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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7599

SECTION 1 OF 6 SAN SALVADOR 2038

NODIS (SPECIAL ENCRYPTION)

E.O. 12865: RDS-4 3/19/98 (WHITE, ROBERT E.) GR-M

TAGS: MASS PINS PINT ES

SUBJ: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR

REF: BROWN-OION SECURE TELCON 3-15-80

2. SUMMARY: THE ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH FOLLOW DO NOT PRETEND TO BE FINAL OR DEFINITIVE. BUT THEY ARE THE ONLY POLICIES WHICH MAKE SENSE TO ME RIGHT NOW. I AM CONVINCED THAT EL SALVADOR IS NOT IN IMMINENT DANGER OF BEING LOST. IF WE USE OUR POWER CORRECTLY I BELIEVE THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE VERY GOOD.

3. IN EL SALVADOR THE RICH AND POWERFUL HAVE SYSTEMATICALLY FRAUDED THE POOR AND DENIED EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE ANY VOICE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THEIR COUNTRY. A REVOLUTION IS NOW UNDERWAY AND WE ARE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS. THERE IS NO STOPPING THIS REVOLUTION; NO GOING BACK. WE CAN INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF EVENTS, HOWEVER, AND TRY TO GUIDE IT INTO CHANNELS WHICH WILL BENEFIT THE SALVADORAN PEOPLE, PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE NICHAGUAN MODEL FOR

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**GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS AND SAFEGUARD OUR SECURITY
INTERESTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.**

•-THE EXTREME OR ULTRA-RIGHT, MADE UP LARGELY OF RICH LANDOWNERS, THEIR PRIVATE ARMIES AND CERTAIN HIGH MILITARY OFFICERS;

--THE REGULAR ARMY AND THE SECURITY FORCES, NATIONAL GUARD, NATIONAL POLICE AND TREASURY POLICE;

--THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE ONLY PARTY REPRESENTED IN THE GOVERNMENT;

--THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND ITS VISIBLE
SYMBOL, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY!

THE CHURCH, ARCHBISHOP ROMERO AND THE JESUITS;
CONSERVATIVE FORCES IN THE CHURCH EXIST BUT WIELD
NO MEASURABLE INFLUENCE;

--THE POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS, THE THREE ACTION-ORIENTED PRESSURE GROUPS RANGING FROM THE LEFTIST BUT RESPONSIBLE FAPU TO THE WILD-EYED, LUNGING LP-28 WHICH OCCUPIES EMBASSIES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS;

--THE THREE FAR LEFT GUERRILLA GROUPS, UNDERGROUND MIRRORS OF THE POPULAR FRONTS, RANGING FROM THE RELATIVELY DISCIPLINED FARN TO THE MURDEROUS ERP.

3. THERE ARE TWO POTENTIAL PLAYERS WHICH ARE NOT NOW

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9. BUT THE YOUNGER OFFICERS OF THE ARMY, REPRESENTED BY JUNTA MEMBER COLONEL MAJANO, ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE WAY THINGS HAVE GONE SINCE THEY OVERTHREW THE FORMER DICTATORSHIP. THEY ARE DETERMINED TO FINISH THE REVOLUTION THEY STARTED BY REASSERTING THEIR POWER. IN MY JUDGMENT THIS IS THE SECTOR THAT WILL DECIDE WHETHER WE WILL WIN OR LOSE THE WAR. AND THIS IS POLITICAL WARFARE, NOTHING SHORT, AND THE ONLY WAY TO AVERT CIVIL WAR. IF OLD GUARD OFFICERS IN CRUCIAL POSITIONS CAN BE EASED OUT AND THE YOUNGER OFFICERS CAN REASSERT THEIR POWER, THEN THE SALVADORAN MILITARY CAN SURVIVE AS AN INSTITUTION AND THIS GOVERNMENT WILL SUCCEED.

18. IF THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN AND IF THE SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY DOES NOT CEASE, ALL THE AGRARIAN AND BANKING REFORMS IN THE WORLD WILL NOT HELP. SOMETIME OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, THE CIVILIAN MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA AND COLONEL MAJANO WILL HAVE TO INSIST ON THE OUSTER OF THOSE IN THE ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES WHO PERMIT AND ENCOURAGE TORTURING AND KILLING INNOCENT CIVILIANS IN A BRUTAL EFFORT TO END POLITICAL ACTION. THE EXTREME RIGHT WILL KEEP ON TRYING TO CONVINCE THE CONSERVATIVE OFFICERS TO RETURN TO THEIR NATURAL ALLIANCE WITH THE RICH AND, IF THEY CAN ENGINEER A COUP TO OUST MAJANO AND THE PDC, WE WILL HAVE A NEW MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT. AT THIS POINT THE WHOLE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE CHURCH, WILL LINK UP WITH THE POPULAR FORCES. MANY OF THE YOUNGER ARMY OFFICERS WILL EITHER BE PURGED OR WILL VOLUNTARILY JOIN THE GUERRILLAS OF THE FAR LEFT. THEN WE WILL BE ONLY A FEW STEPS AWAY FROM THE PEOPLES

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REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR.

11. WHAT CAN WE DO TO AVOID THIS CALAMITY AND BRING
OUR RESOURCES TO BEAR IN SUCH A WAY THAT THIS GOVERNMENT
CAN SUCCEED? FIRST, IT IS VITAL TO UNDERSTAND THAT NO
MODERATE GOVERNMENT CAN SUCCEED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF
ARCHBISHOP ROMMERO AND THE CHURCH.

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BRINGING IN THE MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS IS ALSO IMPORTANT. THEREFORE WE MUST AVOID ANY ACTION THAT WILL ALIENATE THEM IRRETRIEVABLY OR DRIVE THEM FURTHER TO THE LEFT. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE BECOMES SUCH A PROBLEM. THE MTTs WILL BE INTERPRETED BY ALL SECTORS AS SUPPORT FOR THE ARMED FORCES AS CURRENTLY CONSTITUTED AND AS APPROVAL FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF REPRESSION. IF IT IS TRUE, AS I HAVE POSTULATED, THAT AN END TO OFFICIALLY-SPONSORED AND TOLERATED VIOLENCE IS CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE GOVERNMENT THEN WE SHOULD USE ALL OUR INFLUENCE TO BRING THIS TO AN END INCLUDING WITHHOLDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY THE MTTs, TO GAIN OUR OBJECTIVE. I HAVE ALREADY TOLD COLONEL GARCIA HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE TO BRING IN THE MTTs UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS AND HE UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED THE POINT. DR MORALES EHRICH, THE KEY CIVILIAN MEMBER OF THE JUNTA, EXPLICITLY ASKED ME YESTERDAY NOT TO SEND MTTs AT THIS JUNCTURE, ARGUING THAT THIS WOULD STRENGTHEN THE BALEFUL INFLUENCE OF COLONELS GARCIA AND CARRANZA, THE MINISTER AND VICE-MINISTER OF DEFENSE. REGARDING THE ARGUMENT THAT MTTs WILL ASSIST THE ARMY AND NOT THE REPRESSIVE SECURITY FORCES, THIS IS A DISTINCTION MADE BY VERY FEW PEOPLE. IT IS TRUE THAT THERE ARE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE

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ARMED FORCES BUT ALL ARE LED BY ARMY OFFICERS. THERE IS ONLY ONE OFFICER CORPS AND ITS MEMBERS ARE ROUTINELY ASSIGNED TO ANY OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES.

12. GIVEN THE HIGH VISIBILITY OF HELICOPTERS, THE NEED FOR AN ACCOMPANYING MTT AND THEIR OBVIOUS UTILITY IN CARRYING OUT MISSIONS, I AM FORCED BY THE LOGIC OF MY OWN POSITION TO URGE THAT THESE TOO BE HELD UP UNTIL THE WORST OF THE RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE IS BROUGHT TO AN END.

13. WHAT CAN WE DO:

--MAKE CLEAR THAT A MOVE TO THE RIGHT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO US;

--PRESSURE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMY AND THE SECURITY FORCES TO CRACK DOWN ON RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE;

--ENCOURAGE THE SECURITY FORCES TO GO AFTER THE LEFT WING GUERRILLAS AND STOP TORTURING AND KILLING ANY YOUTH BETWEEN 14 AND 25 BECAUSE HE MAY BE INVOLVED WITH LABOR UNIONS, CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS, ETC.;

--ENCOURAGE THE YOUNGER OFFICERS TO BUILD AND CONSOLIDATE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE POINT THAT THEY CAN TAKE OVER COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES;

--DO NOTHING THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE OLDER OFFICERS AGAINST THE REFORM ELEMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY (AGAIN THIS BRINGS UP THE PROBLEM OF OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE). IT IS VITAL

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NOT TO SEND MIXED SIGNALS;

--ENCOURAGE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO
HANG ON AND GRADUALLY EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF
BRINGING OTHER CENTER-LEFT LEADERS INTO THE GOVERN-
MENT;

--CONVINCE THE ARCHBISHOP AND CATHOLIC ACTIVISTS
OF OUR GOOD FAITH IN WANTING TO END THE VIOLENCE;

--WORK TO GET THE SENSIBLE PEOPLE IN THE PRIVATE
SECTOR TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT, SUPPORT THE
REFORMS AND GET BACK TO WORK;

--BEGIN SOON TO SPLIT OFF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE
POPULAR BLOC FROM THE EXTREME LEFT;

--AS SOON AS WE HAVE SOME SEMBLANCE OF A UNITED AND
STRONG GOVERNMENT, BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO ELIMINATE
THE TERRORISTS OF THE LEFT.

14. ABOVE ALL WE MUST RID OURSELVES OF THE NOTION
THAT THE CUBANS ARE PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE HERE.
I DO NOT DOUBT THE REALITY OF CUBAN TRAINING FOR
GUERRILLAS PLUS WEAPONS AND OTHER MATERIEL
VIA HONDURAS AND COSTA RICA. IT EXISTS. BUT IT IS
MARGINAL. EL SALVADOR WILL BE WON OR LOST BY
THE INTERPLAY OF FORCES AND ACTORS PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED.

15. THUS A MAJOR U.S. EFFORT WILL BE NEEDED IF THIS
GOVERNMENT OR A MUTANT THEREOF IS TO SURVIVE AND
SUCCEED. UNLESS WE MOVE FAST AND EFFECTIVELY WITH
PEOPLE AND RESOURCES, THE AGRARIAN REFORM WILL BOG
DOWN AND THE RIGHT WILL STEP UP ITS ATTACKS AIMED AT
RADICALIZING THE LEFT, DISHEARTENING THE JRG AND UNDER-
MINING ITS REFORMS, THE FAR LEFT WILL DO THE SAME,

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INSISTING THAT REFORMS WERE NEVER ANYTHING BUT A COVER FOR REPRESSION DESIGNED TO RESTORE FULL POWER TO THE OLIGARCHY. ULTIMATELY WE WILL FACE A LEFTIST TAKEOVER, PROBABLY USHERED IN BY CIVIL WAR.

16. REMEMBER, WE HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT THIS GOVERNMENT. THE PDC IS A TRUNCATED VERSION OF THE EUROPEAN SPECIES WHOSE LEADERS HAVE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE FOR MANY YEARS AND WHO CANNOT MAKE THE PROPER POLITICAL MOVES BECAUSE THEY LACK THE POWER TO END OFFICIALLY SPONSORED, ENCOURAGED OR TOLERATED VIOLENCE.

17. THE MILITARY IS THE KEY HERE BUT IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER THE YOUNGER OFFICERS CAN MUSTER SUFFICIENT LEADERSHIP, CONVICTION AND FORCE TO REFORM THE MILITARY, RID IT OF REACTIONARY ELEMENTS TIED TO THE ULTRA-RIGHT AND ELIMINATE THE TORTURE AND KILLING OF YOUNG PEOPLE SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEFT WHICH IS RADICALIZING THE SALVADOREAN CAMPESINOS TOWARDS INSURRECTION.

18. THE ONLY WAY I SEE THIS WHOLE CRISIS COMING OUT IN AN ACCEPTABLE FASHION OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD IS AS FOLLOWS: COL. MAJANO SUCCEEDS IN BUILDING UP A CORPS OF PROGRESSIVE OFFICERS WHO GRADUALLY ACQUIRE ENOUGH POWER TO FORCE OUT THE COMMANDERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES, EITHER INTO POWERLESS RETIREMENT OR PRESTIGIOUS POSTS ABROAD. AT THAT POINT, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BECOME ACCEPTABLE NOT ONLY TO THE LEFT-LEANING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (WHO QUIT LAST WEEK) BUT TO OTHERS OF THE MODERATE AND NON-VIOLENT LEFT. MEANWHILE, THIS JUNTA OF PROGRESSIVE OFFICERS AND BROAD-BASED CIVILIANS MIGHT SUCCEED IN BRINGING HOME TO THE PRIVATE

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SECTOR THAT THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF PLANTATION LIFE ARE GONE FOREVER AND THEIR FUTURE LIES IN COOPERATING WITH THE NEW LEADERS TO BUILD A JUST SOCIETY.

19. IF SOMETHING LIKE THE FOREGOING DOES NOT HAPPEN, I CAN SEE THE SECURITY FORCES, IMPELLED BY THE LOGIC OF THEIR BRUTALITY AGAINST THE POOR, JOINING FORCES AGAIN WITH THE REACTIONARY RIGHT, THEIR TRADITIONAL HOME, THE ARMY, WHICH PRIZES UNITY, WOULD IN ALL PROBABILITY BE DRAGGED ALONG BY THE NATIONAL GUARD AND POLICE, A GREAT DEAL OF UNSELECTIVE PHOENIX-TYPE KILLING WOULD FOLLOW OVER THE NEXT FOUR TO SIX MONTHS, PROVIDING THE UNTRA-LEFT A FIELD-DAY FOR STIRRING UP

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POPULAR INDIGNATION AND SECURING FOREIGN (READ NICARAGUAN/CUBAN) TRAINING AND ARMS. THEN THE FIGHT WOULD BE ON. I HONESTLY DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THAT SCENARIO. THE LEFT WOULD WIN AND CARRY OUT SAVAGE REPRISALS AGAINST THE RIGHT. IT MIGHT TAKE TIME TO PLAY OUT TO ITS MACABRE CONCLUSION AND WOULD REQUIRE HEAVY CUBAN AND OTHER ASSISTANCE BUT, AS IN NICARAGUA, THERE IS NO WAY THAT A FEW THOUSAND SOLDIERS SIDING WITH THE EXTREME RIGHT COULD HOLD OFF THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE LEFT, FUELED BY A POPULAR INSURRECTION WITH NEW RECRUITS FROM THE ARMY, THE SECURITY FORCES, THE MODERATE POLITICIANS AND THE OPPRESSED PEASANTRY.

20. THIS TELEGRAM ONLY BEGINS THE WORK OF HOW WE MUST BRING OUR RESOURCES TO BEAR IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED. BUT IT IS A BEGINNING. AND IT IS NECESSARY FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION BEFORE I BEGIN TO PRESCRIBE REMEDIES THAT WILL, IF FOLLOWED, REQUIRE THE ALLOCATION OF IMPORTANT RESOURCES. MEANWHILE, I CANNOT STRESS TOO MUCH THE IMPORTANCE OF WASHINGTON DECIDING WHERE EL SALVADOR FITS ON OUR WORLDWIDE LIST OF PRIORITIES SO THAT ALL OF US CAN HAVE SOME IDEA OF THE SHARE OF THE RESOURCE PIE AVAILABLE TO THIS MISSION. WE MUST APPLY THE RESOURCES THAT WILL WORK AND NOT PUT IN THE

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WRONG KIND OF RESOURCES SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY.

21. DEPT HAS REQUESTED A GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR AT THE END OF MY FIRST WEEK ON THE JOB. THIS WILL BE OF NECESSITY A PRELIMINARY AND PERHAPS INCONCLUSIVE EFFORT BUT I WILL OFFER MY BEST GUESS ABOUT WHERE THINGS STAND, WHERE THEY CAN GO, AND WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME. IN ORDER TO ARRANGE THESE VIEWS IN SOME COHERENT FASHION, I HAVE IMPOSED A SOMEWHAT ARBITRARY OUTLINE, AS FOLLOWS.

WHY DOES EL SALVADOR FACE A MARXIST REVOLUTION?

22. THAT IT DOES IS THE MAIN REASON FOR OUR INTENSE CONCERN; WHY IT DOES MUST UNDERLIE ANY PLAN OF ACTION WE DEVELOP. AN EXTREMIST COMMUNIST TAKEOVER HERE, AND BY THAT I MEAN SOMETHING JUST THIS SIDE OF THE POL POT EPISODE, IS UNFORTUNATELY A REAL POSSIBILITY DUE MAINLY TO THE INTENSE HATRED THAT HAS BEEN CREATED IN THIS COUNTRY AMONG THE MASSES BY THE INSENSITIVITY, BLINONESS AND BRUTALITY OF THE RULING ELITE, USUALLY DESIGNATED "THE OLIGARCHY." IT IS HARD TO DESCRIBE THE INJUSTICE THAT PERMEATES THIS SOCIETY. LET ME OFFER A FEW EXAMPLE. MAGNIFICENT SUBURBS FULL OF VILLAS RIGHT OUT OF BEVERLY HILLS ARE FLANKED BY MISERABLE SLUMS RIGHT OUT OF JAKARTA WHERE FAMILIES HAVE TO WALK TWO BLOCKS TO THE ONLY WATER SPIGOT. THE TRADITIONALLY STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN RICH AND POOR HAS BEEN INTENSIFIED DRAMATICALLY IN RECENT YEARS BY THE IMMENSE RICHES THAT HAVE ACCRUED TO THE LAND-OWNING CLASS AS A RESULT OF HIGH PRICES FOR EXPORT

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CROPS -- COFFEE, SUGAR, AND COTTON -- PRODUCED ON THEIR VAST PLANTATIONS STAFFED BY IMPOVERISHED AND LARGELY ILLITERATE DAY LABORERS. MEANWHILE, THE CITIES HAVE BEEN FLOODED WITH THE POOREST AND MOST DEPRESSED CAMPESEINOS WHO ARE FLEEING OVERPOPULATION AND RURAL POVERTY IN SEARCH OF WORK. A NEW ELEMENT IN THIS EXPLOSIVE EQUATION IS THE GROWTH OF FOREIGN-FINANCED LIGHT INDUSTRY, CONCENTRATED IN MARGINAL ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS WHERE MINIMUM WAGES ARE PAID TO YOUNG AND OTHERWISE UNEMPLOYABLE SLUM DWELLERS AND WHERE UNIONS ARE RIGOROUSLY PROHIBITED. ANOTHER GROWTH SECTOR HAS BEEN BANKING IN WHICH ENORMOUS SUMS OF MONEY WERE CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF CADET BRANCHES OF THE "14 FAMILIES" AND THEREAFTER FUNNELED INTO OLIGARCHY OPERATIONS IN AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND CONSTRUCTION. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL BANKROLLERS OF THE ULTRA-RIGHT AT THE MOMENT IS ROBERTO HILL, WHO BOASTS THAT MOST OF HIS BANKING FORTUNE CAME NOT FROM HIS FAMILY'S COFFEE PLANTATIONS BUT FROM USAID LOW-COST HOUSING LOANS IN THE ERA OF THE ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS. MUCH OF THE SUMPTUOUS HOUSING IN THE EXCLUSIVE SUBURBS HAS BEEN BUILT WITH THREE PERCENT MORTGAGES FROM THE OLIGARCHY-CONTROLLED BANKS. ALL IN ALL, THIS COUNTRY IS A SOCIAL BOMB THAT HAS BEEN TICKING AWAY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND IS ONLY NOW AT THE POINT OF EXPLOSION.

WHY HAS CHANGE FAILED TO OCCUR?

23. VERY SIMPLY, BECAUSE THE OLIGARCHY AND ITS LIEUTENANTS HAVE STIFLED ALL FORMS OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION FOR DECADES AND RELIED ON MILITARY FORCE AND ULTIMATELY TORTURE AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS TO MAINTAIN AN OPPRESSIVE SYSTEM AGAINST ALL CHALLENGERS. THE CONDUCT OF THE WEALTHY UPPER CLASSES AND THE ACTIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES HAVE CREATED A DEEP RESERVOIR OF HATRED AND FRUSTRATION AMONG LARGE SECTORS OF THE RURAL AND URBAN

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POOR, FEAR OF WHAT THE MASSES MIGHT DO TO THEM HAS IN TURN INDUCED A HIGH DEGREE OF PARANOIA IN THE UPPER CLASSES. ONE OF THE MADDEST INCIDENTS IN RECENT MONTHS WAS A GENERALIZED SHOOTOUT IN THE WEALTHY SUBURBS ON JANUARY 19 WHEN ALL THE HOUSEHOLDERS WERE INVITED TO GO OUT IN THEIR FRONT YARDS AND FIRE OFF SIMULTANEOUSLY ALL THE GUNS THEY HAD ON HAND; THE RESULT WAS SAID TO RESEMBLE WORLD WAR II AND WAS INTENDED TO TERRIFY AND INTIMIDATE THE NEARBY SLUM DWELLERS AND ULTRA-LEFTISTS WHO ARE WORKING TO ORGANIZE THEM FOR REVOLUTION.

24. IT SHOULD BE WELL UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON, GIVEN THIS BACKGROUND, THAT PRESSURE FOR CHANGE IN EL SALVADOR IS INRESISTIBLE. NOR IS IT CUBAN INFILTRATORS OR RUSSIAN ARMS SHIPMENTS THAT HAVE CREATED THIS THREAT OF VIOLENT REVOLUTION BUT RATHER DECADES OF OPPRESSION AND A STUBBORN REFUSAL ON THE PART OF THE ELITE TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS TO THE MASSES. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, WHO IS OPENLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEFT, MAKES THE POINT THAT CHANGE CAN ONLY COME ABOUT HERE THROUGH PRESSURE FROM BELOW AND WHILE HE DEPLORES VIOLENCE HE RECOGNIZES AT LEAST TACITLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO HOPE FOR REFORM NOR ANY POSSIBILITY OF U.S. BACKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE WITHOUT THE CONSTANT THREAT OF MARXIST REVOLUTION. HE AND OTHER MODERATES WHO BELIEVE PROFOUND STRUCTURAL CHANGE MUST COME TO EL SALVADOR KNOW THAT OUR ROLE HERE WILL BE CENTRAL, THAT FAR FROM BEING A POWERLESS OBSERVER THE UNITED STATES HAS TRADITIONALLY CALLED THE TUNE IN EL SALVADOR AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNLESS THE MOST VIOLENT LEFTIST GROUPS TAKE POWER.

25. WHETHER ARCHBISHOP ROMERO LIKES IT OR NOT, THE

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OTHER MOST POWERFUL ACTOR IN EL SALVADOR IS THE ARMED
FORCES, MADE UP OF THE 8,000 MAN ARMY; THE 3,000 MAN
NATIONAL GUARD, THE 4,000 MAN NATIONAL POLICE, THE 2,000
MAN TREASURY POLICE, AND THE TINY AIR FORCE AND NAVY.

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THE SECURITY FORCES, THE NATIONAL GUARD AND POLICE, HAVE BEEN CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE OLIGARCHY FOR GENERATIONS. THE NATIONAL GUARD IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN A KIND OF LANDLORDS' MILITIA IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. ALL THREE SECURITY SERVICES HAVE A VERY BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, MOST OF IT WELL DESERVED. THE WATERSHED DATE IN EL SALVADOR'S RECENT HISTORY WAS OCTOBER 15, 1979, WHEN ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES ACTED ALONE AND ESSENTIALLY WITHOUT CIVILIAN ALLIES TO THROW OUT PRESIDENT ROMERO AND THE MOST CORRUPT COLONELS AND GENERALS IN HIS ENTOURAGE. YOUNGER OFFICERS AMONG THE MILITARY WERE MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COUP AND INSPIRED ITS REVOLUTIONARY MESSAGE THAT PROMISED SWEEPING SOCIAL REFORM, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT. IMPORTANT SECTORS OF THE ARMED FORCES, ESPECIALLY THE HIGH COMMAND AND THE LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND NATIONAL POLICE, HAVE GONE ALONG WITH THE YOUNGER OFFICERS WITH CONSIDERABLE RELUCTANCE AND HAVE GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR SOCIAL REFORM. IT WAS THESE MILITARY SECTORS WHO PLANNED A RIGHT-WING COUP IN MID-FEBRUARY WHEN PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION BEGAN TO BECOME A REALITY. THE THREAT OF A SPLIT IN THE ARMED FORCES BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL OPPRESSIVE ELEMENTS AND THE YOUNGER MORE PROGRESSIVE OFFICERS IS REAL. MAINTAINING THE COHERENCE OF THE

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MILITARY WILL BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE DICHOTOMY IN PHILOSOPHY BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN TENDENCIES IN THE OFFICE CORPS. IT IS A FACT, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN THE SEARCH FOR A MODERATE SOLUTION. IF THE ARMED FORCES DISINTEGRATE, THE ONLY OTHER ARMY IN THE COUNTRY BELONGS TO THE MOST MILITANT AND RADICAL MARXIST REVOLUTIONARIES. THUS, MILITARY UNITY IS AN IMPORTANT DESIDERATA BUT CANNOT BE PURSUED AT ALL COSTS IF A POLITICAL SOLUTION, WHICH IS THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE, IS TO BE FOUND FOR EL SALVADOR'S POLITICAL CRISIS.

26. THE FAR LEFT IS THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL MILITARY FORCE IN THE COUNTRY. DEBATE RAGES ABOUT HOW BIG ITS GUERRILLA FORCE IS BUT SOMETHING LIKE THREE TO FIVE THOUSAND ARMED AND RUDIMENTARILY TRAINED LEFTISTS ARE DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE THREE MAJOR TERRORIST ARMIES, THE ERP, FPL AND FARN. AMONG THEM ARE DISCIPLINED, ARMED AND FOREIGN-INFLUENCED ELEMENTS WHO ARE PROBABLY CONSIDERABLY TO THE LEFT OF ANY OF THE SANDINISTA UNITS. THEY ARE ADEPT AT EXPLOITING MASS HATRED IN THIS HATE-FILLED SOCIETY BUT THEY HAVE LOST STRENGTH IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS AND ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS AS THE JRG HAS BEGUN TO IMPLEMENT A SERIOUS REFORM PROGRAM THAT THREATENS IN THE LONG RUN TO DRY UP THE RESERVOIRS OF TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE. ONE OF THEIR MAJOR SOURCES OF THEIR FUNDS, RANSOMS FOR KIDNAPPED OLIGARCHS, HAS EVAPORATED IN RECENT MONTHS WITH THE FLIGHT OF THE BIG RICH TO GUATEMALA AND MIAMI.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES FOR A MODERATE SOLUTION?

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27. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IS CENTRAL BUT CANNOT BE PLAYED WITHOUT DOMESTIC ALLIES, CIVILIAN AS WELL AS MILITARY. IF WE ARE TRULY RESOLVED THAT AN ULTRA-LEFT VICTORY IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE UNITED STATES, THEN WE MUST PURSUE A POLITICAL SOLUTION THAT WILL BRING ABOUT A SHARP DROP IN THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL TENSIONS. WE SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT AN ULTRA-RIGHT VICTORY IS NOT A POSSIBILITY BECAUSE IT IS CERTAIN TO BRING CIVIL WAR AND, AS IN NICARAGUA, END IN THE VICTORY OF THE ULTRA-LEFT BY ACCLAMATION. HERE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE STRUCTURES OF A WESTERN NON-COMMUNIST SOCIETY WOULD BE QUICKLY SWEEPED AWAY WITH NO SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, ONCE THE ARMY AND OWNING CLASSES HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN A CIVIL WAR AGAINST THE MASS OF THE POPULATION. I CAN HARDLY OVEREMPHASIZE THIS POINT: THERE IS NO SOLUTION ON THE RIGHT. THE CONSTANT BLANDISHMENTS TO THE USG FROM THE OLIGARCHY AND ITS ALLIES AMONG THE CASHIRED OFFICERS OF GENERAL ROMERO'S REGIME MUST BE RESISTED WITH UTMOST VIGOR OR WE WILL FIND OURSELVES IN A CATACLYSMIC CIVIL WAR THAT WILL USHER IN THE ULTRA-LEFT.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO STRENGTHEN THE JRG AND WIDEN ITS POLITICAL BASE?

28. AGAIN, A POLITICAL SOLUTION DEPENDS IN GREAT MEASURE ON OUR ALLIES AMONG THE CIVILIANS AND MILITARY IN THE PRESENT JUNTA. THE REFORM PROGRAM HAS NOW BEGUN. AGRARIAN REFORM HAS BEEN A GREAT SUCCESS IN ITS FIRST TWO WEEKS AND CAN ULTIMATELY PROVIDE LAND TO 75 PERCENT OF THE FORMERLY LANDLESS PEASANTS OF THE INTERIOR. BANKING REFORM HAS BROKEN THE STRANGLEHOLD OF THE OLIGARCHY ON NATIONAL FINANCE. LABOR REFORM WILL RESULT IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF SALVADOR'S LONG IGNORED LABOR CODES AND BRING AN END SWEATSHOP

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CONDITIONS IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, THE SCREAMS OF INDIGNATION FROM THE LANDOWNERS AND BANKERS WILL SOON BE JOINED BY THE OWNERS OF ASSEMBLY PLANTS WHERE 30 PERCENT RETURN ON CAPITAL IS STANDARD AND THREE DOLLARS A DAY WAS CONSIDERED AN AMPLE WAGE. ECANY OF THE LAST GROUP ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS AND WILL BE HEARD FROM IN WASHINGTON.

29. THIS RAISES AN IMPORTANT QUESTION, WHAT DOES THE USG CONSIDER A MODERATE SOLUTION? THE REFORMS PROPOSED BY THE JRG AND ALREADY UNDERWAY WILL RESTRUCTURE SALVADORAN SOCIETY IN FUNDAMENTAL WAYS BUT TOWARD U.S. OR EUROPEAN-STYLE WELFARE CAPITALISM, NOT TOWARD SCANDINAVIAN SOCIALISM AND VERY FAR FROM CUBAN OR EAST EUROPEAN MARXISM, THE DAY OF BARONIAL ESTATES, MILLION DOLLAR VILLAS IN FORTIFIED SUBURBS AND VASTLY PROFITABLE SWEATED LABOR OPERATIONS WILL SOON END IN EL SALVADOR. THAT IS ESSENTIAL IF MARXIST REVOLUTION IS TO BE FORECLOSED. BUT TO BROADEN THE BASE OF THE JRG IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MOVE BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT FROM THE KNIFE-THIN EDGE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS PRESENTLY POISED UPON. THAT MEANS ACCOMMODATING WHAT WE REFER TO AS THE ACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS OF THE RIGHT AND THE ACCESSIBLE ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT; THE JRG'S EFFORT TO OPEN UP A DIALOGUE WITH THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR AND THE CHASTENED FORMER LANDOWNERS SEEMS TO BE PROCEEDING VERY SUCCESSFULLY. AT LEAST SOME OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR OWNERS PROFESS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE REFORMS TO DATE AND SAY THEY WILL STOP THEIR BITTER OPPOSITION TO THE JUNTA. THE NON-VIOLENT LEFT IS VERY UNHAPPY WITH WHAT IT SEES AS A DECIDED TURN TOWARD THE RIGHT AND ACCOMMODATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THEY SEE THE

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RIGHT-WING TERRORISM AND ITS ACCOMMODATION OF THE PRIVATESECTOR AS THE LAST STRAW THAT CAUSED THE LEFT-WING OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO RESIGN IN PROTEST LAST WEEK, THESE RELATIVELY MODERATE LEFTIST ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN VICITHS OF A WELL-FINANCED AND VICIOUS CAMPAIGN OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATION AND BOMBINGS THAT SEEMS DESIGNED TO RADICALIZE THE LEFT IRRETRIEVABLY AND FORECLOSE ANY MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION ON THE PART OF THE JRG.

30. THE IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE JUNTASIS FROM THE ULTRA-RIGHT. BACKED BY THE GREAT FORTUNES OF AT LEAST SOME MEMBERS OF THE OLIGARCHY, AND ABETTED BY THE ACQUIESCENCE AND PARTICIPATION OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, A WAVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MODERATES HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AND IS REACHING A DECISIVE STAGE. THE JUNTA MUST END RIGHT-WING TERRORISM IF IT IS TO WIN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND LURE AWAY FROM THE ULTRA-LEFT THOSE MODERATES WHO WANT TO SEE STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND AN END TO OPPRESSION.

31. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO IN PARTICULAR CONTINUES TO DENOUNCE REPRESSION, THE TERM USED BY EVERYONE ON THE LEFT TO DESCRIBE THREE DISTINCT BUT INTERRELATED CATEGORIES: (1) ULTRA-RIGHT TERRORISM, (2) SECURITY

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FORCES' PARTICIPATION IN THESE OPERATIONS AND (3) EXCESSIVE USE OF VIOLENCE BY THE MILITARY IN RESPONDING TO PROVOCATIONS FROM THE LEFT, POSSIBLY ENGINEERED BY THE ULTRA-LEFT TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE OF MASSACRE.

32. THE DAILY TOTAL OF DEAD, MANY AMONG THEM TEENAGERS BEARING MARKS OF BRUTAL TORTURE, RESULT FROM RIGHT-WING TERRORISM BUT THEY ARE EASILY CONFUSED WITH VICTIMS OF UNDISCIPLINED OR PURPOSELY BRUTAL SECURITY OPERATIONS. WHATEVER THE ROLE OF THE HIGH COMMAND IN THIS MEXTURE OF TERRORISM AND INDISCIPLINE, THE REPUTATION OF THE JRG IS BEING BLACKENED AND THE MOST SERIOUS DOUBTS ARE BEING RAISED AS TO ITS BONA FIDES HERE AND ABROAD. FOR THE UNTRA-RIGHT, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THESE ACT OF TERROR ARE DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE OR RADICALIZE THE RELATIVELY MODERATE ELEMENTS ON THE LEFT AND PRECLUDE A MODERATE SOLUTION. FOR THE ULTRA-LEFT, THE GOAL IS TO PROVOKE RIGHTIST ASSASSINATIONS OR A WHOLESALE MASSACRE THAT WILL OUTRAGE THE POPULATION AND KICK OFF A NATIONAL INSURECTION. PROBABLY THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO A MODERATE SOLUTION WOULD BE THE ASSASSINATION, WHETHER BY THE UNTRA-LEFT OR BY THE ULTRA-RIGHT OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURE IN EL SALVADOR AND A SYMBOL OF A BETTER LIFE TOTHE POOR.

33. A RIGHT-WING COUP, FOLLOWED BY AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN OF ASSASSINATION, OR EVEN AN ISOLATED INCIDENT OF TERRORISM AGAINST ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, FOR WHICH THE RIGHT WOULD BE BLAMED, IS LIKEL TO PROVOKE A CIVIL WAR THAT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY END IN A ROUT OF THE RIGHT AND A RADICALIZED LEFTIST TAKEOVER. HENCE, FOR THE MOMENT, THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY OF A

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MODERATE SOLUTION IS THE ULTRA-RIGHT AND ITS ALLIES WITHIN THE HIGH COMMAND WHO ARE PERMITTING THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN OF TORTURE AND MURDER TO CONTINUE.

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO PREVAIL?

34. THE MOST URGENT PRIORITY FOR THE USG AND ITS CIVILIAN/MILITARY ALLIES IN THE JRG IS TO ELIMINATE RIGHTIST ATROCITIES. WE ARE USING EVERY MEASURE OF INFLUENCE AT OUR DISPOSAL TO CONVINCE THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES THAT THESE ACTS MUST END AND THE PERPETRATORS BE PUNISHED. SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS DO NOT EXCUSE THE RIGHTIST CAMPAIGN BUT THEY DO PROFESS A SUSPECT IGNORANCE OF ITS OPERATIONS THAT IS FAR FROM REASSURING. SEVERAL RECENT BOMBINGS, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE ARCHBISHOP'S RADIO STATION AND THE ONE SUNDAY NIGHT AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, BEAR ALL THE SARMARKS OF A HIGHLY TRAINED PROFESSIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE TOLD ME THAT ANTI-CASTRO CUBANS MAY BE OPERATING HERE AS HIRED MERCENARIES OF THE OLIGARCHY. EVERY RESOURCE WE POSSES MUST BE USED TO STOP RIGHTIST TERRORISM BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST PROXIMATE CAUSE OF CIVIL WAR IN EL SALVADOR.

35. OUR NEXT PRIORITY IS TO CONVINCE THE MORE INTELLIGENT AND FAR-SIGHED AMONG THE PRIVATE SECTOR THAT THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THEM IN BLIND REACTION AND THAT THEY MUST COOPERATE WITH THE JRG IN ITS REFORM PROGRAM IF A NON-COMMUNIST EL SALVADOR IS TO SURVIVE. WE SEE ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT THIS REALIZATION IS DAWNING ON SOME OF THE ENTREPRENEURS AND EVEN A FEW OF THE FORMER LANDOWNERS AND BANKERS. IT IS AMONG THESE PEOPLE AND THE SMALL MIDDLE-CLASS NOW SIDING WITH THE OLIGARCHY OUT OF FEAR OF COMMUNISM THAT ALL THE EXPERTISE IS LOCATED. TOGETHER THEY WILL BE CRUCIAL TO FUTURE

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HERE. THUS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE JRG BEGIN TO COOPT THESE ENTREPRENEURS AND TECHNICIANS. NOW THAT THE MAIN REFORM MEASURES ARE IN PLACE, AND THE RIGHT HAS BEEN PRESENTED WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI, IT IS POSSIBLE TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THEM WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE CHANCES FOR PROGRESS OR ALIENATING THE MODERATE LEFT. THE TIME HAS COME, THEREFORE, TO APPROACH THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL CLASSES TO SEEK THEIR COOPERATION. THE U.S. EMBASSY CAN BE A USEFUL BROKER IN THIS PROCESS BECAUSE OF ITS LONG IDENTIFICATION WITH THEM.

36. OUR ROLE WILL BE CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT IN THE EFFORT TO OPEN UP A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE JUNTA AND THE NON-VIOLENT SECTIONS ON THE LEFT. THESE ARE MADE UP LARGELY OF THE LEFT-WING OF THE POC, THE SOCIALIST MNR, THE TRADITIONAL COMMUNIST UDN AND THE MASS ORGANIZATION OF THE LOWER MIDDLE CLASSES AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA, FAPU. THE KEY TO A DIALOGUE WITH THIS IMPORTANT GROUPING IS ARCHBISHOP ROMERO. THE POC HAS SOUGHT HIS HELP IN THIS ENDEAVOR BUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE LEFT-WING OF THE PARTY WILL SEVERELY COMPLICATE A MOVE TOWARD THE MORE MODERATE LEFT. BEFORE ANYTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ON THIS SCORE, HOWEVER, AN END TO THE WORST VIOLENCE ON THE RIGHT AND AMONG THE SECURITY FORCES IS ESSENTIAL.

37. WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IS A COMPLEX AND DELICATE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING FOR THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES IN THE JRG. OUR OBJECTIVE MUST BE TO RESTRUCTURE THIS FEUDAL SOCIETY ALONG WESTERN LINES, THAT IS TO SAY ALONG LINES OF MODERNIZING THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WHERE A MODERATE SOLUTION HAS BEEN FOUND BY COMPROMISE AND

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POLITICAL SAGACITY; PORTUGAL, GREECE, MALAYSIA, AND SINGAPORE ARE POSSIBLE ROLE MODELS. THE ALTERNATIVE IS NOT, AS THE RIGHT AND ULTRA-RIGHT ARGUE, SOME MILITARY-DOMINATED CONSERVATIVE DICTATORSHIP LIKE CHILE, ARGENTINE OR URUGUAY. RADICALIZATION AND

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MOBILIZATION OF THE MASSES HAS GONE TOO FAR HERE FOR REPRESSIVE MACHINERY TO SUCCEED IN DOING ANYTHING EXCEPT PROVOKE AN INSURRECTION. THE ONLY REAL ALTERNATIVE TO WESTERNIZED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN EL SALVADOR IS A MARXIST DICTATORSHIP ALONG CUBAN LINES. WE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO US. OUR ONLY OPTION, THEREFORE, IS TO WORK FOR A MODERATE SOLUTION AND HAVE THE PATIENCE TO FOLLOW OUR POLICY TO ITS ULTIMATE CONCLUSION, ATTACKS FROM RIGHT AND LEFT NOTWITHSTANDING.

WHAT IS THE RESULT FOR CENTRAL AMERICA IF WE PREVAIL?

38. EL SALVADOR'S EMERGENCE AS A JUST AND RAPIDLY MODERNIZING SOCIETY WILL HAVE A CRUCIAL IMPACT ON THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, NOT LEAST AMONG THEM NICARAGUA. THE DISORDER AND CONFUSION THAT HAS FOLLOWED THE SANDINISTA VICTORY HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF PROFOUND DISCOURAGEMENT TO THE MODERATE LEFT IN THIS COUNTRY AND THE SUCCESS OF A REFORMIST NON-MARXIST GOVERNMENT HERE MIGHT BE DECISIVE TO THE OUTCOME THERE. THE RIGHTIST MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA IS ALREADY QUITE CONCERNED THAT THE "CONTAGION OF SOCIAL CHANGE" (READ LAND REFORM) IN EL SALVADOR MIGHT SPREAD NORTH, SHAKING ANOTHER RETROGRADE STRUCTURE TO ITS FOUNDATIONS. A

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41. WHAT TO DO ABOUT U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS THE MOST DELICATE ISSUE WE FACE. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE JRG BY SUPPLYING NON-LETHAL FMS AND IMET TO THE ARMED FORCES BUT THAT THE MTTs SHOULD BE WITHHELD AT LEAST UNTIL THE WORST VIOLENCE ON THE RIGHT IS BROUGHT TO AN END. WE MUST WORK CAREFULLY TO STRENGTHEN THE CIVILIANS AND YOUNGER OFFICERS AND DO NOTHING TO STRENGTHEN THE TRADITIONALIST MILITARY IN ITS TOLERANCE FOR, OR EVEN ENCOURAGEMENT OF, RIGHT-WING TERRORISM AND BRUTAL ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WE CAN LOSE HERE FAST IF THE RIGHT HAS ITS WAY. THAT MUST BE BLOCKED.

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