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F-2016-12466

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4/29/2026

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MRN: 82 SAN SALVADOR 5531
Date/DTG: Jul 02, 1982 / 020000Z Jul 82
From: AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE; BOGOTA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE
E.O.: Unknown
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SOPN, ES
Reference: 82 STATE 158431
Subject: ~~(C)~~ RADIO VENCEREMOS CLAIMS OF MASSACRE

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00
DODE-00 H-01 NSC-01 NSAE-00 SY-05 HA-06 L-03
TRSE-00 PM-09 PA-01 MCT-02 SAL-01 ACDA-12 ICAE-00
SP-02 SPRS-02 /089 W
-----311604 021529Z /53

R 021401Z JUL 82
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 446
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PAN/INTAFF

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E.O. 12065: GDS 07/01/88 (DRISCOLL, ROBERT S.) OR-P
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ES
SUBJECT: ~~(C)~~ RADIO VENCEREMOS CLAIMS OF MASSACRE

REF: STATE 158431

1. ~~(C)~~ ENTIRE TEXT.)
2. MILGRP COMMANDER CONTACTED CHIEF OF STAFF COL. RAFAEL FLORES LIMA ABOUT THE ALLEGATIONS OF MASSACRE IN CHALATENANGO IN JUNE. HE DENIED IT OUT OF HAND. BOTH MILGRP COMMANDER AND DAO HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH THE COMMANDERS

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OF THE ATACATL, ATONAL AND RAMON BELLOSO BATTALIONS. ALL THREE HAVE BEEN ON EXTENDED OPERATION IN MORAZAN AND HAVE NOT RETURNED TO SAN SALVADOR.

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3. CHRISTOPHER DICKEY RAN A STORY IN THE JUNE 11 EDITION OF THE MIAMI HERALD ABOUT THE CHALATENANGO OPERATION DURING WHICH THE MASSACRE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE. DICKEY QUOTED ATACATL COMMANDER LT. COL. DOMINGO MONTERROSA AS SAYING, "SO IN THE CLASHES AND THE DISTINCT OPERATIONS THAT WE CARRIED OUT ABOUT HERE (REFERRING TO A MAP), IT'S NATURAL THAT THERE WERE A SERIES OF PEOPLE KILLED, SOME WITHOUT WEAPONS, INCLUDING SOME WOMEN, AND I UNDERSTAND SOME CHILDREN IN THE CROSSFIRE BETWEEN THEM AND US." HOWEVER, MONTERROSA FIRST POINTS OUT THAT THESE CIVILIANS WERE SUPPORTERS OF THE GUERRILLAS AND TRAVELED WITH THEM.

4. DICKEY TOLD POLCOUNS JUNE 16 THAT HE SUSPECTED THAT THE GUERRILLAS WERE TRYING TO MOVE THEIR CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS AWAY FROM THE ADVANCING ARMY FORCES UNDER ARMED ESCORT. WHEN A PARTY WOULD WALK INTO AN ARMY UNIT, A FIRE FIGHT WOULD BREAK OUT. THE CIVILIANS WERE THE VICTIMS OF THE RESULTING CROSSFIRE. DICKEY, WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH THE GUERRILLAS, SAID THAT WHEN THEY MOVED HIM FROM PLACE TO PLACE, THEY USED JUST THIS SYSTEM. IF HIS ESCORTS HAD RUN INTO GOVERNMENT FORCES, HE COULD HAVE EASILY BECOME ANOTHER VICTIM OF EL SALVADOR'S WAR. DICKEY DID NOT FEEL THAT ANY MASSACRE WAS INTENDED NOR TOOK PLACE. RATHER, CIVILIANS BECAME VICTIMS OF WARFARE BETWEEN TWO ARMED GROUPS.

5. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT HAS PROBABLY NOTICED, EVERY ARMED FORCES OPERATION ALMOST INEVITABLY PRODUCES NEW MASSACRE ALLEGATIONS FROM RADIO VENCEREMOS. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRIZED IF THE GUERRILLAS MAKE FURTHER ALLEGATIONS ONCE THE PRESENT OPERATION IN MORAZAN WINDS DOWN. THIS TIME, THE CHARGES WILL PROBABLY BE DIRECTED

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AGAINST THE A-37 AIRCRAFT WHICH HAVE RECENTLY ARRIVED IN EL SALVADOR. FURTHER, AS THE JULY 28 DATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR EL SALVADOR APPROACHES, WE EXPECT MORE MASSACRE STORIES FROM RADIO VENCEREMOS. THESE STORIES WOULD BE PART OF THE FMLN'S EFFORT TO BLOCK CERTIFICATION. THE TRUTH, IN OUR OPINION, CONCERNING THE "MASSACRE" IN CHALATENANGO IS THAT

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SOME OF THE 135 PEOPLE THE ARMY CLAIMS TO HAVE KILLED WERE INDEED WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THEY WERE PART OF THE GUERRILLA VAN, AND THEY DIED IN A FIRE FIGHT BETWEEN THEIR GUERRILLA ESCORTS AND THE ARMY. WHAT HAPPENED, WHILE TRAGIC, WAS HARDLY A MASSACRE.

6. WE HAD NOT REPLIED TO THE REFTEL ON THE HOPE THAT WE COULD OBTAIN FURTHER DETAILS FROM THE UNIT COMMANDERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CHALATENANGO OPERATION. BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT RETURNED FROM MORAZAN, AND WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN THEY WILL. WE ARE REPORTING WHAT WE KNOW NOW. WE SHALL FOLLOW-UP WITH THESE OFFICERS UPON THEIR RETURN.
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