

RELEASE IN PART  
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**ENVELOPE**

OTTCZYUW RUEKJCS0721 0261731-CCCC--RUCDGDA.

ZNY CCCCC

**HEADER**

O  
261731Z JAN 83  
FM JCS WASHINGTON DC

INFO RUEADWD/CSA WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEADWD/PTC WASH DC  
RUEAMCC/CMC CC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEOFAA/JSOC FORT BRAGG NC  
RUCJAAA/USCINCRD MACDILL AFB FL  
RUCIFBA/MACOS INTEL CENTER SCOTT AFB IL//INW/INZ//  
RUCJAAA/USCINCRD MACDILL AFB FL//RCJ2//  
RUEBBJB/HQ AFOSI BOLLING AFB DC  
RUEBARE/DIRNAVINSERV WASHINGTON DC  
RUDHAAB/CDRUSAITAC ARLINGTON HALL STATION VA  
RUEOAYB/FSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA  
RUCDGDA/CDRMICOM REDSTONE ARS AL//DRSMI-YX//

O

261708Z JAN 83  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4043  
INFO RUESBG/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2151

RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0592  
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0931  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2520  
RUESJO/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 3840  
RUESTE/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0221  
RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN  
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**CONTROLS**

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04

SAN SALVADOR 00721

E.O. 12356 DECL 01/25/89

/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

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TAGS PGOV, PINS, ES  
SUBJECT (C) OBSERVATION OF MILITARY OPERATION IN MORAZAN  
REF (A) IR 6 829 0038 83  
- (B) IR 6 829 0040 83

1. C--ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY. POLOFF SPENT JANUARY 22 TO THE MORNING OF THE 24TH IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT WHERE THE ARMED FORCES ARE LAUNCHING ONE OF THE LARGEST OPERATIONS OF THE WAR TO COUNTER FMLN ADVANCES OF THE OCTOBER AND JANUARY HEROES AND MARTYRS CAMPAIGNS. THE SEVEN BATTALION OPERATION, UNDER THE COMMAND OF [REDACTED] WILL ADVANCE NORTH FROM THE RIO TOROLA, AND IS SET TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD AT LEAST UNTIL UNITS REACH PERQUIN. (THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO OBSERVE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS DURING THE OPERATION.) IN GENERAL, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION APPEARED TO MOVE WITH RELATIVE EASE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE ARMED FORCES HAS SET UP AN EASTERN THEATER "ESTADO MAYOR" TO RUN THE OPERATION, WITH ITS BASE IN SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA. ACTIVITY APPEARED WELL-COORDINATED FOR THE MOST PART, INCLUDING THE USE OF TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE AND AIR SUPPORT. TROOP MORALE WAS HIGH, DESPITE THE FORCED WITHDRAWAL OF THE ATONAL BATTALION FROM MEANGUERA TO AVOID ENCIRCLEMENT ON JANUARY 22. AS USUAL, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPERATION IS INACCURATE. RADIO VENCEREMOS IS MORE USEFUL. MINDEF GARCIA IS WATCHING THE REST OF THE COUNTRY WITH CONCERN WHILE VIRTUALLY ALL STRATEGIC RESERVES ARE TIED UP IN MORAZAN. END SUMMARY.
3. POLOFF SPENT JANUARY 22 TO THE MORNING OF THE 24TH IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT WHERE THE ARMED FORCES ARE LAUNCHING ONE OF THE LARGEST OPERATIONS OF THE WAR TO COUNTER FMLN ADVANCES OF THE OCTOBER AND JANUARY HEROES AND MARTYRS CAMPAIGNS. BY MID-JANUARY, GUERRILLA FORCES HAD OBTAINED EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT NORTH OF THE RIO TOROLA AND THE TOWN OF SOCIEDAD. THEY HAD TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED THE TOWNS OF YAMABAL, SENSEMBRA, AND GUATIJIAGUA IN THE SOUTH. BY JANUARY 15, THEY WERE ADVANCING TO THREATEN THE DEPARTMENTAL CAPITAL AT SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA, HAVING OCCUPIED CASCAOPERA, AND PREPARING TO ATTACK OSICALA, THE NORTHERN MOST TOWN IN ARMED FORCES HANDS ON THAT DATE.
4. OPERATION "ESCALANTE ACEVEDO" BEGAN ON JANUARY 17, AS A THREE BATTALION REACTION TO THESE ADVANCES. THE BELLOSO AND ATONAL IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALIONS SWEEP

B6

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MORAZAN SOUTH OF THE RIO TOROLA, ALONG THE NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY AND IN THE GUATIJAGUA AREA. ON JANUARY 20, THE ATONAL BATTALION CROSSED THE RIO TOROLA TO RETAKE THE TOWN OF MEANGUERA, BUT WAS FORCED TO WITHDRAW BACK ACROSS THE RIVER TO AVOID ENCIRCLEMENT ON THE 22ND. AS OF THE MORNING OF JANUARY 24, ARMED FORCES UNITS INCLUDING ALL THREE IR BATTALIONS, THE PIPIL AND CUSCATLAN BATTALIONS, AND BATTALIONS FROM THE 3RD BRIGADE IN SAN MIGUEL, THE 6TH BRIGADE IN LA UNION, AND THE COMMANDO INSTRUCTION CENTER (CICFA) IN SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA WERE BEING STAGED IN A LINE ROUGHLY FOLLOWING HIGH GROUND IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF THE RIO TOROLA FROM CACAOPERA WEST TO GUALOCOCTI.

ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A TOTAL OF SEVEN BATTALIONS WERE POISED TO MOVE AGAINST AN ESTIMATED GUERRILLA FORCE OF 2,500. [REDACTED] TOLD HIS OFFICERS THE OPERATION WOULD NOT END, "UNTIL THEY REACHED PERQUIN."

B6

B6

5. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO OBSERVE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS DURING THE OPERATION. IN GENERAL, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION APPEARED TO MOVE WITH RELATIVE EASE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMED FORCES. MOST OF MORAZAN'S POPULATION CENTERS ARE FORTIFIED AGAINST ATTACK BY WHICHEVER FORCE DOES NOT HOLD THE TOWN AT THE MOMENT. MOST OF THE POPULATION HAS FOUND ITSELF UNDER ATTACK BY EITHER OR BOTH SIDES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS. THE OFFICIAL DISPLACED PERSON COUNT IS 53,000. THAT NUMBER DOES NOT INCLUDE THE UNKNOWN PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION THAT HAS LEFT THE COUNTRYSIDE TO LIVE WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN THE TOWNS, HAS OCCUPIED ABANDONED HOMES, OR HAS LEFT THE DEPARTMENT ALTOGETHER. THE TOTAL POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED AT 250,000 IN 1980. ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF THESE WERE PRIMARNIY SUBSISTENCE FARMERS LIVING IN SMALL HAMLETS  
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/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 2 \*\*\*\*\*/

CALLED "CANTONES," OR IN TOWNS OF UNDER 5,000. MORAZAN IS ONE OF EL SALVADOR'S POOREST DEPARTMENTS. IN ADDITION TO SUBSISTENCE FARMING, CATTLE, COFFEE, AND HENNEQUEN (FOR SISAL ROPE) ARE THE MAIN PRODUCTS. THE TERRAIN IN EXTREMELY ROUGH AND DRY. LOW HILLS IN THE SOUTH RISE NORTHWARD, BECOMING BROKEN HILLS AND STEEP ESCARPMENTS COVERED WITH THICK AND TALL SCRUB. THE NORTH OF THE DEPARTMENT IS PINE FOREST NORTH OF PERQUIN, WHERE THE MOUNTAINS REACH AN ALTITUDE OF 2,000 METERS. THE RIO TOROLA BISECTS MORAZAN ROUGHLY FROM NORTHWEST TO SOUTHEAST. A SINGLE

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PAVED HIGHWAY LINKS THE DEPARTMENT NORTH-SOUTH.

6. MUCH OF MORAZAN NORTH OF GOTERA HAS BEEN DEVASTATED DURING REPEATED MILITARY OPERATIONS. MOST TOWNS NORTH OF THE RIO TOROLA HAVE BEEN BOMBARDED BY THE ARMED FORCES. GUERRILLA STRONGHOLDS ARE TRADITIONALLY LOCATED IN AND AROUND THE SMALL POPULATION CENTERS OF GUACAMAYA, EL MOZOTE, ARAMBALA, LA JOYA, AND OTHERS OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, GUERRILLAS HAVE SET UP CIVIL ADMINISTRATIONS AND/OR CONDUCT OPEN ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING MARKETING, IN ALL OF THE TOWNS NORTH OF THE RIO TOROLA AND IN CORINTO.

7. GUERRILLAS CARRY OUT HARRASSMENT AND OCCUPATION THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE DEPARTMENT. AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY REDUCED THROUGH FEAR AND INTIMIDATION. LOCAL SOURCES AND PERSONAL OBSERVATION CONFIRMED THAT MOST COFFEE IN THE HIGHLAND AREAS REMAINS UNPICKED. NONETHELESS, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION CONTINUES AS NORMALLY AS POSSIBLE. THE POPULATION DENSITY SOUTH OF THE RIO TOROLA IS HEAVY, AND HAS INCREASED WITH THE INFLUX OF SUBSISTENCE FARM FAMILIES FROM THE NORTH, WHO HAVE SETTLED WHEREVER LAND IS AVAILABLE. AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT, ROAD TRAFFIC WAS RELATIVELY HEAVY, EVEN IN OPERATIONS AREAS SOUTH OF THE TOROLA. MARKETS WERE SET UP IN ALL TOWNS ON SUNDAY THE 23RD. IN SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WAS HEAVIER THAN USUAL DUE TO THE COMBINED PRESENCE OF TROOPS REQUIRING SUPPLIES AND A CATTLE AUCTION. MARKET STALLS AND CIVILIAN CROWDS IMPEDED TROOP MOVEMENT. MORAZAN HAD BEEN WITHOUT LIGHTS FOR THREE DAYS, AND ALL ACTIVITY CEASED AT DARK. IN GENERAL, CIVILIANS ASSOCIATED FREELY WITH SOLDIERS IN ALL TOWNS OBSERVED. THE POPULATION WAS EVENLY DISTRIBUTED BY SEX AND AGE. THERE WAS NO DEARTH OF YOUNG ADULT MALES.

8. AN EASTERN THEATER "ESTADO MAYOR" HAS BEEN FORMED AND IS OPERATING OUT OF THE COMMANDO INSTRUCTION CENTER (CICFA) IN SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TRAVELS DAILY [REDACTED] TO DIRECT THE OPERATION. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EASTERN COMMAND GROUP ARE [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OPERATIONS SUPPORT AT CICFA INCLUDE A FOUR OFFICER INTELLIGENCE SECTION AND AN AIR FORCE LIAISON OFFICER. A FORWARD COMMAND POST IS LOCATED IN OSICALA, WITHIN VIEWING RANGE OF GUERRILLA POSITIONS ON HIGH GROUND NORTH OF THE RIO TOROLA. TROOP DEPLOYMENT AS OF AM JANUARY 24 RESEMBLED

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B6

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A BATTLE FRONT, WITH UNITS DEPLOYED FROM WEST TO EAST, SOUTH OF THE RIO TOROLA. (SEE REF IR'S FOR DETAILS ON DEPLOYMENT.)

9. THE BASIC CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION IS TO ADVANCE ALL UNITS ALONG THE TOROLA NORTHWARD, MANEUVERING TO CONCENTRATE FORCES WHERE STRONGEST RESISTENCE IS MET. A SECOND SWEEP MAY ALSO BE LAUNCHED FROM SOCIEDAD AND CACAOPERA TOWARD JOATECA, OR CORINTO. THE OCCUPATION OF HIGH GROUND, NOT THE RECOVERY OF GUERRILLA HELD TOWNS IS THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION. [REDACTED] STATED THAT HE IS NOT COUNTING ON HONDURAN FORCES TO PROVIDE MUCH OF A BLOCKING FORCE IN THE BORDER AREA, AND EXPECTS GUERRILLA FORCES, WHICH HE ESTIMATED AT 2,500, TO EITHER PUT UP RESISTENCE BEFORE DISPERSING, OR TO DISPERSE ALTOGETHER. HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE ARMED FORCES COULD BE IN PERQUIN AS EARLY AS JANUARY 27, BUT WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THE ADVANCE WOULD BE SO RAPID.

B6

10. [REDACTED] REPORTED IN PERSON TO THE [REDACTED] ON JANUARY 22, WHERE HE SAID HE CONVINCED THEM TO PUT THE NECESSARY RESOURCES INTO A SUSTAINED AND LARGE SCALE OPERATION. HE SAID HE HAS [REDACTED] CONSE. NT TO LEAVE A BATTALION, POSSIBLY ONE OF THE IR'S, IN THE BT

B6

/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 3 \*\*\*\*\*/

NORTH, POSSIBLY PERQUIN, AS A STAY BEHIND FORCE TO CONDUCT ACTIVE PATROLLING. THE OPERATION "ESTADO MAYOR" MET WITH [REDACTED]

B6

[REDACTED] ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 22. MORALE WAS HIGH; ALL COMMANDERS ASSERTED THEIR INTENTION TO MAKE THIS A DECISIVE AND SUSTAINED OPERATION.

11. SPIRITS HAD BEEN NOTICEABLY LOWER EARLIER IN THE DAY, WHEN THE ATONAL BATTALION WAS FORCED TO WITHDRAW FROM MEANGUERA NORTH OF THE TOROLA. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME AN IR BATTALION HAD RETREATED. UNIT COMMANDERS SPOKE OF FACING SUPERIOR GUERRILLA FORCES ARMED WITH M-16'S, WEARING HELMETS AND COMBAT FATIGUES. GUERRILLAS HAD EMPLOYED 81 MM AND A 120MM MORTAR AGAINST ADVANCING FORCES NEAR MEANGUERA, AND FIRED ON THE ARTILLERY BATTERY THAT DAY AS WELL. [REDACTED] ORDERED THE WITHDRAWAL FROM MEANGUERA ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 21, AFTER THE ATONAL HAD CROSSED THE RIVER AND RETAKEN THE TOWN FROM GUERRILLAS ON JANUARY 20. THEY REPORTED FINDING 10 CIVIL DEFENSE, ONE LIEUTENANT, AND ONE CADET LIEUTENANT ASSASSINATED, ALONG WITH 16 CIVILIANS. THE ARMY EVACUATED ABOUT 500 CIVILIANS FROM THE TOWN AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, ATONAL

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WAS UNABLE TO REMAIN IN MEANGUERA. THE TOWN IS IN A DEPRESSION, AND ATTACKING UNITS WERE NOT SUFFICIENT TO DISLodge ENTRENCHED GUERRILLAS FROM SURROUNDING HIGH GROUND, EVEN WITH ARTILLERY AND AIR SUPPORT. THE HASTY WITHDRAWAL BACK ACROSS THE TOROLA WAS ORDERED TO AVOID PENDING ENCIRCLEMENT. ON JANUARY 23 AN ATONAL PATROL WENT UNDER HEAVY FIRE TO RECOVER THE BODIES OF FOUR SOLDIERS KILLED AT THE BLOWN TOROLA BRIDGE DURING THE WITHDRAWAL. THE UNIT RETURNED WITH THE FOUR, BUT ONLY ONE WAS DEAD, THE REST WERE WOUNDED. WHEN THE WORD SPREAD, CHEERS WENT UP ALONG THE ATONAL LINE.

12. ACCORDING TO THE OPERATION'S COMMANDERS, THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION AT CICFA WAS FUNCTIONING WELL. IN THE EARLY MORNING OF JANUARY 22, THE AIR FORCE FLEW IN PICTURES TAKEN FROM THE O-2 OBSERVATION PLANE ON THE AFTER-NOON OF JA

UARY 21. THESE PHOTOS ALLEGEDLY WARNED OF THE IMPENDING ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE ATONAL AND LEAD TO THE ORDER FOR THEM TO WITHDRAW FROM MEANGUERA. [REDACTED] AND ZACAPA, DIRECTING THE S-2, SAID THEY FELT THEY HAD A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF GUERRILLA CONCENTRATIONS IN THE OPERATION AREA, AND THAT THE O-2 PHOTOGRAPHS WERE A BASIC ASSET. THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION WAS ALSO USING EXTENSIVE HUMAN INTELLIGENCE GATHERED FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CIVILIANS FLEEING SOUTH, CAMPESINO AGENTS RESIDING IN GUERRILLA HELD AREAS, AND A CAPTURED PRISONER. ATONAL BROUGHT THE LATTER BACK WITH THEM WHEN THE BATTALION WITHDREW FROM MEANGUERA. HE WAS BEING HELD, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN, AT TREASURY POLICE (PH) HEADQUARTERS IN SAN MIGUEL. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] AND PH COMMANDER LT. (FNU) MAJANO, THE PRISONER REMAINED IN MEANGUERA FOLLOWING THE INITIAL GUERRILLA PULLOUT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON TROOP MOVEMENTS. ONE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE DENOUNCED HIM AS A GUERRILLA AGENT, AND HE WAS CAPTURED WITH HIS FAMILY. HE WAS COLLABORATING WITH THE PH UNDER INTENSIVE INTERROGATION. HE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE SUFFERING FROM PHYSICAL MISTREATMENT, AS DETERMINED FROM A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 20 METERS IN THE PH HEADQUARTERS COURTYARD. POLICE WERE HOLDING HIS FAMILY AS COLLATERAL. POLOFF DID NOT READHINTERROGATION TRANSCRIPTS, WHICH WERE BEING PASSED DAILY TO OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS AT CICFA AND PH HEADQUARTERS IN SAN SALVADOR. HOWEVER, THE MATERIAL WAS EXTENSIVE, AND INCLUDED PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE TO WHAT DEGREE THE COMMAND GROUP WAS MONITORING GUERRILLA COMMUNICATIONS. THE SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

B6

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AT CICFA WOULD MAKE RAPID DISTRIBUTION OF RADIO VENCEREMOS BROADCASTS, TO WHICH COMMANDERS GAVE CLOSE ATTENTION.

13. THE RAMON BELLOSO BATTALION RECOVERED A LARGE FOOD CACHE FROM A GUERRILLA ENCAMPMENT AT LOS BENITEZ NEAR GUATAJIAGA ON JANUARY 21. THE CACHE INCLUDED 200 PLUS POUNDS OF POWDERED MILK, 39 10 GALLON CANS OF COOKING OIL, 80 QUINTALS OF CORN, 35 QUINTALS OF BEANS, 11 QUINTALS OF RICE, 20 QUINTALS OF FLOUR, AND EIGHT QUINTALS OF SUGAR. THE MILK WAS IN CANS LABELED IRA 26 OF THE TYPE RELIEF AGENCIES DISTRIBUTE. THE BEANS AND CORN WERE IN SACKS LABELED "DONATED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," "DONATED BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY," AND "PRODUCT OF THE USA." THE COOKING OIL WAS A COMMERCIAL SALVADO RAN

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/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 4 \*\*\*\*\*/

BRAND. THE SUGAR, RICE, AND FLOUR HAD HONDURAN COMMERCIAL LABELS.

14. DESPITE THE FORCED WITHDRAWAL OF THE ATONAL FROM MEANGUERA, MORALE WAS GENERALLY GOOD. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE EXACT CASUALTY FIGURES, BUT COMMANDERS STATED THEY WERE NOT HEAVY. THE OPERATION "ESTADO MAYOR" APPEARED TO BE FUNCTIONING AS A WELL-COORDINATED UNIT, WITH [REDACTED] DEFINATELY IN COMMAND. THERE WERE NUMEROUS LOGISTIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE USUAL COMPLAINTS OF INADQUATE TRANSPORTATION (TROOPS WERE BEING MOVED IN FARM TRUCKS AND THE TWENTY YEAR OLD MERCEDES BENZ TROOP TRANSPORTS, WE WELL AS THE NEWER FORDS), INADEQUATE RADIOS (APPROXIMATELY ONE PER COMPANY), AND INADEQUATE AIR SUPPORT (ONE HELICOPTER). THIS COUNTER-OFFENSIVE HAS TAKEN ON A NEW ASPECT FOR THIS WAR, WITH BOTH SIDES CURRENTLY LINED UP ON A FRONT DEFINED BY THE RIO TOROLA. OFFICERS NOTED THEY WERE FACING A BETTER ARMED AND EQUIPPED GUERRILLA, WHICH IS EMPLOYING 81 AND 120 MM MORTARS, RECOILESS RIFLES, AND FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE GUNS. IF THERE WAS ANY URGENCY ABOUT MOUNTING THE OPERATION, HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT VISIBLE IN THE EXPRESSIONS AND ACTIONS OF THE COMMANDING OFFICERS.

15. AS USUAL, GOVERNMENT PROVIDED INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPERATION IS INACCURATE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAID HE DID NOT CLAIM 200 GUERRILLA CASUALTIES FROM THE GUATIJIAGUA OPERATION AREA, AS REPORTED IN THE JANUARY 24TH PRESS. NOR HAD THE ARMED FORCES NEARED THE NORTHERN TOWNS OF PERQUIN AND SAN FERNANDO, AS COPREFA STATED ON JANUARY 23. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONFIRM RADIO VENCEREMOS REPORTS OF 63 CIVILIAN DEATHS

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FROM BOMBARDMENT IN MEANGUERA. CIVILIANS HEADING SOUTH FROM THE MEANGUERA ON JANUARY 23 STATED ONLY THAT THEY WERE FLEEING THE PENDING OPERATION. THE ARMED FORCES WAS NOT PERMITTING JOURNALISTS TO ENTER NORTH OF GOTERA. HOWEVER, JUST ABOUT EVERY REPORTER AND FILM CREW IN MORAZAN THE WEEK OF JANUARY 17 WAS TRAVELLING TO GUERRILLA-OCCUPIED CORINTO FOR OBLIGATORY INTERVIEWS WITH "THE OTHER SIDE."

16. POLOFF INTENDS TO RETURN TO MORAZAN ON JANUARY 28 OR 29. SOME OF THE TOWNS THE ARMED FORCES INTEND TO RETAKE HAVE BEEN IN GUERRILLA HANDS FOR FIVE MONTHS. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THEIR "RELIEF" ACTION WILL CONSIST OF.  
17. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] ON JANUARY 24 THAT HE CONSIDERED THE SITUATION IN MORAZAN TO BE "GRAVE." HE WAS NOT CONVINCED THAT OPERATION ESCALANTE ACEVEDO WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL SINCE THEY WOULD BE FIGHTING IN A PLACE AND TIME AND UNDER CONDITIONS DICTATED BY THE ENEMY. HOWEVER, HE SAW NO ALTERNATIVE TO TAKING ACTION AND HAD MADE AVAILABLE TO [REDACTED] ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT. THERE WAS CLEAR AGREEMENT THAT THE OPERATION WAS NOT TO CEASE UNTIL THE ENEMY HAD BEEN DEALT A DECISIVE BLOW. HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY OF ENEMY ATTACKS ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY WHILE ALL STRATEGIC RESERVES WERE LOCATED IN MORAZAN COMPLICATED THE SITUATION. HE INDICATED HE WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO [REDACTED] PROPOSAL THAT HE PERSONALLY RALLY THE TROOPS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY TO UNDERTAKE AGGRESSIVE PATROLLING DURING THIS SENSITIVE PERIOD. THE MINDEF RESPONDED TO A QUESTION FROM [REDACTED] ABOUT HONDURAN ASSISTANCE BY SAYING THAT EL SALVADOR EXPECTED LESS COOPERATION THIS TIME THAN IN PREVIOUS OPERATIONS DUE TO CURRENT DISAGREEMENTS WITH HONDURAS OVER THE ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS TO DEMARK THE FRONTIER.  
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