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 Document:DIRR -0000 977316 Subject: DRAFT [redacted] PAPER ON SALVADORAN MILITARY.C 28405DIRR
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FOR AMBASSADOR PICKERING.
 SUBJECT: DRAFT [redacted] PAPER ON SALVADORAN MILITARY.
 TEXT: .

1. EQUIPMENT FOR THE RAPIDLY EXPANDING FORCE THAN TO SIGN UP RECRUITS.
 SUCH SUPPORT COSTS HAVE PLACED AN ENORMOUS BURDEN ON ALREADY
 STRAINED GOVERNMENT RESOURCES. [redacted]

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[redacted] THAT THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT ENCOUNTERED SERIOUS
 DIFFICULTIES MEETING ITS 1983 MILITARY PAYROLL. FOREIGN ECONOMIC
 AID HAS RELIEVED SOME OF EL SALVADOR'S FISCAL PRESSURES AND MILITARY
 AID CAN PROVIDE HARDWARE AND TRAINING, BUT THE UNITED STATES IS
 LEGALLY PREVENTED FROM OFFERING DIRECT BUDGET SUPPORT. (C/NF)

TROOP QUALITY

US TRAINING PROGRAM: THE SALVADORAN ARMY, AIR FORCE, AND NAVY
 HAVE RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING ASSISTANCE, MAINLY FROM THE
 UNITED STATES, IN RECENT YEARS. AT THE OUTSET, THE UNITED STATES
 FACED THE DAUNTING TASK OF CONVERTING EL SALVADOR'S STANDING
 CONVENTIONAL ARMY, WITH LITTLE FIELD EXPERIENCE, INTO AN ACTIVE
 COUNTERINSURGENCY FORCE. FORCE EXPANSION, RAPID TURNOVER IN
 PERSONNEL, AND THE FIELDING OF NEW EQUIPMENT SYSTEMS SUBSEQUENTLY
 ADDED TO TRAINING REQUIREMENTS. DESPITE LIMITED FUNDS AND RIGID
 PERSONNEL QUOTAS, US TRAINERS HAD TAUGHT CRITICAL SKILLS TO ABOUT
 14,000 OFFICERS AND TROOPS BY EARLY 1984. US EFFORTS WERE
 SUPPLEMENTED BY A 15-MAN VENEZUELAN TEAM THAT TRAINED TWO LIGHT
 BATTALIONS IN 1982 AND BY OTHERS, SUCH AS ARGENTINA, THAT OFFERED
 SPECIAL COURSES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES TO SMALL GROUPS. (C/NF)

IN SPECIFIC AREAS, ENHANCED TRAINING HAS MADE A DRAMATIC
 IMPROVEMENT IN THE CAPABILITIES OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES. THE
 IR BATTALIONS AND THE RECONNAISSANCE TEAMS TRAINED IN PANAMA HAVE
 EARNED CONSIDERABLE RESPECT FROM THE GUERRILLAS, [redacted]

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[redacted] UPGRADING OF THE AIR FORCE HAS ALSO
 BROUGHT THAT SERVICE FULLY INTO THE COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORT. ON THE
 OTHER HAND, THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME OF THE LIGHT BATTALIONS, EVEN
 THOSE TRAINED BY THE US, HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING, OFTEN AS A RESULT
 OF WEAK LEADERSHIP AND THE LOW LEVEL OF SKILLS ACQUIRED DURING
 TRAINING. (IN AN EFFORT TO CORRECT THESE WEAKNESSES, TRAINING FOR

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THE LIGHT BATTALIONS WAS INCREASED FROM FIVE TO EIGHT WEEKS IN EARLY 1984.) (S/NF [REDACTED])

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THE OVERALL IMPACT OF US TRAINING IS LIMITED, HAVING REACHED ONLY ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE STANDING FORCE. OF THE APPROXIMATELY 14,000 US-TRAINED PERSONNEL, WE ESTIMATE THAT ONLY 7,000--OUT OF A TOTAL ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE STRENGTH OF 28,300--ARE STILL ON ACTIVE DUTY, (THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON THE BEST ESTIMATE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL IN 1983 THAT 50 PERCENT OF US-TRAINED TROOPS REMAINED ON ACTIVE DUTY. (C/NF)) ALTHOUGH SOME HAVE JOINED PUBLIC SECURITY UNITS AFTER RELEASE. IN ADDITION, INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVE TECHNICAL TRAINING OFTEN HAVE REJOINED UNITS UNABLE OR DISINCLINED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW SKILLS. EVEN UNITS THAT TRAIN TOGETHER SPEND ONLY A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD UNDER US SUPERVISION, NOT ENOUGH TIME TO GUARANTEE RESULTS. FURTHERMORE, THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES, WHICH CONSTITUTE MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH OF THE SALVADORAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT AND PLAY A SIGNIFICANT COMBAT ROLE, RECEIVE NO ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF US AID RESTRICTIONS. (C/NF)

SALVADORAN TRAINING ROLE: SALVADORAN LEADERS HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN FULLY SUPPORTIVE OF US TRAINING PROGRAMS. THE HIGH COMMAND HAS PULLED UNITS OUT OF TRAINING FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO

[REDACTED] AND IS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT OUT-OF-COUNTRY PROGRAMS BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGH PRICE AND INCONVENIENCE, DESPITE THE ADVANTAGES OF UNINTERRUPTED TRAINING. US TRAINERS ALSO REPORT ONLY SLOW PROGRESS IN GETTING LEADERS TO TRAIN ALONGSIDE THEIR TROOPS; IN SOME CASES OFFICER RELUCTANCE HAS REFLECTED SENSITIVITY OVER ACCEPTING TRAINING FROM US NON-COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION, SOME COURSES HAVE BEEN SHORTENED BECAUSE OF TRAINING BACKLOGS AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS. THE ARCE IR BATTALION, FOR EXAMPLE, RECEIVED ONLY SIX WEEKS OF TRAINING IN MID 1983--IN CONTRAST TO THE BELLOSO'S SCHEDULED 18 WEEKS IN MID 1982--IN ORDER TO HAVE IT RETURN FROM HONDURAS IN TIME FOR THE THEN-EXPECTED FALL ELECTIONS. (C/NF)

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SALVADORAN TRAINING EFFORTS, MOREOVER, HAVE NOT COMPLEMENTED US PROGRAMS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DRAGGED ITS FEET, IN OUR VIEW, ON THE STEPS NEEDED TO REESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM AFTER THE ORIGINAL TRAINING STRUCTURE WAS DISMANTLED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMBAT PERSONNEL. SOME MILITARY SCHOOLS, SUCH AS THE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL AND THE AVIATION SCHOOL, HAVE REAPPEARED, BUT PRIMARILY DUE TO US PRODDING. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ARMY-BASIC-TRAINING-LARGELY-REMAINS-DECENTRALIZED.. AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL, WHERE, DEPENDING ON THE APPROACH OF THE LOCAL COMMANDER, RECRUITS SOMETIMES RECEIVE ONLY A FEW WEEKS OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING BEFORE BEING SENT INTO COMBAT. US TEAMS, EXPECTING TO UPGRADE EXPERIENCED UNITS, OFTEN END UP PROVIDING BASIC WEAPONS FAMILIARIZATION AND DRILL INSTRUCTION TO NOVICES. (C/NF)

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GOVERNMENT PROMISES TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL MILITARY TRAINING CENTER ARE ONLY NOW YIELDING RESULTS. AT THE END OF 1983, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE BEGAN TO STAFF A TRAINING CENTER AT A FACILITY USED BY US ADVISERS IN LA UNION. IT HAS INITIALLY FOCUSED ON REFRESHER COURSES FOR UNITS AS WELL AS SOME BASIC TRAINING FOR RECRUITS, BUT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE CENTER IS OPERATING FULLY. SALVADORAN TRAINERS WORK ALONGSIDE MOST US TEAMS, AND THE MILITARY HAS SHOWN SOME INITIATIVE IN FIELDING TWO OF ITS OWN MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS TO HELP WITH THE CONVERSION OF LARGE GROUND UNITS TO LIGHT BATTALIONS, BUT THE OVERALL SALVADORAN TRAINING PROGRAM IS SMALL AND POORLY ORGANIZED. (C/NF)

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LOYALTY AND MORALE: OVERALL ARMED FORCES LOYALTY IS NOT SERIOUSLY IN QUESTION AND THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE ABLE TO PUT SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD. FEW TROOPS HAVE GONE OVER TO THE ENEMY AND SOME UNITS HAVE SHOWN OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM AND BRAVERY. DESERTION RATES RAN 1-2 PERCENT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1983, WHICH IS NOT CONSIDERED UNUSUAL UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS, ACCORDING TO ATTACHE REPORTING. ALTHOUGH LOSSES FROM ORDINARY UNITS ARE PROBABLY GREATER THAN FROM IR BATTALIONS, DESERTION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A REAL PROBLEM. SO FAR, TROOP DISSATISFACTION REMAINS A LOCAL PROBLEM, WE JUDGE, RATHER THAN ONE OF NATIONAL DIMENSION. (S NF [redacted])

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NONETHELESS, THERE ARE REPORTS FROM [redacted] OF SOME TROOPS FLEEING IN DISORDER, SURRENDERING EASILY, CHANGING TO CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO ESCAPE DETECTION, EXAGGERATING THE SIZE OF OPPOSING FORCES TO AVOID FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS, AND REFUSING TO GO INTO BATTLE UNTIL CONDITIONS--INCLUDING LEADERSHIP CHANGES--ARE MET. (b)(1)

[redacted] THAT TWO COMPANIES WERE EJECTED FROM THE SERVICE FOR INSUBORDINATION IN MORAZAN IN EARLY 1983 AND THAT THE PIPIL BATTALION WAS RETURNED TO GARRISON FOR POOR DISCIPLINE IN SEPTEMBER. SLACKNESS AND LACK OF TRAINING ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO MILITARY DISASTERS AT THE EL PARAISO GARRISON AND THE CUSCATLAN BRIDGE IN LATE DECEMBER 1983. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE FIELD GRADE OFFICER, A SALVADORAN "TROOP MOTIVATION UNIT" IS CONSTANTLY ON THE ROAD PREPARING RECRUITS FOR COMBAT AND REMEDYING CASES OF POOR MORALE. (S NF [redacted])

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CASUALTIES: A CONSISTENTLY HIGH CASUALTY RATE AMONG GOVERNMENT FORCES HAS AFFECTED TROOP MORALE IN SOME CASES, ACCORDING TO

[redacted] ALTHOUGH THE AVAILABILITY OF REPLACEMENTS HAS MINIMIZED THE IMPACT OF LOSSES FORCE-WIDE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES EACH YEAR, WITH ABOUT THREE-FOURTHS OF THESE LOSSES OCCURRING IN THE REGULAR FORCES AND THE REMAINDER IN PUBLIC SECURITY UNITS. (C NF [redacted])

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GOVERNMENT LOSSES REMAIN STRIKING, DESPITE THE DECLINING PROPORTION OF FORCES AFFECTED. CASUALTIES REMOVE A MUCH LARGER PROPORTION OF TROOPS EACH YEAR THAN WOULD BE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE BY WESTERN MILITARY STRATEGISTS. SUCH HIGH LOSSES RESULT FROM THE LARGE NUMBER OF RAW RECRUITS IN COMBAT AND THE DISMAL STATE OF MEDICAL CARE. ACCORDING TO A US MEDICAL TEAM'S EVALUATION IN 1983, ONE-THIRD OF ALL WOUNDED SOLDIERS EVENTUALLY DIED--IN COMPARISON TO ONE-IN-10 FOR THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM--BECAUSE OF POOR FIELD ATTENTION AND INADEQUATE MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION. US SUCCESS IN TRAINING SEVERAL HUNDRED MEDICS WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASED HELICOPTER AND AMBULANCE MEDEVAC SUPPORT UNTIL MID 1984. FURTHERMORE, MANY SALVADORAN OFFICERS CONTINUE TO CONSIDER MEDICS AS INFANTRY TROOPS FIRST, AND LIMIT THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES A MEDIC CAN CARRY. (C NF [redacted])

LEADERSHIP

SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICER CORPS: THE SALVADORAN OFFICER CORPS WAS CAUGHT SHORT AT THE ONSET OF HOSTILITIES BUT HAS GROWN RAPIDLY IN ITS EFFORT TO MATCH FORCE EXPANSION AND MEET THE LEADERSHIP DEMANDS OF SMALL UNIT COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE. BECAUSE OF THE URGENCY OF THE WAR, EL SALVADOR GRADUATED EARLY A RELATIVELY LARGE MILITARY ACADEMY CLASS OF 85 CADETS IN AUGUST 1981, ENROLLED AN UNPRECEDENTED CLASS OF 450 CADETS IN OCTOBER 1981, AND

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COMMISSIONED THE NEXT SENIOR CLASS TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS EARLY IN FEBRUARY 1982. TWO GROUPS OF ABOUT 450 OFFICER CANDIDATES EACH UNDERWENT TWO TO FOUR MONTHS OF INTENSIVE TRAINING AT FORT BENNING, IN SPRING 1982 AND MID 1983, RECEIVING A RANK OF CADET, BELOW THAT OF SECOND LIEUTENANT, UPON COMPLETION. OWING TO THESE PROGRAMS, MORE JUNIOR OFFICERS ENTERED THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES FROM 1980 TO THE END OF 1983 THAN HAD PREVIOUSLY GRADUATED FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMY SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN THE 1930S, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] (b)(1)

DESPITE SOME GROWING PAINS, INCLUDING INITIAL RELUCTANCE OF SENIOR OFFICERS TO ENTRUST RAW CADETS WITH COMBAT RESPONSIBILITIES AND A HIGH ATTRITION RATE AMONG NEW OFFICERS, (IN LATE 1983, A [REDACTED] (b)(1)

THAT 25 PERCENT OF THE FIRST FORT BENNING CLASS WAS NO LONGER ON ACTIVE DUTY, ALTHOUGH ONLY 4 PERCENT OF THE SECOND CLASS HAD LEFT THE SERVICE. (S NF [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] CONSIDER THAT THE CRITICAL SHORTAGES AT THE JUNIOR RANKS HAVE NOW BEEN EASED. (S NF [REDACTED] (b)(1)

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THE INFUSION OF JUNIOR OFFICERS, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASES IN EXPERIENCED OFFICERS AT THE FIELD- AND COMPANY-GRADE LEVEL. REFORMIST ELEMENTS IN THE JUNTA FORCED THE RETIREMENT OF SOME SENIOR OFFICERS IN 1979 AND A KNOWLEDGEABLE [REDACTED] ESTIMATED IN LATE 1983 THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES WERE STILL SHORT AT LEAST 50 MAJORS AND 250 CAPTAINS. FEW UNITS HAVE FULL COMPLEMENTS OF OFFICERS. (S NF [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

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DESPITE CONSIDERABLE US PRESSURE, THE HIGH COMMAND HAS RESISTED FILLING OUT MIDDLE AND UPPER RANKS THROUGH ACCELERATED PROMOTIONS. THE TRADITIONAL PEACETIME PROMOTION POLICY BASED ON TIME-IN-GRADE AND SCHOOLING HAS NOT GIVEN WAY TO A WARTIME SYSTEM BASED ON COMBAT PERFORMANCE, DESPITE THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SEVERAL OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES. THE RECENT ACCESSIONS OF A COMBAT-SEASONED MAJOR TO ACTING COMMAND OF THE ATACATL BATTALION AND A LIEUTENANT COLONEL TO A FULL BRIGADE/ZONE COMMAND, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THAT SOME EVOLUTION MAY BE OCCURRING IN THE SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH NEITHER HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO THE RANK COMMENSURATE WITH HIS NEW COMMAND. (C NF [REDACTED]

THE MILITARY ALSO IS RELUCTANT TO MOVE SEASONED ENLISTED PERSONNEL INTO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, REFLECTING A STRONG CULTURAL BIAS. THE EXISTING NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' COURSE HAS BEEN UPGRADED TO INCLUDE SIX WEEKS OF US TRAINING IN PANAMA, BUT STILL TURNS OUT ONLY ABOUT 30 NCOS TWICE A YEAR. EVEN THOUGH THE UNITED STATES PUT SALVADORAN NCOS IN CHARGE OF THE NEW, HIGHLY-TRAINED, LONG-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS, THIS PRACTICE WAS NOT ADOPTED ELSEWHERE IN THE SALVADORAN FORCES. IN EARLY 1984, A LARGE GROUP OF SERGEANTS RECEIVED LIEUTENANT'S BARS, BUT IT IS TOO SOON TO TELL HOW EFFICIENTLY THEY WILL BE USED. (C NF [REDACTED]

READINESS: PROBLEMS OF ABSENTEE LEADERSHIP AND LAX PROSECUTION OF THE WAR HAVE NOT AFFLICTED THE BEST UNITS BUT ARE ALL TOO CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MANY UNITS WHOSE LEADERS HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED US TRAINING OR HAVE NOT TAKEN THE TEACHINGS TO HEART. ACKNOWLEDGING THE POOR STATE OF READINESS, DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES ISSUED NEW STANDING ORDERS IN SEPTEMBER 1983, [REDACTED] (b)(1)

[REDACTED] SPECIFYING THAT A COMMANDING OFFICER OR DEPUTY BE ON DUTY AT ALL TIMES, 75 PERCENT OF EACH UNIT BE KEPT ON ALERT, OPERATIONS BE CONDUCTED AROUND THE CLOCK WITH EMPHASIS ON NIGHT-TIME PATROLLING, AND DETAILED MONTHLY REPORTS BE SUBMITTED TO SHOW

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COMPLIANCE. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF TOP LEADERSHIP, MANY UNITS CONTINUED TO IGNORE REGULATIONS, [REDACTED] THE REASSIGNMENT IN EARLY 1984 OF A FEW COMMANDERS WHOSE UNITS WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES BY THE ENEMY IS PROVIDING SOME PREVIOUS LACKING INCENTIVE TO IMPROVE READINESS, BUT PUNISHMENTS FOR OFFICERS REMAIN MILD. (S NF [REDACTED])

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COMMAND CHANGES: THE SALVADORAN HIGH COMMAND IS PAYING GREATER ATTENTION TO THE WAR EFFORT THAN TWO YEARS AGO. THE JANUARY 1983 MUTINY OF LT. COLONEL OCHOA IN CABANAS DEPARTMENT BROUGHT OFFICER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WAR TO A HEAD AND EVENTUALLY FORCED THE RESIGNATION OF DEFENSE MINISTER GARCIA. HIS REPLACEMENT, GENERAL VIDES, ASSUMED A MORE ACTIVE PERSONAL ROLE IN THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR, VISITED UNITS IN THE FIELD, TRIED TO PROMOTE AGGRESSIVE SMALL-UNIT TACTICS, AND BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT A NEW 'NATIONAL STRATEGY' FOR DEFEATING THE GUERRILLAS. (S NF [REDACTED])

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THE DEFENSE MINISTER MOVED MORE CAUTIOUSLY IN MAKING CRITICALLY NEEDED PERSONNEL CHANGES, HOWEVER. ANXIOUS TO AVOID POLITICAL FALLOUT THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE HIS OWN POSITION, FACTIONALIZE THE MILITARY, OR ENDANGER CONTINUED US AID, VIDES FOLLOWED TRADITION AND ESTABLISHED A COMMISSION IN OCTOBER TO THRESH OUT MILITARY PROBLEMS. BY NOVEMBER, BATTLEFIELD REVERSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, INCREASING CONSENSUS WITHIN THE MILITARY, AND STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE US FINALLY PROPELLED HIM INTO ANNOUNCING MAJOR LEADERSHIP CHANGES. (S NF [REDACTED])

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THE SHAKEUP PROVIDED A DRAMATIC OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THE TRADITIONALLY UNRESPONSIVE GENERAL STAFF. DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES BROUGHT IN THE FIRST BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL BLANDON AS CHIEF OF STAFF AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL MENDEZ FROM THE BELLOSO BATTALION AS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND SHIFTED 80 PERCENT OF STAFF PERSONNEL, ACCORDING TO US ATTACHE REPORTING. THE OUTSTANDING REPUTATION OF THIS NEW TEAM AMONG COMBAT COMMANDERS PRESAGED AN INCREASE IN THE COMMAND AND CONTROL AUTHORITY EXERCISED BY THE GENERAL STAFF. EARLY CHANGES INCLUDED ROUND-THE-CLOCK STAFFING, FORMAL INVESTIGATION OF RECENT COMBAT LOSSES, THE ADDITION OF AIR FORCE AND ARTILLERY REPRESENTATIVES TO PLANNING SESSIONS, AND MORE CORDIAL LIAISON WITH US ADVISORS. NONETHELESS, REINING IN TRADITIONALLY INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMMANDERS AND SETTING PRIORITIES FOR OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ON A COUNTRYWIDE BASIS WILL NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED QUICKLY. (C NF)

VIDES' MOVES WERE ALSO DESIGNED, WE BELIEVE, TO REVITALIZE BATTLEFIELD PERFORMANCE. HE CHANGED COMMANDERS OF AT LEAST 10 MAJOR COMBAT UNITS--INCLUDING THREE OF THE FOUR US-TRAINED IR BATTALIONS--REMOVING SOME DEAD WOOD, RELIEVING SEVERAL BATTLE-WEARY COMMANDERS, PUTTING A TOP OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE BELEAGUERED EASTERNMOST DEPARTMENTS, AND EXPOSING A NEW GROUP OF OFFICERS TO MORE SENIOR POSTS. ALTHOUGH THE NEW LINE-UP REPRESENTED THE FIRST COMMAND SHIFTS IN A LONG TIME FOR MOST OF THE UNITS, THE CHANGES SET BACK OPERATIONS FOR ONLY A SHORT TIME WHILE THE NEW OFFICERS SETTLED IN. IN A FOLLOW-UP MOVE AT THE END OF 1983, THE CORRUPT COMMANDER OF THE NAVY WAS FINALLY OUSTED. (C NF)

REPUTATION: EVEN SO, THE MILITARY IS MAKING ONLY SLOW PROGRESS IN IMPROVING ITS DISMAL PUBLIC IMAGE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT DEFENSE LEADERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MILITARY-CIVILIAN RELATIONS TO THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRUGGLE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES APPEAR TO BE DECLINING, ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY. US INVESTIGATORS FOUND CREDITABLE THE CLAIMS OF LOCAL VILLAGERS THAT

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GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS HAD MURDERED ABOUT TWO DOZEN YOUTHS IN USULUTAN AT THE END OF NOVEMBER 1983. AN OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR AN EARLIER MASSACRE IN SONSONATE WAS REMOVED BUT NOT BROUGHT TO TRIAL. FEW COMMANDERS HAVE CHOSEN TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF LT. COLONEL OCHOA, WHO ESTABLISHED A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM IN CABANAS IN 1982. DEFENSE LEADERS' HAVE ENDORSED SOCIO-ECONOMIC REFORMS, ESTABLISHED CODES OF CONDUCT, TRIED TO KEEP AIR FORCE BOMBING AWAY FROM CIVILIAN AREAS, PROMOTED CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS, AND PROVIDED PRO-GOVERNMENT MEDIA EXPOSURE. LACK OF FULL ENDORSEMENT OF THESE MEASURES BY SOME LOCAL COMMANDERS, HOWEVER, HAS WEAKENED THEIR IMPACT. THE TRANSFER OF A FEW OF THE MORE NOTORIOUS RIGHT WING OFFICERS AT THE END OF NOVEMBER FROM NATIONAL STAFF SLOTS TO ACTIVE FIELD UNITS MAY HAVE REMOVED THE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE LIMELIGHT BUT DID NOT REMOVE THEM FROM POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. ONLY THREE WERE EXILED AT THAT TIME. PRESIDENT DUARTE, HOWEVER, HAS RECENTLY DESIGNATED THREE ADDITIONAL OFFICERS TO LEAVE FOR OVERSEAS POSTS.

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MILITARY EQUIPMENT

EL SALVADOR HAS REVAMPED ITS EQUIPMENT INVENTORIES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ~~_____~~ AID TO BEGIN TO STANDARDIZE WEAPONS THROUGHOUT THE REGULAR FORCES AND PURCHASE NEW ITEMS GEARED FOR THE COUNTERINSURGENCY THREAT. DEFENSE LEADERS MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH OTHER MILITARY SUPPLIERS, SUCH AS ISRAEL, TAIWAN, CHILE, AND ARGENTINA, BUT NO COUNTRY BESIDES THE UNITED STATES HAS COME FORTH WITH SUBSTANTIAL AID OR LONG-TERM CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS. ~~(C NF)~~

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WEAPONS: GROUND TROOPS NOW HAVE M-16 ASSAULT RIFLES, M-60 MACHINE GUNS, 90 MM SHOULDER-FIRED RECOILLESS RIFLES, AND 60 MM AND 81 MM MORTARS, REPLACING AN ASSORTMENT OF EUROPEAN-MANUFACTURED AND OLDER US WEAPONS THAT WERE LARGELY TURNED OVER TO THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES. THE TRANSITION FOR EXISTING UNITS WAS LARGELY COMPLETED DURING 1983, WHILE EACH NEW LIGHT BATTALION WILL RECEIVE ABOUT \$600,000 WORTH OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT AS IT IS FORMED. SAN SALVADOR ALSO SUBSTANTIALLY UPGRADED ITS FIELD ARTILLERY WITH LIGHTWEIGHT M102 105 MM HOWITZERS IN THE FALL OF 1983 AND PUT THE NEW WEAPONS IN THE FIELD BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. BY MAY 1984, 24 NEW HOWITZERS HAD BEEN RECEIVED. ~~(C NF)~~

THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PUT NEW WEAPONS INTO USE RAPIDLY BECAUSE THE WEAPONS ARE NOT TECHNICALLY COMPLEX AND BECAUSE TRAINING PACKAGES HAVE ACCOMPANIED PROCUREMENT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO ~~_____~~ FIELD INSPECTIONS SHOW THAT WEAPONS ARE NOT ALWAYS WELL-MAINTAINED BECAUSE OF TRAINING DEFICIENCIES AND SHORTAGES OF CLEANING KITS. LACK OF TRAINED FORWARD OBSERVERS ALSO OFTEN LIMITS THE USEFUL RANGE OF SUPPORT WEAPONS. FURTHERMORE, SALVADORAN UNITS HAVE LOST SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WEAPONS TO ENEMY ACTIONS. CUMULATIVE LOSSES SINCE EARLY 1982 COULD HAVE EQUIPPED MORE THAN THREE ADDITIONAL FULL-SIZE IR BATTALIONS. (ACCORDING TO BOTH SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT AND FMLN STATISTICS, ABOUT 3,500 WEAPONS OF ALL KINDS FELL INTO ENEMY HANDS IN 1983 ALONE.) THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ESTIMATES THAT A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE ENEMY'S WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION NEEDS ARE MET THROUGH THE CAPTURE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES. (SEE THE DECEMBER 1983 SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE 'NEAR TERM MILITARY PROSPECTS FOR EL SALVADOR,' 83.1-2-83, FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF ARMS FLOWS TO THE GUERRILLAS. ~~(S NF)~~ ~~(S NF)~~)

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COMMUNICATIONS: SALVADORAN MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT AS A RESULT OF US ATTENTION. PRC-77 TACTICAL RADIOS NOW FORM THE BASIS OF A FORCE-WIDE MOBILE NETWORK, PROVIDING COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY BETWEEN COMMANDERS AND COMPANIES IN THE FIELD, CONTACT WITH AIRCRAFT FLYING IN SUPPORT OF GROUND OPERATIONS, AND SOME INTERFACE BETWEEN PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES AND REGULAR UNITS. SECURE TELEPHONE, TELETYPE, AND RADIO SYSTEMS CONNECT FIELD HEADQUARTERS WITH THE HIGH COMMAND. [REDACTED] OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE ARMED FORCES ARE STILL SHORT OF PRC-77 SETS, BUT THE PURCHASE OF 1,000 RADIOS FOR DELIVERY IN SPRING 1984 SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SOLVING TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS. TOO FEW COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS, BATTERY PROBLEMS, AND A GENERAL LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS; HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO RESULT IN INEFFICIENT USE OF UPGRADED EQUIPMENT.

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[REDACTED] POOR RADIO DISCIPLINE, FOR EXAMPLE, REGULARLY REVEALS ARMY MOVEMENTS TO THE ENEMY, [REDACTED] AND LOSS OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PRC-77 SETS HAS FACILITATED GUERRILLA INTERFERENCE IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS. IN RECOGNITION OF SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS, A NEW GENERAL STAFF DEPARTMENT WAS SET UP IN JANUARY 1984 TO TRY TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS PERFORMANCE. (S NF)

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AIRCRAFT AND AIR FORCE SUPPLIES: DELIVERY OF MORE THAN TWO DOZEN US PLANES AND HELICOPTERS IN 1982 TO SUPPLEMENT AN AGING FLEET OF ISRAELI-SUPPLIED FRENCH PLANES AND REPLACE LOSSES FROM THE ILOPANGO RAID IN JANUARY BROUGHT A STRONG NEW DIMENSION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR EFFORT. THE AIR FORCE WAS ABLE TO FLY COMBAT RUNS SHORTLY AFTER THE PLANES ARRIVED AND HAS LOST ONLY ONE JET FIGHTER AND THREE HELICOPTERS DURING OPERATIONS SINCE. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE STATISTICS ON BOMBING ACCURACY, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAYS THAT AIR FORCE OPERATIONS HAVE CAUSED CONCERN WITHIN THE FMLN. COMBAT COMMANDERS REGULARLY CALL FOR AIR SUPPORT, RELYING ON SMALL CESSNA 0-2S FOR TARGET IDENTIFICATION IN ADVANCE OF AIR OR ARTILLERY STRIKES; A-37 JETS FOR BOMBING OR STRAFING; HUGHES 500 HELICOPTERS WITH LONG LOITER TIME FOR SATURATING MINIGUN FIRE; OR UH-1H HELICOPTERS FOR DELIVERING RECONNAISSANCE TEAMS, PROVIDING LIGHT FIRE SUPPORT, DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO THE FIELD, AND EVACUATING WOUNDED. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] RESPONSE IS SOMETIMES SLOW DUE TO COMMAND AND CONTROL CONFUSIONS, LIMITED NIGHTTIME AND POOR WEATHER FLYING CAPABILITY, AND COMPETING MISSIONS. (S NF [REDACTED])

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AIR FORCE PERSONNEL HAVE TURNED IN AN EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE, HOWEVER, GIVEN EXTREMELY LIMITED RESOURCES. THE 15 UH-1H HELICOPTER PILOTS, LESS THAN HALF THE NUMBER EL SALVADOR SHOULD HAVE FOR AVAILABLE HELICOPTERS, BEAR THE BRUNT OF AIR OPERATIONS, OFTEN FLYING 75 HOURS IN SEVEN DAYS, [REDACTED] THE TREMENDOUS DEMAND FOR THE USE OF LIMITED AIRCRAFT TO RESUPPLY AMMUNITION AND FOOD TO TROOPS IN THE FIELD HAS MEANT THAT OTHER PRIORITY MISSIONS SUCH AS TROOP INSERTION AND MEDEVAC SUFFER. (S NF [REDACTED])

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BOATS AND NAVY SUPPLIES: THE SALVADORAN NAVY HAS SHOWN THE LEAST OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE BRANCHES. THE NAVY'S SIX NEW 21-FOOT PATROL BOATS--BRINGING ITS TOTAL INVENTORY TO ABOUT 26 SMALL CRAFT--ARE COMPLICATED TO MAINTAIN, HAVE HIGH FUEL CONSUMPTION, AND ARE OVERPOWERED FOR SALVADORAN NEEDS, ACCORDING TO A US NAVAL OBSERVER. DESPITE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL NAVAL COMMANDO UNIT EQUIPPED WITH 8 ZODIAC INFLATIBLE BOATS, THE NAVY HAS RARELY DEPLOYED THE UNIT ON RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS. OUTSIDE INTERESTS, INCLUDING SMUGGLING, RAKEOFFS FROM LOCAL FISHERMEN, AND

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THE COLLECTION OF HARBOR TAXES, HAVE DISTRACTED THE NAVY'S ATTENTION FROM THE WAR. ALTHOUGH EL SALVADOR HAS PARTICIPATED IN OCCASIONAL MANEUVERS WITH HONDURAS, PATROLLING OF THE GULF OF FONSECA HAS GENERALLY BEEN INADEQUATE, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] PATROL ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, SINCE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE NAVAL COMMANDER. (S NF)

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MUNITIONS AND EXPENDABLES: US AMMUNITION DELIVERIES ARE CRITICAL TO KEEPING SALVADORAN FORCES IN THE FIELD. DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES ACKNOWLEDGED EL SALVADOR'S DEPENDENCE IN THIS AREA WHEN HE TOLD A VISITING US SENATOR, ACCORDING [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] THAT TROOPS COULD NOT FIGHT THREE MONTHS WITHOUT US MUNITIONS SUPPORT. WITH NO MILITARY INDUSTRIES AND NO ALTERNATIVE FOREIGN SOURCES OF SUPPLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD TO USE ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF US MILITARY AID IN RECENT YEARS FOR ORDNANCE TO KEEP THE WAR GOING. (C NF)

EVEN SO, AMMUNITION SHORTAGES AFFECTING THE LEVEL OF COMBAT HAVE OCCURRED FROM TIME TO TIME. [REDACTED] SHORTAGES HAVE OCCURRED BECAUSE OF AID CEILINGS, THE DIFFICULTY OF ORDERING IN ADVANCE AND STOCKPILING UNDER THE IRREGULAR APPROPRIATIONS TIMETABLE, AND FLUCTUATIONS IN SALVADORAN TACTICAL ACTIVITY AND FIRE DISCIPLINE THAT HAVE MADE FORECASTING DIFFICULT. EL SALVADOR REQUIRED AN EMERGENCY SHIPMENT OF 5.56 AMMUNITION AT THE END OF 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER THE GOVERNMENT'S SUMMER OFFENSIVE AND THE FALL GUERRILLA RESURGENCE DEPLETED STOCKS MORE RAPIDLY THAN EXPECTED. (C NF)

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EVEN WHEN STOCKS ARE ON HAND, WORRY ABOUT FUTURE AVAILABILITY-- ESPECIALLY DURING US CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES OVER AID LEGISLATION--HAS CAUSED SALVADORAN COMMANDERS TO HOARD SUPPLIES AND REDUCE OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY. THE HIGH PROPORTION OF AID FUNDS GOING FOR MUNITIONS HAS REDUCED EL SALVADOR'S ABILITY TO MAKE LONGER-TERM INVESTMENTS IN MILITARY HARDWARE AND TRAINING. THE GROWING NEED FOR SPARE PARTS AS NEW EQUIPMENT AGES HAS ALSO BEGUN TO INCREASE THE PRESSURE TO USE MORE AID FUNDS FOR SHORT-TERM EXPENDABLES. (C NF)

TRANSPORTATION: GUERRILLA ATTACKS AGAINST EL SALVADOR'S TRANSPORT FACILITIES CONTINUE TO HINDER GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO MOVE SUPPLIES OVERLAND. THE INSURGENTS HAVE HIT EL SALVADOR'S BRIDGES MORE THAN 60 TIMES, BLOWING UP THE TWO MAJOR SPANS OVER THE LEMPA RIVER AND DESTROYING OR DAMAGING NUMEROUS OTHERS. HIGHWAYS AND RAIL LINES ARE VULNERABLE TO INTERDICTION. ONLY 8 LOCOMOTIVES ARE STILL OPERATIONAL OUT OF 28 IN JANUARY 1980 BECAUSE OF ATTACKS AND DERAILMENTS. THE GUERRILLAS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL STRETCHES OF MAJOR HIGHWAYS, AMBUSHING MILITARY CONVOYS, HOLDING UP AND DESTROYING CIVILIAN BUSES AND TRUCKS, AND TAXING LOCAL RESIDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE POLITICAL STRENGTH. ALMOST ALL SUPPLIES ARE STILL MOVED ON THE GROUND, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORCED TO DIVERT CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO REPAIR ROUTES, INSTALL BAILEY BRIDGES, AND TIGHTEN SECURITY FOR CONVOYS. IN ADDITION, THE MILITARY HAS IMPROVED SECURITY AT MOST MAJOR BRIDGES TO DETER INSURGENT ATTACKS.

(C NF)

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT FULLY USE ITS AIR TRANSPORT CAPACITY. EL SALVADOR HAS ABOUT 30 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, MOST OF WHICH CAN LAND ON SHORT, UNIMPROVED AIRSTRIPS, BUT THE [REDACTED] THAT THESE AIRCRAFT ARE UNDERUTILIZED BECAUSE OF PILOT SHORTAGES, SLOW

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MAINTENANCE, AND POOR SCHEDULING. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TAPPED THE ALMOST 20 COMMERCIAL PILOTS WHO ARE AVAILABLE TO FLY PART-TIME AND COULD RELIEVE THE OVERBURDENED AIR FORCE PILOTS OF SOME OF THEIR NON-COMBAT MISSIONS. SO FAR, AIR DELIVERY HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY SAFE, ALTHOUGH THE MINING OF A RUNWAY AT SAN MIGUEL IN EARLY 1984 MAY PRESAGE AN INCREASE IN THIS KIND OF HARASSMENT. (S NF [REDACTED])

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SUPPLY SYSTEM: EL SALVADOR'S SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS ONLY SLOWLY ADJUSTING TO WARTIME NEEDS. US ADVISERS REPORT PROGRESS IN FAMILIARIZING SALVADORAN STAFF OFFICERS WITH COMPLEX PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES, BUT ACKNOWLEDGE LITTLE HEADWAY IN MAKING THE TRADITIONAL SUPPLY-DRIVEN SYSTEM RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL COMBAT DEMANDS. THE LOGISTICS STAFF OFTEN HAS WITHHELD SUPPLIES FROM THE FIELD TO HEDGE AGAINST A FEARED DECLINE IN US AID, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] ROUTINE DELIVERIES ARE MADE IN EQUAL SHARES TO ALL MAJOR COMMANDS, BOTH TO AVOID OFFENDING POLITICALLY POWERFUL LOCAL COMMANDERS AND TO COMPENSATE FOR THE ABSENCE OF RATIONAL INVENTORY AND REQUISITION PROCEDURES. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE CENTRAL STAFF'S RELUCTANCE TO SET PRIORITIES AND CONCENTRATE RESOURCES HAS LED TO SEVERE FRUSTRATION ON THE PART OF COMBAT COMMANDERS IN THE MOST CONTESTED AREAS, ALTHOUGH IMPROVEMENTS ARE GRADUALLY OCCURRING. (S NF [REDACTED])

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TIGHT CENTRAL CONTROL OF SUPPLIES CLASHES WITH DECENTRALIZED OPERATIONAL PLANNING. THE LOGISTICS STAFF IS RELUCTANT TO LOSE LEVERAGE OVER LOCAL COMMANDERS BY STOCKPILING SUPPLIES IN FORWARD AREAS AND REQUIRES THAT EACH REQUEST FOR LOGISTICS SUPPORT BE PROCESSED THROUGH THE NATIONAL BUREAUCRACY. THE SYSTEM HAS ENCOURAGED MISREPORTING OF NEEDS IN ORDER FOR COMMANDERS TO HOARD SUPPLIES FOR PLANNED OPERATIONS. EVEN WITH SUCH INFORMAL STOCKPILING, COMBAT CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN CUT SHORT WHEN SUPPLIES RAN OUT. THE IMPROVED ABILITY OF SOME UNITS TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS LAST SUMMER--SOME STAYED IN THE FIELD LONGER THAN A MONTH--REFLECTED THE RESOURCEFULNESS OF INDIVIDUAL LOCAL COMMANDERS MORE THAN CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM, [REDACTED] (S NF)

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SO FAR, THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR EFFORT HAS FAILED TO STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC MILITARY INDUSTRIES OR ENCOURAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ADJUST FOR THE STRUGGLE. ALTHOUGH CAPITAL IS IN SHORT SUPPLY, THE CONTINUING ABSENCE OF AMMUNITION PLANTS SEEMS TO US A LAMENTABLE PRODUCTION WEAKNESS. IN ADDITION, DESPITE THE NEED FOR RELATIVELY CHEAP PRE-PACKAGED COMBAT RATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRIVATE SALVADORAN FIRMS HAVE REPEATEDLY FOUNDERED. COMBAT COMMANDERS STILL HAVE TO PURCHASE LARGE QUANTITIES OF FOOD THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS--OFTEN COMPROMISING OPERATIONAL SECURITY--AND DELIVER BULKY ITEMS TO THE FIELD DESPITE POOR TRANSPORT. FURTHERMORE, LACK OF UNIFORMS AND OTHER NON-WEAPON ITEMS THAT ARE TOO EXPENSIVE TO IMPORT HAS LIMITED THE NUMBER OF RECRUITS LOCAL COMMANDERS CAN INDUCT AND HAS CAUSED MORALE PROBLEMS, THE [REDACTED] (C NF)

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MAINTENANCE: THE MILITARY'S EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE SYSTEM, TRADITIONALLY CHARACTERIZED BY AD HOC REPAIRS AND EXTENSIVE CANNIBALIZATION, HAS IMPROVED IN THOSE SECTORS RECEIVING US ASSISTANCE. STANDARDIZATION OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT IN GENERAL HAS FACILITATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF STOCKS OF SPARE PARTS AT CENTRAL DEPOTS, WE BELIEVE, ALTHOUGH MANY SHORTAGES STILL EXIST. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] SUGGESTS THAT AIRCRAFT AND BOAT MAINTENANCE ARE BECOMING ADEQUATE. IMPROVED HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE HAS RAISED THE OPERATIONAL READINESS RATE FOR UH-1H HELICOPTERS FROM ABOUT 30 PERCENT IN 1982

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TO BETTER THAN 50 PERCENT AT PRESENT, [REDACTED] (b)(1)
 [REDACTED] WHILE THE AVAILABILITY OF ONLY ABOUT 12 UH-1H HELICOPTERS (b)(3) NatSecAct
 OUT OF 19 FRUSTRATES COMBAT PLANNERS, [REDACTED] SAY THAT (b)(1)
 THE RATE IS NOT UNREASONABLE CONSIDERING THE HEAVY COMBAT USE OF THE (b)(3) NatSecAct
 AIRCRAFT. (S NF [REDACTED])

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THE ARMED FORCES HAVE MADE LESS PROGRESS IN VEHICLE MAINTENANCE
 AND SMALL ARMS REPAIR. HAVING SUBSTITUTED NEW US WEAPONS FOR OLDER
 EUROPEAN MODELS IN THE REGULAR FORCES, THE COUNTRY HAS A LARGE
 NUMBER OF ARMS THAT COULD BE RECONDITIONED AND ISSUED TO CIVIL
 DEFENSE UNITS, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] AID...
 REGULATIONS LIMIT US PARTICIPATION IN THIS ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, AND (b)(1)
 THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN LITTLE INITIATIVE. AS A RESULT, (b)(3) NatSecAct
 ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF CIVIL DEFENSE PERSONNEL--OFTEN THE FIRST
 LINE OF DEFENSE IN OUTLYING VILLAGES--ARE ARMED WITH ANYTHING MORE
 THAN MACHETES. (S NF [REDACTED])

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STRUCTURE

GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION: EL SALVADOR HAS GEOGRAPHICALLY
 RESHAPED ITS MILITARY STRUCTURE IN RECENT YEARS TO FACE THE
 GUERRILLA THREAT. THE GOVERNMENT DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF MILITARY
 ZONES TO SIX BY 1982. (SEE FIGURE 4) IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, CONTROL
 CONTINUED TO REST WITH THE 14 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS, WHO PREFERRED
 DIRECT LINKS WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. THE NEED TO COORDINATE
 MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS AGAINST AN INCREASINGLY CAPABLE ENEMY LED TO
 EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE THEATER COMMAND CONCEPT IN LATE 1982.
 ALTHOUGH OPERATIONALLY SOUND, TEMPORARY COMMANDS CONTINUED TO
 FOUNDER ON STAFF SHORTAGES AND LOCAL JEALOUSIES OVER THE CONTROL OF
 FORCES. IN THE NOVEMBER 1983 ORGANIZATIONAL SHAKEUP, THE HIGH
 COMMAND MOVED SIGNIFICANTLY CLOSER TO ALIGNING THE FORMAL ARMY
 STRUCTURE WITH OPERATIONAL REALITIES BY SHIFTING THE BOUNDARIES OF
 MILITARY ZONES TO COINCIDE ROUGHLY WITH ENEMY FRONTS. (C NF)

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED FORCES IN THE
 MOST CONTESTED AREAS. INITIALLY, THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY BORROWING
 UNITS FROM THE LESS ACTIVE DEPARTMENTS. COLONEL FLORES, THEN
 COMMANDER OF THE THIRD BRIGADE, EXPRESSED TYPICAL FRUSTRATION WITH
 THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, WHEN HE COMPLAINED TO THE [REDACTED] (b)(1)
 IN FEBRUARY 1982 THAT HE COULD NOT SECURE HIS OWN MILITARY ZONE (b)(3) NatSecAct
 AROUND SAN MIGUEL WHILE HIS TROOPS WERE OFF PATROLLING IN USULUTAN,
 GUARDING THE CUSCATLAN BRIDGE, RELIEVING THE TOWN OF CORINTO IN
 MORAZAN, AND REGAINING CONTROL OF A HIGHWAY IN SAN VICENTE. THE
 EXPANSION OF STRATEGIC RESERVE FORCES IN INTERVENING YEARS HAS
 ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT GENERALLY TO FOCUS DEPLOYMENTS AGAINST
 GUERRILLA CONCENTRATIONS WITHOUT LEAVING LESS CONTESTED AREAS OF THE
 COUNTRY UNPROTECTED (SEE FIGURE 1). (C NF)

SHIFT TO LIGHT BATTALIONS: IN MARCH 1983 THE DEFENSE MINISTER
 ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR THE CONVERSION OF LOCAL GARRISON UNITS TO LIGHT
 BATTALIONS. DESIGNED TO STANDARDIZE UNIT CONFIGURATION, PROVIDE A
 STRUCTURE FOR FURTHER FORCE EXPANSION, AND FACILITATE MORE
 AGGRESSIVE SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS, THE PLAN ENVISAGED THE CREATION OF
 36 350-MAN BATTALIONS COUNTRYWIDE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, MAINLY BY
 COMBINING EXISTING INFANTRY COMPANIES AND ADDING STAFFS AND COMBAT
 SUPPORT UNITS. THE LIGHT BATTALIONS WERE SCHEDULED TO ALTERNATE
 STATIC DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES WITH AGGRESSIVE PATROLLING. (C NF)

IN THE WAKE OF A SERIES OF GUERRILLA VICTORIES LAST FALL, IN
 WHICH SEVERAL LIGHT BATTALIONS WERE MAULED BY THE INSURGENTS, SENIOR

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COMMANDERS IN THE EAST PROPOSED THAT THE 350-MAN BATTALION CONCEPT BE SCRAPPED IN FAVOR OF BATTALIONS HAVING A STRENGTH OF NEARLY 600 TROOPS. THEY ARGUED, ACCORDING TO ATTACHE REPORTS, THAT THE LIGHTER BATTALIONS WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH OR WELL-TRAINED ENOUGH TO ENGAGE IN OPERATIONS. (C NF)

BY MID-FEBRUARY, [REDACTED] THE GENERAL STAFF (b)(1)
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HAD APPROVED THE REORGANIZATION OF THE LIGHT BATTALIONS INTO COUNTERINSURGENCY BATTALIONS OF OVER 400 PERSONNEL AUGMENTED IN MANY INSTANCES BY A 170-MAN COMBAT SUPPORT COMPANY. IN THE EAST, WHERE THE FIGHTING HAS BEEN HEAVIEST, THE ARMY COMMANDER IS REORGANIZING INTO 600-MAN BATTALIONS. THE US EMBASSY REPORTED RECENTLY THAT THE REVAMPING WAS PROCEEDING. (S NF)

COMMAND AND CONTROL: THE CLARIFICATION OF COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS HAS BARELY KEPT PACE WITH FORCE DEVELOPMENT. WITH NEW UNITS ADDED, MORE THAN 30 MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS BECAME SUBORDINATE TO THE ARMED FORCES STAFF. THIS IMPOSSIBLY WIDE SPAN OF CONTROL MADE THE GENERAL STAFF WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE IN MANAGING THE WAR EFFORT. WITH STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT FROM US ADVISERS, THE SALVADORAN CHAIN OF COMMAND HAS BEEN EVOLVING TOWARD A SYSTEM OF INTERMEDIATE LEVELS OF AUTHORITY. IN ANNOUNCING THE NOVEMBER REALIGNMENT OF MILITARY ZONES, FOR EXAMPLE, GENERAL VIDES REMINDED SUBORDINATE UNITS TO REPORT THROUGH BRIGADE CHANNELS AT ZONE HEADQUARTERS, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY REPORTING. THE CONVERSION TO SMALLER LOCAL-FORCE BATTALIONS AND GRADUAL DOWN-GRADING OF COMMAND SLOTS BECAUSE OF OFFICER SHORTAGES ARE DIFFUSING THE INDEPENDENT POWER OF LOCAL COMMANDERS, ENCOURAGING RELIANCE ON THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO BEEN PARCELLING OUT HELICOPTER AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT TO REGIONAL COMMANDS ON AN INFORMAL BASIS, ALTHOUGH STOPPING SHORT OF FORMAL REASSIGNMENT. STAFFING AT INTERMEDIATE LEVELS HAS ALSO INCREASED, STRENGTHENING THE ABILITY OF BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS TO ACT AS TWO-WAY CONDUITS FOR INFORMATION BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMAND AND FIELD UNITS. (C NF)

THE NEW PATTERN, HOWEVER, CANNOT YET BE CONSIDERED AN INSTITUTIONAL NORM. THE ELITE IR BATTALIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, CONTINUE TO RESIST OPERATIONAL CONTROL BY LOCAL COMMANDERS. SO FAR, A HIERARCHICAL CHAIN OF COMMAND REPORTEDLY HAS TAKEN FIRMEST ROOT IN THOSE AREAS SUCH AS THE 3RD MILITARY ZONE IN THE EAST WHERE THE BRIGADE COMMANDER HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXERT AUTHORITY BY THE SHEER FORCE OF HIS PERSONALITY AND PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION. (C NF)

INTERSERVICE COORDINATION: SOME CONTINUED OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE AIR FORCE, NAVY, AND PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES ALSO HANDICAPS THE WAR EFFORT. BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRUGGLE, THE SALVADORAN ARMY HAS RECEIVED THE LION'S SHARE OF US ASSISTANCE, INCREASING THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THAT SERVICE AND OTHER FIGHTING ELEMENTS. AIR FORCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAR HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, BUT HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING COORDINATION IS STILL UNEVEN. [REDACTED] (b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct
REQUESTS FOR COMBAT SUPPORT IN THE PAST TENDED TO COME STRAIGHT TO THE AIR FORCE FROM FIELD COMMANDERS, OFTEN OVER COMMERCIAL TELEPHONE LINES. WITH LITTLE DIRECTION FROM THE GENERAL STAFF, AIR FORCE DUTY OFFICERS MADE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ON MISSION PRIORITIES. CHANGES IN GENERAL STAFF PROCEDURES ARE IMPROVING COORDINATION. THE NAVY'S CAPABILITIES REMAIN SO POOR THAT EVEN WHEN INVOLVED IN OPERATIONAL PLANNING--SUCH AS DURING THE JUCUARAN OPERATIONS IN SEPTEMBER 1983-- IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CLOSE OFF THE ENEMY'S SEA ROUTES OF ESCAPE. (C NF)

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THE INTEGRATION OF THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY INTO THE PLANNING PROCESS IMPROVED IN NOVEMBER 1983 WITH THE INCLUSION OF SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES AT MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL STAFF. NEITHER THE POWERFUL CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE, COLONEL BUSTILLO, NOR A HIGH-LEVEL NAVAL OFFICER ARE PART OF THE STRENGTHENED STAFF ORGANIZATION, HOWEVER, AND IMPROVEMENT IN DAY-TO-DAY COORDINATION HAS BEEN SLOW. DESPITE HEAVY INVOLVEMENT IN THE URBAN AND RURAL GROUND WAR, THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES REMAIN OUTSIDE REGULAR PLANNING CHANNELS. SHUNTED ASIDE FROM THE US ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE NATIONAL GUARD, NATIONAL POLICE AND TREASURY POLICE HAVE NEITHER CONSOLIDATED THEIR FORCES NOR REALIGNED THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH ARMY THEATERS TO REINFORCE THE NATIONAL WAR EFFORT. (C NF)

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

STRATEGIC PLANNING: EL SALVADOR HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN ADOPTING AND STICKING WITH A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DEFEATING THE INSURGENTS. HAVING NEVER FOUGHT A COUNTERINSURGENCY, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO ESTABLISHED DOCTRINE TO GUIDE ITS INITIAL RESPONSE. SOME OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS DEMONSTRATED ENERGY AND RESOURCEFULNESS, BUT MOST RESORTED TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND ENGAGING IN OCCASIONAL UNSUCCESSFUL SWEEP OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO OUR ANALYSIS. THIS PIECEMEAL APPROACH RESULTED IN LITTLE OVERALL PROGRESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD, AND DEFENSE LEADERS BEGAN TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES WITH US ADVISERS BY EARLY 1983. (C NF)

THE NATIONAL PLAN THAT EMERGED CALLED FOR THE CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES TO SCORE DECISIVE GAINS IN ONE AREA AT A TIME, THE USE OF AGGRESSIVE SMALL UNIT TACTICS TO KEEP THE ENEMY OFF BALANCE, THE INTEGRATION OF CIVIC ACTION AND ECONOMIC RESTORATION WITH THE MILITARY EFFORT, AND THE EXPANSION OF CIVIL DEFENSE FORCES TO CONSOLIDATE COMBAT GAINS. IMPLEMENTED FIRST IN SAN VICENTE, A WELL POPULATED DEPARTMENT IN THE CENTER OF THE COUNTRY WHERE GUERRILLAS HAD SUCCESSFULLY DISRUPTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, THE NATIONAL PLAN BEGAN WITH GREAT ACCLAIM IN JUNE 1983 AND ACCELERATED IN JULY AS PARALLEL BUT SMALLER OPERATIONS WERE INITIATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. DESPITE MUCH PLANNING AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM THE US, HOWEVER, MOMENTUM SAGGED BY FALL. THE EXPERIMENT IN OUR VIEW PROVED TOO AMBITIOUS FOR THE WELL-MEANING BUT STILL INEXPERIENCED SALVADORAN HIGH COMMAND. THE CAMPAIGN FINALLY MOVED ON TO USULUTAN IN JANUARY 1984, BUT LARGELY WITHOUT ITS ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND CIVIL DEFENSE COMPONENTS. (S N [redacted])

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TACTICAL COORDINATION: IN THE ABSENCE OF AN OVERALL STRATEGY, DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS ARE DETERMINED BY A CONSTANTLY SHIFTING MIX OF NATIONAL DIRECTIVES AND LOCAL INITIATIVES. THE HIGH COMMAND CONTROLS THE PURSE STRINGS, LOGISTICS SUPPORT, AND THE FLOW OF INTELLIGENCE. IT ALSO REVIEWS BATTLEFIELD PLANS AND PERFORMANCE AND ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS, BUT LESS OFTEN ORDERS. IN SEPTEMBER 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, DEFENSE LEADERS CLARIFIED THE PROCEDURES FOR USE OF CLOSE AIR SUPPORT IN POPULATED AREAS FOLLOWING CIVILIAN DEATHS IN TENANCINGO, AND A NOVEMBER DIRECTIVE REVIEWED THE STEPS FOR AVOIDING AMBUSHES. ON THE OTHER HAND, LOCAL COMMANDERS DETERMINE THE SIZE, TIMING, TARGETS, AND TACTICS FOR FIELD OPERATIONS. IN A TYPICAL OPERATION, FOR EXAMPLE, COLONEL FLORES MOUNTED A THREE-BATTALION ATTACK AGAINST GUERRILLA BASES NEAR JUCUARAN IN SOUTHERN USULUTAN IN AUGUST 1983 WITH NO HELP FROM THE GENERAL STAFF IN EITHER PLANNING OR EXECUTION, ACCORDING TO [redacted] (C NPT)

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THE SPLIT IN DECISIONMAKING AUTHORITY HAS HINDERED COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS BY ENCOURAGING LOCAL INITIATIVES WHILE DENYING COMMANDERS THE MEANS OF CONSOLIDATING THEIR GAINS. TENSIONS RUN HIGH ON BOTH SIDES. THE HIGH COMMAND CHARGES THAT FIELD OFFICERS FAIL TO NOTIFY THEM OF PENDING OPERATIONS AND THEN COMPLAIN WHEN INTELLIGENCE, LOGISTICS, AND AIR AND NAVY SUPPORT IS NOT AVAILABLE ON A TIMELY BASIS. COMBAT COMMANDERS BLAME THE COMMAND FOR SECURITY LEAKS THAT COMPROMISE OPERATIONAL PLANS, AND NEGLIGENCE IN DENYING RESOURCES TO RESCUE UNITS UNDER ATTACK OR TO SUSTAIN FIELD ACTIONS.

~~(S NF)~~

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COUNTERINSURGENT TACTICS: OVER TIME THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE AND MORE WILLING TO ADOPT SMALL-UNIT TACTICS AND OCCASIONAL NIGHT OPERATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL, MANY OFFICERS REMAIN RELUCTANT TO FULLY EMPLOY SUCH TACTICS. COLONEL BUSTILLO, THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER AND ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST DEDICATED LEADERS, HAS BERATED FELLOW OFFICERS FOR NOT UNDERSTANDING THAT THE URGENCY OF THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE DEMANDS FIELD OPERATIONS 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. ALTHOUGH UP TO 70 PERCENT OF SALVADORAN FORCES REMAINED IN THE FIELD DURING THE SUMMER OF 1983 ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] THIS FIGURE DECLINED BY FALL. A LARGE NUMBER OF UNITS WAS ONCE AGAIN OPERATING CONSTANTLY IN THE SPRING OF 1984, HOWEVER, TO KEEP THE GUERRILLAS OFF BALANCE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. ~~(S NF)~~ [REDACTED]

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VARIOUS COMMANDERS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT SHORTAGES OF OFFICERS AND TROOPS AND INADEQUATE RADIOS AND HELICOPTERS HAVE MADE THEM RELUCTANT TO MOVE OUT OF GARRISONS WITH SMALLER THAN COMPANY-SIZE UNITS EVEN IN DAYTIME, [REDACTED] ALTHOUGH RESOURCE SHORTAGES ARE A REALITY, IT APPEARS TO US THAT IN MANY CASES OFFICERS HAVE USED THEM AS A CRUTCH FOR THEIR TRADITIONAL DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY. MANPOWER, EQUIPMENT, AND TRAINING IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 1981 HAVE GREATLY STRENGTHENED THE OFFENSIVE POTENTIAL OF THE ARMED FORCES, WE BELIEVE. IN OUR VIEW, LACK OF STRONGER DIRECTION FROM COMMAND AUTHORITIES, LIMITATIONS IN THE SIZE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM; AND THE INGRAINED RELUCTANCE OF MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICERS TO RISK EXPERIMENTATION WITH NEW TACTICS STILL INHIBIT MORE EFFECTIVE MILITARY PERFORMANCE. ~~(S NF)~~ [REDACTED]

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INADEQUATE MOBILITY HAS ALSO REDUCED SOME OF THE TACTICAL CHOICES OPEN TO FIELD COMMANDERS. EVEN THE IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALIONS CANNOT RESPOND ON SHORT NOTICE. NOT ONLY IS THE NUMBER OF TRUCKS INADEQUATE IN THE FIELD, BUT THE HIGH RISK OF AMBUSH DISCOURAGES GROUND TRANSPORT ALTOGETHER. ALTHOUGH GUERRILLA AMBUSH TACTICS HAVE BECOME WELL KNOWN, SALVADORAN TROOPS CONTINUE TO IGNORE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. IN APRIL 1983, AN 86-MAN UNIT FROM THE ELITE BELLOSO BATTALION, ON ITS WAY TO REINFORCE A TOWN UNDER ATTACK, TRAVELLED DOWN A ROAD WITH NO SCOUTS OR FLANK GUARD, FELL INTO A TRAP, AND LOST ALMOST THE ENTIRE UNIT. IN NOVEMBER, AN ARMY UNIT MADE SEVEN FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO TEJUTEPEQUE DOWN A MAIN ROAD WITHOUT ELIMINATING OR CIRCLING AROUND GUERRILLAS AT KNOWN AMBUSH POINTS. ~~(C NF)~~

WITH ONLY ABOUT 12 HELICOPTERS OPERATIONAL AT ONE TIME, COMMANDERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO AIRLIFT LARGE NUMBERS OF GROUND TROOPS ON A REGULAR BASIS. COLONEL BUSTILLO EXPLAINED TO A US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LAST SEPTEMBER THAT PRIORITY MISSIONS SUCH

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AS COMBAT RESUPPLY LEAVE FEW HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE FOR TROOP TRANSPORT. BECAUSE OF THIS, FORCES HAVE ON MANY OCCASIONS LOST THE ELEMENT OF TACTICAL SURPRISE, FAILED TO CUT OFF RETREATING INSURGENT UNITS, AND HAD TO PULL TROOPS BACK FROM THREATENED FORWARD POSITIONS BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE REINFORCED IN TIME. THE ARCE BATTALION TOOK 48 HOURS TO GET TROOPS INTO POSITION FOR AN OPERATION IN MORAZAN IN NOVEMBER 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, GIVING ENEMY FORCES TIME TO SLIP AWAY. IN DECEMBER, AFTER THE LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE, WE BEGAN TO SEE TROOP TRANSPORT RECEIVE HIGHER PRIORITY--EIGHT UH-1H HELICOPTERS LIFTED TROOPS INTO ACTION NEAR CACAHUATIQUE--BUT THE SMALL NUMBER OF HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE STILL PRECLUDES REGULAR AIRLIFT OPERATIONS.

(C NF)

DESPITE CONTINUING RESOURCE SHORTAGES, SEVERAL OUTSTANDING SALVADORAN COMMANDERS HAVE PROVEN TOUGH AND RESOURCEFUL, ACCORDING TO OUR ANALYSIS, PROVIDING MODELS OF HOW THE WAR SHOULD BE FOUGHT. IN 1982, LT. COLONEL OCHOA IN CABANAS WAS ALREADY SENDING OUT 11-MAN PATROLS AT NIGHT, AND COMBINING HIS MILITARY ACTIONS WITH A STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM. IN A MAJOR OPERATION IN MORAZAN IN EARLY 1983, COLONEL FLORES TRIED ENCIRCLEMENT TACTICS AND LEAVING SOME FORCES BEHIND TO SECURE GAINS AFTER THE PRIMARY ATTACK WAS ACCOMPLISHED INSTEAD OF LARGE SWEEPS TOWARD A STATIC BLOCKING FORCE. LT. COLONEL CRUZ PERIODICALLY SENDS COMPANIES NORTH OF THE TOROLA RIVER IN MORAZAN TO FLUSH OUT INSURGENT UNITS, THEN PULLS HIS TROOPS BACK AND CALLS IN PRE-PLANNED AIR STRIKES, [REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] (S NF)

INTELLIGENCE: STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION HAS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. WITH US ASSISTANCE, A SALVADORAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAS SET UP IN EARLY 1982 AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE COURSES HAVE BETTER PREPARED OFFICERS AND SENIOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL FOR INTELLIGENCE STAFF POSITIONS AT ALL LEVELS IN THE ARMED FORCES. BY THE END OF 1983, ALMOST ALL BRIGADES AND MAJOR BATTALIONS HAD FULL TIME INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS, IN CONTRAST TO ONLY PART-TIME POSITIONS AT THIS LEVEL AT THE END OF 1981. WITH US URGING, ARMY UNITS HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE CAPTURE AND INTERROGATION OF GUERRILLAS, ALTHOUGH FEW MILITARY COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH EXTENSIVE INFORMANT NETWORKS OWING TO INSUFFICIENT FUNDS, ACCORDING TO A [REDACTED] (S NF)

[REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

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(b)(3) NatSecAct

A LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY--DIVIDED INTO 18 SIX-MAN TEAMS--RECEIVED INTENSIVE US TRAINING IN PANAMA AND HAS UNDERTAKEN DANGEROUS BUT PRODUCTIVE MISSIONS INTO ENEMY CONTROLLED TERRITORY, PINPOINTING TARGETS FOR SUBSEQUENT AIR, ARTILLERY, AND GROUND FORCE STRIKES, THE [REDACTED]. A [REDACTED] REPORTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT RECONNAISSANCE UNITS DISCOVERED AND DESTROYED AN INSURGENT CAMP AT THE MOUTH OF THE LEMPA RIVER IN APRIL 1984. SALVADORAN OBSERVER AIRCRAFT HAVE INCREASED THE ARMY'S VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY, WHILE US AIRCRAFT PROVIDE PHOTOGRAPHIC AND SIGNALS INTERCEPT SUPPORT. EL SALVADOR'S OWN TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES REMAIN POOR, HOWEVER. (S NF) [REDACTED]

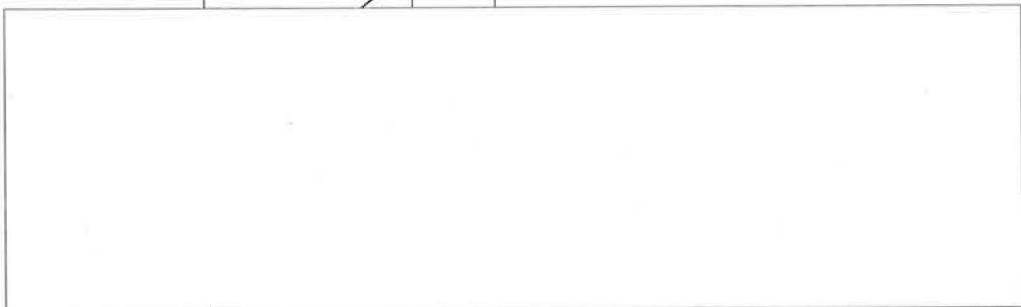
(b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct
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(b)(3) NatSecAct

(b)(3) NatSecAct

THE ARMED FORCES' ABILITY TO USE INTELLIGENCE HAS NOT KEPT PACE WITH COLLECTION, HOWEVER. POOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GENERAL STAFF AND FIELD COMMANDS HAS PROVEN A MAJOR LIABILITY IN THE DISSEMINATION OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INFORMATION. DESPITE THE POSSIBILITY OF UNDERMINING THE GENERAL STAFF, US PERSONNEL HAVE ON OCCASION FELT COMPELLED TO DELIVER DATA DIRECTLY TO FIELD COMMANDERS WHEN STAFF BOTTLENECKS HAVE PREVENTED OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE FROM

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GETTING TO THE FIELD. [REDACTED] HAVE POINTED- (b)(1)
 OUT THAT MOST OF THE TIME-SENSITIVE TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE COMES IN (b)(3) NatSecAct
 AT NIGHT WHEN SALVADORAN STAFF AND TROOPS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO
 RESPOND. ALL-SOURCE TACTICAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING PACKAGES FROM
 WASHINGTON ORIGINALLY WERE NOT TIMELY; THEY TOOK SEVERAL WEEKS TO
 PREPARE, NEEDED UPDATING IN THE COUNTRY, AND WERE TOO COMPLICATED (b)(1)
 FOR LOCAL COMMANDERS TO USE, IN THE OPINION OF KNOWLEDGEABLE [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct
 [REDACTED] MODIFICATIONS IN THE PACKAGES (b)(1)
 ARE IMPROVING THEIR USEFULNESS FOR SALVADORAN OPERATIONS. (b)(3) NatSecAct
 INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMMANDERS AND PILOTS IN SOME CASES HAVE BEEN
 OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR ABILITIES AND HAVE FAILED TO HEED
 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. ALTHOUGH COMMANDERS
 ARE PAYING INCREASING ATTENTION TO HUMAN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE IN
 THEIR IMMEDIATE AREAS, [REDACTED] (b)(1)
 CHANNELS STILL DO NOT FUNCTION SMOOTHLY FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF (b)(3) NatSecAct
 LOCAL INFORMATION TO THE HIGH COMMAND FOR ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION
 ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. (S NF [REDACTED]) (b)(3) NatSecAct



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[REDACTED] (b)(1)
 STAFF 130118Z DIRECTOR 977316 (b)(3) NatSecAct
 TO: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (b)(1)
 (b)(3) NatSecAct
 FOR AMBASSADOR PICKERING. (b)(1)
 (b)(3) NatSecAct (b)(1)
 SUBJECT: DRAFT [REDACTED] PAPER ON SALVADORAN MILITARY. (b)(3) NatSecAct

TEXT:
 1. EQUIPMENT FOR THE RAPIDLY EXPANDING FORCE THAN TO SIGN UP RECRUITS.
 SUCH SUPPORT COSTS HAVE PLACED AN ENORMOUS BURDEN ON ALREADY (b)(1)
 STRAINED GOVERNMENT RESOURCES. [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct
 [REDACTED] THAT THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT ENCOUNTERED SERIOUS
 DIFFICULTIES MEETING ITS 1983 MILITARY PAYROLL. FOREIGN ECONOMIC
 AID HAS RELIEVED SOME OF EL SALVADOR'S FISCAL PRESSURES AND MILITARY
 AID CAN PROVIDE HARDWARE AND TRAINING, BUT THE UNITED STATES IS
 LEGALLY PREVENTED FROM OFFERING DIRECT BUDGET SUPPORT. (C NF)

TROOP QUALITY

US TRAINING PROGRAM: THE SALVADORAN ARMY, AIR FORCE, AND NAVY
 HAVE RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING ASSISTANCE, MAINLY FROM THE
 UNITED STATES, IN RECENT YEARS. AT THE OUTSET, THE UNITED STATES
 FACED THE DAUNTING TASK OF CONVERTING EL SALVADOR'S STANDING
 CONVENTIONAL ARMY, WITH LITTLE FIELD EXPERIENCE, INTO AN ACTIVE
 COUNTERINSURGENCY FORCE. FORCE EXPANSION, RAPID TURNOVER IN

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PERSONNEL, AND THE FIELDING OF NEW EQUIPMENT SYSTEMS SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED TO TRAINING REQUIREMENTS. DESPITE LIMITED FUNDS AND RIGID PERSONNEL QUOTAS, US TRAINERS HAD TAUGHT CRITICAL SKILLS TO ABOUT 14,000 OFFICERS AND TROOPS BY EARLY 1984. US EFFORTS WERE SUPPLEMENTED BY A 15-MAN VENEZUELAN TEAM THAT TRAINED TWO LIGHT BATTALIONS IN 1982 AND BY OTHERS, SUCH AS ARGENTINA, THAT OFFERED SPECIAL COURSES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES TO SMALL GROUPS. (C NF)

IN SPECIFIC AREAS, ENHANCED TRAINING HAS MADE A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN THE CAPABILITIES OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES. THE IR BATTALIONS AND THE RECONNAISSANCE TEAMS TRAINED IN PANAMA HAVE EARNED CONSIDERABLE RESPECT FROM THE GUERRILLAS, ACCORDING TO

[REDACTED] UPGRADING OF THE AIR FORCE HAS ALSO BROUGHT THAT SERVICE FULLY INTO THE COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME OF THE LIGHT BATTALIONS, EVEN THOSE TRAINED BY THE US, HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING, OFTEN AS A RESULT OF WEAK LEADERSHIP AND THE LOW LEVEL OF SKILLS ACQUIRED DURING TRAINING. (IN AN EFFORT TO CORRECT THESE WEAKNESSES, TRAINING FOR THE LIGHT BATTALIONS WAS INCREASED FROM FIVE TO EIGHT WEEKS IN EARLY 1984.) (S NF [REDACTED])

(b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct

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THE OVERALL IMPACT OF US TRAINING IS LIMITED, HAVING REACHED ONLY ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE STANDING FORCE. OF THE APPROXIMATELY 14,000 US-TRAINED PERSONNEL, WE ESTIMATE THAT ONLY 7,000--OUT OF A TOTAL ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE STRENGTH OF 28,300--ARE STILL ON ACTIVE DUTY, (THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON THE BEST ESTIMATE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL IN 1983 THAT 50 PERCENT OF US-TRAINED TROOPS REMAINED ON ACTIVE DUTY. (C NF)) ALTHOUGH SOME HAVE JOINED PUBLIC SECURITY UNITS AFTER RELEASE. IN ADDITION, INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVE TECHNICAL TRAINING OFTEN HAVE REJOINED UNITS UNABLE OR DISINCLINED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW SKILLS. EVEN UNITS THAT TRAIN TOGETHER SPEND ONLY A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD UNDER US SUPERVISION, NOT ENOUGH TIME TO GUARANTEE RESULTS. FURTHERMORE, THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES, WHICH CONSTITUTE MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH OF THE SALVADORAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT AND PLAY A SIGNIFICANT COMBAT ROLE, RECEIVE NO ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF US AID RESTRICTIONS. (C NF)

SALVADORAN TRAINING ROLE: SALVADORAN LEADERS HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN FULLY SUPPORTIVE OF US TRAINING PROGRAMS. THE HIGH COMMAND HAS PULLED UNITS OUT OF TRAINING FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO

[REDACTED] AND IS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT OUT-OF-COUNTRY PROGRAMS BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGH PRICE AND INCONVENIENCE, DESPITE THE ADVANTAGES OF UNINTERRUPTED TRAINING. US TRAINERS ALSO REPORT ONLY SLOW PROGRESS IN GETTING LEADERS TO TRAIN ALONGSIDE THEIR TROOPS; IN SOME CASES OFFICER RELUCTANCE HAS REFLECTED SENSITIVITY OVER ACCEPTING TRAINING FROM US NON-COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION, SOME COURSES HAVE BEEN SHORTENED BECAUSE OF TRAINING BACKLOGS AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS. THE ARCE IR BATTALION, FOR EXAMPLE, RECEIVED ONLY SIX WEEKS OF TRAINING IN MID 1983--IN CONTRAST TO THE BELLOSO'S SCHEDULED 18 WEEKS IN MID 1982--IN ORDER TO HAVE IT RETURN FROM HONDURAS IN TIME FOR THE THEN-EXPECTED FALL ELECTIONS. (C NF)

(b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct

SALVADORAN TRAINING EFFORTS, MOREOVER, HAVE NOT COMPLEMENTED US PROGRAMS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DRAGGED ITS FEET, IN OUR VIEW, ON THE STEPS NEEDED TO REESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM AFTER THE ORIGINAL TRAINING STRUCTURE WAS DISMANTLED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMBAT PERSONNEL. SOME MILITARY SCHOOLS, SUCH AS THE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL AND THE AVIATION SCHOOL, HAVE REAPPEARED, BUT PRIMARILY DUE TO US PRODDING, ACCORDING TO

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(b)(3) NatSecAct
(b)(1)

[REDACTED] ARMY-BASIC TRAINING LARGELY REMAINS DECENTRALIZED

(b)(3) NatSecAct

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AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL, WHERE, DEPENDING ON THE APPROACH OF THE LOCAL COMMANDER, RECRUITS SOMETIMES RECEIVE ONLY A FEW WEEKS OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING BEFORE BEING SENT INTO COMBAT. US TEAMS, EXPECTING TO UPGRADE EXPERIENCED UNITS, OFTEN END UP PROVIDING BASIC WEAPONS FAMILIARIZATION AND DRILL INSTRUCTION TO NOVICES. (C NF)

GOVERNMENT PROMISES TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL MILITARY TRAINING CENTER ARE ONLY NOW YIELDING RESULTS. AT THE END OF 1983, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE BEGAN TO STAFF A TRAINING CENTER AT A FACILITY USED BY US ADVISERS IN LA UNION. IT HAS INITIALLY FOCUSED ON REFRESHER COURSES FOR UNITS AS WELL AS SOME BASIC TRAINING FOR RECRUITS, BUT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE CENTER IS OPERATING FULLY. SALVADORAN TRAINERS WORK ALONGSIDE MOST US TEAMS, AND THE MILITARY HAS SHOWN SOME INITIATIVE IN FIELDING TWO OF ITS OWN MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS TO HELP WITH THE CONVERSION OF LARGE GROUND UNITS TO LIGHT BATTALIONS, BUT THE OVERALL SALVADORAN TRAINING PROGRAM IS SMALL AND POORLY ORGANIZED. (C NF)

LOYALTY AND MORALE: OVERALL ARMED FORCES LOYALTY IS NOT SERIOUSLY IN QUESTION AND THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE ABLE TO PUT SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD. FEW TROOPS HAVE GONE OVER TO THE ENEMY AND SOME UNITS HAVE SHOWN OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM AND BRAVERY. DESERTION RATES RAN 1-2 PERCENT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1983, WHICH IS NOT CONSIDERED UNUSUAL UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS, ACCORDING TO ATTACHE REPORTING. ALTHOUGH LOSSES FROM ORDINARY UNITS ARE PROBABLY GREATER THAN FROM IR BATTALIONS, DESERTION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A REAL PROBLEM. SO FAR, TROOP DISSATISFACTION REMAINS A LOCAL PROBLEM, WE JUDGE, RATHER THAN ONE OF NATIONAL DIMENSION. (S NF)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

NONETHELESS, THERE ARE [REDACTED] OF SOME TROOPS FLEEING IN DISORDER, SURRENDERING EASILY, CHANGING TO CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO ESCAPE DETECTION, EXAGGERATING THE SIZE OF OPPOSING FORCES TO AVOID FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS, AND REFUSING TO GO INTO BATTLE UNTIL CONDITIONS--INCLUDING LEADERSHIP CHANGES--ARE MET. THE [REDACTED] HAS REPORTED THAT TWO COMPANIES WERE EJECTED FROM THE SERVICE FOR INSUBORDINATION IN MORAZAN IN EARLY 1983 AND THAT THE PIPIL BATTALION WAS RETURNED TO GARRISON FOR POOR DISCIPLINE IN SEPTEMBER. SLACKNESS AND LACK OF TRAINING ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO MILITARY DISASTERS AT THE EL PARAISO GARRISON AND THE CUSCATLAN BRIDGE IN LATE DECEMBER 1983. [REDACTED]

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] A SALVADORAN "TROOP MOTIVATION UNIT" IS CONSTANTLY ON THE ROAD PREPARING RECRUITS FOR COMBAT AND REMEDYING CASES OF POOR MORALE. (S NF)

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

(b)(3) NatSecAct

CASUALTIES: A CONSISTENTLY HIGH CASUALTY RATE AMONG GOVERNMENT FORCES HAS AFFECTED TROOP MORALE IN SOME CASES, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

ALTHOUGH THE AVAILABILITY OF REPLACEMENTS HAS MINIMIZED THE IMPACT OF LOSSES FORCE-WIDE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES EACH YEAR, WITH ABOUT THREE-FOURTHS OF THESE LOSSES OCCURRING IN THE REGULAR FORCES AND THE REMAINDER IN PUBLIC SECURITY UNITS. (C NF)

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

GOVERNMENT LOSSES REMAIN STRIKING, DESPITE THE DECLINING PROPORTION OF FORCES AFFECTED. CASUALTIES REMOVE A MUCH LARGER PROPORTION OF TROOPS EACH YEAR THAN WOULD BE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE BY WESTERN MILITARY STRATEGISTS. SUCH HIGH LOSSES RESULT FROM THE LARGE NUMBER OF RAW RECRUITS IN COMBAT AND THE DISMAL STATE OF MEDICAL CARE. ACCORDING TO A US MEDICAL TEAM'S EVALUATION IN 1983,

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ONE-THIRD OF ALL WOUNDED SOLDIERS EVENTUALLY DIED--IN COMPARISON TO ONE-IN-10 FOR THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM--BECAUSE OF POOR FIELD ATTENTION AND INADEQUATE MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION. US SUCCESS IN TRAINING SEVERAL HUNDRED MEDICS WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASED HELICOPTER AND AMBULANCE MEDEVAC SUPPORT UNTIL MID 1984. FURTHERMORE, MANY SALVADORAN OFFICERS CONTINUE TO CONSIDER MEDICS AS INFANTRY TROOPS FIRST, AND LIMIT THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES A MEDIC CAN CARRY. (C NF)

LEADERSHIP

SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICER CORPS: THE SALVADORAN OFFICER CORPS WAS CAUGHT SHORT AT THE ONSET OF HOSTILITIES BUT HAS GROWN RAPIDLY IN ITS EFFORT TO MATCH FORCE EXPANSION AND MEET THE LEADERSHIP DEMANDS OF SMALL UNIT COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE. BECAUSE OF THE URGENCY OF THE WAR, EL SALVADOR GRADUATED EARLY A RELATIVELY LARGE MILITARY ACADEMY CLASS OF 85 CADETS IN AUGUST 1981, ENROLLED AN UNPRECEDENTED CLASS OF 450 CADETS IN OCTOBER 1981, AND COMMISSIONED THE NEXT SENIOR CLASS TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS EARLY IN FEBRUARY 1982. TWO GROUPS OF ABOUT 450 OFFICER CANDIDATES EACH UNDERWENT TWO TO FOUR MONTHS OF INTENSIVE TRAINING AT FORT BENNING, IN SPRING 1982 AND MID 1983, RECEIVING A RANK OF CADET, BELOW THAT OF SECOND LIEUTENANT, UPON COMPLETION. OWING TO THESE PROGRAMS, MORE JUNIOR OFFICERS ENTERED THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES FROM 1980 TO THE END OF 1983 THAN HAD PREVIOUSLY GRADUATED FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMY SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN THE 1930S, [REDACTED] (C NF)

NF

(b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct

DESPITE SOME GROWING PAINS, INCLUDING INITIAL RELUCTANCE OF SENIOR OFFICERS TO ENTRUST RAW CADETS WITH COMBAT RESPONSIBILITIES AND A HIGH ATTRITION RATE AMONG NEW OFFICERS, (IN LATE 1983, A [REDACTED] (b)(1)

[REDACTED] REPORTED THAT 25 PERCENT OF THE FIRST FORT BENNING CLASS WAS NO LONGER ON ACTIVE DUTY, ALTHOUGH ONLY 4 PERCENT OF THE SECOND CLASS HAD LEFT THE SERVICE. (S NF) (b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] CONSIDER THAT THE CRITICAL SHORTAGES AT THE JUNIOR RANKS HAVE NOW BEEN EASED. (S NF) (b)(1)
(b)(3) NatSecAct

THE INFUSION OF JUNIOR OFFICERS, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASES IN EXPERIENCED OFFICERS AT THE FIELD- AND COMPANY-GRADE LEVEL. REFORMIST ELEMENTS IN THE JUNTA FORCED THE RETIREMENT OF SOME SENIOR OFFICERS IN 1979 AND A KNOWLEDGEABLE [REDACTED] (b)(1) ESTIMATED IN LATE 1983 THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES WERE STILL SHORT AT LEAST 50 MAJORS AND 250 CAPTAINS. FEW UNITS HAVE FULL COMPLEMENTS OF OFFICERS. (S NF) [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

DESPITE CONSIDERABLE US PRESSURE, THE HIGH COMMAND HAS RESISTED FILLING OUT MIDDLE AND UPPER RANKS THROUGH ACCELERATED PROMOTIONS. THE TRADITIONAL PEACETIME PROMOTION POLICY BASED ON TIME-IN-GRADE AND SCHOOLING HAS NOT GIVEN WAY TO A WARTIME SYSTEM BASED ON COMBAT PERFORMANCE, DESPITE THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SEVERAL OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES. THE RECENT ACCESSIONS OF A COMBAT-SEASONED MAJOR TO ACTING COMMAND OF THE ATACATL BATTALION AND A LIEUTENANT COLONEL TO A FULL BRIGADE/ZONE COMMAND, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THAT SOME EVOLUTION MAY BE OCCURRING IN THE SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH NEITHER HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO THE RANK COMMENSURATE WITH HIS NEW COMMAND. (C NF)

THE MILITARY ALSO IS RELUCTANT TO MOVE SEASONED ENLISTED PERSONNEL INTO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, REFLECTING A STRONG CULTURAL BIAS. THE EXISTING NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS' COURSE HAS BEEN

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UPGRADED TO INCLUDE SIX WEEKS OF US TRAINING IN PANAMA, BUT STILL TURNS OUT ONLY ABOUT 30 NCOS TWICE A YEAR. EVEN THOUGH THE UNITED STATES PUT SALVADORAN NCOS IN CHARGE OF THE NEW, HIGHLY-TRAINED, LONG-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS, THIS PRACTICE WAS NOT ADOPTED ELSEWHERE IN THE SALVADORAN FORCES. IN EARLY 1984, A LARGE GROUP OF SERGEANTS RECEIVED LIEUTENANT'S BARS, BUT IT IS TOO SOON TO TELL HOW EFFICIENTLY THEY WILL BE USED. (C/NF)

READINESS: PROBLEMS OF ABSENTEE LEADERSHIP AND LAX PROSECUTION OF THE WAR HAVE NOT AFFLICTED THE BEST UNITS BUT ARE ALL TOO CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MANY UNITS WHOSE LEADERS HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED US TRAINING OR HAVE NOT TAKEN THE TEACHINGS TO HEART. ACKNOWLEDGING THE POOR STATE OF READINESS, DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES ISSUED NEW STANDING ORDERS IN SEPTEMBER 1983, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

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(b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] SPECIFYING THAT A COMMANDING OFFICER OR DEPUTY BE ON DUTY AT ALL TIMES, 75 PERCENT OF EACH UNIT BE KEPT ON ALERT, OPERATIONS BE CONDUCTED AROUND THE CLOCK WITH EMPHASIS ON NIGHT-TIME PATROLLING, AND DETAILED MONTHLY REPORTS BE SUBMITTED TO SHOW COMPLIANCE. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF TOP LEADERSHIP, MANY UNITS CONTINUED TO IGNORE REGULATIONS. [REDACTED] THE REASSIGNMENT IN EARLY 1984 OF A FEW COMMANDERS WHOSE UNITS WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES BY THE ENEMY IS PROVIDING SOME PREVIOUS LACKING INCENTIVE TO IMPROVE READINESS, BUT PUNISHMENTS FOR OFFICERS REMAIN MILD. (S/NF [REDACTED])

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

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(b)(3) NatSecAct

COMMAND CHANGES: THE SALVADORAN HIGH COMMAND IS PAYING GREATER ATTENTION TO THE WAR EFFORT THAN TWO YEARS AGO. THE JANUARY 1983 MUTINY OF LT. COLONEL OCHOA IN CABANAS DEPARTMENT BROUGHT OFFICER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WAR TO A HEAD AND EVENTUALLY FORCED THE RESIGNATION OF DEFENSE MINISTER GARCIA. HIS REPLACEMENT, GENERAL VIDES, ASSUMED A MORE ACTIVE PERSONAL ROLE IN THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR, VISITED UNITS IN THE FIELD, TRIED TO PROMOTE AGGRESSIVE SMALL-UNIT TACTICS, AND BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT A NEW 'NATIONAL STRATEGY' FOR DEFEATING THE GUERRILLAS. (S/NF [REDACTED])

(b)(3) NatSecAct

THE DEFENSE MINISTER MOVED MORE CAUTIOUSLY IN MAKING CRITICALLY NEEDED PERSONNEL CHANGES, HOWEVER. ANXIOUS TO AVOID POLITICAL FALLOUT THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE HIS OWN POSITION, FACTIONALIZE THE MILITARY, OR ENDANGER CONTINUED US AID, VIDES FOLLOWED TRADITION AND ESTABLISHED A COMMISSION IN OCTOBER TO THRESH OUT MILITARY PROBLEMS. BY NOVEMBER, BATTLEFIELD REVERSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, INCREASING CONSENSUS WITHIN THE MILITARY, AND STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE US FINALLY PROPELLED HIM INTO ANNOUNCING MAJOR LEADERSHIP CHANGES. (S/NF [REDACTED])

(b)(3) NatSecAct

THE SHAKEUP PROVIDED A DRAMATIC OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THE TRADITIONALLY UNRESPONSIVE GENERAL STAFF. DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES BROUGHT IN THE FIRST BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL BLANDON AS CHIEF OF STAFF AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL MENDEZ FROM THE BELLOSO BATTALION AS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND SHIFTED 80 PERCENT OF STAFF PERSONNEL, ACCORDING TO US ATTACHE REPORTING. THE OUTSTANDING REPUTATION OF THIS NEW TEAM AMONG COMBAT COMMANDERS PRESAGED AN INCREASE IN THE COMMAND AND CONTROL AUTHORITY EXERCISED BY THE GENERAL STAFF. EARLY CHANGES INCLUDED ROUND-THE-CLOCK STAFFING, FORMAL INVESTIGATION OF RECENT COMBAT LOSSES, THE ADDITION OF AIR FORCE AND ARTILLERY REPRESENTATIVES TO PLANNING SESSIONS, AND MORE CORDIAL LIAISON WITH US ADVISORS. NONETHELESS, REINING IN TRADITIONALLY INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMMANDERS AND SETTING PRIORITIES FOR OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ON A COUNTRYWIDE BASIS WILL NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED QUICKLY. (C/NF)

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VIDES' MOVES WERE ALSO DESIGNED, WE BELIEVE, TO REVITALIZE BATTLEFIELD PERFORMANCE. HE CHANGED COMMANDERS OF AT LEAST 10 MAJOR COMBAT UNITS--INCLUDING THREE OF THE FOUR US-TRAINED IR BATTALIONS--REMOVING SOME DEAD WOOD, RELIEVING SEVERAL BATTLE-WEARY COMMANDERS, PUTTING A TOP OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE BELEAGUERED EASTERNMOST DEPARTMENTS, AND EXPOSING A NEW GROUP OF OFFICERS TO MORE SENIOR POSTS. ALTHOUGH THE NEW LINE-UP REPRESENTED THE FIRST COMMAND SHIFTS IN A LONG TIME FOR MOST OF THE UNITS, THE CHANGES SET BACK OPERATIONS FOR ONLY A SHORT TIME WHILE THE NEW OFFICERS SETTLED IN. IN A FOLLOW-UP MOVE AT THE END OF 1983, THE CORRUPT COMMANDER OF THE NAVY WAS FINALLY OUSTED. (C NF)

REPUTATION: EVEN SO, THE MILITARY IS MAKING ONLY SLOW PROGRESS IN IMPROVING ITS DISMAL PUBLIC IMAGE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT DEFENSE LEADERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MILITARY-CIVILIAN RELATIONS TO THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRUGGLE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES APPEAR TO BE DECLINING, ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY. US INVESTIGATORS FOUND CREDITABLE THE CLAIMS OF LOCAL VILLAGERS THAT GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS HAD MURDERED ABOUT TWO DOZEN YOUTHS IN USULUTAN AT THE END OF NOVEMBER 1983. AN OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR AN EARLIER MASSACRE IN SONSONATE WAS REMOVED BUT NOT BROUGHT TO TRIAL. FEW COMMANDERS HAVE CHOSEN TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF LT. COLONEL OCHOA, WHO ESTABLISHED A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM IN CABANAS IN 1982. DEFENSE LEADERS' HAVE ENDORSED SOCIO-ECONOMIC REFORMS, ESTABLISHED CODES OF CONDUCT, TRIED TO KEEP AIR FORCE BOMBING AWAY FROM CIVILIAN AREAS, PROMOTED CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS, AND PROVIDED PRO-GOVERNMENT MEDIA EXPOSURE. LACK OF FULL ENDORSEMENT OF THESE MEASURES BY SOME LOCAL COMMANDERS, HOWEVER, HAS WEAKENED THEIR IMPACT. THE TRANSFER OF A FEW OF THE MORE NOTORIOUS RIGHT WING OFFICERS AT THE END OF NOVEMBER FROM NATIONAL STAFF SLOTS TO ACTIVE FIELD UNITS MAY HAVE REMOVED THE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE LIMELIGHT BUT DID NOT REMOVE THEM FROM POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. ONLY THREE WERE EXILED AT THAT TIME. PRESIDENT DUARTE, HOWEVER, HAS RECENTLY DESIGNATED THREE ADDITIONAL OFFICERS TO LEAVE FOR OVERSEAS POSTS.

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MILITARY EQUIPMENT

EL SALVADOR HAS REVAMPED ITS EQUIPMENT INVENTORIES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF [REDACTED] AID TO BEGIN TO STANDARDIZE WEAPONS THROUGHOUT THE REGULAR FORCES AND PURCHASE NEW ITEMS GEARED FOR THE COUNTERINSURGENCY THREAT. DEFENSE LEADERS MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH OTHER MILITARY SUPPLIERS, SUCH AS ISRAEL, TAIWAN, CHILE AND ARGENTINA, BUT NO COUNTRY BESIDES THE UNITED STATES HAS COME FORTH WITH SUBSTANTIAL AID OR LONG-TERM CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS. (C NF)

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WEAPONS: GROUND TROOPS NOW HAVE M-16 ASSAULT RIFLES, M-60 MACHINE GUNS, 90 MM SHOULDER-FIRED RECOILLESS RIFLES, AND 60 MM AND 81 MM MORTARS REPLACING AN ASSORTMENT OF EUROPEAN-MANUFACTURED AND OLDER US WEAPONS THAT WERE LARGELY TURNED OVER TO THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES. THE TRANSITION FOR EXISTING UNITS WAS LARGELY COMPLETED DURING 1983, WHILE EACH NEW LIGHT BATTALION WILL RECEIVE ABOUT \$600,000 WORTH OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT AS IT IS FORMED. SAN SALVADOR ALSO SUBSTANTIALLY UPGRADED ITS FIELD ARTILLERY WITH LIGHTWEIGHT M102 105 MM HOWITZERS IN THE FALL OF 1983 AND PUT THE NEW WEAPONS IN THE FIELD BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. BY MAY 1984, 24 NEW HOWITZERS HAD BEEN RECEIVED. (C NF)

THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PUT NEW WEAPONS INTO USE

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RAPIDLY BECAUSE THE WEAPONS ARE NOT TECHNICALLY COMPLEX AND BECAUSE TRAINING PACKAGES HAVE ACCOMPANIED PROCUREMENT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING

[REDACTED] FIELD INSPECTIONS SHOW THAT WEAPONS ARE NOT ALWAYS WELL-MAINTAINED BECAUSE OF TRAINING DEFICIENCIES AND SHORTAGES OF CLEANING KITS. LACK OF TRAINED FORWARD OBSERVERS ALSO OFTEN LIMITS THE USEFUL RANGE OF SUPPORT WEAPONS. FURTHERMORE, SALVADORAN UNITS HAVE LOST SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WEAPONS TO ENEMY ACTIONS. CUMULATIVE LOSSES SINCE EARLY 1982 COULD HAVE EQUIPPED MORE THAN THREE ADDITIONAL FULL-SIZE IR BATTALIONS. (ACCORDING TO BOTH SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT AND FMLN STATISTICS, ABOUT 3,500 WEAPONS OF ALL KINDS FELL INTO ENEMY HANDS IN 1983 ALONE.) THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ESTIMATES THAT A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE ENEMY'S WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION NEEDS ARE MET THROUGH THE CAPTURE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES. (SEE THE DECEMBER 1983 SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE 'NEAR TERM MILITARY PROSPECTS FOR EL SALVADOR,' 83.1-2-83, FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF ARMS FLOWS TO THE GUERRILLAS. (S NF) (S NF))

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COMMUNICATIONS: SALVADORAN MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT AS A RESULT OF US ATTENTION. PRC-77 TACTICAL RADIOS NOW FORM THE BASIS OF A FORCE-WIDE MOBILE NETWORK, PROVIDING COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY BETWEEN COMMANDERS AND COMPANIES IN THE FIELD, CONTACT WITH AIRCRAFT FLYING IN SUPPORT OF GROUND OPERATIONS, AND SOME INTERFACE BETWEEN PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES AND REGULAR UNITS. SECURE TELEPHONE, TELETYPE, AND RADIO SYSTEMS CONNECT FIELD HEADQUARTERS WITH THE HIGH COMMAND. [REDACTED]

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OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE ARMED FORCES ARE STILL SHORT OF PRC-77 SETS, BUT THE PURCHASE OF 1,000 RADIOS FOR DELIVERY IN SPRING 1984 SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SOLVING TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS. TOO FEW COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS, BATTERY PROBLEMS, AND A GENERAL LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO RESULT IN INEFFICIENT USE OF UPGRADED EQUIPMENT, ACCORDING TO FIELD REPORTING. POOR RADIO DISCIPLINE, FOR EXAMPLE, REGULARLY REVEALS ARMY MOVEMENTS TO THE ENEMY, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] AND LOSS OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PRC-77 SETS HAS FACILITATED GUERRILLA INTERFERENCE IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS. IN RECOGNITION OF SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS, A NEW GENERAL STAFF DEPARTMENT WAS SET UP IN JANUARY 1984 TO TRY TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS PERFORMANCE. (S NF)

AIRCRAFT AND AIR FORCE SUPPLIES: DELIVERY OF MORE THAN TWO DOZEN US PLANES AND HELICOPTERS IN 1982 TO SUPPLEMENT AN AGING FLEET OF ISRAELI-SUPPLIED FRENCH PLANES AND REPLACE LOSSES FROM THE ILOPANGO RAID IN JANUARY BROUGHT A STRONG NEW DIMENSION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR EFFORT. THE AIR FORCE WAS ABLE TO FLY COMBAT RUNS SHORTLY AFTER THE PLANES ARRIVED AND HAS LOST ONLY ONE JET FIGHTER AND THREE HELICOPTERS DURING OPERATIONS SINCE. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE STATISTICS ON BOMBING ACCURACY, A FAIRLY [REDACTED] WITH ACCESS SAYS THAT AIR FORCE OPERATIONS HAVE CAUSED CONCERN WITHIN THE FMLN. COMBAT COMMANDERS REGULARLY CALL FOR AIR SUPPORT, RELYING ON SMALL CESSNA 0-2S FOR TARGET IDENTIFICATION IN ADVANCE OF AIR OR ARTILLERY STRIKES; A-37 JETS FOR BOMBING OR STRAFING; HUGHES 500 HELICOPTERS WITH LONG LOITER TIME FOR SATURATING MINIGUN FIRE; OR UH-1H HELICOPTERS FOR INSERTING RECONNAISSANCE TEAMS, PROVIDING LIGHT FIRE SUPPORT, DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO THE FIELD, AND EVACUATING WOUNDED. [REDACTED] RESPONSE IS SOMETIMES SLOW DUE TO COMMAND AND CONTROL CONFUSIONS, LIMITED NIGHTTIME AND POOR WEATHER FLYING CAPABILITY, AND COMPETING MISSIONS. (S NF) [REDACTED]

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AIR FORCE PERSONNEL HAVE TURNED IN AN EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE,

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HOWEVER, GIVEN EXTREMELY LIMITED RESOURCES. THE 15 UH-1H HELICOPTER PILOTS, LESS THAN HALF THE NUMBER EL SALVADOR SHOULD HAVE FOR AVAILABLE HELICOPTERS, BEAR THE BRUNT OF AIR OPERATIONS, OFTEN FLYING 75 HOURS IN SEVEN DAYS, [REDACTED] THE TREMENDOUS DEMAND FOR THE USE OF LIMITED AIRCRAFT TO RESUPPLY AMMUNITION AND FOOD TO TROOPS IN THE FIELD HAS MEANT THAT OTHER PRIORITY MISSIONS SUCH AS TROOP INSERTION AND MEDEVAC SUFFER. (S NF)

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BOATS AND NAVY SUPPLIES: THE SALVADORAN NAVY HAS SHOWN THE LEAST OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE BRANCHES. THE NAVY'S SIX NEW 21-FOOT PATROL BOATS--BRINGING ITS TOTAL INVENTORY TO ABOUT 26 SMALL CRAFT--ARE COMPLICATED TO MAINTAIN, HAVE HIGH FUEL CONSUMPTION, AND ARE OVERPOWERED FOR SALVADORAN NEEDS, ACCORDING TO

[REDACTED] DESPITE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL NAVAL COMMANDO UNIT EQUIPPED WITH 8 ZODIAC INFLATIBLE BOATS, THE NAVY HAS RARELY DEPLOYED THE UNIT ON RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS. OUTSIDE INTERESTS, INCLUDING SMUGGLING, RAKEOFFS FROM LOCAL FISHERMEN, AND THE COLLECTION OF HARBOR TAXES, HAVE DISTRACTED THE NAVY'S ATTENTION FROM THE WAR. ALTHOUGH EL SALVADOR HAS PARTICIPATED IN OCCASIONAL MANEUVERS WITH HONDURAS, PATROLLING OF THE GULF OF FONSECA HAS GENERALLY BEEN INADEQUATE, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] PATROL ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, SINCE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE NAVAL COMMANDER. (S NF)

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MUNITIONS AND EXPENDABLES: US AMMUNITION DELIVERIES ARE CRITICAL TO KEEPING SALVADORAN FORCES IN THE FIELD. DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES ACKNOWLEDGED EL SALVADOR'S DEPENDENCE IN THIS AREA WHEN HE TOLD A VISITING US SENATOR, ACCORDING TO A [REDACTED] PRESENT, THAT TROOPS COULD NOT FIGHT THREE MONTHS WITHOUT US MUNITIONS SUPPORT. WITH NO MILITARY INDUSTRIES AND NO ALTERNATIVE FOREIGN SOURCES OF SUPPLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD TO USE ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF [REDACTED] AID IN RECENT YEARS FOR ORDNANCE TO KEEP THE WAR GOING. (C NF)

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EVEN SO, AMMUNITION SHORTAGES AFFECTING THE LEVEL OF COMBAT HAVE OCCURRED FROM TIME TO TIME. [REDACTED] SHORTAGES HAVE OCCURRED BECAUSE OF AI D CEILINGS, THE DIFFICULTY OF ORDERING IN ADVANCE AND STOCKPILING UNDER THE IRREGULAR APPROPRIATIONS TIMETABLE, AND FLUCTUATIONS IN SALVADORAN TACTICAL ACTIVITY AND FIRE DISCIPLINE THAT HAVE MADE FORECASTING DIFFICULT. EL SALVADOR REQUIRED AN EMERGENCY SHIPMENT OF 5.56 AMMUNITION AT THE END OF 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER THE GOVERNMENT'S SUMMER OFFENSIVE AND THE FALL GUERRILLA RESURGENCE DEPLETED STOCKS MORE RAPIDLY THAN EXPECTED. (C NF)

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EVEN WHEN STOCKS ARE ON HAND, WORRY ABOUT FUTURE AVAILABILITY--ESPECIALLY DURING US CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES OVER AID LEGISLATION--HAS CAUSED SALVADORAN COMMANDERS TO HOARD SUPPLIES AND REDUCE OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY. THE HIGH PROPORTION OF AID FUNDS GOING FOR MUNITIONS HAS REDUCED EL SALVADOR'S ABILITY TO MAKE LONGER-TERM INVESTMENTS IN MILITARY HARDWARE AND TRAINING. THE GROWING NEED FOR SPARE PARTS AS NEW EQUIPMENT AGES HAS ALSO BEGUN TO INCREASE THE PRESSURE TO USE MORE AID FUNDS FOR SHORT-TERM EXPENDABLES. (C NF)

TRANSPORTATION: GUERRILLA ATTACKS AGAINST EL SALVADOR'S TRANSPORT FACILITIES CONTINUE TO HINDER GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO MOVE SUPPLIES OVERLAND. THE INSURGENTS HAVE HIT EL SALVADOR'S BRIDGES

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MORE THAN 60 TIMES, BLOWING UP THE TWO MAJOR SPANS OVER THE LEMPA RIVER AND DESTROYING OR DAMAGING NUMEROUS OTHERS. HIGHWAYS AND RAIL LINES ARE VULNERABLE TO INTERDICTION. ONLY 8 LOCOMOTIVES ARE STILL OPERATIONAL OUT OF 28 IN JANUARY 1980 BECAUSE OF ATTACKS AND DERAILMENTS. THE GUERRILLAS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL STRETCHES OF MAJOR HIGHWAYS, AMBUSHING MILITARY CONVOYS, HOLDING UP AND DESTROYING CIVILIAN BUSES AND TRUCKS, AND TAXING LOCAL RESIDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE POLITICAL STRENGTH. ALMOST ALL SUPPLIES ARE STILL MOVED ON THE GROUND, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORCED TO DIVERT CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO REPAIR ROUTES, INSTALL BAILEY BRIDGES, AND TIGHTEN SECURITY FOR CONVOYS. IN ADDITION, THE MILITARY HAS IMPROVED SECURITY AT MOST MAJOR BRIDGES TO DETER INSURGENT ATTACKS.

(C NF)

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT FULLY USE ITS AIR TRANSPORT CAPACITY. EL SALVADOR HAS ABOUT 30 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, MOST OF WHICH CAN LAND ON SHORT, UNIMPROVED AIRSTRIPS, BUT [REDACTED] THAT THESE AIRCRAFT ARE UNDERUTILIZED BECAUSE OF PILOT SHORTAGES, SLOW MAINTENANCE, AND POOR SCHEDULING. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TAPPED THE ALMOST 20 COMMERCIAL PILOTS WHO ARE AVAILABLE TO FLY PART-TIME AND COULD RELIEVE THE OVERBURDENED AIR FORCE PILOTS OF SOME OF THEIR NON-COMBAT MISSIONS. SO FAR, AIR DELIVERY HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY SAFE, ALTHOUGH THE MINING OF A RUNWAY AT SAN MIGUEL IN EARLY 1984 MAY PRESAGE AN INCREASE IN THIS KIND OF HARASSMENT. (S NF [REDACTED])

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SUPPLY SYSTEM: EL SALVADOR'S SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS ONLY SLOWLY ADJUSTING TO WARTIME NEEDS. [REDACTED] PROGRESS IN FAMILIARIZING SALVADORAN STAFF OFFICERS WITH COMPLEX PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES, BUT ACKNOWLEDGE LITTLE HEADWAY IN MAKING THE TRADITIONAL SUPPLY-DRIVEN SYSTEM RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL COMBAT DEMANDS. THE LOGISTICS STAFF OFTEN HAS WITHHELD SUPPLIES FROM THE FIELD TO HEDGE AGAINST A FEARED DECLINE IN US AID, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] OBSERVERS. ROUTINE DELIVERIES ARE MADE IN EQUAL SHARES TO ALL MAJOR COMMANDS, BOTH TO AVOID OFFENDING POLITICALLY POWERFUL LOCAL COMMANDERS AND TO COMPENSATE FOR THE ABSENCE OF RATIONAL INVENTORY AND REQUISITION PROCEDURES. [REDACTED] INDICATE THAT THE CENTRAL STAFF'S RELUCTANCE TO SET PRIORITIES AND CONCENTRATE RESOURCES HAS LED TO SEVERE FRUSTRATION ON THE PART OF COMBAT COMMANDERS IN THE MOST CONTESTED AREAS, ALTHOUGH IMPROVEMENTS ARE GRADUALLY OCCURRING. (S NF [REDACTED])

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TIGHT CENTRAL CONTROL OF SUPPLIES CLASHES WITH DECENTRALIZED OPERATIONAL PLANNING. THE LOGISTICS STAFF IS RELUCTANT TO LOSE LEVERAGE OVER LOCAL COMMANDERS BY STOCKPILING SUPPLIES IN FORWARD AREAS AND REQUIRES THAT EACH REQUEST FOR LOGISTICS SUPPORT BE PROCESSED THROUGH THE NATIONAL BUREAUCRACY. THE SYSTEM HAS ENCOURAGED MISREPORTING OF NEEDS IN ORDER FOR COMMANDERS TO HOARD SUPPLIES FOR PLANNED OPERATIONS. EVEN WITH SUCH INFORMAL STOCKPILING, COMBAT CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN CUT SHORT WHEN SUPPLIES RAN OUT. THE IMPROVED ABILITY OF SOME UNITS TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS LAST SUMMER--SOME STAYED IN THE FIELD LONGER THAN A MONTH--REFLECTED THE RESOURCEFULNESS OF INDIVIDUAL LOCAL COMMANDERS MORE THAN CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM, [REDACTED] (S NF [REDACTED])

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SO FAR, THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR EFFORT HAS FAILED TO STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC MILITARY INDUSTRIES OR ENCOURAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ADJUST FOR THE STRUGGLE. ALTHOUGH CAPITAL IS IN SHORT SUPPLY, THE CONTINUING ABSENCE OF AMMUNITION PLANTS SEEMS TO US A LAMENTABLE PRODUCTION WEAKNESS. IN ADDITION, DESPITE THE NEED FOR RELATIVELY CHEAP PRE-PACKAGED COMBAT RATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS WITH

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PRIVATE SALVADORAN FIRMS HAVE REPEATEDLY FOUNDERED. COMBAT COMMANDERS STILL HAVE TO PURCHASE LARGE QUANTITIES OF FOOD THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS--OFTEN COMPROMISING OPERATIONAL SECURITY--AND DELIVER BULKY ITEMS TO THE FIELD DESPITE POOR TRANSPORT. FURTHERMORE, LACK OF UNIFORMS AND OTHER NON-WEAPON ITEMS THAT ARE TOO EXPENSIVE TO IMPORT HAS LIMITED THE NUMBER OF RECRUITS LOCAL COMMANDERS CAN INDUCT AND HAS CAUSED MORALE PROBLEMS, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (C NF)

MAINTENANCE: THE MILITARY'S EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE SYSTEM, TRADITIONALLY CHARACTERIZED BY AD HOC REPAIRS AND EXTENSIVE CANNIBALIZATION, HAS IMPROVED IN THOSE SECTORS RECEIVING US ASSISTANCE. STANDARDIZATION OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT IN GENERAL HAS FACILITATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF STOCKS OF SPARE PARTS AT CENTRAL DEPOTS, WE BELIEVE, ALTHOUGH MANY SHORTAGES STILL EXIST. ATTACHE REPORTING SUGGESTS THAT AIRCRAFT AND BOAT MAINTENANCE ARE BECOMING ADEQUATE. IMPROVED HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE HAS RAISED THE OPERATIONAL READINESS RATE FOR UH-1H HELICOPTERS FROM ABOUT 30 PERCENT IN 1982 TO BETTER THAN 50 PERCENT AT PRESENT, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] REPORTS. WHILE THE AVAILABILITY OF ONLY ABOUT 12 UH-1H HELICOPTERS OUT OF 19 FRUSTRATES COMBAT PLANNERS, [REDACTED] SAY THAT THE RATE IS NOT UNREASONABLE CONSIDERING THE HEAVY COMBAT USE OF THE AIRCRAFT. (S NF NC OC)

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THE ARMED FORCES HAVE MADE LESS PROGRESS IN VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND SMALL ARMS REPAIR. HAVING SUBSTITUTED NEW US WEAPONS FOR OLDER EUROPEAN MODELS IN THE REGULAR FORCES, THE COUNTRY HAS A LARGE NUMBER OF ARMS THAT COULD BE RECONDITIONED AND ISSUED TO CIVIL DEFENSE UNITS, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL. AID REGULATIONS LIMIT US PARTICIPATION IN THIS ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, AND THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN LITTLE INITIATIVE. AS A RESULT, ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF CIVIL DEFENSE PERSONNEL--OFTEN THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IN OUTLYING VILLAGES--ARE ARMED WITH ANYTHING MORE THAN MACHETES. (S NF [REDACTED])

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STRUCTURE

GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION: EL SALVADOR HAS GEOGRAPHICALLY RESHAPED ITS MILITARY STRUCTURE IN RECENT YEARS TO FACE THE GUERRILLA THREAT. THE GOVERNMENT DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF MILITARY ZONES TO SIX BY 1982. (SEE FIGURE 4) IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, CONTROL CONTINUED TO REST WITH THE 14 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS, WHO PREFERRED DIRECT LINKS WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. THE NEED TO COORDINATE MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS AGAINST AN INCREASINGLY CAPABLE ENEMY LED TO EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE THEATER COMMAND CONCEPT IN LATE 1982. ALTHOUGH OPERATIONALLY SOUND, TEMPORARY COMMANDS CONTINUED TO FOUNDER ON STAFF SHORTAGES AND LOCAL JEALOUSIES OVER THE CONTROL OF FORCES. IN THE NOVEMBER 1983 ORGANIZATIONAL SHAKEUP, THE HIGH COMMAND MOVED SIGNIFICANTLY CLOSER TO ALIGNING THE FORMAL ARMY STRUCTURE WITH OPERATIONAL REALITIES BY SHIFTING THE BOUNDARIES OF MILITARY ZONES TO COINCIDE ROUGHLY WITH ENEMY FRONTS. (C NF)

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED FORCES IN THE MOST CONTESTED AREAS. INITIALLY, THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY BORROWING UNITS FROM THE LESS ACTIVE DEPARTMENTS. COLONEL FLORES, THEN COMMANDER OF THE THIRD BRIGADE, EXPRESSED TYPICAL FRUSTRATION WITH THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, WHEN HE COMPLAINED TO THE [REDACTED] IN FEBRUARY 1982 THAT HE COULD NOT SECURE HIS OWN MILITARY ZONE AROUND SAN MIGUEL WHILE HIS TROOPS WERE OFF PATROLLING IN USULUTAN, GUARDING THE CUSCATLAN BRIDGE, RELIEVING THE TOWN OF CORINTO IN

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MORAZAN, AND REGAINING CONTROL OF A HIGHWAY IN SAN VICENTE. THE EXPANSION OF STRATEGIC RESERVE FORCES IN INTERVENING YEARS HAS ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT GENERALLY TO FOCUS DEPLOYMENTS AGAINST GUERRILLA CONCENTRATIONS WITHOUT LEAVING LESS CONTESTED AREAS OF THE COUNTRY UNPROTECTED (SEE FIGURE 1). (C NF)

SHIFT TO LIGHT BATTALIONS: IN MARCH 1983 THE DEFENSE MINISTER ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR THE CONVERSION OF LOCAL GARRISON UNITS TO LIGHT BATTALIONS. DESIGNED TO STANDARDIZE UNIT CONFIGURATION, PROVIDE A STRUCTURE FOR FURTHER FORCE EXPANSION, AND FACILITATE MORE AGGRESSIVE SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS, THE PLAN ENVISAGED THE CREATION OF 36 350-MAN BATTALIONS COUNTRYWIDE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, MAINLY BY COMBINING EXISTING INFANTRY COMPANIES AND ADDING STAFFS AND COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS. THE LIGHT BATTALIONS WERE SCHEDULED TO ALTERNATE STATIC DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES WITH AGGRESSIVE PATROLLING. (C NF)

IN THE WAKE OF A SERIES OF GUERRILLA VICTORIES LAST FALL, IN WHICH SEVERAL LIGHT BATTALIONS WERE MAULED BY THE INSURGENTS, SENIOR COMMANDERS IN THE EAST PROPOSED THAT THE 350-MAN BATTALION CONCEPT BE SCRAPPED IN FAVOR OF BATTALIONS HAVING A STRENGTH OF NEARLY 600 TROOPS. THEY ARGUED, [REDACTED] THAT THE LIGHTER BATTALIONS WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH OR WELL-TRAINED ENOUGH TO ENGAGE IN OPERATIONS. (C NF)

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BY MID-FEBRUARY, [REDACTED] THE GENERAL STAFF HAD APPROVED THE REORGANIZATION OF THE LIGHT BATTALIONS INTO COUNTERINSURGENCY BATTALIONS OF OVER 400 PERSONNEL AUGMENTED IN MANY INSTANCES BY A 170-MAN COMBAT SUPPORT COMPANY. IN THE EAST, WHERE THE FIGHTING HAS BEEN HEAVIEST, THE ARMY COMMANDER IS REORGANIZING INTO 600-MAN BATTALIONS. THE US EMBASSY REPORTED RECENTLY THAT THE REVAMPING WAS PROCEEDING. (S NF)

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COMMAND AND CONTROL: THE CLARIFICATION OF COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS HAS BARELY KEPT PACE WITH FORCE DEVELOPMENT. WITH NEW UNITS ADDED, MORE THAN 30 MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS BECAME SUBORDINATE TO THE ARMED FORCES STAFF. THIS IMPOSSIBLY WIDE SPAN OF CONTROL MADE THE GENERAL STAFF WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE IN MANAGING THE WAR EFFORT. WITH STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT FROM US ADVISERS, THE SALVADORAN CHAIN OF COMMAND HAS BEEN EVOLVING TOWARD A SYSTEM OF INTERMEDIATE LEVELS OF AUTHORITY. IN ANNOUNCING THE NOVEMBER REALIGNMENT OF MILITARY ZONES, FOR EXAMPLE, GENERAL VIDES REMINDED SUBORDINATE UNITS TO REPORT THROUGH BRIGADE CHANNELS AT ZONE HEADQUARTERS, [REDACTED]

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THE CONVERSION TO SMALLER LOCAL-FORCE BATTALIONS AND GRADUAL DOWN-GRADING OF COMMAND SLOTS BECAUSE OF OFFICER SHORTAGES ARE DIFFUSING THE INDEPENDENT POWER OF LOCAL COMMANDERS, ENCOURAGING RELIANCE ON THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO BEEN PARCELLING OUT HELICOPTER AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT TO REGIONAL COMMANDS ON AN INFORMAL BASIS, ALTHOUGH STOPPING SHORT OF FORMAL REASSIGNMENT. STAFFING AT INTERMEDIATE LEVELS HAS ALSO INCREASED, STRENGTHENING THE ABILITY OF BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS TO ACT AS TWO-WAY CONDUITS FOR INFORMATION BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMAND AND FIELD UNITS. (C NF)

THE NEW PATTERN, HOWEVER, CANNOT YET BE CONSIDERED AN INSTITUTIONAL NORM. THE ELITE IR BATTALIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, CONTINUE TO RESIST OPERATIONAL CONTROL BY LOCAL COMMANDERS. SO FAR, A HIERARCHICAL CHAIN OF COMMAND REPORTEDLY HAS TAKEN FIRMIEST ROOT IN THOSE AREAS SUCH AS THE 3RD MILITARY ZONE IN THE EAST WHERE THE BRIGADE COMMANDER HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXERT AUTHORITY BY THE SHEER FORCE OF HIS PERSONALITY AND PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION. (C NF)

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INTERSERVICE COORDINATION: SOME CONTINUED OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE AIR FORCE, NAVY, AND PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES ALSO HANDICAPS THE WAR EFFORT. BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRUGGLE, THE SALVADORAN ARMY HAS RECEIVED THE LION'S SHARE OF US ASSISTANCE, INCREASING THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THAT SERVICE AND OTHER FIGHTING ELEMENTS. AIR FORCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAR HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, BUT HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING COORDINATION IS STILL UNEVEN. [REDACTED]

REQUESTS FOR COMBAT SUPPORT IN THE PAST TENDED TO COME STRAIGHT TO THE AIR FORCE FROM FIELD COMMANDERS, OFTEN OVER COMMERCIAL TELEPHONE LINES. WITH LITTLE DIRECTION FROM THE GENERAL STAFF, AIR FORCE DUTY OFFICERS MADE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ON MISSION PRIORITIES. CHANGES IN GENERAL STAFF PROCEDURES ARE IMPROVING COORDINATION. THE NAVY'S CAPABILITIES REMAIN SO POOR THAT EVEN WHEN INVOLVED IN OPERATIONAL PLANNING--SUCH AS DURING THE JUCUARAN OPERATIONS IN SEPTEMBER 1983-- IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CLOSE OFF THE ENEMY'S SEA ROUTES OF ESCAPE.

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THE INTEGRATION OF THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY INTO THE PLANNING PROCESS IMPROVED IN NOVEMBER 1983 WITH THE INCLUSION OF SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES AT MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL STAFF. NEITHER THE POWERFUL CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE, COLONEL BUSTILLO, NOR A HIGH-LEVEL NAVAL OFFICER ARE PART OF THE STRENGTHENED STAFF ORGANIZATION, HOWEVER, AND IMPROVEMENT IN DAY-TO-DAY COORDINATION HAS BEEN SLOW. DESPITE HEAVY INVOLVEMENT IN THE URBAN AND RURAL GROUND WAR, THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES REMAIN OUTSIDE REGULAR PLANNING CHANNELS. SHUNTED ASIDE FROM THE US ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE NATIONAL GUARD, NATIONAL POLICE AND TREASURY POLICE HAVE NEITHER CONSOLIDATED THEIR FORCES NOR REALIGNED THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH ARMY THEATERS TO REINFORCE THE NATIONAL WAR EFFORT. (C NF)

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

STRATEGIC PLANNING: EL SALVADOR HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN ADOPTING AND STICKING WITH A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DEFEATING THE INSURGENTS. HAVING NEVER FOUGHT A COUNTERINSURGENCY, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO ESTABLISHED DOCTRINE TO GUIDE ITS INITIAL RESPONSE. SOME OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS DEMONSTRATED ENERGY AND RESOURCEFULNESS, BUT MOST RESORTED TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND ENGAGING IN OCCASIONAL UNSUCCESSFUL SWEEP OPERATIONS, ACCORDING TO OUR ANALYSIS. THIS PIECEMEAL APPROACH RESULTED IN LITTLE OVERALL PROGRESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD, AND DEFENSE LEADERS BEGAN TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES WITH US ADVISERS BY EARLY 1983. (C NF)

THE NATIONAL PLAN THAT EMERGED CALLED FOR THE CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES TO SCORE DECISIVE GAINS IN ONE AREA AT A TIME, THE USE OF AGGRESSIVE SMALL UNIT TACTICS TO KEEP THE ENEMY OFF BALANCE, THE INTEGRATION OF CIVIC ACTION AND ECONOMIC RESTORATION WITH THE MILITARY EFFORT, AND THE EXPANSION OF CIVIL DEFENSE FORCES TO CONSOLIDATE COMBAT GAINS. IMPLEMENTED FIRST IN SAN VICENTE, A WELL POPULATED DEPARTMENT IN THE CENTER OF THE COUNTRY WHERE GUERRILLAS HAD SUCCESSFULLY DISRUPTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, THE NATIONAL PLAN BEGAN WITH GREAT ACCLAIM IN JUNE 1983 AND ACCELERATED IN JULY AS PARALLEL BUT SMALLER OPERATIONS WERE INITIATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. DESPITE MUCH PLANNING AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM THE US, HOWEVER, MOMENTUM SAGGED BY FALL. THE EXPERIMENT IN OUR VIEW PROVED TOO AMBITIOUS FOR THE WELL-MEANING BUT STILL INEXPERIENCED SALVADORAN HIGH COMMAND. THE CAMPAIGN FINALLY MOVED ON TO USULUTAN

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IN JANUARY 1984, BUT LARGELY WITHOUT ITS ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND CIVIL DEFENSE COMPONENTS. (S NF [redacted])

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TACTICAL COORDINATION: IN THE ABSENCE OF AN OVERALL STRATEGY, DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS ARE DETERMINED BY A CONSTANTLY SHIFTING MIX OF NATIONAL DIRECTIVES AND LOCAL INITIATIVES. THE HIGH COMMAND CONTROLS THE PURSE STRINGS, LOGISTICS SUPPORT, AND THE FLOW OF INTELLIGENCE. IT ALSO REVIEWS BATTLEFIELD PLANS AND PERFORMANCE AND ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS, BUT LESS OFTEN ORDERS. IN SEPTEMBER 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, DEFENSE LEADERS CLARIFIED THE PROCEDURES FOR USE OF CLOSE AIR SUPPORT IN POPULATED AREAS FOLLOWING CIVILIAN DEATHS IN TENANCINGO, AND A NOVEMBER DIRECTIVE REVIEWED THE STEPS FOR AVOIDING AMBUSHES. ON THE OTHER HAND, LOCAL COMMANDERS DETERMINE THE SIZE, TIMING, TARGETS, AND TACTICS FOR FIELD OPERATIONS. IN A TYPICAL OPERATION, FOR EXAMPLE, COLONEL FLORES MOUNTED A THREE-BATTALION ATTACK AGAINST GUERRILLA BASES NEAR JUCUARAN IN SOUTHERN USulután IN AUGUST 1983 WITH NO HELP FROM THE GENERAL STAFF IN EITHER PLANNING OR EXECUTION, [redacted]

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THE SPLIT IN DECISIONMAKING AUTHORITY HAS HINDERED COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS BY ENCOURAGING LOCAL INITIATIVES WHILE DENYING COMMANDERS THE MEANS OF CONSOLIDATING THEIR GAINS. TENSIONS RUN HIGH ON BOTH SIDES. THE HIGH COMMAND CHARGES THAT FIELD OFFICERS FAIL TO NOTIFY THEM OF PENDING OPERATIONS AND THEN COMPLAIN WHEN INTELLIGENCE, LOGISTICS, AND AIR AND NAVY SUPPORT IS NOT AVAILABLE ON A TIMELY BASIS. COMBAT COMMANDERS BLAME THE COMMAND FOR SECURITY LEAKS THAT COMPROMISE OPERATIONAL PLANS, AND NEGLIGENCE IN DENYING RESOURCES TO RESCUE UNITS UNDER ATTACK OR TO SUSTAIN FIELD ACTIONS.

(S NF [redacted])

(b)(3) NatSecAct

COUNTERINSURGENT TACTICS: OVER TIME THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE AND MORE WILLING TO ADOPT SMALL-UNIT TACTICS AND OCCASIONAL NIGHT OPERATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL, MANY OFFICERS REMAIN RELUCTANT TO FULLY EMPLOY SUCH TACTICS. COLONEL BUSTILLO, THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER AND ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST DEDICATED LEADERS, HAS BERATED FELLOW OFFICERS FOR NOT UNDERSTANDING THAT THE URGENCY OF THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE DEMANDS FIELD OPERATIONS 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. ALTHOUGH UP TO 70 PERCENT OF SALVADORAN FORCES REMAINED IN THE FIELD DURING THE SUMMER OF 1983 [redacted] THIS FIGURE DECLINED BY FALL. A LARGE NUMBER OF UNITS WAS ONCE AGAIN OPERATING CONSTANTLY IN THE SPRING OF 1984, HOWEVER, TO KEEP THE GUERRILLAS OFF BALANCE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. (S NF [redacted])

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VARIOUS COMMANDERS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT SHORTAGES OF OFFICERS AND TROOPS AND INADEQUATE RADIOS AND HELICOPTERS HAVE MADE THEM RELUCTANT TO MOVE OUT OF GARRISONS WITH SMALLER THAN COMPANY-SIZE UNITS EVEN IN DAYTIME, ACCORDING TO MILITARY REPORTING. ALTHOUGH RESOURCE SHORTAGES ARE A REALITY, IT APPEARS TO US THAT IN MANY CASES OFFICERS HAVE USED THEM AS A CRUTCH FOR THEIR TRADITIONAL DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY. MANPOWER, EQUIPMENT, AND TRAINING IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 1981 HAVE GREATLY STRENGTHENED THE OFFENSIVE POTENTIAL OF THE ARMED FORCES, WE BELIEVE. IN OUR VIEW, LACK OF STRONGER DIRECTION FROM COMMAND AUTHORITIES, LIMITATIONS IN THE SIZE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM, AND THE INGRAINED RELUCTANCE OF MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICERS TO RISK EXPERIMENTATION WITH NEW TACTICS STILL INHIBIT MORE EFFECTIVE MILITARY PERFORMANCE. (S NF [redacted])

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INADEQUATE MOBILITY HAS ALSO REDUCED SOME OF THE TACTICAL CHOICES OPEN TO FIELD COMMANDERS. EVEN THE IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALIONS CANNOT RESPOND ON SHORT NOTICE. NOT ONLY IS THE NUMBER OF TRUCKS INADEQUATE IN THE FIELD, BUT THE HIGH RISK OF AMBUSH DISCOURAGES GROUND TRANSPORT ALTOGETHER. ALTHOUGH GUERRILLA AMBUSH TACTICS HAVE BECOME WELL KNOWN, SALVADORAN TROOPS CONTINUE TO IGNORE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. IN APRIL 1983, AN 86-MAN UNIT FROM THE ELITE BELLOSO BATTALION, ON ITS WAY TO REINFORCE A TOWN UNDER ATTACK, TRAVELLED DOWN A ROAD WITH NO SCOUTS OR FLANK GUARD, FELL INTO A TRAP, AND LOST ALMOST THE ENTIRE UNIT. IN NOVEMBER, AN ARMY UNIT MADE SEVEN FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO TEJUTEPEQUE DOWN A MAIN ROAD WITHOUT ELIMINATING OR CIRCLING AROUND GUERRILLAS AT KNOWN AMBUSH POINTS. (C NF)

WITH ONLY ABOUT 12 HELICOPTERS OPERATIONAL AT ONE TIME, COMMANDERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO AIRLIFT LARGE NUMBERS OF GROUND TROOPS ON A REGULAR BASIS. COLONEL BUSTILLO EXPLAINED TO A US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LAST SEPTEMBER THAT PRIORITY MISSIONS SUCH AS COMBAT RESUPPLY LEAVE FEW HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE FOR TROOP TRANSPORT. BECAUSE OF THIS, FORCES HAVE ON MANY OCCASIONS LOST THE ELEMENT OF TACTICAL SURPRISE, FAILED TO CUT OFF RETREATING INSURGENT UNITS, AND HAD TO PULL TROOPS BACK FROM THREATENED FORWARD POSITIONS BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE REINFORCED IN TIME. THE ARCE BATTALION TOOK 48 HOURS TO GET TROOPS INTO POSITION FOR AN OPERATION IN MORAZAN IN NOVEMBER 1983, FOR EXAMPLE, GIVING ENEMY FORCES TIME TO SLIP AWAY. IN DECEMBER, AFTER THE LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE, WE BEGAN TO SEE TROOP TRANSPORT RECEIVE HIGHER PRIORITY--EIGHT UH-1H HELICOPTERS LIFTED TROOPS INTO ACTION NEAR CACAHUATIQUE--BUT THE SMALL NUMBER OF HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE STILL PRECLUDES REGULAR AIRLIFT OPERATIONS. (C NF)

DESPITE CONTINUING RESOURCE SHORTAGES, SEVERAL OUTSTANDING SALVADORAN COMMANDERS HAVE PROVEN TOUGH AND RESOURCEFUL, ACCORDING TO OUR ANALYSIS, PROVIDING MODELS OF HOW THE WAR SHOULD BE FOUGHT. IN 1982, LT. COLONEL OCHOA IN CABANAS WAS ALREADY SENDING OUT 11-MAN PATROLS AT NIGHT, AND COMBINING HIS MILITARY ACTIONS WITH A STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM. IN A MAJOR OPERATION IN MORAZAN IN EARLY 1983, COLONEL FLORES TRIED ENCIRCLEMENT TACTICS AND LEAVING SOME FORCES BEHIND TO SECURE GAINS AFTER THE PRIMARY ATTACK WAS ACCOMPLISHED INSTEAD OF LARGE SWEEPS TOWARD A STATIC BLOCKING FORCE. LT. COLONEL CRUZ PERIODICALLY SENDS COMPANIES NORTH OF THE TOROLA RIVER IN MORAZAN TO FLUSH OUT INSURGENT UNITS, THEN PULLS HIS TROOPS BACK AND CALLS IN PRE-PLANNED AIR STRIKES, [REDACTED]

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INTELLIGENCE: STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION HAS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. WITH US ASSISTANCE, A SALVADORAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAS SET UP IN EARLY 1982 AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE COURSES HAVE BETTER PREPARED OFFICERS AND SENIOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL FOR INTELLIGENCE STAFF POSITIONS AT ALL LEVELS IN THE ARMED FORCES. BY THE END OF 1983, ALMOST ALL BRIGADES AND MAJOR BATTALIONS HAD FULL TIME INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS, IN CONTRAST TO ONLY PART-TIME POSITIONS AT THIS LEVEL AT THE END OF 1981. WITH US URGING, ARMY UNITS HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE CAPTURE AND INTERROGATION OF GUERRILLAS, ALTHOUGH FEW MILITARY COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH EXTENSIVE INFORMANT NETWORKS OWING TO INSUFFICIENT FUNDS, [REDACTED] (S NF)

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A LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY--DIVIDED INTO 18 SIX-MAN

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TEAMS--RECEIVED INTENSIVE US TRAINING IN PANAMA AND HAS UNDERTAKEN DANGEROUS BUT PRODUCTIVE MISSIONS INTO ENEMY CONTROLLED TERRITORY, (b)(1)
PINPOINTING TARGETS FOR SUBSEQUENT AIR, ARTILLERY, AND GROUND FORCE STRIKES, (b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED] A [REDACTED] (b)(1)
[REDACTED] FOR EXAMPLE, THAT RECONNAISSANCE UNITS DISCOVERED AND (b)(3) NatSecAct
DESTROYED AN INSURGENT CAMP AT THE MOUTH OF THE LEMPA RIVER IN APRIL 1984. SALVADORAN OBSERVER AIRCRAFT HAVE INCREASED THE ARMY'S VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY, WHILE US AIRCRAFT PROVIDE PHOTOGRAPHIC AND SIGNALS INTERCEPT SUPPORT. EL SALVADOR'S OWN TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES REMAIN POOR, HOWEVER. (S) MF [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

THE ARMED FORCES' ABILITY TO USE INTELLIGENCE HAS NOT KEPT PACE WITH COLLECTION, HOWEVER. POOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GENERAL STAFF AND FIELD COMMANDS HAS PROVEN A MAJOR LIABILITY IN THE DISSEMINATION OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INFORMATION. DESPITE THE POSSIBILITY OF UNDERMINING THE GENERAL STAFF, US PERSONNEL HAVE ON OCCASION FELT COMPELLED TO DELIVER DATA DIRECTLY TO FIELD COMMANDERS WHEN STAFF BOTTLENECKS HAVE PREVENTED OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE FROM GETTING TO THE FIELD. [REDACTED] HAVE POINTED (b)(1)
OUT THAT MOST OF THE TIME-SENSITIVE TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE COMES IN (b)(3) NatSecAct
AT NIGHT WHEN SALVADORAN STAFF AND TROOPS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND. ALL-SOURCE TACTICAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING PACKAGES FROM WASHINGTON ORIGINALLY WERE NOT TIMELY; THEY TOOK SEVERAL WEEKS TO PREPARE, NEEDED UPDATING IN THE COUNTRY, AND WERE TOO COMPLICATED FOR LOCAL COMMANDERS TO USE, IN THE OPINION OF KNOWLEDGEABLE [REDACTED] (b)(1)

[REDACTED] MODIFICATIONS IN THE PACKAGES (b)(3) NatSecAct
ARE IMPROVING THEIR USEFULNESS FOR SALVADORAN OPERATIONS. INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMMANDERS AND PILOTS IN SOME CASES HAVE BEEN OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR ABILITIES AND HAVE FAILED TO HEED INTELLIGENCE PRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. ALTHOUGH COMMANDERS ARE PAYING INCREASING ATTENTION TO HUMAN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE IN THEIR IMMEDIATE AREAS, [REDACTED] (b)(1)
CHANNELS STILL DO NOT FUNCTION SMOOTHLY FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF (b)(3) NatSecAct
LOCAL INFORMATION TO THE HIGH COMMAND FOR ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION-- ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. (S) MF [REDACTED] (b)(3) NatSecAct

[REDACTED]

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