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(S/[redacted]/CIA-IUO[redacted]NF) SUBJ: REPORT ON RESULTS OF MAJOR MILITARY OPERATION CONDUCTED BY TASK FORCE "LINCE" IN THE GUAZAPA VOLCANO AREA (b)(1)3) (b)(3)

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SUMMARY: OPERATION "MAJOR JOSE ARMANDO AZMITIA MELARA" CONCLUDED ON 7 DECEMBER 1984 WITH THE EXTRACTION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF TASK FORCE "LINCE" FROM THE GUAZAPA VOLCANO AREA. THE OPERATION, WHICH INVOLVED ELEMENTS OF THE ATLACATL AND BELLOSO BATTALIONS, THE FIRST BRIGADE, THE AIRBORNE BATTALION, AND THE LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS, RAN SMOOTHLY. WHILE THERE WAS LESS CONTACT WITH INSURGENT FORCES THAN HAD BEEN HOPED FOR, THE OPERATION IS CONSIDERED SUCCESS- FUL FROM THE ARMED FORCES POINT OF VIEW IN THAT A DIFFICULT NIGHT MOVEMENT, LARGELY UNDETECTED BY THE INSURGENTS, WAS COORDINATED AND CARRIED TO COMPLETION.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WARNING: INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.
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TEXT: 1. TASK FORCE "LINCE" CONCLUDED A MAJOR OPERATION IN THE AREA OF THE GUAZAPA VOLCANO (1353N 8907W) ON 7 DECEMBER 1984 WITH THE RETURN OF ALL DEPLOYED UNITS. THE TASK FORCE DEPLOYED AS SCHEDULED ON 3 DECEMBER, FOLLOWING DECEPTION BROADCASTS BY THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OF THE LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS (PRAL) THE PREVIOUS DAY, TO MASK THE TROOP DEPLOYMENT. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

COMMENT: TASK FORCE "LINCE" WAS COMPOSED OF 280 HANDPICKED MEN FROM THE ATLACATL BATTALION AND 280 FROM THE **BELLOSO BATTALION**, SUPPORTED BY A BATTALION FROM THE FIRST BRIGADE WHICH WAS TO ACT AS A BLOCKING FORCE, AND THE AIRBORNE BATTALION AND PRAL ELEMENTS. PRAL TEAMS FAMILIAR WITH THE AREA ACTED AS GUIDES FOR THE INFILTRATION OF THE ELEMENTS FROM THE ATLACATL AND BELLOSO BATTALIONS, WHICH, AFTER AIRLIFT BY HELICOPTER TO GUAZAPA VOLCANO, MOVED TO DESIGNATED POSITIONS UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS ON THE EVENING OF 3 DECEMBER. THE DECEPTION BROADCASTS ON 2 DECEMBER WERE DESIGNED TO MAKE THE INSURGENTS THINK THAT THE RIFLE COMPANIES FROM THE FIRST BRIGADE, WHICH NORMALLY MAN SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES (ESAF) POSITIONS ON THE VOLCANO, WERE BEING ROTATED OUT FOR FRESH TROOPS.)

[redacted] COMMENT: THE INSURGENTS DID IN FACT INTERCEPT THE DECEPTION MESSAGES, BUT THOUGHT THEY WERE A RUSE TO CAUSE THEM TO MOVE OUT OF THE AREA. AT ABOUT NOON ON 3 DECEMBER, HOWEVER, THE INSURGENTS SAW THE BLOCKING FORCE BEING MOVED IN BY TRUCKS, AND MADE PLANS TO VACATE THE AREA. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] THE ENTIRE COMPLEMENT OF THE RAFAEL AGUINADA CARRANZA BATTALION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF LIBERATION (FAL), SOME 350 COMBATANTS, AND 100 - 125 MEMBERS OF THE FARN'S CARLOS ARIAS BATTALION EXFILTRATED THE AREA

ON THE EVENING OF 3 DECEMBER UNDETECTED AND UNCHALLENGED BY THE ESAF.)

2. FROM ITS INCEPTION, THE OPERATION RAN SMOOTHLY, WITH COORDINATION OF ALL ELEMENTS HANDLED CAPABLY BY TASK FORCE COMMANDER COLONEL JAIME ERNESTO ((FLORES)), COMMANDER OF THE FIRST BRIGADE. INITIALLY, THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES WITH COMMUNICATIONS, LARGELY DUE TO THE TERRAIN, WHICH BLOCKED RADIO SIGNALS BETWEEN UNITS. THESE PROBLEMS WERE QUICKLY OVERCOME, AND COMMUNICATIONS REMAINED EXCELLENT THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE OPERATION. PRAL COMMUNICATIONS TEAMS ESTABLISHED SEVERAL MOBILE INTERMEDIATE COMMUNICATIONS SITES ON THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH DEPLOYED ELEMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE. ONE OF THESE SITES, ON CERRO LOS GONCHOS, WAS AN INSURGENT OBSERVATION POST WHICH WAS CLEARED BY AN A-37 STRIKE BY THE SALVADORAN AIR FORCE (FAES).

3. A TOTAL OF FOURTEEN 40-MAN TEAMS, LED BY PRAL MEMBERS, COMMENCED NIGHT INFILTRATION FROM ATOP GUAZAPA VOLCANO ON 3 DECEMBER. EACH TEAM HAD A SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE TO OBSERVE AND REPORT ON. EACH OF THESE OBJECTIVES WERE KNOWN INSURGENT BASE CAMPS AND LOGISTICS POINTS AROUND THE VOLCANO. THE TEAMS HAD LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN MOVING INTO THEIR POSITIONS, AND BY EARLY MORNING ON 4 DECEMBER ALL WERE IN POSITION.

4. AT 0900 HOURS ON 4 DECEMBER, THE FIRST BRIGADE UNIT DEPLOYED AT LOS ALMENDROS (1357N 8905W) REPORTED CONTACT WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED INSURGENT UNIT, WHICH RESULTED IN TO INSURGENTS KILLED IN ACTION, AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER WOUNDED, AND THE CAPTURE OF THREE WEAPONS. THERE WAS ONE ESAF SOLDIER WOUNDED. THE INSURGENTS WERE DRESSED IN CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORMS, AND HAD A 90MM RECOILLESS RIFLE AND RPG-2 ROCKET LAUNCHERS. AT 1315 HOURS ON 4 DECEMBER, A FAES O-2 AIRCRAFT SUPPORTING THE OPERATION SPOTTED AN INSURGENT COLUMN CROSSING A ROAD THREE KILOMETERS EAST OF LOS ALMENDROS, AND THE PILOT DIRECTED 81MM AND 105MM FIRE ON THE INSURGENTS, WHICH RESULTED IN THREE INSURGENTS KILLED IN ACTION. AT 2000 HOURS ON 4 DECEMBER A TASK FORCE PATROL MADE CONTACT WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED INSURGENT UNIT AT LOS PEREZ (1354N 8908W), RESULTING IN UNDETERMINED INSURGENT CASUALTIES AND NO ESAF CASUALTIES. TASK FORCE ELEMENTS SIGHTED TWO ADDITIONAL INSURGENT UNITS DURING THE EVENING OF 4 DECEMBER, BUT NO CONTACT WAS MADE.)

5. ON 5 DECEMBER, AT 0940 HOURS, ONE TASK FORCE UNIT REPORTED CONTACT WITH AN INSURGENT PATROL AT LOS ALMENDROS, RESULTING IN ONE ESAF WOUNDED AND AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF INSURGENT CASUALTIES. AT 1400 HOURS, A TASK FORCE PATROL REPORTED TWO ESAF WOUNDED IN AN ENCOUNTER IN THE VICINITY OF TRES CEIBAS (1355N 8908W), WITH AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF INSURGENT CASUALTIES. AT 1930 HOURS AN ELEMENT FROM THE ATLACATL BATTALION REPORTED TWO INSURGENTS KILLED IN A CONTACT AT LOS RUANOS, TWO KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF GUAZAPA (1354N 8911W).

6. BASED ON INFORMATION THAT THE INSURGENTS MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN BREAKING OUT OF THE BLOCKING FORCE'S ENCIRCLEMENT, ON THE EVENING OF 5 DECEMBER COL. FLORES ORDERED THE DEPLOYMENT OF ELEMENTS OF THE <u>BELLOSO BATTALION</u> TO CONDUCT A SWEEP OPERATION TO THE NORTH OF GUAZAPA, IN THE VICINITY OF LAS DELICIAS (1359N 8806W) AND CONCEPCION CHAPARRAL (1359N 8804W). THE UNIT DEPLOYED AT 0300 HOURS ON 6 DECEMBER, ASSISTED BY FIRE SUPPORT FROM A 105MM BATTERY, BUT

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MADE NO CONTACT WITH INSURGENTS.
6. ON THE MORNING OF 6 DECEMBER, A TASK FORCE PATROL DISCOVERED TWO LARGE CAVES IN THE VICINITY OF MIRANDILLA (1355N 8906W), WHICH CONTAINED FOOD AND WATER. AT 1500 HOURS THAT DAY, A TASK FORCE PATROL AMBUSHED AN INSURGENT PATROL IN THE VICINITY OF MONTEPEQUE (1353N 8905W), RESULTING IN UNDETERMINED INSURGENT CASUALTIES AND THE CAPTURE OF A YAESU FT-203R TRANSCEIVER. AT 2300 HOURS INSURGENT MOVEMENT WAS NOTED IN THE VICINITY OF EL PLATANAR (1357N 8904W), AND AN 81MM MORTAR BATTERY CONDUCTED A FIRE MISSION; THE ROUNDS WERE REPORTED ON TARGET, WITH UNDETERMINED INSURGENT CASUALTIES.
7. [redacted]
8. [redacted]

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COMMENT: THE OPERATION IS CONSIDERED A SUCCESS FROM THE ESAF POINT OF VIEW, NOT BECAUSE OF INSURGENT CASUALTIES -- WHICH APPEAR LOW -- BUT BECAUSE OF THE ABILITY OF THE ESAF TO COORDINATE AND CARRY OUT A NIGHT INFILTRATION MOVEMENT LARGELY UNDETECTED BY INSURGENT FORCES. IN ADDITION, THE DEPLOYMENT OF 40-MAN PATROLS, INTO WHICH TASK FORCE "LINCE" SEARCH ELEMENTS WERE DIVIDED, MARKS A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN TACTICS FOR THE SALVADORAN MILITARY. BASED ON THE INITIAL RESULTS OF THIS OPERATION, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE HIGH COMMAND WILL ENDORSE THIS SMALL-UNIT CONCEPT.)
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