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HEADER

R 132159Z AUG 90  
FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEACMC/CMC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEADAA/AFIS AMHS BOLLING AFB DC  
RUEKCGG/USDP-CCC WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/WHITEHOUSE  
RUETIAQ/MPCFTGEORGEAEMD  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHC /SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAMCC/CMC CC WASHINGTON DC

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE  
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2012-010, document no. 5  
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[Redacted]

R 132019Z AUG 90

FM [Redacted]  
TO RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
INFO RHLBAAA/USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HEIGHTS//SCJ2//  
RUEHMU/[Redacted]  
BT

CONTROLS

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 01 OF 03 SAN SALVADOR [Redacted]

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CITE: (U) [Redacted]

SERIAL: (U) [Redacted]

/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) EL SALVADOR (ES).

SUBJ: [Redacted] 1352 [Redacted] PART 33 IN JESUIT SERIES - BILUNTALK ON JESUIT CASE/(431)  
(U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT  
FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
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DOI: (U) 900808.

REQS: (U) [REDACTED]

SOURCES: (U) [REDACTED]

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10 USC § 424

SUMMARY: (S/NF) VISITING U.S. CONGRESSMEN DELIVER AN EXTREMELY BLUNT MESSAGE TO EMC CHIEF COL PONCE AND HIS DEPUTY COL RUBIO REGARDING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND THE JESUIT CASE. MESSAGE RECEIVED. RESPONSE - SAME OLD STUFF.

TEXT: 1. (S/NF) CODEL DREIER, A VISITING DELEGATION OF THREE CONSERVATIVE U.S. CONGRESSMEN, WAS RECEIVED BY CHIEF OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF (JEMC) COL RENE ((PONCE)) AND HIS DEPUTY COL GILBERTO (RUBIO)) AT THE JOINT STAFF (EMC) ON 900808. THE THREE VISITING U.S. DIGNITARIES INITIATED THE DISCUSSION BY EXPLAINING THAT THEY ARE LONG-TIME, STAUNCH SUPPORTERS OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR -- A FACT ALREADY KNOWN TO PONCE AND RUBIO. HOWEVER, AS THEY POINTED OUT, THEY ARE BELEAGUERED SUPPORTERS WHO ARE "HIGHLY EMBARRASSED AND COMPLETELY FRUSTRATED" BY THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE JESUIT CASE. THEY TOUCHED ON SEVERAL INTERRELATED DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR THE TWO SENIOR SALVADORAN OFFICERS TO CONSIDER. FIRST, THEY SEE A LACK OF RESOLVE BY THE SENIOR ESAF LEADERSHIP (PONCE AND RUBIO) TO SUPPORT THE EFFORT OF 4TH CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE MAURICIO ((GUTIERREZ)) OR SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE RICARDO ((ZAMORA)). NOR IS THE GOES ASSISTING IN THE PROSECUTION EFFORT. SECOND, IN LIGHT OF THE EXTREME TIMELINESS OF THEIR VISIT, THE VISITING LAWMAKERS WANTED TO KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES THAT REDUCED/CONDITIONED AID WOULD HAVE ON THE ESAF. FINALLY, THE THREE CONGRESSMEN WANTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT, CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS HIGH-PROFILE HUMAN RIGHTS CASES, THE JESUIT CASE WAS NOT GOING AWAY AND WOULD ONLY DEEPEN IN IMPACT AS TIME DRAGGED ON WITHOUT PROGRESS.

2. (S/NF) COL PONCE RESPONDED TO THESE DISCUSSION POINTS BY ADDRESSING THE LAST ISSUE FIRST. HE, THE ESAF SENIOR LEADERSHIP, AND THE GOES ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIZED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE JESUIT CASE IN WASHINGTON, AND HAVE NO EXPECTATION THAT IRAQ (FOR INSTANCE) OR ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT NEWS EVENT WOULD CAUSE THE JESUIT CASE TO DIMINISH IN INTEREST. PONCE THEN DIGRESSED BY SAYING HE RECOGNIZES THE INTERNATIONAL POWER AND IMPACT OF THE

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ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THIS ISSUE. FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, FMLN SOLIDARITY GROUPS ARE CONTINUING TO AGITATE ON THE JESUIT CASE WITH THE GOAL OF ELIMINATING, REDUCING, OR CONDITIONING U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE. [ ]

[ ] --AT THIS POINT IT WAS ALREADY CLEAR THAT COL PONCE WAS GOING TO ANSWER THE STRONGLY WORDED FRUSTRATIONS OF THREE STAUNCH CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORTERS WITH A POLEMIC.) THE FIELD OF BATTLE ACCORDING TO PONCE HAS SHIFTED TO WASHINGTON, AND EL SALVADOR LACKS THE MEANS TO FIGHT IN WASHINGTON. IT IS A WAR OF PERCEPTIONS AND SPECULATION. THE MURDER OF THE JESUITS TOOK PLACE UNDER A VERY SPECIAL SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE CAPITAL CITY WAS UNDER INTENSE FMLN OFFENSIVE PRESSURE ON THREE SIDES. SAN MIGUEL, USulután, AND ZACATECOLUCA WERE UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE ALSO. THE HIGH COMMAND WAS PROFOUNDLY CONCERNED THAT THE CAPITAL WOULD BE LOST. ON 891115 AT 1800 A (WELL-KNOWN) MEETING WAS HELD AT THE EMC WHERE THE POSITION WAS DEVELOPED THAT MUCH STRONGER MILITARY ACTION WOULD BE NEEDED TO DISLODGE FMLN FORCES FROM SAN SALVADOR NEIGHBORHOODS. HEAVY WEAPONS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO POUND THE GUERRILLAS IN PRESUMABLY DESERTED BARRIOS. SUBJ: [ ] 90/PART 33 IN JESUIT SERIES - BLUNT THE ESAF LEADERSHIP SAW 10 YEARS OF SWEAT AND BLOOD ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED AND RESOLVED TO SAVE A NATION AND GOVERNMENT THEY FELT TO BE IN EXTREMIS. [ ]

[ ] --ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED THIS TIME, PONCE WAS APPARENTLY IMPLYING THAT GIVEN THE CRISIS AT THAT MOMENT, NO ONE IN THE HIGH COMMAND WAS THINKING ABOUT JESUITS.) AT THIS POINT COL PONCE FINALLY ADDRESSED THE ACT ITSELF SAYING HE AND THE NATION WERE SHAMED BY THE "DAMNABLE ACT". HAVING THUS FINALLY BOWED TO PROPRIETY COL PONCE THEN SAID THE CASE WAS IN THE HANDS OF THE JUDGE. "WHATEVER THE JUDGE SAYS HE NEEDS FROM US IN THE CASE, WE ARE COMMITTED TO GIVE." WHILE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE ESAF MIGHT NOT BE SO DISPOSED TO COOPERATE IN THE CASE, THE ESAF AS AN INSTITUTION RECOGNIZES THE DANGER THAT THE JESUIT CASE REPRESENTS FOR THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, CURRENT SALVADORAN LAW MUST BE APPLIED IN PROSECUTING THE CASE. THERE HAS BEEN A COMPLETE CHANGE IN ATTITUDES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADHERANCE TO SALVADORAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW WITHIN THE ESAF AFTER 10 YEARS OF U.S. SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE. AND IF THERE IS A U.S. PERCEPTION OF FOOT DRAGGING IN THE CASE IT IS THE FAULT OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM -- SOMETHING BEYOND THE REACH OF THE ESAF. IT WOULD BE TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE ESAF TO PRESSURE AN INDEPENDENT ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. ON THE CONTRARY, THE ESAF STOOD PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE JUDGE IN WHATEVER WAY POSSIBLE.

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3. (S/NF) IN ADDRESSING THE IMPACT THAT A CUT OR CONDITIONING OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE WOULD HAVE ON THE ESAF, COL PONCE INDICATED THAT EVERYONE IN THE ESAF SENIOR LEADERSHIP EXPECTS A CUT; PERCENTAGE OBVIOUSLY TO BE DETERMINED. THE PRIMARY CATEGORIES TO SUFFER WOULD BE HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES -- BOTH OF WHICH WOULD TRANSLATE INTO MORE BATTLEFIELD DEATHS DUE TO MEDEVAC SHORTFALLS. FUEL AND FIELD RATIONS WOULD ALSO GO UNDERFUNDED. BUT THESE ARE ALL MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS. THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE EVEN MORE TRANSCENDENTAL. IN COL PONCE'S VIEW, IF THE REASON FOR CUTTING AID TO EL SALVADOR IS A PURELY ECONOMIC CONSIDERATION INTENDED TO SHIFT MONIES TO PANAMA, NICARAGUA, OR EASTERN EUROPE, WELL AND GOOD. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE REASON FOR CUTTING AID IS TO PUNISH PERCEIVED INTRANSIGENCE ON THE JESUIT CASE OR TO PRESSURE GOES COMMITMENT TO THE DIALOGUE PROCESS, THEN U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE CONTINUATION IS ACTUALLY IN THE HANDS OF THE FMLN. PONCE WRAPPED UP BY INSISTING THE ESAF IS A CHANGED INSTITUTION WHICH RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAS YIELDED TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITY UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CONDITIONS OF NATIONAL TRAVAIL. WHILE ADMITTING TO PAST ERRORS AND RECOGNIZING THAT SOMEWHERE IN THE ESAF SOMEONE MAY WELL BE VIOLATING A CITIZEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS EVEN NOW, THE ESAF HIGH COMMAND IS DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS -- A PROCESS BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THOSE WHO STEP OUT OF LINE WOULD BE PUNISHED. PONCE THEN PASSED OUT COPIES OF A NEW HUMAN RIGHTS SOP WHICH HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO ESAF UNITS.

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4. (S/NF) COL RUBIO THEN ADDRESSED THE SAME ISSUES, IN MUCH THE SAME PLATITUDINOUS FASHION AS PONCE. HE INDICATED THAT AMONG OTHER THINGS TO SUFFER IN A BUDGET CUT WOULD BE ADVISORY SUPPORT TO THE ESAF, IMPLYING THAT USG INFLUENCE WOULD BE DIMINISHED. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR HAS ALWAYS FALLEN SHORT OF THE 120 MILLION USD RECOMMENDED BY U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND. FURTHERMORE, THE ESAF IS ONLY ABLE TO SUSTAIN COMBAT NOW AND HAS NO RESERVE STOCKS. OTHERWISE, COL RUBIO WENT NO FURTHER IN SATISFYING THE VISITING CONGRESSMEN'S CLEARLY STATED FRUSTRATION AND CONCERN.

5. 8:40, 1/WN) THERE FOLLOWED A GIVE AND TAKE WHERE ALL GTRJ

VISITING DIGNITARIES TRIED TO CLARIFY THAA HEY INTENDED TO INDICATE THAT (SPEAKING AS STAUNCH ESAF/GOES SUPPORTERS) THE ESAF WASHJOT FORTHCOMING ENOUGH IN THIS

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SERIAL7 (U) [REDACTED]

COUNTRY: (U) EL SALVADOR (ES).

SUBJ: [REDACTED] 1352 [REDACTED] PART [REDACTED] IN JESUIT SERIES - BLUNT DAMAGING AND EMBARRASSING JESUIT CASE. COL RUBIO INSISTED AGAIN THAT THE CASE IS OUT OF ESAF HANDS, THAT IT IS A MATTER FOR THE 4TH CRIMINAL COURT. THE ESAF HAS NO "POWER" IN THE CASE -- EVEN LESS SO SINCE IT'S AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL MATTER. COL PONCE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH IN MOST COUNTRIES MILITARY POWER AND INFLUENCE INCREASE IN TIME OF WAR, IN EL SALVAODR THE REVERSE HAS BEEN TRUE. ESAF INFLUENCE HAS ACTUALLY DIMINISHED SINCE 1979 -- AND THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE IS TO CREDIT.

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COMMENTS: 1. (S/NF) [REDACTED] THIS WAS A TYPICAL EXCHANGE REGARDING THIS IMPORTANT CASE. PONCE AND RUBIO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONVINCe THREE DISAPPOINTED SUPPORTERS THAT THE ESAF WAS INTENT ON COMING CLEAN IN THE JESUIT CASE. WHAT THE VISITING CONGRESSMEN GOT WAS A SOMEWHAT DISSEMBLING, GRATUITOUS, POLEMICAL, DISINGENUOUS TUTORIAL -- BUT ALL AMONG "FRIENDS". PONCE AND RUBIO DISSEMBLED WHEN THEY INSISTED THAT THE ESAF HAS NO POWER OR INFLUENCE OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF BATTLE. (ASK A DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNOR ABOUT THAT STATEMENT...OR A LOCAL JUDGE ABOUT MILITARY INTERFERENCE.) PONCE'S CONTINUOUS STRESSING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AND HIS DISTRIBUTION OF A LIP-SERVICE DOCUMENT TO THE CONGRESSMEN WAS PARTICULARLY GRATUITOUS INASMUCH AS HE AVOIDED DISCUSSING THE PREEMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS CASE IN POINT.

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2. (S/NF) [REDACTED] COL PONCE'S LEAD-OFF COMMENTS REGARDING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, FMLN SUPPORT GROUPS AND THEIR OBVIOUS SUCCESS IN WASHINGTON (BLAH, BLAH, BLAH) TO BE A PARTICULARLY INSULTING AND INAPPROPRIATE POLEMIC GIVEN HIS SUPPORTIVE AND "CONSERVATIVE" AUDIENCE. COL PONCE REFERRED TO THE BRUTAL MURDER OF SIX UNARMED PRIESTS AND TWO WOMEN ONLY ONCE -- AND PERHAPS BEGRUDGINGLY SO. FINALLY, THESE TWO SENIOR SALVADORAN LEADERS RESPONDED TO THE CONGRESSMEN'S CANDID, DIRECT, ALMOST IMPLOING QUERIES WITH THE KIND OF OBTUSE, DISINGENUOUSNESS ONE RESERVES FOR POLITICAL ENEMIES IN A DEBATE -- NOT FOR FRIENDS IN AN INTIMATE, FRANK DISCUSSION. THE CONGRESSMEN'S MESSAGE WAS CLEAR AS A BELL. THEY DESERVED A MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE.

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//IPSP: (U) [REDACTED]//

//COMSOBJ: (U) 431//

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PROJ: (U) .  
INSTR: (U) US NO.  
PREP: (U) [REDACTED]  
ACQ: (U) EL SALVADOR [REDACTED]  
DISSEM: (U) [REDACTED] AMEMBASSY EL SALVADOR.  
WARNING: (U) REPORT CLASSIFIED C O N F I D Q N T I A L /  
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