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Intelligence Information Cable

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STATE/INR JCS/MC(DIA) CIA/NMCC
SWS NSA TREAS SOU
(HARD COPIES TO: NSC/S NFAC WHSITRM OCR).



~~Classification Authority: [Redacted]~~

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REPORT CLASS ~~S E C R E T~~ WNINTEL NOFORM [Redacted]

CITE [Redacted]
DIST 30 DEC 81

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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJECT: INSURGENT'S CLAIM OF LACK OF SUCCESS OF EARLY
DECEMBER MILITARY SWEEP OPERATION IN MORAZAN
DEPARTMENT; REESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY
ARMY (ERP) BASE AREAS IN MORAZAN FOLLOWING MILITARY
SWEEP OPERATION.

(DOI: [Redacted])

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SOURCE : SEE BELOW.

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THE EARLY DECEMBER SALVADORAN MILITARY SWEEP OPERATION IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON THE DISPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP), WHICH IS THE GUERRILLA GROUPS THAT IS DOMINANT IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT.

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[REDACTED] THE ERP HAD SEVERAL WEEKS' ADVANCE WARNING THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES PLANNED A SWEEP OPERATION IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT TO ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE CLANDESTINE RADIO STATION, "RADIO VENCEREMOS." THUS, WHEN THE ENCIRCLEMENT OPERATION BEGAN, THE ERP HAD ALREADY DEVELOPED ROUTES OF ESCAPE, HAD CACHED THE "RADIO VENCEREMOS" EQUIPMENT, AND WERE ABLE TO EASILY ESCAPE THE ENCIRCLEMENT.

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3. [REDACTED] THERE WERE FOUR TRANSMITTING SITES FOR "RADIO VENCEREMOS" WHICH WERE DISMANTLED AND THE RADIO EQUIPMENT HIDDEN PRIOR TO THE MILITARY SWEEP OPERATION. THE RADIO DISCOVERED BY THE SALVADORAN MILITARY WHICH WAS SAID TO BE "RADIO VENCEREMOS" WAS ONLY A SHORT-WAVE TRANSCEIVER USED FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHER GUERRILLA UNITS AND NOT PUBLIC BROADCASTS. FOLLOWING THE MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ERP AREAS OF CONTROL, THE "RADIO VENCEREMOS" EQUIPMENT WAS RETRIEVED, AND THE CLANDESTINE RADIO WAS RETURNED TO FULL OPERATION. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: "RADIO VENCEREMOS" WAS BACK ON THE AIR AT LEAST BRIEFLY BY LATE DECEMBER.)

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4. [REDACTED] THE ERP AS WELL AS THE OTHER GUERRILLA GROUPS CURRENTLY HAD LOW WEAPONS INVENTORIES AND THAT ONE REASON THAT THE ERP AVOIDED CONFRONTING MILITARY UNITS WAS THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT FIREARMS. NONETHELESS, [REDACTED] ERP UNITS DID MOUNT SUCCESSFUL AMBUSH OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MILITARY UNITS AND

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WERE ABLE TO CAPTURE ONE RECOILLESS RIFLE AND A "90MM CANNON."
THE ERP UNITS ALSO NOTED THAT THE MILITARY TROOPS APPEARED TO
HAVE A LOW MORALE AND WERE AFRAID TO PRESS FORWARD RAPIDLY
IN THEIR ADVANCE TOWARD ERP STRONGHOLDS. [REDACTED] COMMENT:

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[REDACTED] THE ERP HAS A
LARGE AMOUNT OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION CACHED IN THE SAN SALVADOR
AREA THAT COULD BE SHIPPED TO FIELD UNITS IF NEEDED. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OPERATIONAL REPORTS FROM UNITS IN MORAZAN HAVE NOT
MENTIONED A NEED FOR ARMS OR AMMUNITION.)

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5. [REDACTED]

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6. ON 23 DECEMBER 1981, [REDACTED]

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THE DISPOSITION OF THE ERP IN MORAZAN WAS THE SAME NOW
AS PRIOR TO THE MILITARY OFFENSIVE, WITH THE SAME CAMPS
REOCCUPIED AND CONTROL REGAINED OVER THE SAME BASE AREAS.
THE ERP WAS ABLE TO ELUDE THE MILITARY ENCIRCLEMENT BECAUSE
THE GUERRILLAS KNEW OF THE ATTACK PLAN TWO AND A HALF WEEKS
PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MILITARY SWEEP OPERATION. THE ERP
BELIEVES THAT THE MILITARY WILL INITIATE ANOTHER SWEEP
OPERATION IN MORAZAN DEPARTMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE BECAUSE OF

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FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO
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THE LACK OF SUCCESS IN THE EARLY DECEMBER OPERATION. MEANWHILE,

[REDACTED] THE EPP IS CONCENTRATING ON EXPANDING
ITS AREAS OF OPERATION AND CONTROL IN USULUTAN DEPARTMENT.)

7.

[REDACTED]

8. IN MID-DECEMBER 1981, MID-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS WHO
PARTICIPATED AS FIELD COMMANDERS IN THE MORAZAN SWEEP OPERATION
DESCRIBED THE OPERATION AS INCONCLUSIVE. THE OFFICERS SAID
THAT MILITARY UNITS HAD ALMOST NO DIRECT CONFRONTATIONS WITH
GUERRILLA UNITS. HOWEVER, THE GUERRILLAS CONSTANTLY AMBUSHED
MILITARY UNITS, EFFECTIVELY BOGGING DOWN THE ENCIRCLEMENT
AT CERTAIN POINTS AND ALLOWING THE GUERRILLAS TO ESCAPE.
THE AMBUSH TACTIC HAD A GREATLY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE TROOP
MORALE. ONE OFFICER SAID THAT HIS PERSONNEL PANICKED
WHENEVER THEY RECEIVED FIRE AND WOULD RETURN FIRE BLINDLY
WITH NO FIRE DISCIPLINE. FIELD OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT THE
GUEPRILLAS HAD ADVANCE NOTICE ABOUT THE OPERATION ALTHOUGH
CAMPS DISCOVERED BY MILITARY UNITS APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN
HASTILY ABANDONED LEAVING BEHIND SMALL QUANTITIES OF FOOD,
MEDICINE AND OTHER MATERIALS.

9. [REDACTED] COMMENT: MID-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS BELIEVE

THAT THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG MILITARY RECRUITS IS A MAJOR

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REASON WHY MILITARY SWEEP OPERATIONS ARE GENERALLY INCONCLUSIVE.
OFFICERS MANY TIMES ARE UNABLE TO GET THEIR UNITS TO ADVANCE
AGAINST ENTRENCHED, WELL-DISCIPLINED GUERRILLAS. MID-LEVEL
OFFICER BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION COULD BE REMEDIED BY
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF JUNIOR OFFICERS AND INSTITUTING A
DRAFT TO OBTAIN SOLDIERS FROM OTHER SOCIAL CLASSES.)

10. [] COMMENT: []

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11. []

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12. [] DISSEM: EMBASSY AT SAN SALVADOR. SENT TO

[] USCINCSO (J-2 ONLY).

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REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~ -WARNING NOTICE - INTELLIGENCE
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[] RECORDED REPORTING
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OF OVERALL DOCUMENT.

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