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**MRN:** 89 SAN SALVADOR 2467  
**Date/DTG:** Feb 24, 1989 / 240000Z Feb 89  
**From:** AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*; GUATEMALA, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** Unknown  
**TAGS:** ELAB, PINS, ES  
**Reference:** 89 SAN SALVADOR 02119  
**Subject:** STREET VIOLENCE FOLLOWS IN THE WAKE OF BOMB - ATTACK ON FENASTRAS HEADQUARTERS.

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ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 EB-00 DODE-00  
 H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03  
 LAB-04 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-02 OMB-01 STR-17 SIL-01  
 INRE-00 OPM-01 SP-02 SNP-01 C-01 SSE-01 PRS-01  
 DS-01 P-02 T-01 /066 W  
 -----134207 240102Z /66

O 240036Z FEB 89  
 FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7273  
 INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
 AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
 AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
 AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
 USIA WASHDC 3109  
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 02467

DEPT FOR ARA/CEN:KWHITAKER

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: ELAB, PINS, ES  
 SUBJECT: STREET VIOLENCE FOLLOWS IN THE WAKE OF BOMB  
 - ATTACK ON FENASTRAS HEADQUARTERS.

REF: SAN SALVADOR 02119

- - 1. FENASTRAS BUILDING BOMBED
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Released in Full  
 John Powers, Acting Powers  
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 01/29/2026

A FEW HUNDRED DEMONSTRATORS USED THE FEBRUARY 22 PRE-DAWN BOMBING OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SALVADORAN WORKERS UNIONS (FENASTRAS), AN AFFILIATE OF THE FMLN LABOR FRONT UNITS, AS THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PRETEXT FOR A VIOLENT RAMPAGE THROUGH THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN SAN SALVADOR AT MIDAFTERNOON. THE FENASTRAS BUILDING SUFFERED DAMAGE TOTALING AN ESTIMATED USDOLS 60,000 BUT THERE WERE NO REPORTED INJURIES. AT LEAST 20 OTHER STRUCTURES ON THE SAME STREET SUFFERED VARYING DEGREES OF DAMAGE. FENASTRAS SEC GEN FEBE ELIZABETH VELASQUEZ BLAMED THE "ARMED FORCES AND 'DEATH SQUADS' WITHIN IT" FOR THE BOMBING. THIS LATEST BOMBING OCCURRED EXACTLY ONE WEEK TO THE DAY OF A SIMILAR ATTACK ON THE UNITS HEADQUARTERS ITSELF (REFTEL).

2. VIOLENCE BEGATS VIOLENCE

WHILE THE BOMBING OF UNITS DID NOT PROVOKE A VIOLENT REACTION, TWO TO THREE HUNDRED FENASTRAS SUPPORTERS TOOK TO THE STREETS IN THE CENTRAL SHOPPING DISTRICT OF THE CAPITAL AND FIREBOMBED AT LEAST EIGHT VEHICLES, INCLUDING THREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUSES. THE DEMONSTRATORS ALSO DAMAGED SEVERAL MORE VEHICLES, SMASHED PLATEGLASS WINDOWS, LOOTED THE CONTENTS OF DISPLAY CASES, AND TRASHED THE STALLS OF STREET VENDORS. EMBOFFS WHO WERE TRANSITING THROUGH THE AREA SAW ONE DEMONSTRATORS BRANDISHING A PISTOL AND TV CAMERAS CAPTURED OTHERS MENACING PEDESTRIANS AND MOTORISTS WITH MACHETES AND LENGTHS OF STEEL REINFORCING BAR. SOME MINOR INJURIES TO PASSERSBY CAUGHT IN THE MELEE WERE REPORTED.

3. RESTRAINED POLICE RESPONSE

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UNITS OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (PN) AND THE CAVALRY REGIMENT WERE AT THE SCENE OF THE VIOLENCE BUT DID NOT INTERVENE. THE TROOPS TRAILED THE DEMONSTRATORS BACK TO THE FENASTRAS BUILDING, WHICH IS LOCATED A FEW BLOCKS AWAY FROM THE SHOPPING DISTRICT. WHEN THE

DEMONSTRATORS ARRIVED, THEY TOOK REFUGE BEHIND A SANDBAG BARRICADE, FROM WHERE THEY PELTED THE TROOPS WITH BOTTLES AND STONES. AT THIS POINT, ONE TEAR GAS GRENADE WAS FIRED, SCATTERING THE DEMONSTRATORS.

4. FENASTRAS BLOCKS FORENSICS PROBE  
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MEANWHILE, FENASTRAS HAS REFUSED TO ALLOW POLICE FORENSICS EXPERTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION AT THE SITE OF THE BOMBING, ALLEGING THAT THIS WILL ONLY LEAD TO A "COVER-UP." FENASTRAS, IN FACT, ALREADY HAS ORGANIZED CREWS TO REMOVE THE DEBRIS AND RUBBLE, ACTION WHICH IS DESTROYING VITAL EVIDENCE. THIS HAS LED TO SPECULATION THAT FENASTRAS IS NOT INTERESTED IN GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS CRIME.

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