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"REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~--WNINTEL-- [REDACTED]

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"COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

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"SUBJ: POSSIBLE CHANGES IN SALVADORAN MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS

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TEXT: 1. ON 18 MARCH 1983 PRESIDENT ALVARO ALFREDO ((MAGANA)) MET WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO ((GARCIA)), VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE COLONEL RAFAEL ((FLORES)) LIMA, AND KEY MILITARY COMMANDERS. AT THIS MEETING, THE MILITARY COMMANDERS TOOK A FIRM POSITION THAT THERE MUST BE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS. THE COMMANDERS AGREED THAT, IF SUCH CHANGES WERE IMPLEMENTED, THEY WOULD SUPPORT GENERAL GARCIA AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE AT LEAST THROUGH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 1983. THE COMMANDERS AGREED TO DROP THEIR OPPOSITION TO GARCIA IN ORDER TO DIMINISH THE CURRENT IMAGE OF DISSENSION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES.

2. IN RETURN FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO GARCIA, THE COMMANDERS STIPULATED THAT CERTAIN CHANGES BE EFFECTED WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. THESE WOULD INCLUDE (1) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF; (2) THE NAMING OF A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF MILITARY

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OPERATIONS; AND (3) AN END TO CRONYISM IN MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS. COMPLIANCE WITH THESE STIPULATIONS WOULD REQUIRE THE REMOVAL OF SOME GARCIA SUPPORTERS FROM KEY MILITARY POSITIONS, AND GARCIA HIMSELF WOULD BE LEFT WITH ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

[REDACTED] WHILE NO FIRM CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED ON THESE PROPOSALS, THE COMMANDERS OPPOSED TO GARCIA'S REMAINING AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE DEMONSTRATED A WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT IMPASSE.)

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3. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING ALSO AGREED THAT THE CASE OF NATIONAL GUARD LIEUTENANT RODOLFO ((LOPEZ)) SIBRIAN WOULD BE RE-OPENED. THEY FELT THAT LOPEZ, IMPLICATED IN THE JANUARY 1981 MURDERS OF TWO U.S. CITIZENS IN THE SHERATON HOTEL IN SAN SALVADOR, SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE JUDICIARY FOR PROSECUTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY ALSO AGREED THAT CAPTAIN (FNU) ((FIGUEROA)) MORALES, SUSPECTED OF BEING IN CHARGE OF A SALVADORAN ARMY UNIT THAT KIDNAPED AND MURDERED SEVENTEEN FARM WORKERS AT A COOPERATIVE IN SONSONATE DEPARTMENT IN FEBRUARY 1983, SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND TURNED OVER TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES, AND THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THESE TWO POLITICALLY IMPORTANT CASES SHOULD BE MADE QUICKLY.

4. ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING LATER CONTACTED ARMY LT. COL. SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ, NOW ASSIGNED TO WASHINGTON, D.C., TO INFORM HIM OF EVENTS AT THE MEETING. ACCORDING TO THIS PARTICIPANT, OCHOA COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NO OBJECTIONS TO GARCIA'S REMAINING AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL PERSONNEL CHANGES WERE EFFECTED. THE PARTICIPANT SAID THAT OCHOA INDICATED THAT HIS PERSONAL CANDIDATE FOR THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POSITION IS AIR FORCE COMMANDER COLONEL JUAN RAFAEL ((BUSTILLO)), AND HIS CHOICE AS CHIEF OF STAFF WOULD BE CURRENT FIRST BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL ADOLFO ((BLANDON)) MEJIA, WHO WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO DIRECT THE ARMED FORCES WAR EFFORTS. THE PARTICIPANT SAID OCHOA FELT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR THESE ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE SENIOR RANKS OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES.

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5. NO FILE. [REDACTED] ALL SECRET.>

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