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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: FMLN DECISION TO POSTPONE NATIONAL OFFENSIVE DUE IN
PART TO FRONT GROUPS' INABILITY TO PARTICIPATE;
FRONT GROUP PLANS TO DISRUPT GOVERNMENT

DOI: LATE DECEMBER 1989 - MID-JANUARY 1990

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

FMLN POLITICAL COMMISSION MEMBERS SAID THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE OFFENSIVE WAS BASED IN PART ON NATIONAL UNITY OF SALVADORAN WORKERS (UNTS) DIRECTORATE MEMBER JULIO CESAR ((PORTILLO))'S DECLARATION THAT HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE RANK AND FILE MEMBERS WOULD BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT A NATIONWIDE ARMED OPERATION. MEMBERS WERE UNPREPARED BECAUSE THEY WERE SHOCKED BY THE OFFENSIVE WHICH BEGAN ON 11 NOVEMBER 1989, AND UNTS MEMBERS AND OTHER FRONT GROUP MEMBERS WENT INTO HIDING AND HAVE REFUSED TO EMERGE. THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSED STATE OF SIEGE AND SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS HAVE ALSO HAMPERED THE GROUP'S OPERATIONS.

3. HOWEVER, PORTILLO PROMISED TO SUPPORT THE NEXT NATIONAL INSURRECTION ONCE THE STATE OF SIEGE WAS LIFTED AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS ARE RESTORED. THE UNTS AND OTHER FRONT ORGANIZATIONS ALSO PLANNED TO MOUNT CAMPAIGNS TO DENOUNCE "HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES" BY

THE ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR: THE 31 OCTOBER 1989 BOMBING OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SALVADORAN WORKERS UNIONS (FENASTRAS), WHICH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF UNION LEADERS, INCLUDING FENASTRAS LEADER FEBE ELIZABETH VELAZQUEZ; AND THE 16 NOVEMBER ASSASSINATIONS OF THE SIX CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY JESUIT PRIESTS.

4. PORTILLO CLAIMED THE MPSC BELIEVES THE JESUITS WERE NOT KILLED BY LOW RANKING SOLDIERS, BUT THAT THE KILLINGS WERE ORCHESTRATED BY COLONEL HECTOR HERIBERTO ((HERNANDEZ)), DIRECTOR OF THE TREASURY POLICE, AND ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON)), HONORARY PRESIDENT FOR LIFE OF THE NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE (ARENA) PARTY. THE MPSC PLANS TO PUBLICLY CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF HERNANDEZ AND D'AUBUISSON, IF THEY ARE NOT IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS THE MASTERMINDS OF THE ASSASSINATIONS.

5. [REDACTED] ARMY COLONEL GUILLERMO BENAVIDES AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE ATACATL IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALION HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MURDER OF THE JESUITS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO DATE IMPLICATING EITHER HERNANDEZ OR D'AUBUISSON.)