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AND SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES 43803 [redacted] ASP82-9337746 MIDD  
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TO: PRIORITY DIRECTOR.

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1. IN VIEW OF REF INFO AND CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES IN SALVADORAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS, WE ARE PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING [redacted] ASSESS-  
MENT OF CURRENT MILITARY-POLITICAL SITUATION.

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2. AS REF INDICATES, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES TO THE CONTINUED LEADERSHIP OF GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO ((GARCIA)), AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, TO COLONEL RAFAEL ((FLORES)) LIMA. OPPOSITION TO GARCIA AND FLORES LIMA APPEARS TO COME FROM TWO DISTINCT MILITARY CAMPS OR GROUPS, EACH GROUP IMPELLED BY DIVERGENT GRIEVANCES. ONE MILITARY GROUP, INCLUDING COL. NICHOLAS ((CARRANZA)), LTC. SIGFRIEDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ, LTC. JOSE DOMINGO ((MONTERROSA)) AND OTHERS, ARE OPPOSED TO GARCIA'S HIGH-PROFILE SUPPORT OF LAND REFORM PROGRAMS AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE MILITARY INSTITUTION WITH REFORMS ORIGINATED BY THE FORMER RULING JUNTA. MEMBERS OF THIS OPPOSITION GROUP GENERALLY SUPPORT THE RIGHT-WING, ANTI-REFORMIST VIEWS OF ARENA AND ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON)), AND SOME, SUCH AS OCHOA, APPEAR CLOSELY TIED TO ARENA. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS GROUP IS ADDITIONALLY OPPOSED TO THE MANNER IN WHICH GARCIA AND FLORES LIMA HAVE PROSECUTED THE WAR AGAINST THE INSURGENTS AND FEEL THAT THE WAR HAS NOT BEEN WAGED FORECEFULLY ENOUGH, PARTLY BECAUSE GARCIA AND FLORES LIMA HAVE OCCUPIED MUCH OF THEIR TIME WITH INTERNAL SALVADORAN POLITICS.

3. A SECOND, SEPARATE, MILITARY OPPOSITION GROUP, MORE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE, ARE NOT ARENA SUPPORTS BUT DO BELIEVE THAT GARCIA AND FLORES LIMA ARE CONDUCTING THE WAR INEFFECTIVELY. THIS GROUP, WHICH CONTAINS SOME

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JUNIOR OFFICERS, BELIEVES THAT GARCIA IS TOO FAR REMOVED FROM FIELD COMMANDERS AND BATTLEFIELD REALITIES TO PROPERLY COMMAND THE ARMED FORCES. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE FIRST MILITARY OPPOSITION GROUP, SOME ELEMENTS OF THE SECOND GROUP BLAME GARCIA FOR NOT BEING PROGRESSIVE ENOUGH.

4. BOTH GARCIA AND FLORES LIMA ARE CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE EXTENT OF MILITARY OPPOSITION TO THEIR CONTINUED SERVICE, AND MOST OF THEIR CONCERN SEEMS TO BE PROMPTED BY THE PRO-ARENA OFFICER GROUP. ADDITIONALLY, AS REF INDICATES, GARCIA SEEMS DISPOSED TO RESIGN IF CONFRONTED BY THIS GROUP, A SITUATION WHICH WOULD PROBABLY PROMPT FLORES LIMA TO DO LIKEWISE. TO DATE, THE MILITARY OPPOSITION HAS NOT STRONGLY CONFRONTED GARCIA AND MAY EVEN BE UNAWARE OF HIS CURRENT FATALISTIC ATTITUDE.

5. WE EXPECT THAT THE RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION TO GARCIA WITHIN THE MILITARY WILL CONTINUE AND PROBABLY INTENSIFY AS ARENA REPRESENTATIVES ARE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING SUCH ACTIVITY AMONG THE OFFICER CORPS. WE ALSO NOTE THAT SOME OF THE OPPOSITION LEADERS, NOTABLY COLONEL OCHOA, ENJOY CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE AMONG THE OFFICER CORPS AND AMONG SALVADORANS IN GENERAL.

6. FOR THE NEAR TERM, THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF THE ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP ARE CRITICAL TO U.S. POLICY IN EL SALVADOR. ONLY THE HIGH COMMAND MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR CAMPESINOS TO RETURN TO THE LAND WHICH THEY HAD LEGALLY ACQUIRED AND FROM WHICH THEY WERE EVICTED BY THE PREVIOUS OWNERS WHEN AN ARENA VICTORY WAS PERCEIVED. FOR THE PRESENT, ONLY CONTINUED PRESSURE FROM THE HIGH COMMAND WILL PREVENT ARENA AND THE OLIGARCHY IT REPRESENTS FROM REVERSING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS.

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