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JOINT STATE/MILGP MESSAGE

E. O. 12065: GDS 7/15/88 (DRISCOLL, ROBERT S) OR-M  
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, ES  
SUBJECT: (S) COMMENTS ON THE ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR

1. ~~S~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS OUTLINE THE PROBLEMS FACING THE EL SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES (ESAF). THESE CRITICISMS ARE INTENDED TO GIVE THE ADDRESSEES SOME PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEMS FACING THIS MISSION IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF THE ESAF. NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE INSURMOUNTABLE AND MARKED PROGRESS HAS ALREADY BEEN NOTED. MILGP COMMANDER HAS PASSED THESE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESAF CHIEF OF STAFF - END SUMMARY.

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3. FUNCTIONING OF COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

1) GENERAL: THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL HEADQUARTERS COMMAND AND CONTROL (C3) CAPABILITY CONTINES TO IMPROVE, ALBEIT AT TIMES SLOWLY. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, ESAF REMAINS OPEN TO SUGGESTION AND CHANGE. ITS GREATEST SHORTCOMING STILL LIES IN ITS TENDANCY TO REACT TO INSURGENT INITIATIVES RATHER THAN TAKE THE OFFENSIVE. THE LATEST EPISODES IN CHALATENANGO AND MORAZAN ARE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THE FOREGOING. ALTHOUGH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE BY-AND-LARGE NEGATIVE IN NATURE,

IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO CONCLUDE THAT THE SITUATION IS CRITICAL, OR THAT NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. ON THE CONTRARY THE HIGH COMMAND IS AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS, SOME HAVE BEEN RESOLVED RECENTLY, AND THEY ARE WORKING TOWARD RESOLUTION OF OTHERS.

## 2) GENERAL STAFF

--A MAJOR SHORTCOMING IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH COMMAND AND THE SIX BRIGADE COMMANDERS. THE BRIGADE COMMANDERS PLAN AND EXECUTE OPERATIONS OFTEN WITHOUT PRIOR COORDINATION. THIS FAILURE HAS CREATED A SITUATION WHERE THE HIGH COMMAND MUST ATTEMPT TO "CATCH-UP" WITH THE OPERATION IN TERMS OF TACTICAL SUPPORT, LOGISTICS, AND INTELLIGENCE. THE PROPENSITY FOR THE BRIGADE COMMANDERS TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION THAT ULTIMATELY IMPACTS MULTILATERALLY HAS RESULTED IN POORLY PLANNED, EXECUTED AND SUPPORTED OPERATIONS AND HAS DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO INCREASED COMBAT CASUALTIES, EQUIPMENT LOSS, AND HAS PROVIDED THE INSURGENTS WITH A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE.

--A DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS IS NEEDED TO COORDINATE AND DIRECT THE VARIOUS STAFF SECTIONS ON A DAILY

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BASIS. AT PRESENT ALL DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF, COLONEL FLORES LIMA, WHO IS ALSO OCCUPIED WITH A MULTITUDE OF OTHER DETAILS. UNTIL RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE INTER-STAFF COORDINATION FOR TACTICAL OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT (INTELLIGENCE, LOGISTICS, AIR SUPPORT, COMMUNICATIONS, PLANNING, EXECUTION). IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN NOTED SINCE MORAZAN.

## 3) PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF INTELLIGENCE (D-II)

--DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION Laterally, UPWARDS AND DOWNWARDS IS POOR.

--BATTALION AND BRIGADE TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY RANGES FROM GOOD TO NONE ACCORDING TO A COMMANDER'S APPRECIATION OF INTELLIGENCE, AVAILABILITY OF AN S-2 OFFICER AND HIS TRAINING.

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JOINT STATE/MILGP MESSAGE

--THERE IS LITTLE INTELLIGENCE LIAISON OR COORDINATION  
WITH NAVY, FAS, AND PUBLIC SECURITY AGENCIES.

--THERE IS NO REAL COORDINATION BETWEEN NATIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES. (ANI, NAVY, FAS, AND D-II)

--TARGET FOLDERS ARE NOT DEVELOPED.

--INTELLIGENCE UTILIZATION NEEDS TO BE EMPHASIZED.

--INFORMATION, MATERIEL, DOCUMENTS AND PRISONERS ARE NOT RAPIDLY SENT TO THE REAR FOR PROPER EXPLOITATION. THE HIGH COMMAND IS NOT KEPT INFORMED AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE LOST.

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#### 4) PROBLEMS IN AREA OF OPERATIONS (D-III)

--THE D-III IS NOT FUNCTIONALLY ORGANIZED. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING FUNCTIONS NEED TO BE SEPARATED.

A. OPERATIONS WOULD INCLUDE THE ARMED FORCES COMBINED OPERATION CENTER (COCFA) AND PLANNING.

B. TRAINING WOULD INCLUDE MTTs AND OUT-OF-COUNTRY PROGRAM.

--PRESENTLY THE D-III IS COMPRISED OF JUST TWO OFFICERS, AN INSUFFICIENT NUMBER TO MAN THE PRINCIPAL STAFF AGENCY.

--THERE IS NO CONTINGENCY PLANNING EFFORT OR EVEN A REALIZATION OF ITS IMPORTANCE. D-III SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS REGARD.

--OPERATIONALLY, THERE IS TOO LITTLE COORDINATION, DIRECTION, AND LIAISON BETWEEN THE D-111, HIGH COMMAND AND THE NAVY, FAS, PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES.

--OPERATIONS INVOLVING STRATEGIC RESERVE FORCES SHOULD HAVE HIGH COMMAND PLANNING AND COORDINATION FROM INCEPTION. THE DESIGNATED COMMANDER SHOULD HEAD THE EFFORT AND HAVE A FULL STAFF AVAILABLE.

--COORDINATION BETWEEN ADJACENT UNITS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED BUT NOT TO THE POINT OF INFORMALLY ATTACHING OR "LOANING" UNITS WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE HIGH COMMAND. ALL OPERATIONS OF MORE THAN A FEW COMPANIES SHOULD HAVE THE HIGH COMMAND APPROVAL.

--REPORTING DURING COMBAT OPERATIONS IS USUALLY POOR.

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FORMATS AND SOPS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE D-III/III BUT ARE IGNORED DUE TO LACK OF COMMAND EMPHASIS.

--ROUTE AND MOVEMENT TO CONTACT SECURITY IS POOR. CONVOYS

CONTINUE TO BE AMBUSHED AT THE SAME LOCATIONS (E.G. SAN FELIPE ALONG THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY).

--THE PIECE-MEAL INTRODUCTION OF FORCES INTO MORAZAN ADDED TO THE THE CONFUSION AND LOSSES. THERE WAS A LACK OF AN OVERALL PLAN AND A FAILURE TO PROPERLY BRIEF EACH COMPANY COMMANDER SENT INTO THE AREA. UNTIL THE REORGANIZATION OF JUNE 22 THERE WAS NO REAL CONTROL.

--MORAZAN COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING WAS NON EXISTENT--THIS WAS DISCOVERED WHEN THE 6TH BRIGADE LOST RADIO CONTACT WITH FORWARD UNITS WHICH HAD MOVED OUT OF RANGE.

--IN MORAZAN ARTILLERY SUPPORT DID NOT ALWAYS ADVANCE TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS ON-CALL FIRES. AN S-3 AND AN ARTILLERY FIRE-SUPPORT COORDINATOR WORKING TOGETHER WOULD HAVE PEVENTED THIS.

5) PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF LOGISTICS (D-IV)

--CLOSER COORDINATION IS REQUIRED BETWEEN D-IV AND D-III TO ANTICIPATE REQUIREMENTS RATHER THAN TO REACT TO THEM.

6) PROBLEMS IN AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, COORDINATION AND UTILIZATION.

A. FORWARD MULTI-SHIP REFUEL POINTS NEED TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE EAST AND WEST. UH-1H ENDURANCE IS TOO LIMITED TO OPERATE FAR FROM ILOPANGO AIR BASE WITHOUT FORWARD REFUEL CAPABILITY.

B. THERE IS LITTLE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT WHICH N TURN RESULTS IN LOW AVAILABILITY OF HELICOPTERS AND INACCURATE FORECASTING. THE FAS NEEDS TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THEIR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM.

C. UH-1H'S ARE TROOP CARRIERS, NOT GUNSHIPS. STRAFFING RUNS UTILIZING DOOR GUNNERS IS A POOR USE OF A CRITICAL ASSET.

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THE O-2/A-37 PACKAGE SHOULD HELP ALLEVIATE THE CLOSE AIR SUPPORT PROBLEMS.

D. THERE IS POOR CONTROL OVER THE USE OF HELICOPTERS.

THESE UNNECESSARY MISSIONS REDUCE AVAILABILITY FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS.

E. TRAINING HAS BEEN AFFECTED BECAUSE OF THE DEMAND ON PILOTS FOR COMBAT MISSIONS; HOWEVER, THE PROGRAM IS NOW GETTING BACK ON TRACK. EIGHT NEW CO-PILOTS WERE RECENTLY CHECKED OUT AND TWO PILOTS WILL BEGIN INSTRUCTOR TRAINING ON JULY 6, 1982.

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7) PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF JOINT OPERATIONS.  
--INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMAND, FAS

AND THE NAVY NEEDS TO BE ESTABLISHED (PILOT BRIEF/DEBRIEF, BOMB DAMAGE ASSESSMENT, NAVY OPERATIONAL REPORTS, ESTABLISHMENT OF NAVY AND FAS INTELLIGENCE SECTIONS).

--CLOSE AIR/ARTILLERY/NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT:

- A. PROCEDURES FOR TARGET PLANNING AND ACQUISITION BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMAND AND FAS NEED TO BE ESTABLISHED.
- B. REGULAR PROGRAM ATTENDANCE FOR AIRGROUND OPERATIONS SCHOOL COURSE (AGOS) IN PANAMA IS NEEDED.
- C. FIRE SUPPORT COORDINATION PROCEDURES MUST BE ESTABLISHED (FAS, NAVY, ARMY).

#### 8) PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF COMMUNICATIONS

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--THERE IS NO COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING DURING PREPLANNING, OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND EXECUTION.

--THE HIGH COMMAND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER NEEDS TO GET CONTROL OF COMMUNICATIONS.

- A. BRIGADE AND BATTALION COMMO OFFICERS SERVE AS INFANTRY PLATOON LEADERS AS WELL AS PERFORMING THEIR PRINCIPAL DUTIES. THESE UNITS SHOULD HAVE COMMO OFFICERS WHO DO NOT HAVE COLATERAL RESPONSIBILITIES.
- B. THE HIGH COMMAND HAS DEVELOPED COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICS OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (CEOI) BUT IS UNABLE TO DISTRIBUTE IT, AND HAS NOT YET TRAINED THE BRIGADE AND BATTALION COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS IN ITS IMPORTANCE AND USE.

--THERE IS NO COMMAND EMPHASIS ON COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY.

--THE HIGH COMMAND IS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING AND DIRECTING OF ELECTRONIC WARFARE. THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (ANI) IS TILL "GOING IT ALONE" ON JAMMING AND DIRECTION FINDING.

#### 9) ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE HIGH COMMAND TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES:

--THE MILGP COMMANDER HAS PROVIDED THE HIGH COMMAND WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE COMMENTS. THE MOST POSITIVE REACTION THUS FAR HAS BEEN A SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE HIGH COMMAND, BRIGADE AND BATTALION COMMANDERS TO DISCUSS "LESSONS LEARNED" IN MORAZAN. THE SESSION LASTED FOR 6 HOURS.

--U.S. TRAINERS WORKING DIRECTLY WITH THE D-11 AND D-111 BELIEVE MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS HAVE WORKABLE SOLUTIONS AND HAVE FOUND A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF STAFF OFFICERS TO ADDRESS THEM. ALTHOUGH MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE AT THE HIGH COMMAND, THE SIGNIFICANT C3 PROBLEMS APPEAR TO BE AT THE

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BRIGADE LEVEL. AT THIS POINT C3 IN THE BATTALIONS, PARTICULARLY THE IMMEDIATE REACTION FORCES, APPEARS TO BE SATISFACTORY. GIVEN THE PROPENSITY OF THE HIGH COMMAND TO ORGANIZE TASKS AT THE BRIGADE LEVEL, IMPROVING THE BRIGADE'S C3 CAPABILITY IS IMPORTANT.

10) IMPROVEMENTS IN AVIATION OPERATIONS

O-2A AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

A. THE O-2A AIRCRAFT ARE NOW USING WHITE PHOSPHORUS (WP) ROCKETS TO MARK TARGETS. THE AIRCRAFT ARE ASSIGNED TO MARK SPECIFIC TARGETS BY EITHER THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES OR THE GROUND COMMANDER. CODED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROUND-AIRCRAFT, AIRCRAFT-AIRCRAFT, AND AIRCRAFT-TOWER, HAS BEEN IMPROVED. FOR EXAMPLE, "SEND ME MY PANCAKES" MEANS LAUNCH THE A-37S. ALL AIRCRAFT COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ARE WORKING VERY WELL, AND THEY ARE BEING PROPERLY USED. FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS (FACS) ARE TALKING TO EVERYONE: GROUND FORCES, FIGHTERS, HELICOPTERS, AND THE GROUP COMBAT OPERATIONS CENTER. ON STATION TIME FOR THE O-2'S IS AVERAGING BETWEEN THREE AND HALF TO FOUR HOURS.

--THE AIR FORCE IS USING THE TRAINING RECEIVED IN PANAMA TO MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE. IT NOW CONDUCTS SUBSTANTIVE BRIEFINGS (A RARITY IN THE PAST). IT CARRIES OUT RECONNAISSANCE FOR GROUND FORCES, CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN FACS, FIGHTERS AND THE GROUND COMMANDER IS BEING IMPLEMENTED.

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B. A-37B AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

(1) THESE AIRCRAFT ARE MAINTAINED ON A "STRIP ALERT" STATUS AND ARE ONLY LAUNCHED IF A REQUEST COMES THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS. THE PAYLOAD OF THESE AIRCRAFT IS A MIXTURE OF BOMBS (NORMALLY ON THE MK-82 500 POUND BOMB IS CARRIED - 4 PER AIRCRAFT) AND 500 ROUNDS OF 7.62 MM FOR THE MINI-GUN. HIGH EXPLOSIVE ROCKETS HAVE NOT YET BEEN CARRIED.

(2) THE PILOTS OF THE A-37B AIRCRAFT ARE DESCRIBED BY ESAF TROOP CDRS AS PROFESSIONAL AND EXTREMELY ACCURATE IN DELIVERING THEIR ORDNANCE. THERE ARE REPORTS OF EXCELLENT RESULTS AGAINST DUG-IN (BUNKERED) GUERRILLAS IN NORTHERN MORAZAN BY THESE PILOTS AND THEIR AIRCRAFT.

C. O-2/A 37B AIRCRAFT COMBINATION

FACS AND GROUND COMMANDERS ALIKE CAN TALK DIRECTLY

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TO THE A-37 AIRCRAFT AND WITHIN A VERY SHORT TIME SEE THE RESULT OF THEIR REQUESTS: BOMBS ON TARGET. THE EFFECT OF THIS COMBINATION, NOT TO MENTION THE IMMEASURABLY IMPROVED COMMUNICATION CAPABILITY, HAD BEEN NOTHING LESS THAN EXHILARATING FOR BOTH THE AIR FORCE AND THE TROOPS ON THE GROUND.

D. ORDNANCE

WHITE PHOSPHOROUS ROCKETS ARE LOADED ON THE O-2 AIRCRAFT ONLY.

11) PROBLEMS IN ES NAVY.

A. CURRENT OBSERVATIONS OF THE SALVADORAN NAVY CLEARLY REINFORCE PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS WHICH INDICATE THAT, ALTHOUGH

PROGRESS IS NOTED AT INDIVIDUAL SKILL LEVELS, A GREAT DEAL MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE ON THE TWO WEAKEST AREAS OF NAVY PERFORMANCE -PATROL BOAT MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICS.

B. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SALVADORAN INHIBITIONS TO ACHIEVING SATISFACTORY READINESS IN THESE TWO AREAS ARE: SALVADORAN NAVY LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES, SPECIFICALLY THE COMMANDER, AND SHORTAGE OF OFFICER AND NCO PERSONNEL.

C. BECAUSE OF ITS LOW PRIORITY THE NAVY IS THE LAST TO RECEIVE NEW EQUIPMENT. HOPEFULLY, THE EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE BY A NAVAL INFANTRY MTT TO RAISE EFFECTIVENESS LEVELS WILL ACT TO PRIME THE PUMP. THIS TRAINING WILL CREATE A 160 MAN COMPANY OF MARINES WHO CAN THEN BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH NAVAL INTERDICTION OPERATIONS IN SUCH PLACES AS THE JIQUILISCO BAY AREA.

D. OTHER KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF OPERATIONS, TACTICS, INTELLIGENCE HAVE ONLY BEEN ADDRESSED IN LIMITED SCOPE AND DEPTH PRIMARILY DUE TO SALVADORAN NAVY LEADERSHIP SHORTCOMINGS.

E. PATROL BOAT STATUS

GC-5 (65' ) INOPERABLE

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GC-6 (100') OPERABLE (RADAR INOP)

GC-7 (100') OPERABLE

GC-8 (100') OPERABLE (RADAR INOP)

GC-BOSTON WHALERS (SIX-25') OPERABLE

12) THE ABOVE COMMENTS, CRITICISM AND OBSERVATIONS HAVE BEEN PASSED TO ES AF OFFICIALS IN BOTH WRITTEN AND ORAL FORM. THEY INCLUDED A WRITTEN CRITIQUE OF THE HIGH COMMAND AND STAFF PERFORMANCE WICH THE MILGP COMMANDER PRESENTED TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF. THE CHIEF OF STAFF IS USING IT AS A CHECKLIST TO BRING ABOUT THE IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE WHICH HE RECOGNIZES ARE NECESSARY. WHAT THE SALVADORANS NEED FROM US AT THIS POINT IS A LITTLE PATIENCE, MORE TRAINING AND SOME ENCOURAGEMENT.

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