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SUBJ: EMCFA OFFICER'S COMMENTS ON DISAFFECTION IN THE FOURTH
BRIGADE AND MANAGEABILITY OF MILITARY RESTIVENESS

DOI: 11 OCTOBER 1985

TEXT: 1. ON 11 OCTOBER 1985, SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES JOINT GENERAL STAFF (EMCFA) CHIEF OF OPERATIONS (C-III) LT. COLONEL RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)) COMMENTED TO A COLLEAGUE THAT A SERIOUS PROBLEM EXISTS AMONG THE OFFICERS OF THE FOURTH BRIGADE. HE SAID THAT THIS HAS BEEN CAUSED BY FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER AND COMMANDER OF MILITARY ZONE FOUR COLONEL SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ. PONCE EXPLAINED THAT OCHOA FUNDAMENTALLY DISAGREES WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH PRESIDENT JOSE NAPOLEON ((DUARTE)) IS HANDLING THE KIDNAPPING OF HIS DAUGHTER, INES GUADALUPE ((DUARTE)) DURAN. PONCE SAID THAT OCHOA HAS COMPLAINED TO THE EMCFA ABOUT ORDERS FORBIDDING MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE EASTERN PART OF CHALATENANGO DEPARTMENT. ACCORDING TO PONCE, OCHOA HAS STATED THAT HE CANNOT ACCEPT THE IMPACT OF THIS "POLITICAL DECISION" ON THE MILITARY CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

2. PONCE SAID THAT OCHOA MET WITH CHIEF, EMCFA, GENERAL ADOLFO ONECIFERO ((BLANDON)) ON THE MORNING OF 11 OCTOBER; BLANDON ORDERED OCHOA TO STOP HIS OPEN COMPLAINING AND INCITING HIS OFFICERS AGAINST THE PRESIDENT.

3. PONCE COMMENTED THAT WHILE HE UNDERSTANDS THE OFFICER CORPS' FRUSTRATION OVER PRESIDENT DUARTE'S BEHAVIOR, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION WILL BECOME UNMANAGEABLE BECAUSE OF THE STRENGTH AND RESPECT WHICH GENERAL BLANDON COMMANDS OVER THESE OFFICERS.

4. PONCE ALSO REMARKED THAT THE EMCFA HAS BEEN GIVEN APPROVAL TO PLAN AN ATTEMPT TO RESCUE INES DUARTE. PONCE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF A RESCUE OPERATION AUTHORIZED BY THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT HELP IN REGAINING SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM DISGRUNTLED OFFICERS.

5. PONCE ADDED THAT GRUMBLING IS OCCURRING AMONG OTHER MILITARY CONTINGENTS BUT HAS NOT REACHED THE EXTENT OF THAT IN THE FOURTH BRIGADE. PONCE SAID THAT OCHOA'S FOLLOWERS ARE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY LIMITED TO THE OFFICERS OF HIS OWN BRIGADE. HE ALSO REMARKED THAT DISCONTENT IN OTHER BRIGADES, SUCH AS THE THIRD BRIGADE, IS NORMAL IN VIEW OF THE RIGHTIST POLITICAL TENDENCIES OF SOME OF THE OFFICERS IN THE EASTERN ZONE.