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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-13 ADS-00 CIAE-00 C-01 DODE-00 HA-09
H-01 INRE-00 INR-01 L-03 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-01
PA-01 PM-01 PRS-01 P-02 SNP-01 SP-01 SS-01
TRSE-00 T-01 USIE-00 /039W
-----48D8C9 050038Z /66

R 041452Z MAR 91
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5580
INFO RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

RELEASED IN FULL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 02681

DEPT FOR ARA/PPC:RMCBRIDE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Oscar Olson, Senior
Reviewer

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, ES
SUBJECT: CRISTIANI'S HELICOPTER OVERFLIES ARENA
- GATHERING -- CROWD ROARS APPROVAL

1. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY: A CROWD, ESTIMATED BY POLOFFS TO NUMBER ABOUT 20,000 PERSONS, FILLED SAN SALVADOR'S PLAZA LIBERTAD, SATURDAY MARCH 2, AS ARENA POLITICIANS STAGED ONE OF THE BIGGEST RALLIES TO DATE OF THE
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ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. APPEALING FOR PARTY UNITY AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, SPEAKERS CALLED ON THE PARTY FAITHFUL TO RALLY AROUND PRESIDENT ALFREDO CRISTIANI AND PARTY LEADER ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON AND VOTE ARENA ON MARCH 10. MIDWAY THROUGH THE PROGRAM, A HELICOPTER, ALLEGEDLY CARRYING PRESIDENT CRISTIANI, CIRCLED ON HIGH WHILE ARENA SUPPORTERS WAVED RED, WHITE, AND BLUE FLAGS FROM SURROUNDING ROOFTOPS. OTHER THAN A FEW BODYGUARDS ARMED WITH HANDGUNS, SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WERE NOT EVIDENT. END SUMMARY

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ARENA RALLIES ITS PARTY FAITHFUL

3. ON THIS, THE LAST WEEKEND BEFORE ELECTION DAY, ARENA SUPPORTERS MARCHED FROM FOUR POINTS OF SAN

SALVADOR TO JOIN THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WAITING IN PLAZA LIBERTAD, AGAIN DEMONSTRATING THE STRENGTH AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ARENA ELECTORAL MACHINE. IF T-SHIRT LOGOS AND OTHER CAMPAIGN MATERIAL CAN BE BELIEVED, ARENA SUPPORTERS FROM ALL 14 DEPARTMENTS WERE REPRESENTED, BUSSED IN ON TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY THE PARTY. FRANCISCO "PATO" GUERRERO, CANDIDATE FOR THE NUMBER ONE POSITION FOR ARENA ASSEMBLY DEPUTY FROM SAN SALVADOR, SPOKE FIRST FOLLOWED BY VICE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ROBERTO ANGULO, NATIONAL ELECTRIC COMPANY (CEL) PRESIDENT FORMER COLONEL SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ, VICE PRESIDENT FRANCISCO MERINO LOPEZ, AND SAN SALVADOR MAYOR ARMANDO CALDERON SOL. BILLED AS A RALLY TO SUPPORT ARENA MAYORAL AND LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES NATIONWIDE, SPEAKERS
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NONETHELESS FOCUSED ON CALDERON SOL'S BID FOR RE-ELECTION AS MAYOR OF SAN SALVADOR.

"PRESENTE POR LA PATRIA"

4. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, SPEECHES GIVEN BY ARENA OFFICIALS CARRIED THE HOPE OF HARMONY, PEACE, AND UNITY, PERIODICALLY INVOKING THE NAMES OF CRISTIANI, D'AUBUISSON, AND CALDERON SOL AS RALLYING POINTS FOR THE PARTY FAITHFUL AND AS EXAMPLES OF ARENA'S PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP. ANGULO CALLED ON SAN SALVADOR'S YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND TO "RESCUE" THE COUNTRY FROM POLITICIANS AND PARTIES (READ CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY -- PDC) INTENT ON DESTROYING ARENA ADVANCES MADE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. EL SALVADOR HAS CHANGED AND IS CHANGING FOR THE BETTER, HE SAID, AND IT IS UP TO THE VOTERS TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM ON TRACK.

5. OCHOA PEREZ, USING MILITARY ANALOGIES, CALLED ON THE AUDIENCE TO DON THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE UNIFORM OF ARENA. THE PDC, HE SAID, BROUGHT ONLY CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT TO THE COUNTRY. SIGNALING THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS IN THE AUDIENCE, OCHOA SAID THAT THE FMLN SUPPORTS AND IS CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PDC, THE DEMOCRATIC CONVERGENCE (CD), AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDN), AND A VOTE FOR ANY OF THOSE PARTIES IS TANTAMOUNT TO AN EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE GUERRILLAS AND A CONTINUATION OF THE WAR.

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6. USING A CAMPAIGN TRICK PERHAPS LEARNED FROM HIS TRAVELS ABROAD, VICE PRESIDENT MERINO CALLED ON DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE AUDIENCE TO RESPOND AS HE CALLED OUT PLAZA LOCATIONS. AS RALLY PARTICIPANTS CHEERED AND CLAPPED, IN TURN, MERINO CALLED ON INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS TO WITNESS THE STRENGTH OF THE ARENA PARTY AND TO REPORT THAT STRENGTH TO THEIR FOREIGN AUDIENCES. ARENA HAS MORE PEOPLE HERE THAN ALL THE OTHER PARTIES COMBINED CAN MUSTER, MERINO SAID.

7. AS THE FINAL SPEAKER, SAN SALVADOR MAYOR CALDERON

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SOL STEPPED UP TO THE MICROPHONE, THE FAMILIAR BEATING

SOUND OF AN ARRIVING HELICOPTER INTERRUPTED THE PROCEEDINGS. CALDERON SOL, SHOUTING INTO THE MICROPHONE TO BE HEARD AND MOTIONING UPWARD, EXCLAIMED THAT HE IS BRINGING GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT CRISTIANI. UNITY AND RECONCILIATION ARE WHAT CRISTIANI AND ARENA STAND FOR, HE SAID, AS THE CROWD

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SEGUED INTO THE FAMILIAR ARENA CAMPAIGN SONG.

8. AFTER CIRCLING SEVERAL TIMES, THE HELICOPTER ALLEGEDLY CARRYING CRISTIANI FLEW OFF AND CALDERON SOL CONTINUED HIS SPEECH. (NOTE: POLICEMEN LATER LEARNED THAT CRISTIANI WAS NOT ON THE HELICOPTER ALTHOUGH NEWS MEDIA PERSONS WERE. END NOTE). HIS MESSAGE FOCUSED ON THE ADVANCES MADE BY HIS ADMINISTRATION TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION, GARBAGE COLLECTION, AND OTHER CITY SERVICES. EVEN THOUGH HE DID NOT GET THE VOTE OF ALL WHO LIVE IN SAN SALVADOR, HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS WORKED FOR EVERY CITY RESIDENT, CALDERON SOL SAID. REPEATING THE THEME ESTABLISHED BY PRIOR SPEAKERS, CALDERON SOL LAMBASTED THE PDC FOR CREATING ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS, MISERY, AND CLASS CONFLICT. ARENA IS AN ALLIANCE OF ALL SALVADORANS, HE SAID, AND A VOTE FOR ARENA IS A VOTE FOR NATIONAL UNITY.

9. COMMENT: IN THIS, ARENA'S CLOSE TO LAST ATTEMPT TO RALLY THE POPULACE AND WIN A MAJORITY OF THE VOTE ON MARCH 10, THE PARTY MADE A GOOD SHOWING. AUDIENCE RESPONSE WAS ENTHUSIASTIC, PARTICULARLY DURING CALDERON SOL'S SPEECH AS HE CALLED FOR AN END TO CLASS CONFLICT AND PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT WILL BENEFIT MARGINAL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION. SPARKED, NO DOUBT, BY "CRISTIANI'S" TIMELY OVERFLIGHT, AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO CALDERON SOL WAS MARKEDLY MORE ENERGETIC THAN TO THE OTHER SPEAKERS. ALTHOUGH NOT BILLED AS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER (THAT HONOR WAS TO GO TO D'AUBUISSON WHO THE AUDIENCE WAS TOLD WAS PREVENTED FROM APPEARING DUE TO OTHER COMMITMENTS), CALDERON SOL

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EMERGED AS THIS RALLY'S FOCAL POINT. END COMMENT

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