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MILITARY COMMANDERS' RESENTMENT AND OPPOSITION TO U.S.
GOVERNMENT PRESSURE TO DETAIN CAPTAIN EDUARDO AVILA

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1. DURING A MEETING [REDACTED] SALVADORAN MILITARY
COMMANDERS OPENLY EXPRESSED THEIR RESENTMENT AND OPPOSITION TO

SECRET

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Approved for Release

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PRESSURE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO DETAIN CAPTAIN EDUARDO AVILA. POINTING OUT THAT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING CRIMINAL CASES. THE OFFICERS INFORMED THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL CARLOS EUGENIO ((VIDES)) CASANOVA, THAT THEY COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE PRESSURE ON THE MILITARY TO HOLD AVILA PRISONER. THEY AGREED, HOWEVER, TO SUPPORT VIDES' PLAN TO KEEP AVILA INCARCERATED UNTIL MID-FEBRUARY SO AS NOT TO FUEL THE DEBATE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY IN THE U.S. CONGRESS OVER INCREASED MILITARY AID TO SALVADOR. THE OFFICERS MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT AVILA MUST BE FORMALLY CHARGED AS REQUIRED BY LAW BY MID-FEBRUARY OR SET FREE.

2. THE COMPLAINTS VOICED TO VIDES BY THE COMMANDERS WERE DESIGNED NOT SO MUCH TO PROTECT AVILA AS THEY WERE TO VENT FRUSTRATION OVER CONTINUED U.S. INSISTENCE THAT THE ARMED FORCES TAKE ACTION AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS. LEADING THE OPPOSITION WERE LIEUTENANT COLONEL NAOPLEON HERSON ((CALITTO)), ATONAL BATTALION COMMANDER; LIEUTENANT COLONEL JULIO CESAR ((YANEZ)) LOPEZ, SIXTH MILITARY ZONE COMMANDER AND COLONEL JUAN RAFAEL ((BUSTILLO)), AIR FORCE COMMANDER. BUSTILLO SAID THAT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES HAS NEITHER THE RIGHT NOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO INVESTIGATE CIVIL CRIMINAL CASES. IT WAS SUGGESTED BY THE COMMANDERS THAT VIDES PRESSURE THE SUPREME COURT TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER IN EARNEST AND TO REPLACE RICARDO ((AVILA)) MOREYDA, THE JUDGE IN CHARGE OF THE SHERATON MURDER CASE

AND THE UNCLE OF CAPTAIN EDUARDO AVILA. VIDES ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS MAY BE A VALID COURSE OF ACTION.

3. FINALLY, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF HIS FELLOW OFFICERS, BUSTILLO FURTHER DEMONSTRATED SALVADORAN RESENTMENT TO U.S. ARM-TWISTING TACTICS BY REMARKING THAT U.S. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON SHOULD REALIZE SOMETHING THAT SALVADORANS HAVE KNOWN FOR SEVERAL YEARS; THAT SALVADORAN SOLDIERS ARE SHEDDING THEIR BLOOD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISM SO THAT U.S. SOLDIERS WILL NOT HAVE TO DO THE SAME.