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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-17 ACDE-00 CIAE-00 OASY-00 DODE-00 H-01  
TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-16 L-01 ADS-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-00 PRS-01 P-01 SNP-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0904  
INFO ARA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

RELEASED IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL SAN SALVADOR 004609

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior  
Reviewer

E.O. 12356:DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, MCAF, ES  
SUBJECT: CALDERON SOL REMOVES MILITARY FROM STATE POSTS

1. (U) PRESIDENT CALDERON SOL HAS REMOVED ACTIVE-DUTY AND RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS FROM ALL CABINET AND PARASTATAL POSTIONS, EXCEPT FOR MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL HUMBERTO CORADO. IN THE CABINET, CALDERON SOL APPOINTED A SENIOR ARENA OFFICIAL AND RESPECTED PHYSICIAN, DR. EDUARDO INTERIANO, TO REPLACE COL. LISANDRO VASQUEZ SOSA AS MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH. HE ALSO APPOINTED FORMER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT ROBERTO  
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ANGULO TO REPLACE COL. (RET.) JUAN MARTINEZ VARELA AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

2. (U) SIMILARLY, CALDERON SOL HAS APPOINTED CIVILIANS TO RUN THE PARASTATALS, A TRADITIONAL SOURCE OF SINECURES FOR EX-MILITARY OFFICERS. FORMER ACTING MAYOR OF SAN SALVADOR JUAN JOSE DOMENECH WAS NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY (ANTEL). EX-TREASURY MINISTER EDWIN SAGRERA REPORTEDLY WILL REPLACE COL. (RET.) CARLOS HUMBERTO FIGUEROA AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL PORTY AUTHORITY (CEPA), ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE. ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, FORMER PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY ARTURO TONA IS SLATED TO REPLACE COL. (RET.) RAMON GONZALEZ SUVILLAGA AS CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL WATER COMPANY (ANDA).

3. (U) THE PRESIDENT HAS RETAINED ARENA SENIOR

STATESMAN GUILLERMO "BILLY" SOL BANG AS CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC COMPANY (CEL). HE REPLACED THE CONTROVERSIAL COL. (RET.) SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ AS PRESIDENT OF CEL IN FEBRUARY 1993, AFTER ARENA LEADERS EXPELLED OCHOA FROM THE PARTY'S INNER CIRCLE AND SENT HIM INTO GOLDEN EXILE AS AMBASSADOR TO ARGENTINA.

4. (C) COMMENT: SOL BANG, WHO IS STILL TRYING TO CLEAN UP THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY OCHOA AT CEL, IS A LEADING ADVOCATE OF ARENA EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE MILITARY INFLUENCE FROM GOVERNMENT AND KEY PARTY POSTS. THIS POLICY REFLECTS IN PART ARENA'S BITTER EXPERIENCE WITH OCHOA, A FLAMBOYANT FIGURE WHO USED CEL TO CREATE A VAST PATRONAGE NETWORK AIMED AT ADVANCING HIS FAILED PRESIDENTIAL  
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AMBITIONS.

5. (C) THIS MOVE BY CALDERON SOL IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS PLEDGE TO REFORM THE PUBLIC SECTOR, AND REFLECTS HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT THE MILITARY SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PURELY DEFENSE-RELATED ACTIVITIES. WE WELCOME THAT APPROACH, WHICH REINFORCES THE CONTINUED STRENGTHENING OF CIVILIAN CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY IN EL SALVADOR.  
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