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FM USDAO SAN SALVADOR
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LATER SWELL TO APPROXIMATELY 1,500 AS BUSES BROUGHT IN A MIX OF SEGUNDO MONTES //GEO COORD 1352N 8809W// REPATRIATES AND OUTSIDERS. THE SAME PROPORTION OF PRESS, "INTERNATIONALISTS", HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVERS, AND FRONT GROUP ORGANIZERS GREW WITH THE SWELLING CROWD.

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 15480

NOFORN

CITE: (U) 0160.

SERIAL: (U) IIR 6 829 0181 92.

COUNTRY: (U) EL SALVADOR (ES).

SUBJ: IIR 6 829 0181 92/EL MOZOTE AFTER TEN YEARS (U)

REMOVE

MARKING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL - NOFORN.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 911211.

SOURCES: (U) *[REDACTED]* *(C) s/m*

SUMMARY: (C/NF) ON 911211 RO TRAVELED WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICIAL TO THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE ALLEGED EL MOZOTE MASSACRE. WHILE RO HAS LITTLE DOUBT CIVILIANS WERE KILLED, THE 1,100 FIGURES STRAINS CREDIBILITY. THE BURDEN IS ON THE GOES/ESAF.

TEXT: 1. (C/NF) ON 911211, RO TRAVELED WITH AN AMERICAN EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER TO THE SITE OF THE ALLEGED EL MOZOTE //GEO COORD 1355N 8807W// MASSACRE. THE MOTIVE FOR THE TRIP WAS TO OBSERVE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE EVENT, ORGANIZED BY VARIOUS FRONT AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS.

2. (C/NF) THE EVENT, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AT 1300 HOURS, WAS LATE IN GETTING STARTED. WHEN RO AND POLITICAL OFFICER ARRIVED AT THE SITE AT 1500 HOURS, THERE WERE ONLY APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE GATHERED. THIS WAS A SIGNIFICANT FACT FOR RO. OF THE 500, PERHAPS THIRTY WERE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. ANOTHER 10 (APPROXIMATELY) APPEARED TO BE "INTERNATIONALISTS" (IDENTIFIED TO RO AS MEMBERS OF THE SO-CALLED "PEACE BRIGADES" -- A RADICAL SUPPORT GROUP), HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVERS, AND FRONT GROUP ORGANIZERS. IN OTHER WORDS, IN A REMOTE AREA, STILL WITH THOUSANDS OF PEASANTS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE, ORGANIZERS COULD ONLY PRODUCE APPROXIMATELY 300 INTERESTED LOCALS. THE CROWD WAS TO

3. (C/NF) THE STORY OF THE ALLEGED MASSACRE HAS PASSED INTO LEFT-WING FOLKLORE. GUITARISTS PLAYED SONG AFTER SONG RECOUNTING THE ALLEGED EVENT. AND EVERYONE HAD A VERY CONVINCING VERSION OF THE "MASSACRE"; ONLY, EVERY VERSION RECOUNTED DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM EVERY OTHER VERSION. SOME OF THE APPARENT LOCALS RELATED THAT 700 PEASANTS HAD BEEN MASSACRED; OTHERS THAT UP TO 1100 WERE SLAIN. THE ONLY PURPORTED EYEWITNESS TO THE EVENTS OF TEN YEARS AGO SUPPORTED THE 1100 FIGURE AND RECOUNTED THAT THE ESAF HAD ROUNDED UP THE PEASANTS, SEPARATING THE MEN FROM THE WOMEN. MANY VICTIMS WERE BEHEADED ACCORDING TO HER ACCOUNT; AND UP TO 500 OF THE VICTIMS WERE CHILDREN. THIS "EYEWITNESS" WAS ACTUALLY RATHER CONVINCING -- IN A WELL REHEARSED SORT OF WAY.

4. (C/NF) EL MOZOTE ITSELF IS INDEED A "GHOST TOWN". THE VAGUE TOWN SQUARE HAS EVIDENCE OF FOUR STRUCTURES, WHILE ANOTHER FOUR ABANDONED STRUCTURES DEFINE THE OVERGROWN "MAIN STREET". OUTSIDE OF THESE, THERE IS NO FURTHER EVIDENCE OF A TOWN PROPER. ONLY ONE STRUCTURE IN THE SQUARE SHOWED EVIDENCE OF THE BATTLE WHICH PROBABLY TOOK PLACE IN DECEMBER OF 1981. (RO COMMENT: THE IIR RETRANSMITTED AS IIR 6 829 0171 92, DOES INCLUDE A TACTIC ADMISSION BY BIRI ATACATL COMMANDER, LTC JOSE DOMINGO ((MONTERROSA)) THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WERE ONE RESULT OF THE HEAVY CONTACT IN THE EL MOZOTE AREA OVER THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS). THAT SAME STRUCTURE SHOWS EVIDENCE OF TWO POSSIBLE ROCKET HITS, AS WELL AS NUMEROUS .50 CALIBER AND 7.62MM MITS. (MONTERROSA ADMITTED FIRING 90MM ROUNDS INTO THE TOWN).

5. (C/NF) PEASANTS DIGGING THROUGH THE RUBBLE OF THE STRUCTURE, PRODUCED A SIZEABLE BONE FRAGMENT OF UNKNOWN BT

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SPECIES. FURTHERMORE, THEY POINTED OUT CLUMPS OF "HAIR" PURPORTED TO BE FROM THE VICTIMS. *(C) ANA*

ALL OF THIS WAS DONE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. OTHERWISE, THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT TO POINT OUT A MASS GRAVE OR ANY BURIAL SITES. IN FACT NO ONE HAD ANY CONCRETE IDEA OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BECOME OF 1100 BODIES.

COMMENTS: 1. (C/NF) FIELD COMMENTS: LACKING FURTHER AMEMBASSY DOCUMENTATION OF THE EVENT AS REPORTED AT THE TIME, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP AN INFORMED POSITION ON AN ALLEGED MASSACRE THAT IS RAPIDLY BECOMING THE SALVADORAN LEFT'S NEW CAUSE CELEBRE. BUT THERE ARE MANY INCONSISTENCIES AND SEVERE FLAWS IN THE VERSIONS NOW CATCHING THE EYE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. THE LACK OF EYEWITNESS CORROBORATION OF THE EVENT PLACES SERIOUS DOUBT ON THE LEFT'S VERSION OF THE EL MOZOTE STORY. IT IS HARD TO FATHOM THAT SUCH A HEINOUS CRIME AS DESCRIBED WOULD LIE DORMANT IN THE LEFT'S COLLECTIVE MEMORY UNTIL AFTER THE PREVIOUS CAUSE CELEBRE (THE JESUIT CASE) HAD BEEN MORE OR LESS RESOLVED.

2. (C/NF) THE SALVADORAN CONFLICT WAS A DIFFERENT WAR IN 1961, WITH MAJOR ESAF CONCENTRATIONS BATTLING MAIN

ACTION DIA(1) (U,6,7,8)
INFO CJCS(1) NIDS(1) JS(2) USCINCSO LX(1) SECDEF-W(1)
ASD:PA&E/EPF(1) USDP:IA(1) USDP:DSAA(1) USDP:TSC(1)
USDP:PP(1) PIO(1) NWS(1) DAT-5(1) ODB-SC(1)
+OCSA WASHINGTON DC
+CNO WASHINGTON DC
+CSAF WASHINGTON DC
+CMC WASHINGTON DC
+WHITEHOUSE
+MPCFTGEORGEGETAEMD
+CDRUSARSO FT CLAYTON PH
+USCINCSOC INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL
+CDRUSOC FT BRAGG NC//J2//
+SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC
+CIA WASHINGTON DC
+MARCOMINTEC QUANTICO VA
+SAFE

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MCN=91351/05763

TOR=91351/1758Z

TAD=91351/1808Z

CDSN=MI1347

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FORCE GUERRILLA UNITS. SUCH A CONTACT AS PURPORTED IN EL MOZOTE WOULD HAVE ATTRACTED WIDE LOCAL ATTENTION AND PRESUMABLY MANY WITNESSES- RO IS AT THIS POINT CONVINCED THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES INDEED OCCURRED. HOWEVER, EL MOZOTE IS VERY REMOTE. BIRI ATACATL WAS (AND STILL IS) A FOOT MOBILE FORCE. IT STRAINS CREDIBILITY THAT THE ATACATL COULD HAVE MURDERED 700-1100 PEASANTS, AND THEN SOMEHOW DISPOSED OF THE BODIES (NO SMALL LOGISTICS FEAT) WITH FEW WITNESSES TO TELL THE TALE. (RO COMMENT: THE CATHOLIC LEGAL AID OFFICE CLAIMS TO HAVE TESTIMONY FROM A DOZEN OTHER WITNESSES).

2. (REF) ALL OF THIS ARGUES HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF THE GOES AND ESAF DOING ALL IN THEIR POWER TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER. THE INCONSISTENCIES AND FLAWS OF THIS NOW LEGENDARY EVENT CAN AND MUST BE INVESTIGATED, AND, IF NECESSARY, THE UGLY TRUTHS ADMITTED. THE LEFT SEEMS UNWILLING AND INCAPABLE OF PROVING THEIR WILD CLAIMS. THE GOES AND ESAF MUST DISPROVE THEM, OR COPE WITH THE EL MOZOTE LEGEND LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

[REDACTED] N/G

[REDACTED]

ACC: (U) EL SALVADOR (911211).
DISSEM: (U) FIELD: AMEMBASSY EL SALVADOR.
WARNING: (U) REPORT CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL/
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS.
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BT