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Document [redacted] Subject: NICARAGUA/EL SALVADOR TACTICAL UPDATE; 10/10-10/16C  
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SUBJECT: NICARAGUA/EL SALVADOR TACTICAL UPDATE, 10/10-10/16

1. FOLLOWING BETWEEN TEAR LINES IS THE NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR TACTICAL UPDATE FOR 10-16 OCTOBER 1985. IT MAY BE SHARED WITH APPROPRIATELY CLEARED EMBASSY OFFICERS ON A BACKGROUND USE ONLY BASIS. IT DRAWS ON ALL-SOURCE MATERIAL, BUT IS NOT COORDINATED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, AND IS NOT FINISHED INTELLIGENCE PER SE.

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NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR TACTICAL UPDATE  
WEEK OF 10-16 OCTOBER 1985

OVERVIEW

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EL SALVADOR

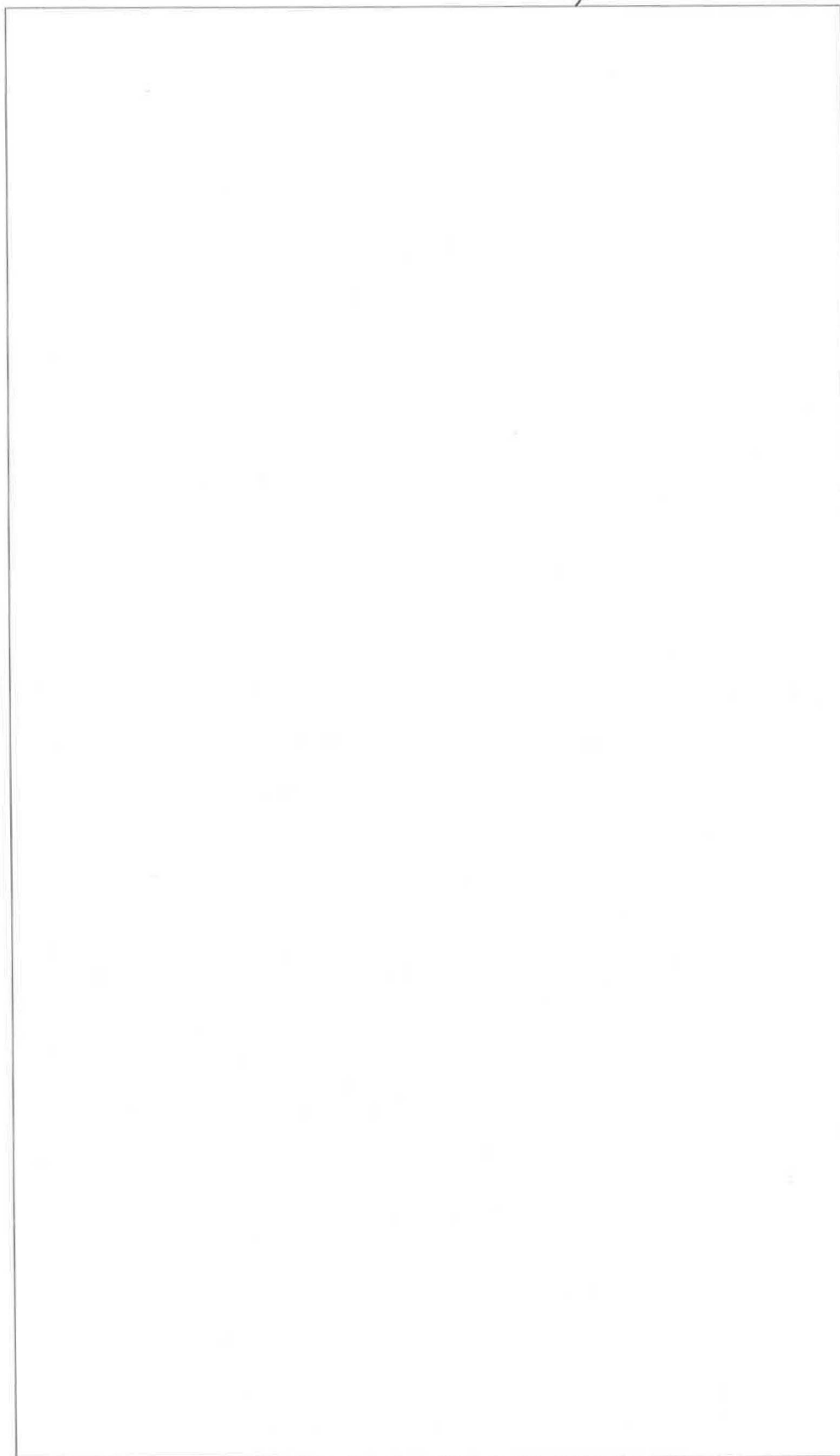
NEGOTIATIONS DESIGNED TO UIN THE RELEASE OF DUARTE'S DAUGHTER REMAIN STALLED. AS THE KIDNAPING ENTERS ITS SECOND MONTH, THE PRESIDENT IS COMING UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE, PARTICULARLY FROM HIS MILITARY COMMANDERS, TO BE TOUGHER WITH THE INSURGENTS. AS A RESULT OF STEPPED UP ECONOMIC SABOTAGE AND GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON MILITARY AND CIVILIAN TARGETS, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, DUARTE PROOABLY WILL ADOPT MILITARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASED COUNTERINSURGENCY INITIATIVES. MILITARY LEADERS ARE PLANNING RETALIATORY ACTIONS, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, IN RESPONSE TO THE ASSAULT ON THE SALVADORAN MILITARY TRAINING CENTER IN LA UNION LAST WEEK, UHICH UAS THE LARGEST REBEL OPERATION IN OVER A YEAR. THERE WAS NO NEW REPORTING ON ARMS RESUPPLY TO THE INSURGENTS. (S/NF [Redacted])

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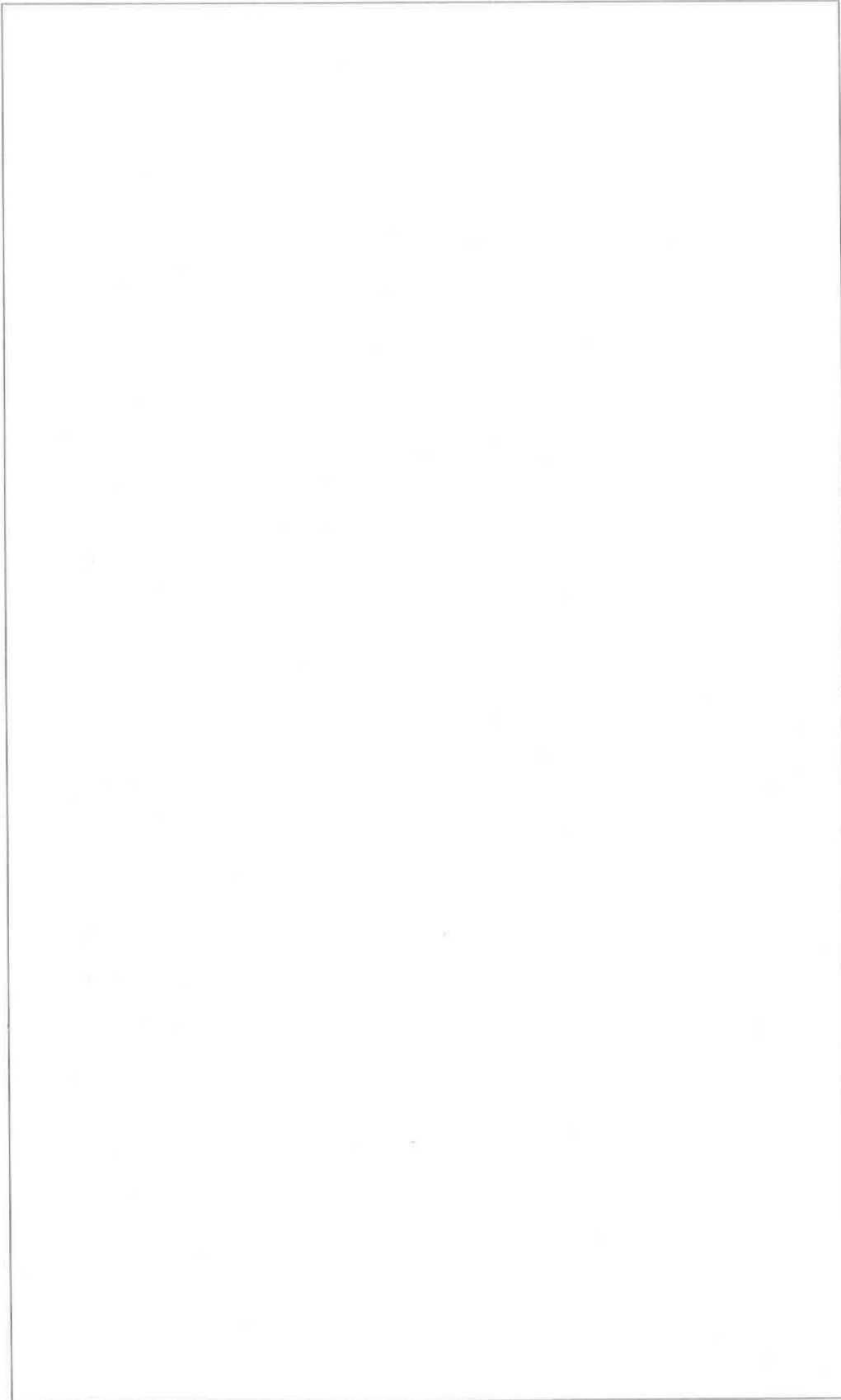
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## SALVADORAN DEVELOPMENTS

## GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

NEGOTIATIONS TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF PRESIDENT DUARTE'S DAUGHTER REMAINED STALLED LAST WEEK. DUARTE CAME UNDER INCREASING CRITICISM FROM MILITARY AND POLITICAL LEADERS OVER HIS PERCEIVED READINESS TO MEET REBEL DEMANDS TO SECURE THE RETURN OF HIS DAUGHTER. ALTHOUGH MOST MILITARY LEADERS REMAIN SYMPATHETIC TO DUARTE'S PERSONAL CRISIS, THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT HE MAY ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT THAT SETS A BAD PRECEDENT AND ENCOURAGES FURTHER KIDNAPINGS. THERE IS PARTICULAR CONCERN THAT DUARTE MAY BACK OFF FROM INSISTING THAT THE KIDNAPED MAYORS BE RELEASED ALONG WITH HIS DAUGHTER.

--COLONEL OCHOA, THE MOST OUTSPOKEN RIGHTWING REGIONAL COMMANDER WHO LEADS THE FOURTH MILITARY ZONE, HAS LED THE CRITICISM, VARIOUSLY THREATENING TO RESIGN, ADVOCATING A "RESTRUCTURING" OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE PRESIDENT, AND DENOUCING THE CURRENT RESTRICTION ON MILITARY OPERATIONS IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY.

M- [REDACTED] HAVE REPORTED THAT OTHER FIELD COMMANDERS OPENLY HAVE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH DUARTE'S CONCILIATORY TACTICS, PARTICULARLY HIS APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO RELEASE 21 CAPTURED GUERRILLAS IN RETURN FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

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[REDACTED] SOME MILITARY OFFICERS ARE PARTICULARLY UPSET WITH THE ACTION OF DEFENSE MINISTER VIDES CASSANOVA. THESE OFFICERS BELIEVE HE IS MORE CONCERNED WITH "POLITICAL" ISSUES, THAT HE HAS LOST TOUCH WITH THE MILITARY, AND THAT HE SHOULD BE REPLACED.

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--THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AS YET, HOWEVER, OF UNIFIED MILITARY OPPOSITION TO THE PRESIDENT, OR THAT THE GRUMBLING IS LEADING SOME OFFICERS TOWARD CONTEMPLATING ACTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. MANY, IN FACT, HAVE DISTANCED THEMSELVES FROM OCHOA WHILE ECHOING HIS CRITICISMS. (S NF [REDACTED])

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ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO GATHER TACTICAL INFORMATION ON MRS. DUARTE'S WHEREABOUTS, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST A RESCUE ATTEMPT IS IN THE OFFING.

[REDACTED] ALSO REPORTS THAT DUARTE'S DAUGHTER WAS BEING HELD ON THE SOUTHERN SLOPES OF THE GUAZAPA VOLCANO AS OF LATE SEPTEMBER.

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[REDACTED] REPORTS THAT FAL FORCES ARE GUARDING MRS. DUARTE AND THAT MINES HAVE BEEN LAID IN THE AREA TO DETER ANY GOVERNMENT RESCUE EFFORT. (S NF [REDACTED] WN)

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THE ARMED FORCES CONTINUED TO SCORE SOME TACTICAL SUCCESSES AGAINST THE REBELS.

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[REDACTED] REPORTS THAT AT LEAST 15 MILITARY PATROLS CONDUCTED ANTI-INSURGENT OPERATIONS IN THE FIFTH

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MILITARY ZONE ON 10 OCTOBER.

--THE SALVDORAN AIR FORCE DESTROYED A GUERRILLA CAMP AND KILLED APPROXIMATELY 20 REBELS IN NORTHERN MORAŽAN ON 2 OCTOBER. (TS [redacted]) (b)(3) NatSecAct

[redacted] THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF PLANS TO SEEK APPROVAL FOR SEVERAL OPERATIONS AGAINST THE PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP) IN REPRISAL FOR THE 10 OCTOBER ATTACK ON THE LIGHTLY DEFENDED MILITARY TRAINING CENTER. (S NF [redacted]) (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

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GUERRILLA ACTIVITY

THE 10 OCTOBER ATTACK ON THE MILITARY TRAINING CENTER IN LA UNION UNDERSCORES THE INSURGENT'S DETERMINATION TO SLOW THE GOVERNMENT'S MOMENTUM AND TO REFOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON REBEL CAPABILITIES.

--APPROXIMATELY 75 GUERRILLAS OVERRAN THE CENTER, KILLING 43 SALVDORAN SOLDIERS AND WOUNDING 75 OTHERS.

[redacted] US MILITARY ADVISERS AT THE TRAINING CENTER WERE THE PRIMARY TARGET. IN THE WAKE OF THE ATTACK, THE GUERRILLAS PUBLICLY REITERATED THEIR INTENTION TO STRIKE AT US MILITARY PERSONNEL. (S S NF [redacted]) (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

REBEL FORCES CONTINUED TO DISRUPT CIVILIAN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMITTED SEVERAL ACTS OF SABOTAGE IN RURAL AREAS.

--THE GUERRILLAS HAVE EXTENDED THE CURRENT "ANTI-HIGHWAY CAMPAIGN" INDEFINITELY. [redacted] THERE HAVE BEEN AN INORDINATELY HIGH NUMBER OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AS A RESULT OF THE MACHINEGUNNING OF BUSES AND INCREASED MINING. (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

[redacted] THAT GUERRILLAS COMMITTED WIDESPREAD HIT-AND-RUN AMBUSHES AND SABOTAGE IN SAN MIGUEL, USULUTAN, LA PAZ, LA UNION, CHALAEANGO, AND SAN VICENTE DEPARTMENTS. (TS [redacted]) (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

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[redacted] REPORT THAT GUERRILLAS HAVE PLANS TO CONTINUE ATTACKS AGAINST MAJOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY TARGETS.

[redacted] THE INSURGENTS INTEND TO DISRUPT THE COFFEE HARVEST BEGINNING IN LATE NOVEMBER AND TO SABOTAGE THE SUGAR CANE HARVEST IN EARLY 1986. (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

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[redacted] REPORT THAT APPROXIMATELY 1,000 GUERRILLAS PLAN TO ATTACK THE MILITARY BASE AT VILLA DOLORES. (b)(1) (b)(3) NatSecAct

--WE HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY OF SUCH REPORTING, BUT SOME MASSING OF GUERRILLAS, PARTICULARLY IN THE EAST, SUGGESTS SMALL TOWNS WILL BE HIT PERIODICALLY TO DEMONSTRATE THE REBEL'S ABILITY TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE. (TS NF [redacted])

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