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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-13 ADS-00 AID-01 AMAD-01 CIAE-00 C-01  
DODE-00 ANHR-01 EB-01 HA-09 H-01 INRE-00 INR-01  
IO-19 LAB-04 L-03 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01  
PA-01 PM-01 PRS-01 P-01 RP-10 SIL-01 SNP-01  
SP-01 SR-01 SS-01 STR-18 TRSE-00 T-01 USIE-00  
/097W

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P 272228Z SEP 91  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1046  
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1356  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior  
Reviewer

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 12413

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, PHUM, PREL, ES  
SUBJECT: MOD SAYS JESUIT CASE, PEACE TALKS, AND  
- ESAF BASHING CAUSE RUMBLINGS

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. VISITING ARA/CEN DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MILGROUP  
COMMANDER, NARCOTICS OFFICER AND POLOFF CALLED ON  
MINISTER OF DEFENSE (MOD) GENERAL RENE EMILIO PONCE ON  
SEPTEMBER 26 TO DISCUSS NARCOTICS (SEE SEPTTEL) AND  
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OTHER ISSUES.

3. AS THE MEETING WOUND DOWN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ASKED  
PONCE IF THERE WERE ANY MESSAGES HE WOULD LIKE PASSED  
ON TO SENIOR OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. PONCE SAID HE  
HOPED THE USG UNDERSTANDS THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO  
PUT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON THE ESAF. PONCE SAID THE  
CONVERGENCE OF THE JESUIT TRIAL AND MISGUIDED CHARGES  
THAT THE GOES IS GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH IN THE PEACE  
TALKS MAY INCREASE TENSIONS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES.  
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4. PONCE STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE, THE HIGH  
COMMAND, THE ESAF AS AN INSTITUTION, AND A MAJORITY OF  
OFFICERS UNDERSTAND THAT AGREEMENTS WHICH MIGHT APPEAR  
TO BE GIVING IN TO THE FMLN IN SOME AREAS WERE IN FACT  
AIMED AT A PEACE ACCORD WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE END OF  
THE FMLN AS AN ARMED FORCE. THE MOD SAID THAT THE

ESAF CONTINUES EFFORTS TO KEEP THE RANK AND FILE INFORMED BUT THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO STAY AHEAD OF THE INACCURATE ACCOUNTS RAMPANT IN LOCAL MEDIA. PONCE SAID THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE ESAF AND RIGHT WING CIVILIANS WOULD CLEARLY BE UPSET BY REPEATED ASSERTIONS THAT THE GOES/ESAF ARE "LOSING" THE NEGOTIATION. PONCE ADDED THAT THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN WOULD BE THAT SOME "CARAPINTADAS" WOULD EMERGE AS THEY DID IN ARGENTINA. HE ADDED THAT THE HIGH COMMAND WAS READY FOR THIS CHALLENGE.

5. PONCE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF THE NEW YORK AGREEMENTS BY SOME SECTORS ANXIOUS TO DISCREDIT THE ESAF. HE NOTED THAT  
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STATEMENTS DEMANDING THAT THE ESAF "SUBMIT" AND "SWALLOW THE ACCORD WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT" WERE MULTIPLYING DESPITE THE FACT THAT NO ONE IN THE ESAF HAD SAID A WORD AGAINST THE AGREEMENTS. THE MOD SAID HE WOULD ASK PRESIDENT CRISTIANI FOR PERMISSION TO CONVENE THE LEADERS OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES TO URGE THAT THEY REFRAIN FROM INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC.

6. COMMENT: PONCE'S RECOGNITION THAT THERE ARE RUMBLINGS IN THE ESAF IS NOT SURPRISING GIVEN THE HISTORIC MOMENT IN WHICH AN ESAF COLONEL IS ON TRIAL FOR MURDER AND THE GOES GETS CLOSER TO AGREEMENT WITH THE ESAF'S SWORN ENEMY. HIS CONCERN ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY THE NEW YORK AGREEMENTS AS A DEFEAT FOR THE ESAF IS BORNE OUT BY CALLS FOR ESAF "SUBMISSION" FROM SUCH DIVERSE FIGURES AS PDC SEC GEN FIDEL CHAVEZ MENA AND ARENA HARDLINER (AND REGULAR TANDONA CRITIC) SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ.  
WALKER

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