

UNCLAS 6F

*** BEGIN MESSAGE 52 ***

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WARNING: MONITORED SALVADORAN MEDIA HAVE NOT BEEN OBSERVED TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING

WARNING: MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

SERIAL: PA1911150689

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: CRISTIANI ON MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN KILLINGS

REF: PA1911023289 PANAMA CITY ACAN SPANISH 190032 -- MORE ON MEETING BETWEEN SPANISH OFFICIAL, CRISTIANI

SOURCE: MADRID EFE IN SPANISH 1312 GMT 19 NOV 89

TEXT:

((TEXT)) SAN SALVADOR, 19 NOV (EFE) -- SALVADORAN PRESIDENT ALFREDO CRISTIANI STATED TODAY THAT THE ARMED FORCES HIGH COMMAND "DOES NOT DISMISS" THE POSSIBILITY THAT THOSE WHO INSTIGATED THE ASSASSINATION OF THE SIX JESUITS ON 16 NOVEMBER COULD HAVE BEEN MILITARY.

"THE HIGH COMMAND MEMBERS DO NOT DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PERPETRATORS COULD BEEN ARMY MEMBERS, AND ARE READY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS SO THAT THEY WILL BE PUNISHED," THE SALVADORAN PRESIDENT SAID IN STATEMENTS TO EFE AND OTHER MEDIA.

CRISTIANI, WHO INSISTED ON THE NECESSITY OF "NOT JUMPING TO HASTY CONCLUSIONS," ADDED THAT "THE ARMED FORCES DO NOT WANT THE INSTITUTE, PER SE, TO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT ITS MEMBERS DO AS INDIVIDUALS."

ON 16 NOVEMBER SIX JESUIT PRIESTS, FIVE OF THEM SPANIARDS, WERE ASSASSINATED BY UNIFORMED MEN WHO MACHINEGUNNED THEM IN THEIR RESIDENCE THAT MORNING, WHILE A RIGID CURFEW WAS IN EFFECT IN EL SALVADOR.

THE JESUITS, WHO HAD LIVED IN EL SALVADOR FOR MANY YEARS, WERE STANCH CRITICS OF THE MILITARY REGIMES AND OF THE EXTREME RIGHTIST SECTORS OF THE COUNTRY.

ACCORDING TO CRISTIANI, "THE ARMED FORCES HIGH COMMAND, OF WHICH THE PRESIDENT IS A PART, ARE TOTALLY DETERMINED TO INVESTIGATE AND CLEAR UP THE ASSASSINATION OF THE JESUITS."

INTERVIEWED SHORTLY AFTER MEETING WITH INOCENCIO ARIAS, SPANISH UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, CRISTIANI ASKED THAT SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES, AND GREAT BRITAIN PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION "BY SENDING EXPERTS."

THE SALVADORAN PRESIDENT DESCRIBED THE ATTITUDE OF THOSE PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES WHO HAVE HINTED AT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUSPENDING THE \$1 MILLION DAILY AID GIVEN TO EL SALVADOR AS "VERY SIMPLISTIC."

"I TRUST THAT THIS WILL NOT BE SO AND I HAVE INFORMATION THAT THE LARGE MAJORITY OF U.S. POLITICAL LEADERS DO NOT FEEL THAT WAY," THE PRESIDENT ADDED.

THUS FAR, THE AUTOPSIES PERFORMED ON THE JESUITS BY THREE U.S. PATHOLOGISTS "ARE NOT CONCLUSIVE IN DETERMINING GUILT," THE PRESIDENT ADDED.

CRISTIANI HAD WORDS OF PRAISE FOR IGNACIO ELLACURIA, ONE OF THE JESUITS KILLED, "WHO HAD BECOME A CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSER OF THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT," ACCORDING TO HIM.

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Approved for Release
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DEC 1993

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THE SALVADORAN TELEVISION, WHICH HAS BEEN STATE-CONTROLLED SINCE THE GUERRILLA OFFENSIVE WAS UNLEASHED 1 WEEK AGO, CARRIED SOME CLIPS OF ELLACURIA IN WHICH HE REQUESTED APPLAUSE FOR CRISTIANI AT AN EVENT HELD SOME MONTHS AGO IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR.

SOME SALVADORAN RIGHTIST SECTORS HAVE PUBLICLY ACCUSED THE FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FMLN) GUERRILLAS OF BEING BEHIND THE JESUITS' KILLING.

ELLACURIA TOLD EFE, 4 DAYS BEFORE HE WAS KILLED, THAT CRISTIANI REPRESENTS "THE CIVILIAN SECTOR" OF THE RULING ARENA ((NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE) PARTY, IN CONTRAST WITH TWO OTHERS WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS "MILITARISTS" AND "DEATH SQUAD ORIENTED."

"ARENA, PER SE, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH VIOLENT INCIDENTS," CRISTIANI SAID, COMMENTING ON ELLACURIA'S APPRAISAL AND ADDING THAT "OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE VIOLENT GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY, BUT THEY ARE NOT KNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT OR TO ARENA.

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