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P 202324Z FEB 91
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5294
INFO RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

RELEASED IN FULL

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior
Reviewer

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SAN SALVADOR 02236

DEPT. FOR ARA/PPC:KMCBRIDE

DEPT. ALSO FOR INR/B

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, ES
SUBJECT: WEEKEND CAMPAIGN RALLIES, FEB 15-18

1. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT.
2. THE FOLLOWING IS A RUNDOWN, BY PARTY, OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES DURING FEBRUARY 15-18. PARAGRAPHS
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SEVEN AND EIGHT PROVIDE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON
ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON AND ARMANDO CALDERON SOL.

ARENA: THE STEAMROLLER ROLLS ON

3. POLOFFS ARRIVED AT AN ARENA RALLY IN ILOPANGO ON FRIDAY EVENING, FEB 15, IN TIME FOR THE MAIN ATTRACTION: SPEECHES BY PARTY PRESIDENT AND SAN SALVADOR MAYOR ARMANDO CALDERON SOL AND "MAXIMUM LEADER" MAJOR ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON. THE EVENT HAD THE USUAL HALLMARKS OF AN ARENA-SPONSORED EVENT: GOOD ORGANIZATION, LAVISH RESOURCES, AND AN ENTHUSIASTIC TURNOUT. THE CROWD OF ABOUT 400-500, REPRESENTING ALL AGES AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, WAS SOMEWHAT SMALLER THAN IS USUAL FOR AN ARENA EVENT NEAR THE CAPITAL,

WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE INCUMBENT ARENA MAYOR OF ILOPANGO HAD BEEN SACKED THE WEEK BEFORE FOR THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS. THE ATTENDEES WERE DECKED OUT IN THE USUAL ARENA T-SHIRTS AND CAPS, AND PRO-ARENA PLACARDS, BANNERS, POM-POMS, ETC WERE IN ABUNDANCE. ONE SOLDIER PATROLLING THE RALLY SPORTED AN ARENA STICKER ON HIS RIFLE STOCK.

4. ON SUNDAY, FEB 17, EMBOFFS ATTENDED AN ARENA RALLY IN THE POOR FARMING TOWN OF EL TRANSITO IN SOUTHERN SAN MIGUEL DEPARTMENT NEAR THE BORDER WITH USulután. A CROWD OF 400-500 CAMPESINOS, MANY WEARING ARENA T-SHIRTS AND CARRYING FLAGS, POM-POMS, AND HAND-LETTERED SIGNS, GATHERED IN THE RUDIMENTARY TOWN CIVIC CENTER. SPEECHES PRAISING D'AUBUISSON,

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PRESIDENT CRISTIANI, AND LOCAL CANDIDATES ALTERNATED WITH SALSA MUSIC AND CAMPAIGN SONGS FROM THE PA SYSTEM. LOCAL CANDIDATES PROMISED ELECTRICITY, PEACE, EDUCATION, ETC WHILE DENOUNCING PDC CORRUPTION AND CONVERGENCIA "COMMUNISM." ONE CANDIDATE TOLD HOW HIS YOUNG SON HAD DESCRIBED D'AUBUISSON'S HEART AS "BIGGER THAN THE SEA" AND ANOTHER DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS THE SON OF A WOMAN WHO SOLD TORTILLAS IN THE MARKET. SEVERAL IN THE AUDIENCE ASSURED EMBOFF THAT THE REGION IS OVERWHELMINGLY PRO-ARENA, AND ESPECIALLY PRO-D'AUBUISSON. ONE CAMPESINO YOUTH IN AN ARENA T-SHIRT EVEN APPEALED FOR MORE MILITARY AID.

5. COLONEL SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ, HEAD OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC COMPANY (CEL), PROMISED MORE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION, WATER, AND EDUCATION IN EACH TOWN. HE WENT ON TO DENOUNCE THE FMLN FOR BURNING THE CITY HALL IN CORINTO, BUT SAID THAT THE PEOPLE "DO NOT FEAR THE GUERRILLAS, THE CONVERGENCIA, OR THE COMMUNISTS, MUCH LESS THE CORRUPT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS." ARENA, HE SAID, "IS ASKING FOR VOTES WITH WORDS, NOT THREATS." HE PREDICTED THAT ARENA WOULD WIN 50 OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S 84 SEATS.

6. D'AUBUISSON TOOK THE MICROPHONE AMID APPLAUSE AND CHEERS, AND TRIUMPHANTLY INVOKED SALVADORAN NATIONALISM AND PRAISED CRISTIANI AND THE MILITARY. HIS REMARK THAT HE IS NOT LIKED OUTSIDE HIS OWN COUNTRY BUT LOVED BY SALVADORANS PROMPTED CHEERS AND SHOUTS. WOVEN THROUGHOUT HIS SPEECH WERE ACCUSATIONS, JOKES, AND INNUENDO DERIDING THE PDC AS THIEVES AND

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INCOMPETENTS AND THE CONVERGENCIA AS CLINGING TO
MARXISM WHEN EVEN RUSSIA IS GIVING IT UP. HE CLAIMED
THAT BOTH PARTIES WOULD HARM THE ARMED FORCES, AND
THAT THIS SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED.

7. COMMENT: SURPRISINGLY, COL. OCHOA HAS NOT PLAYED
AS ACTIVE A ROLE IN THE CAMPAIGN AS EXPECTED. ARENA'S
PREMIER CAMPAIGNERS, MAYOR CALDERON SOL AND MAJOR
D'AUBUISSON, HAVE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT STYLES AND
APPEAR TO PLAY DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE CAMPAIGN.
CALDERON SOL IS PREACHY, SOLEMN, AND LOUD. HE SELDOM

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CRACKS A SMILE AS HE BOOMS THROUGH HIS BY NOW FAMILIAR ORATORY: CONDEMNATION OF PDC CORRUPTION, WARNINGS ABOUT THE LINKS BETWEEN THE CONVERGENCIA AND FMLN "COMMUNISM," AND PRAISE FOR THE CIVIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF
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ARENA INCUMBENTS. CLEARLY POSITIONED TO BE ARENA'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN 1994, CALDERON SOL ALREADY BEHAVES IN A PRESIDENTIAL MANNER. ALTHOUGH SERIOUS AND DIGNIFIED, HE SEEKS TO STRIKE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE IN THE AUDIENCE, AND APPEARS TO ENJOY A GOOD DEAL OF SUCCESS.

8. BY CONTRAST, D'AUBUISSON WORKS THE CROWD LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN A CATSKILLS COMEDIAN AND A REVIVAL TENT PREACHER. HE PACES THE STAGE CONSTANTLY, GESTURING AND JOKING IN EARTHY SLANG. UNLIKE THE ALOOF CALDERON SOL, D'AUBUISSON ENJOYS CONTACT WITH PEOPLE, SOMETIMES INVITING SPECTATORS ONSTAGE OR KNEELING TO OFFER THE MICROPHONE TO SOMEONE IN THE FRONT ROW. HIS FOLLOWERS, IN TURN, REACT WITH NEAR ADULATION. HIS SPEECHES ARE CROWD-PLEASERS, BUT GENERALLY DEVOID OF DETAIL. OTHER THAN A FERVENT ANTICOMMUNISM AND A FEW ROSY PLATITUDES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHAT POLICIES HE STANDS FOR. WHILE LACKING THE SCRIPTED QUALITY OF CALDERON SOL'S SPEECHES, D'AUBUISSON'S PERFORMANCES GENERALLY HIT ON TWO SIMPLE THEMES: (1) HIS PARTY'S LONG STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND RECOGNITION IN THE FACE OF WAR AND INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION AND ITS SUBSEQUENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN OFFICE; (2) SPIRITED ATTACKS ON POLITICAL OPPONENTS, WHICH OFTEN ARE AD HOMINUM AND FILLED WITH FOGGY ACCUSATIONS THAT THE PDC, CONVERGENCIA, ET AL ARE IN LEAGUE WITH "THE COMMUNISTS." THE CROWDS EAT IT UP. END COMMENT.

ANOTHER UNIMPRESSIVE SHOWING BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
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9. POLOFF ATTENDED A PDC PARADE/RALLY IN ARMENIA, SONSONATE DEPARTMENT ON FEB 16. ABOUT 70-75 PEOPLE SHOWED UP, HALF OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE CURIOUS ON-LOOKERS. THE PROCESSION MOVED THROUGH TOWN, STOPPING IN THE TOWN MARKET, WHERE PDC LEADER FIDEL CHAVEZ-MENA SCRAMBLED INTO THE BACK OF A PICKUP TRUCK TO DELIVER A SPEECH DENOUNCING ARENA AND PROMISING

BETTER GOVERNMENT UNDER THE PDC. THE CROWD APPEARED LARGELY INDIFFERENT AND UNRESPONSIVE TO CHAVEZ-MENA'S MESSAGE, HOWEVER, AND MUCH OF THE SPEECH WAS DROWNED OUT BY A STREET VENDOR USING HIS OWN LOUDSPEAKER. THE RALLY THEN MOVED TO THE CENTRAL PLAZA, A SCENE OF MASS CONFUSION. CHAVEZ-MENA AGAIN SPOKE TO THE CROWD, RECEIVING THE SAME LACKLUSTER RESPONSE.

10. EMBOFFS ATTENDED A PDC RALLY IN NEJAPA, NORTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL, ON FEB 16. THE EVENT, WHICH GOT UNDERWAY AN HOUR LATE, WAS A SPARTAN AFFAIR: NO MUSIC AND LITTLE IN THE WAY OF CAMPAIGN PARAPHERNALIA. THE CROWD OF ABOUT 75 PEOPLE WAS GENERALLY UNENTHUSIASTIC, AND THE PDC SPEAKERS HAD TO COMPETE WITH A WEDDING PROCESSION AND A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST A PROPOSED WATER PROJECT, BOTH OCCURRING IN THE SAME AREA. ELECTION OBSERVERS FROM THE OAS AND THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY ALSO COVERED THE EVENT.

MIXED PERFORMANCE BY THE COVERGENCIA

11. ON FRIDAY EVENING, FEB 15, EMBOFFS ATTENDED A
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CONVERGENCIA RALLY IN SAN SALVADOR. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "WOMEN OF THE CD" OPENED THE PROGRAM BLAMING ARENA'S ECONOMIC POLICIES FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF BROTHELS IN THE COUNTRY. THE MPSC'S JORGE VILLACORTA THEN GAVE A WELL DELIVERED APPEAL TO WORKERS AND CAMPESINOS CRITICIZING GOES POLICIES ON BANK PRIVATIZATION AND LAND REFORM. RUBEN ZAMORA WAS THE FEATURED SPEAKER AND INTRODUCED THE CD'S SAN SALVADOR MAYORAL CANDIDATE TO LUKEWARM APPLAUSE BEFORE DELIVERING HIS USUAL "POWER TO THE PEOPLE" MESSAGE. THE EVENT DREW A CROWD OF

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APPROXIMATELY 500, ABOUT HALF OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE
CURIOUS ON-LOOKERS. ONE ADOLESCENT ATTENDEE SPORTED
AN AREANA T-SHIRT AND QUICKLY DREW THE ATTENTION OF
THREE UNAPPRECIATIVE CD SUPPORTERS. THE CD SUPPORTERS
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OPENLY DISCUSSED DEFACING THE SHIRT OR REMOVING IT
WHILE THE "ARENERO" IGNORED THEM. AS MORE
CONVERGENCIA SUPPORTERS GATHERED AND CONTINUED TO JOKE
ABOUT THE OUT-OF-PLACE SHIRT AND ITS OWNER, ONE OF
THEM PUT HIS ARM AROUND THE ADOLESCENT'S SHOULDER AND
THE GROUP SLOWLY MOVED HIM TO THE EDGE OF THE CROWD.
THE "ARENERO" SHOWED NO EXPRESSION OR RESISTANCE AT
ALL AND EVENTUALLY WALKED AWAY FROM THE CROWD.

12. ON FEB 17, THE CD STAGED A RALLY IN APOPA, NORTH
OF THE CAPITAL. THE EVENT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY
WELL-ORGANIZED, OR ATTENDED, AND LASTED ONLY ONE
HOUR. VILLACORTA GAVE A FAIRLY GOOD SPEECH. IN
GENERAL, THE SPEECHES CRITICIZED THE DEREGULATION OF
PRICES UNDER ARENA, AND ATTACKED D'AUBUISSON AND ARENA
AS "NAZIS."

13. POLOFF ATTEMPTED TO ATTEND A CONVERGENCIA RALLY

SCHEDULED FOR NOON, FEB 16, IN ATQUIZAYA IN NORTHERN AHUACAPAN, THE WESTERNMOST DEPARTMENT OF EL SALVADOR. POLOFF STAKED OUT BOTH LIKELY RALLY SITES IN THE SMALL, DUSTY TOWN, BUT THE APPOINTED HOUR APPROACHED AND PASSED WITH NO ACTIVITY IN EITHER LOCATION. POLOFF SOUGHT INFORMATION AT THE LOCAL MPSC OFFICE, BUT THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE WAS NEITHER IN THE OFFICE NOR AT HOME, AND HER SMALL DAUGHTER COULD PROVIDE NOTHING CONCRETE ON CONVERGENCIA RALLY PLANS.

THE PCN: KNOCKING 'EM DEAD IN LA PAZ

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14. FINALLY, IN AN INCIDENT PERHAPS SYMBOLIC OF THE NATIONAL CONCILIATION PARTY'S EBBING STATURE ON THE SALVADORAN POLITICAL SCENE: ON FEB 17, THE PCN CANCELLED A RALLY IN LA HERRADURA, LA PAZ DEPARTMENT AFTER A LOCAL DRUNK WAS ACCIDENTALLY STRUCK AND KILLED BY ONE OF THEIR CAMPAIGN VEHICLES. PCN OFFICIALS PAID FOR THE FUNERAL EXPENSES.

WALKER

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