked in front of the building, with a package on the windshield and leaflets all around. The leaflets said that only Rigoberta Menchu had been intelligent enough to leave the country and that the four of us who remained there had a final deadline of 12 hours.

A few minutes later, we received a call from the voluntary firemen corps, saying that a call had been received there with the following message: "This is the URNG. In the apartment house 'Suites Aida' RUOG is having a meeting. Because it is acting against Guatemalan democracy we have placed a bomb there." we told the firemen that there was a strange looking car in front of the apartment house and that they had better check for a bomb there. They asked if they should call the police and we advised them to do so. In the meantime we told the receptionist to alert all residents about the car and not try to move it. Firemen and police came around 11:30 p.m. and reached the conclusion that there were three bombs in the car: one on the windshield, a second one in the front seat and a third one in the back seat. The police assumed the responsibility to disactivate them.

After midnight we were told to abandon the building, given the fact that the explosive load was very heavy and if it exploded, the building could be damaged. very reluctantly we left the apartment and took refuge within a firemen's van. All residents had abandoned the building and the place was crowded with journalists and TV personnel (we were immediately interviewed). Close to 1:00 a.m. the police told us that they had dismantled the bombs and that we could go back to the building. we learned later that the three bombs were connected to the battery, which meant they could explode only if the motor was started. Therefore the episode was only an act of intimidation: to be covered by the media, and to terrorize all those in touch with us. One example of this was the immediate reaction of the owner of the residence

where we were: he asked us to leave the place the following day. Since our first hotel had already been threatened an immediate problem became finding a place to stay. we had to finally move to one of the most expensive hotels in town.

At 10:30 on the following morning the pressure on us stopped. Two plain-clothed men from the Technical Investigations Department and a uniformed police officer came to our residence with precise instructions from the Minister of Interior to offer protection. It meant the government was assuming responsibility for our safety. Certainly this was the result of the flood of telegrams from labor networks, church and solidarity networks, governments, human rights organizations and individuals internationally that acted to protest the coup attempt and the threats. The government could no longer ignore RUOG's situation. The only additional threatening action after this was the explosion of four small bombs within the university campus, which spread the same leaflets that were in the car-bomb the night before.

5. Who was behind the threatening campaign and why. When we informed the first phone threats to the diplomatic corps in Guatemala and to the international solidarity networks, we could not identify their source. It could have been a right wing political force, a faction within the military, a paramilitary organization, or the army's intelligence section. In this sense we made it clear for all people concerned that we had to get more information before blaming any particular group or the government.

Once the threatening campaign was over, however, we were totally sure that it had been devised, orchestrated and carried on by the army's intelligence section and that the purpose was to force us out of the country. we had to put together many pieces of information before coming to this conclusion.

a) For a period of 72 hours the threats were conducted with absolute impunity, despite the fact that the diplomatic corps had informed the Guatemalan Government of its concerns some four hours after the campaign had been initiated, and that international pressure was building;

b) Our phone conversations were being tapped (line problems, wrong connections and strange sounds) and we were under surveillance by the G-2. It was impossible for them not to know of the more than 20 death-threats. They would also have known of the written messages to our residence and the vehicles that persecuted us. Thus, we were bound to conclude that there was a plan duly approved not to interfere with these acts of intimidation;

c) The plan of intimidation called for human, economic and technical resources, as well as a great deal of expertise. It was a plan carefully implemented, with a high degree of coordinated timing. This could only work if it were carried out by the State apparatus;

d) The messages sent, both oral and written, revealed a highly disciplined group with specific skills. For instance, it was not by chance that the PST-6 of January was blamed for the threats. The purpose was to create the confusing appearance of a struggle within leftist forces. As a matter of

fact, the official version continues to be that the 6 of January fraction of the PGT was responsible for these threats;

e) Before anyone knew that the PGT- 6 of January had supposedly signed the death threats, a high-ranking officer member of the Chief of Staff's High Command was asked by a relative why the army was threatening RUOG. He responded: "It is not the army, it is the PGT- 6 of January, a subversive organization." (How did he know it?)

f) For Guatemalans whose lives are permeated by the presence of the army, it is a simple matter to distinguish their voices. The death threats people and we heard on the phone were pronounced by army officers. The clipped tones and the authoritarian style left no doubt!

Why force us out of the country? Probably there were many reasons for it, but all of them fall in the category of "dangerous utilization of the political space" at a moment when contradictions within the factors of power were on the rise. During three weeks the army's intelligence section observed all our movements, heard all our messages and measured all the results. An objective analysis of this information would lead to the following conclusions: the DN, originally authorized on the grounds that it would be irrelevant and marginalized, was being transformed into a potential instrument for redefining national policies; RUOG had access to a wide spectrum of Guatemalan society not reached by other political forces in the country (students assemblies at the national university; high-school students assemblies; trade union federations; teachers associations and federations; campesino organizations; Christian grass-roots groups; university authorities; human rights groups; victims groups); RUOG was being welcomed by many other organizations (political parties, State institutions, Church leaders) and invited to several places outside the capital city; messages not heard in Guatemala for the last 9 years were being presented again, whether in a direct way or through the media, the most important one being the real situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

The overall conclusion for the army must have been that it could not tolerate RUOG's activities within the country. Because of the widespread international concern (we knew of thousands of messages to President Cerezo and General Gramajo on our behalf) the government and the army found themselves compelled not to openly act against RUOG. It was necessary for them to launch a covert campaign, which in its first stage would leave the decision to leave the country in RUOG's hands. If this stage failed, as it did, new actions were to be implemented.

6. RUOG's decision to leave Guatemala. Confronted with the threatening campaign, RUOG at first decided to continue its work within the DN and its political presence in the country. we had properly evaluated that during the first stage the purpose of the Guatemalan army had been to intimidate us and people close to us, but not to physically eliminate us. we were able to endure the pressure mounted on us, and we made plans to continue in Guatemala, despite the advice to the contrary of many friends in the

international field. We set ourselves, though, to the task of constantly evaluating the situation, because it is common sense in Guatemala that the country does not need any more martyrs.

By Sunday, two days after the first stage of the threatening campaign, when everything looked very calm, we pondered two alternative hypotheses with respect to the near future. (1) The campaign was over and we should not fear any more harassment or pressure; and (2) a second stage would start, meaning that the military objective was to throw us out of the country at any cost -that is, even international pressure could not impede drastic actions by the army. Under the second hypothesis, there were five possibilities: (2.1) there would be a repetition of the first stage, with follow-up messages setting a new deadline; (2.2) there would be an increase of pressure on us, with more intimidating actions; (2.3) there would be a plan to attack us, whether to injure or eliminate us; (2.4) the pressure would be applied to our relatives, with clear indications of harm to children and elders; and (2.5) the pressure would mount against representatives of popular and democratic organizations, under the excuse that they were collaborating with us.

For four days we collected information and we watched for any sorts of signs. There were no further phone calls, either to us or to our relatives. Meanwhile the international support campaign slowed down. The popular movement was not menaced because of us, though pressure continued against it. On Sunday, when Raul Molina left Guatemala, in order to attend the meeting of ECOSOC, in New York, surveillance was heavy at the national airport. By Monday, our vehicle started to be followed again by 6-2 vehicles. We read all the news and statements coming after the military coup attempt, in order to identify the importance now being given to our presence in Guatemala. With more and more data coming into our hands, we stuck to possibilities (1) and (2.3) and discarded the other ones. We believed that the official message President Cerezo would deliver could illustrate the ultimate attitude towards RUOG. If he gave firm guarantees for our security, we would admit hypothesis (1) was the correct one. Unfortunately, when Cerezo referred to RUOG he reaffirmed the official version: that the PGT- 6 of January was behind the threatening campaign. This meant anything might happen, implying that the situation was beyond his control. Probabilities grew higher for hypothesis (2.3) and it became just a matter of time, before being implemented.

RUOG made the decision to temporarily leave the country and request the Christian Democratic government's commitment that all participants in the DN would enjoy full guarantees for their lives and safety. The government will have to take full responsibility and obtain the army's promise not to repress anyone. Otherwise, the DN is impossible. Our decision was made public on Thursday, 18 May 1989, at a press conference in Guatemala. Later that day, the three RUOG members still in Guatemala --Rolando Castillo Montalvo, Frank LaRue y Marta Gloria Torres- flew to Mexico.

The decision corresponds now to the Guatemalan Government. It could be in favor of the DN and in compliance with the Esquipulas II Agreement or it could tolerate increased levels of repression. We expect the right decision to be made, in order to travel back to Guatemala and continue our participation within the DN. Hopefully, if better conditions exist, next time we will be able to remain in the country until the end of the National Dialogue, on 15 September 1989.
New York, 20 May 1989.

Tarjeta del Dia de la Madre enviada a la madre
de Raul Molina, con fecha 10 de mayo de 1989
Card sent to Raul Molina's mother on Mother's Day
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ll ll) (l: i"0 0(, I / This is a very serious warning. Your son,
6/ l N a traitor, will have to leave Guatemala not later
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NOTA ADJUNTA A LA TARJETA DEL DIA DE LA MADRE
LEAFLET SENT WITH THE MOTHER'S DAY CARD

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TRAIDDRES

uaus - RUOG:

El meneaje qua ya ea 12: env16'telef6nicameg
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rel y colaboradorea.

IPUR GUATEMALA, LA REVOLUCIOk Y EL SOCIALiSMDI

, PARTIDO GUATEMALTECD DEL Tananao

PST (6 DE ENERO)

TRAITORS

URNNG - RUOG

The message already sent to you by phone through your
collaborators is no game. This is to remind you that you should not
forget that not later than Thursday noon, you will have to abandon
Guatemala. Otherwise, you will die together with your relatives and
collaborators.

For Guatemala, the Revolution and Socialism!

Guatemalan Workers Party

PGT (January 6)

[illegible]

13 de mayo de 1989 ,
en zona 9
1E
.Terrorismo
if I
' Mn" . _ g. . ' Lg; ,, _ %#' , DALARMA. Enla lologratla grande, RUOG. Desqus, el a
utomovil, en
an. ' g 4 M" 3. cl vehiculo con la: bombas esclacio- cuyo vidrio delantero, se alcanza a
.. .5 . nado en la entrada al sbtano del edi- ver la primera bomba. (Fotograflas
. ' .. - . -. licio cue ocupan lo: miembroa de la de Ricardo Galica Tnejo)
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Hostigamiento a la RUOG

El A nombre del Partido guatemalteco del Trab
su sede

Guatemala, mayo 13. Por R1-
cardo Gatica Trejo. De la Re-
daoc16n dc EL G CO.

La Representacldn Unllan'a
de la Oposicldn Guatemalteca,
RUOG. cuya malma dlngen-
(:13 se encuentra en el pais. fue
blanco de una sevem amenaza
e lnlldadacldn para que aban-
done cl pais en el menor Uem-
po poslble, cuando desconocl-
dos. que se autoldenflcaron 00-
mo micmbros del Part ido Gua-
lcmalleco del Trabajo. PCT. co-
locaron un carro-bomba en la
entrada a los apartamentos en
donde residen.

En L05 apartamenlos "Ai-
da", slluados en In 38. Achda
10-21 zona 9 :11 sur dc la capiy
ml, 36 pneucnlrau residiendo
los diri lentes de la RUOG, Ro-
lando aslillo Montalvo; Raur
Molina; Franck LuRue y Mar-
lhu dc Torrez, quienes llegaron
ul pru's para participar en 6!
Gran Dizilogo Nacional.

La noche del jueves. a las
21:30 horas, dcscnocidos de-
iaron aparvado un vehlzmlin 65
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cnerol. acusa a la RUOG dc ple-
arse a los Interests (14: la
ilRNG y pcrmillr que 61 PCT
(tradiclonal). ingresc a la mls.
ma .

En cl vehiculo. cn cl vidrio
(mscro y el batil, fueron pinla-
das con "spray" rojo, las 51
IGTAyeralauladelama ru-
gada. expertos en explosives
e la policia naclonal desatu-
Varon las bombas.

D INTIMIDACIONIS
DEL PASADO

Como consccuencia de la sl-
lumzidn surgida en el lugar, 5?
him necesario evacuar a unos
(reinta huespedes del alojay
mlenlo. entre ellos los dlrigen-
les de la RUOG.

Rolando Castillo Montalvo;

F ranck LaRuc: Raul Molina y

Martha de Torrez. salieron a la calle cast al filo de la media noche. cuando la capital era azotada por un fuerte viento con frias lluvias. Castillo Montalvo. al referirse al incidente. dijo que "los bomberos voluntarios habian hecho contacto telefonico con ellos. tras recibir una llamada en el sentido de que en el edificio. se ha detonado la bomba".

Agrego que "estas acciones inlimi aton'as pertenecen al pasado. pero se continuan dando. buscando con ello cerrar la posibilidad de expresion de los grupos democraticos".

Castillo Montalvo recorda que ellos "se encuentran en Guatemala para participar en el Gran Dia'logo Nacional que lo hacen como parte de proyecto democratico que se vive actualmente".

Mientras

tanlo. F ranck

LaRue seriala que "hasta ahora. se a las amenazas surtidas (los autores del fall! 0 atentado piden a los dirigidos de RUOG que abandonen el'

D ROTULOS. En la parte de atras del vehiculo. aparecen dos (bultos que en letras rojas, tienen las iniciales PGT, que pertenecen al Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo.

país). no han decidido aun que aculud tomaran. -

leo notar que R1 oberta

Menchl'x habia salido el jueves a Italia para participar en una reunion del Partido Socialista. pero ello no quiere decir que por las amenazas se ha maxchado.

explicó igualmente que

U BOMBEROS. Varios bomberos voluntarios a cien metros de donde estaba el automovil, observan, antes de ayudar a la evacuacion de los huéspedes del alojamiento.

El ACEECAMIENTO. En este acercamiento se puede observar claramente como esta colocada la bomba: exterior en el vidrio delantero del automovil. que habia sido robado a la nuera de la noche al señor Mafia Hemán Rivas.

ajo, colocan carro-bomba ante.

Raul Molina deberia de salir ayer en las Naciones Unidas para participar en un debate. 0 ha fa una decision de salir del país.

Castillo Montalvo se habia que era "absurdo pretender culpar a! PCT de estas acciones. pues se trata de personas anónimas que segun utihv zando mt5t0305 antiguos pzu'u pmlonar a los grupos demcxatlicos que tratan de abrir un espacio politico en el país".

a LA Lulunnn A

Los nonsenos

vounu-Aluos

Los bombcros Voluntarios
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DECANO DE LA PRENSA INDEPENDIENTE

FUNDADOR: CLEMENTE MARROQUIN ROJAS;

DENUNCMN PHHONES Y ALEJAZASu Frark La Ru. y Ram Molha, dlrlgemos de In 8006 qua so oncuon tran on

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DIRECTOR GENERAL: OSCAR MARROQUIN ROJAS EPOCA IV -GUATEMALA DE LA ASUNCION, VIERNES 12 DE

MAYO DE 1989- NUMEHO 24025

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Ejemplar

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OPOSICION y
GUATEMALTECA 1 1
REPRESENTACION e W

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New York, November 20, 1989

H.E. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Permanent Representative to the United Nations

New York, New York

Your Excellency:

we, members of the Representacion Unitaria de la Oposicion Guatemalteca, RUOG, have the honor of addressing ourselves to you to request your Government to consider expressing concern about the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Guatemala, during the debate under item 12 of the Third Committee's agenda.

Last October we sent you a letter, together with a series of written materials documenting the worsening of the situation of human rights in Guatemala, in which we requested your Government to consider not voting for Guatemala to become a member of ECOSOC. We felt very much encouraged by the outcome of the elections, on November 1st, because Guatemala not only failed to obtain the seat, but the number of votes in its favor was significantly low. we considered this result as a first measure the international community could take to try to halt the increase in repression against the popular and democratic sectors of Guatemalan society.

we Viewed this important action as a first measure only because we understood that preventing the escalation of human rights violations in the country was going to necessitate a deeper treatment by United Nations human rights bodies. In effect, reports condng from Guatemala clearly indicate that repression continues and is expanding its radius of impact: following the already documented attacks on the peasant, trade union, human rights, and student sectors, it is now the Catholic Church that faces death threats, abductions, torture and life-threatening situations. After the abduction and torture of the 0.8. religious nun Diana Ortiz, on 3 November 1989, the Archbishop of Guatemala City stated: "This attack cannot be seen but as a direct attack on the Catholic Church." The responses from President Cerezo and General Gramajo, Minister of Defense, were very much dismaying: they expressed doubts that this attack ever occurred and rather claimed that the story was a fabrication of Sister Ortiz. It is worth mentioning that four nuns have already left the country because of death threats, and that according to Cronica, a weekly magazine in Guatemala, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany traveled abroad after receiving similar threats. For the Guatemalan people it is beyond logic to be told that the UN General Assembly is not going to discuss and approve a resolution on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Guatemala. Different

organizations involved in the defense of the right to life both within and outside Guatemala are questioning how much worse conditions have to be in order to overcome technical and political considerations that prevent such a resolution. Those familiar with the proceedings of the UN human rights bodies understand that it may be technically more advisable to wait for the session of the Commission on Human Rights and proceed there, as many missions have recommended, to deal with the situation of human rights in Guatemala under the item of gross and systematic Violations of human rights, to appoint a Special Rapporteur for the country, and to give him/her a very precise mandate to study the situation in depth. But for victims in the country it is hard to believe and accept that the UN General Assembly will have to wait one more whole year before getting involved in the tragic situation of Guatemala.

It is in view of this apparent contradiction that mentioning the case of Guatemala in the official statements under item 12 of the Third Committee's agenda becomes a very important signal: a message of criticism for the repressive forces in the country, a message of support for the repressed people in Guatemala, and a message of encouragement for the Commission on Human Rights to act free of political constraints. It will therefore be extremely important that these messages come from the various regional groups, as well as address with no equivocation the grave violations of human rights being carried on by the armed and security forces of Guatemala. Your Excellency, we are confident that you will appreciate the above mentioned request and act accordingly. Please find enclosed a series of documents that support our allegations that the situation of human rights in Guatemala has deteriorated to intolerable extremes. The prompt action of the international community seems to be the only resource to defuse a mounting explosive crisis.

Sincerely yours, on behalf of RUOG,

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c/o RUOG, P.O. Box 6268, Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163-6024

Telephone: (212) 682-3633 ext. 124; Fax: g212) 682-5354

REPRESENTACION K x
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GUATEMALTECA '
PRESS RELEASE

Sister Diana Mack Ortiz, a United States citizen, of the Ursuline order of Mount Hope, Kentucky was abducted in Guatemala on 2 November 1989. After being tortured and burned, she was able to escape her captors on 3 November 1989.

Sister Ortiz was at the Belen retreat house in the City of Antigua Guatemala when she was abducted by four armed men driving a marked police vehicle. She was taken to a clandestine detention center where she was severely beaten and subsequently burned 72 times with cigarettes. She could hear the screams and cries of other people being tortured in the same place. Sister Ortiz escaped her captors while she was being driven to another location, and sought refuge in a religious home in Guatemala City. She was moved to the custody of the Apostolic Nuncio, where she was medically treated while waiting to leave the country. She is now in the United States.

The 31 year old Ursuline Sister had been working with children in Guatemala for over two years. She had previously received threats, as have others of the religious community of Guatemala. This particular case is viewed as a threatening message directed toward the Catholic Church of Guatemala.

Monsignor Prospero Penados del Barrio, Archbishop of Guatemala City, stated in a press conference on 2 November 1989, "These actions are viewed as the beginning of a campaign of intimidation against the Catholic Church." He also announced that a Maryknoll Sister, Patricia Denny, had to leave Guatemala recently after her residence was broken into by unidentified men. They warned her that "if she wanted to remain alive she had to abandon the country." Sister Denny also received numerous written and phoned death threats, in perfect English. Monsignor Penados del Barrio indicated that these actions intend "to force the Catholic Church to be silent and impede its denunciation of the crimes that occur in Guatemala."

we believe, once more, that the international community has to react strongly to the repressive campaign inside Guatemala. There is certainly merit for a General Assembly's resolution on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Guatemala.

New York, 6 November 1989.

Telephone: (212) 682 3633 ext 124; Fax: (212) 682 5354

8/EL DIARIO-LA PRENSA, MARTES 7 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1989

NACIONALES

Nixon discute con Bush viaje a China

WASHINGTON - El presidente Bush oen6 con el ex presidente Richard Nixon para que Ste le dicta un informe sobre el viaje que realizb a China haoc poco, segim se informt') ayer.

Durante su viaje, Nixon habia urgido a China y a los Estados Unidos que echamn a unJado sus difcmncias y reanudamn relaciones normales, pese a las tensioncs que aim quedan por la saninema mprcsibn a grupos de manifestantes.

yEl presidente (Bush) hallb que ese punlo de vista es bastante inleresante y productive", dijo el ponavoz dc Bush. Marlin Fitzwzner. yQueremos mantener la relacibn y... segim prooeden los eventos continuaremos conside-rgpdo posibles acciones que cambian'an nuestra relacion

Boeing hace otra oferta a maquinistas

SEATTLE. Washington -- La compaflia Boeing hizo ayrc una ofena "final" a los maquinistas en huclga comm la empresa. pero los representantes de los empleados indicaron que la ofena es aim pcor que la anterior, pre-scnlada en octubrc.

.Al frent

Monja dice 'la torturaron' en Guatemala a

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky - La monja mtblica que desa- pareciO por min de 24 horas en Guatemala la semana pasada dijo que me secuestmda, tortumda y agredida sexualmentc por Ines hombres, en un edificio dondc aparentemente otras personas estaban tambien siendo maltratada.

Diana Oniz regresb a Kentucky cl domingo. y csti) descansando en un convento cuya ubicic'm no se ha dado a conooer, segl'm dijeron las dos monjas que la trajcron de vuelta a cstc is. las hennanas Darleen Chmielewski y Mary Elizabeth Ballard.

El sccuestro pudo haber sido una vcnganza personal por algim acto real o imagina- do. pero tambiEn pudo haber sido un acto dc venganza dirigido a la iglesia, segl'm dijo Ballard.

Chmielewski y Ballard dije- ron que Oniz. de 31 aflos, queria que su historia fuera dada a conooer pabljmmmente ' para almer atencibn a la situacibn del pais ccmroamericano, donde, indican, un represivo ragimen militar eslh oculto tras la fachada de un gobierno ymarioneta', y el lerrorismo es un hecho de la Vida diaria.

Ortiz. nacida en Grants, Nuevo Mexico, es miembro de las Hermanas Ursulinas de Mount St. Joseph, una comunidad religiosa basada cerca de Owensboro, Kentucky.

Tms dar clases de kinderganen en dos escuelas de Kentuc- ky, sc mudb 3 Guatemala. para hacer la misma clase de trabajo en el pueblo de San Mi cl Acatan.

La monja no esta involucrada en ningl'm lipo de activi- dad politica. segim dijeron las hcrmanas.

La monja indic6 que la llevaron a un edificio grande, y se podia escuchar a otras personas gritando de dolor.

Pero a principios de este aim Ortiz comenzc') a recibir canas anbnimas. amenazz'mdola y ordenindole que se fucm del pais. En julio, un hombre desoonocido la acomlc') y repitib la amena- za.

Temprano en la maflana del jueves pasado, de acuerdo a las declaraciones escritas de la monja, el mismo hombre, acompa- fxado de otro, se le aoermron, le mostmron una pistola y amena- zaron con haoer daho a sus amistades si no xba con ellos en

calma. para responder a algunas preguntas

La monja fue llevada en

autobús y en automóvil a un

edificio grande, bajo amenazas de hacerle daño si gritaba.

Allí les recibió un tercer hom-

bre, vestido como oficial de

policía. Ortiz dijo que podía

escuchar a hombres gemiendo

y a mujeres gritando de dolor.

Ortiz indicó que fue golpeada

en la cama y que fue sometida

a abuso sexual. Indicó que

los tres hombres le mostraron fotografías tomadas en San Mi-

guel, le decían que identificara a la gema en las fotos. y la

quemaban cada vez que daba una respuesta.

Finalmente, otro hombre entró y ordenó que detuvieran los

abuses, diciéndole "idiotas" a los otros y diciendo "ella es nor-

teamérica Déjenla quieta. Ya está saliendo en las noticias de

televisión".

Ortiz indicó que este mismo hombre la llevó a Ciudad de

Guatemala. en un viaje en automóvil que duró casi una hora.

El hombre le pidió que los perdonara porque la habían confun-

dido con otra persona, pero también admitió que ellos eran

quienes le habían enviado las cartas anónimas. (AP)

B
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H oe Derechos Humonos Jamey
l"" de Guotemolo EH GUATEMALA
i
Ursuline Sister Diana Ortiz's Account of her Kidnapping

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PRIOR EVENTS:

Sister Diana Ortiz had received several anonymous written threats telling her to leave the country. She received three (3) of these letters in San Miguel Acatan, state of Huehuetenango in the parish where she worked with children, another was received in Guatemala City, and the last in the Belen Sisters' Retreat House in Antigua Guatemala. Also she had been accosted in the center of Guatemala City, by a man unknown to her, who told her to leave the country.

DETAILS OF THE KIDNAPPING

Diana was participating in a course in the Belen Retreat House in Antigua Guatemala. On Thursday, November 2, 1989, about 8.00 AM, Diana asked the caretaker to open the door to the enclosed gardens. She entered the garden alone with the intention of praying awhile before classes were to begin. She was there alone ten (10) minutes reading the Bible when a man put his hand on her shoulder and said: "Hola mi amor" (which is a derogatory greeting coming from a man she doesn't know). He was the same man that had accosted her in Guatemala City. This man said that she had to come with him because he had to ask her some questions. Then another unknown man appeared. The first insisted that she had to accompany them. She said she wouldn't go. So they showed her a pistol and said they would harm her friends if she didn't go with them. With that she felt obligated to leave with them through the back of the gardens where there was a garbage dump and an opening in the wall.

They took her along the dry river bed of the Rio Pensativo to the street leaving Antigua where they boarded an inter-urban bus. As they got on the bus he showed her a hand grenade and said that if she tried to escape, innocent people would die. Upon arriving at the crossroads to Mexico (1/2 hour from the capital --Guatemala City) they got off the bus and walked about ten (10) minutes along a dirt road with few houses until they came to a white police car. Inside there was a uniformed policeman. They put her into the car and blindfolded her. The policeman said to the men, "I see that your trip was successful."

After a trip of approximately 1/2 hour, they stopped and took her inside a place that seemed like a warehouse because there was a lot of echo. They went downstairs where she heard screams of a woman in a great deal of pain and moans of men. They put her in a dark and very cold room that had a chair and a desk. They left her there for many hours. Then three (3) men entered: the policeman. the two men who had kidnapped her from the gardens. They told her that they had business to take care of and that they were going to explain the rules of the game to her: they were going to ask her some questions, if she gave an answer they liked they would let her smoke; if they didn't like the answer, they would burn her back with a cigarette. When she said the rules were unjust, she
- received the first burn.

They removed her sweat shirt and the policeman began to abuse her sexually. But the man who accosted her in Guatemala City said, "let's take care of business first and then we'll have fun." They removed her blindfold and showed her some pictures. One was of her in the Plaza of San Miguel Acatan and in the village of Yalaj. Both were during fiesta days. She recalls that those were 2 occasions when the military were present. They kept turning her for every answer she gave. Then they showed pictures of two (2) indigenous people: a man and a woman carrying guns. She had never seen them before and said so. But they insisted that she was that woman even though there wasn't any resemblance. She received approximately 76 cigarette burns on her back. One of the men blindfolded her again. One man hit her so hard in the face she fell to the floor, receiving lesions on the left side of her face. They pulled her up to a sitting position on the floor and began to abuse her sexually, in several ways, but not in actual rape, because in that moment a fourth man entered the room.

Someone said "Alejandro, come have some fun." But he answered them with an obscene word common in English among North Americans. He said: "Idiots, she is a North American. Let her alone. It's already on the news on television." The fourth person approached her and helped her replace her t-shirt and sweat shirt. He removed her blindfold and said: "Let's get out of here." He conducted her through a garage toward a gray Suzuki jeep and drove out onto the street. During the trip Diana spoke in English and he answered in Spanish, but with a non-Guatemalan accent.

He asked her to pardon them because they had confused her with someone else and that they had tried to prevent this with the anonymous letters and that she hadn't taken them seriously. She replied that she had stayed because of her commitment to a suffering people. He said they had something in common. That is, he also was concerned about the people and consequently, was working to liberate them from communism. She said it wasn't the same because they didn't respect human life. The man told her that they were going to talk with a friend from the North American Embassy who could help her. At this point Diana realized she was in Zone 6 of the Capital: so when they stopped in heavy traffic, she opened the door and jumped out. She ran rapidly until she found a person from whom she asked help. The woman invited her into her house where she stayed about 2 hours resting. Then she gave her some money for phone calls and bus fare to Zone 7 where Diana proceeded to a travel agency. From there she was taken to the Maryknoll Center House.

For security reasons she was moved to the safety of the Papal Nuncio of Guatemala. Under the protection of Monsignor Oriano Quilici, Sister Diana Ortiz left Guatemala for the United States.