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RELEASE IN FULL

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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 H-01 ARA-00 HA-09 SIL-01 /011 W
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R 202227Z DEC 89
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4562

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 16509

H PASS

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PHUM, ELAB, ES
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY - LANE EVANS AND 49
OTHERS

TO: THE HONORABLE LANE EVANS
- HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
- WASHINGTON DC 20515

DEAR MR. EVANS:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF NOVEMBER 8, 1989, IN WHICH YOU AND 49 OF YOUR COLLEAGUES EXPRESS CONCERN OVER TWO BOMBING INCIDENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN SAN SALVADOR ON OCTOBER 31. I REGRET THE DELAY IN RESPONDING, BUT THE ONSET OF THE FMLN OFFENSIVE NOVEMBER 11 HAS SEVERELY INTERRUPTED NORMAL OPERATIONS.

PRESIDENT CRISTIANI WENT ON NATIONAL TELEVISION THE DAY OF THE INCIDENTS, STATING FIRMLY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT NEITHER SUPPORTED NOR TOLERATED SUCH ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AND PROMISING A FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENTS. IN THE CASE OF COMADRES, TWO STICKS OF DYNAMITE WERE REPORTEDLY THROWN AT THE BUILDING,
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RESULTING IN A GREAT DEAL OF BROKEN GLASS, BUT VERY LITTLE DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING STRUCTURE. MOST OF THOSE WHO SUFFERED WOUNDS WERE HIT BY SPRAYING GLASS, AND WERE NOT SERIOUSLY INJURED. NO WITNESSES HAVE COME FORWARD ON THE CASE, AND THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AT THE CRIME SCENE TO ALLOW POLICE TO IDENTIFY THE PERPETRATORS.

THE CASE OF FENASTRAS WAS A GREAT DEAL MORE SERIOUS. THE EXPLOSION, WHICH TOOK PLACE SHORTLY AFTER NOON,

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Janina Slattery, Senior Reviewer

KILLED 10 PERSONS AND INJURED 30 MORE. ACTIVITISTS OF PRO-FMLN FRONT GROUPS QUICKLY SEALED OFF THE TWO ENDS OF THE STREET ON WHICH FENASTRAS WAS LOCATED, AND DENIED ACCESS TO ALL GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATORS. IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, POLICE OFFICIALS WHO TRIED TO INVESTIGATE THE BOMBING WERE CAPTURED AND HELD BY FENASTRAS -- THEN REMOVED FROM THE SCENE WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO INVESTIGATE.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS BERNARD ARONSON MET WITH FENASTRAS REPRESENTATIVES ON NOVEMBER 6, AND URGED THEM TO COOPERATE WITH A GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION. AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT CRISTIANI, THE US GOVERNMENT PROVIDED TWO BOMB EXPERTS TO REVIEW THE SITE. THE GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIVE TEAM, INCLUDING THE TWO BOMB EXPERTS, WERE FINALLY GRANTED ACCESS TO THE SITE ON NOVEMBER 8, 1989, MORE THAN A WEEK AFTER THE BLAST.

FENASTRAS ALSO REFUSED TO RELEASE THE BODIES OF THOSE KILLED INSTANTLY IN THE EXPLOSION TO AUTHORITIES FOR AUTOPSY, INSTEAD HOLDING A TWO-DAY WAKE FOR THE DEAD AT FENASTRAS OFFICES. FUNERAL SERVICES FOR THOSE UNCLASSIFIED

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KILLED WERE HELD WITHOUT MAJOR INCIDENTS ON NOVEMBER 2, CELEBRATED AS THE "DAY OF THE DEAD" IN LATIN AMERICA.

THESE TWO ATTACKS REPRESENT A TRAGIC INCREASE IN THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE TARGETED AGAINST REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT WHICH CULMINATED IN THE FMLN OFFENSIVE LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 11, WHICH HAS SO FAR LEFT HUNDREDS OF CIVILIANS DEAD OR INJURED, AND THOUSANDS HOMELESS. IN THE MIDST OF THE OFFENSIVE, AS I AM SURE YOU ARE AWARE, SIX JESUIT PRIESTS WERE BRUTALLY EXECUTED AT THEIR RESIDENCE ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA. PRESIDENT CRISTIANI AGAIN CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, AND REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. WE PROVIDED THE SERVICES OF AN EXPERT FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINER, AND HELPED ASSURE THE SAFETY OF ONE OF THE ONLY EYEWITNESSES TO THE CRIME. THE FBI-TRAINED SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE UNIT (SIU) OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE CASE, AND WE ARE MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS CAREFULLY. THE CONTINUING FMLN ATTACKS, HOWEVER, HAVE SERIOUSLY IMPEDED BOTH THE JESUIT AND THE FENASTRAS INVESTIGATIONS.

BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND MEMBERS OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAVE DEPLORED THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE

OCCURRING IN EL SALVADOR, AND HAVE STRESSED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ARMED FORCES THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING HUMAN RIGHTS. YOU

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ARE CORRECT IN NOTING THE WEAKNESS OF THE SALVADORAN JUSTICE SYSTEM IN PURSUING PERPETRATORS OF THESE CRIMES, AND STRENGTHENING THAT SYSTEM IS A KEY FACET OF OUR ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE PROGRAM.

BUT RECRIMINATIONS NEED TO BE MADE AGAINST THE FMLN AS WELL, WHICH HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSASSINATIONS OF POLITICAL FIGURES, AND HAS LAUNCHED AN UNPROVOKED OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR AFTER FIRST BREAKING OFF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE LOGISTICAL SOPHISTICATION OF THE FMLN OFFENSIVE INDICATES THAT PLANNING FOR THE ATTACKS WAS WELL UNDERWAY EVEN AS THE FMLN PROFESSED

TO BE SEEKING PEACE.

IN A SITUATION AS COMPLEX AND HIGHLY CHARGED AS THE ONE IN EL SALVADOR, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO DEFINE THE FACTS BEFORE MAKING ALLEGATIONS, AND TO PURSUE JUSTICE ONCE THE FACTS ARE KNOWN. I BELIEVE PRESIDENT CRISTIANI IS SINCERE IN HIS EFFORTS TO DO UNCLASSIFIED

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BOTH, AND HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL BE ABLE TO HELP HIM STOP THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR.

SINCERELY,

WILLIAM J. DIETERCH
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I.

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