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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SOBY BELIEF BY DIRECTOR OF SALVADORAN NATIONAL POLICE  
THAT SALVADORAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE IS CAUSING  
DISSENSION WITHIN OFFICER CORPS THROUGH PUBLIC  
ATTACKS ON CAPTAIN EDUARDO ALFONSO ((AVILA)) AVILA.

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COLONEL ANTONIO ((LOPEZ)) NUILA, DIRECTOR OF THE SALVADORAN NATIONAL POLICE, ADVISED MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO ((GARCIA)) IN MID-OCTOBER 1982 NOT TO PUBLICLY ENGAGE IN ATTACKS AGAINST CAPTAIN EDUARDO ERNESTO ALFONSO ((AVILA)) AVILA, ONE OF THE ARMED FORCES OFFICERS IMPLICATED IN THE 1980 ASSASSINATION OF TWO U.S. CITIZENS EMPLOYED WITH THE AGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD) OFFICES. LOPEZ NUILA'S ADVICE WAS PROMPTED BY GARCIA'S STATEMENT THAT HE INTENDED TO TAKE OUT NEWSPAPER ADS ATTACKING AVILA IN RESPONSE TO NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS SIGNED BY AVILA'S MOTHER WHICH STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR THE "PERSECUTION" OF HER SON. GARCIA TOLD LOPEZ NUILA THAT HE REGARDED THE PRO-AVILA ADVERTISEMENT AS A PERSONAL AFFRONT.

2. LOPEZ NUILA UNSUCCESSFULLY ARGUED WITH GARCIA THAT A PUBLIC DEBATE WITH PRO-AVILA FORCES WOULD ONLY EXACERBATE EXISTING TENSION WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS. HE ADDITIONALLY NOTED THAT A REBUTTAL OF MRS. AVILA'S ADVERTISEMENT WOULD DAMAGE THE IMAGE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AS HE WOULD APPEAR TO BE USING HIS POWERFUL OFFICE TO ATTACK AN OLD WOMAN, WITH THE RESULT THAT PUBLIC SYMPATHY WOULD PROBABLY REST WITH MRS. AVILA. GARCIA RESPONDED THAT, DESPITE THESE ARGUMENTS, HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RESPOND TO A PUBLIC ATTACK ON HIS INTEGRITY.

COMMENT: THE PRO-AVILA, ANTI-GARCIA ARTICLE SIGNED BY MRS. AVILA APPEARED IN THE SALVADORAN PRESS ON 27 OCTOBER 1982. A ONE-PAGE REBUTTAL, ATTRIBUTED TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, WAS CARRIED IN "LA PRENSA GRAFICA" ON 28 OCTOBER AND DETAILED THE EVIDENCE IMPLICATING CAPTAIN AVILA IN THE AIFLD MURDERS.)

3. ON 28 OCTOBER, FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF GARCIA'S ADVERTISEMENT, LOPEZ NUILA CONFIDED TO AN INFORMAL GATHERING OF NATIONAL POLICE CAPTAINS AND MAJORS THAT HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO DISSUADE GARCIA FROM A PUBLIC CONFLICT WITH THE AVILA FORCES. LOPEZ NUILA STATED THAT GARCIA COULD MORE EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH THE AVILA CASE PRIVATELY. THE OTHER NATIONAL POLICE OFFICERS AGREED WITH NUILA AND ONE OFFICER COMMENTED THAT THE INCIDENT WAS YET ANOTHER REASON WHY GARCIA SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS POSITION AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE.