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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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EXCLUSIVE DISSEMINATION TO ADDRESSEES LISTED AT END OF REPORT

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: EFFORTS BY A SALVADORAN ARMY OFFICER TO PROMOTE A COUP;
INCREASING PRESSURE IN THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE REMOVAL
OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE.

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SOURCE: ☐

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TEXT: 1. IN RECENT DAYS, LTC. SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ,
THE FORMER CABANAS DEPARTMENTAL COMMANDER WHO LED A REBELLION
AGAINST GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO ((GARCIA)), MINISTER OF DEFENSE,
HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF AIR FORCE AND ARMY
OFFICERS TO FORCE THE REMOVAL OF GENERAL GARCIA AS WELL AS
PRESIDENT ALVARO ((MAGANA)) AND COL. RAFAEL ((FLORES)) LIMA,

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CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF. OCHOA HAS RECENTLY VISITED OFFICERS AT THE ILOPANGO AIR FORCE BASE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE. COL. MAXIMILIANO ((LEIVA)), COMMANDER OF THE 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE, HAS BEEN ASSISTING OCHOA IN PROMOTING A COUP AMONG THE OFFICERS CORPS. GENERAL GARCIA, WHO IS WELL AWARE OF OCHOA'S ACTIVITIES, IS ADAMANT THAT OCHOA WILL DEPART FOR HIS ASSIGNMENT TO THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. NO LATER THAN 7 FEBRUARY 1983.

2. [REDACTED] THERE IS NOT YET SUFFICIENT SUPPORT IN THE MILITARY FOR A COUP BUT THE SITUATION IS DELICATE AS GENERAL GARCIA, WHOSE RESIGNATION IS INCREASINGLY SOUGHT IN THE OFFICER CORPS, HAS PROVIDED NO ASSURANCES OF RESIGNING AND, IN FACT, WANTS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE. [REDACTED] IF GARCIA DOES NOT RESIGN OR MAKE A COMMITMENT TO DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES, SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE (ARENA) PARTY, COULD BE PROMOTED TO ATTEMPT A COUP.

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3. ONE INDICATION [REDACTED] OF GARCIA'S INTENTIONS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE IS THE VERY HEAVY PRESSURE HE IS EXERTING ON FLORES LIMA TO ACCEPT THE CURRENTLY VACANT POSITION OF SUB-SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. [REDACTED] PART OF A PLAN BY GARCIA TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AND IMPROVE HIS CHANCES TO REMAIN IN OFFICE. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] GARCIA'S CANDIDATE TO REPLACE FLORES LIMA IS COL. MARIO ADALBERTO ((REYES)) MENA, COMMANDER OF THE 2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE, [REDACTED] DESCRIBED AS POLITICALLY NEUTRAL AND A "GOOD SOLDIER". [REDACTED]

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