

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] TOR: 101711Z DEC 89 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF EMBASSY TASK FORCE ON THE JESUIT KILLINGS

[REDACTED]

2. SUMMARY: ON 4 DECEMBER 1989 AN EMBASSY TASK FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACT AS A COORDINATING BODY AND FOCAL POINT FOR ALL MISSION INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE MURDERS OF SIX JESUIT PRIESTS AND TWO OTHER PERSONS ON 16 NOVEMBER 1989. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR CALLED IN FROM MEXICO CITY [REDACTED] BEGAN THE WEEK INTERVIEWING NUMEROUS PERSONS WHO ARE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO THE INVESTIGATION. AMONG THOSE INTERVIEWED WERE ROBERTO D'AUBUSSON, COLONEL RENE ((PONCE)) AND SEVERAL OFFICERS ON DUTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE CRIME SCENE ON THE NIGHT OF THE MURDERS. AS OF 9 DECEMBER 1989 THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS, AND A LACK OF EVIDENCE AND WITNESSES HAS PREVENTED THE INVESTIGATION FROM BEING NARROWED TO SPECIFIC SUSPECT/S.

3. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR, ACCOMPANIED BY THE EMBASSY LEGAL ATTACHE, BEGAN THE INVESTIGATION WITH AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)). CRISTIANI MADE IT CLEAR HE WANTED THIS CASE CLEARED-UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WOULD COOPERATE IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. CRISTIANI ALSO REQUESTED THAT THE INVESTIGATION FOCUS FIRST ON THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. HE WANTED THE MILITARY INVESTIGATED FIRST BECAUSE THE PRESS AND CHURCH ARE POINTING THE FINGER IN THAT DIRECTION AND CRISTIANI WANTS THE MILITARY AS AN INSTITUTION CLEARED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ALLOW THEM TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF FIGHTING A WAR. CRISTIANI ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IF THE INVESTIGATION INDICATED MILITARY OFFICERS WERE INVOLVED, THEY WOULD BE PROSECUTED. THERE WILL BE NO COVER-UP.

4. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR LEDED TO PRESIDENT CRISTIANI'S WISHES AND HAS FOCUSED THE INVESTIGATION ON THE MILITARY. HE INTERVIEWED CHIEF OF STAFF COLONEL RENE ((PONCE)) ON 4 DEC AS WELL, AND RECEIVED PONCE'S ASSURANCES THAT THE MILITARY WOULD COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE INVESTIGATION. PONCE ASKED FOR GUIDANCE/ SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHERE THE ARMY SHOULD BEGIN. UNFORTUNATELY, [REDACTED] HAS OBSERVED THAT TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL ANSWER GIVEN TO PONCE ON THIS POINT.

5. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR AND LEGAL ATTACHE INTERVIEWED ALL OF THE UNIT COMMANDERS ON DUTY IN THE AREA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA (UCA) ON THE NIGHT OF THE MURDERS. MILITARY DETACHMENTS SIX AND SEVEN HAD SQUADS IN THE AREA AS DID THE TREASURY POLICE. ALL OF THE SQUAD LEADERS FROM DM-6 AND DM-7 REPORTED HEARING THE GUN SHOTS WHICH WERE PROBABLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE KILLINGS OF THE PRIESTS; BUT THEY ALL SAID THEY DID NOT ASSOCIATE THE SHOTS WITH THE UCA CAMPUS, BUT RATHER THOUGHT THERE WAS A FIREFIGHT NEAR THE AREA. THE TREASURY POLICE UNIT

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WAS STATIONED ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE DEMOCRACY TOWER BUILDING. IN THE FIRST INTERVIEW, THE SQUAD LEADER SAID HE HEARD NOTHING, WHICH RAISED SUSPICIONS BECAUSE HE HAD PERHAPS THE BEST Vantage POINT TO HAVE HEARD THE SHOTS AND EXPLOSIONS AS WELL AS TO HAVE SEEN THE MUZZLE FLASHES BECAUSE THE BUILDING OVERLOOKS THE UCA CAMPUS. THE OFFICER LATER ADMITTED HE WAS ASLEEP AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOTING BUT ONE OF HIS MEN MAY HAVE HEARD THE SHOTS. THIS SECOND OFFICER WAS INTERVIEWED AND CONFIRMED HE HEARD THE SHOTS BUT, AT THE TIME, THOUGHT THEY WERE THE RESULT OF A FIREFIGHT.

6. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR BELIEVES THE MILITARY OFFICERS TOLD THE TRUTH AND WILL BE OF LITTLE USE TO THE INVESTIGATION. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATION UNIT (SIU) SUBSEQUENTLY CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS OF ALL THE MEN POSITIONED NEAR THE UCA ON THE NIGHT OF THE MURDERS AND CONCLUDED THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE ANY OF THEM WERE INVOLVED.

7. AFTERNOON OF 5 DECEMBER THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR AND LEGAL ATTACHE INTERVIEWED MAJOR ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON)) AT HIS OFFICE IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUILDING. ACCORDING TO THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR, D'AUBUISSON EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE INVESTIGATION, AND DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MURDERS. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATION POINTEDLY TOLD D'AUBUISSON THAT HE WAS A PRINCIPAL SUSPECT IN THE CRIME AND WOULD BE INVESTIGATED FULLY. D'AUBUISSON THREW THIS BACK AT THE INVESTIGATOR SAYING THAT HE HAD GONE THROUGH OTHER INVESTIGATIONS; HE MENTIONED THE KIDNAPPING CASE AND ROMERO MURDER SPECIFICALLY, AND HAD BEEN PROVEN INNOCENT IN THOSE CASES.

8. PERHAPS TRYING TO SHOW HIS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE, D'AUBUISSON MADE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHERE THE INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED. HE SUGGESTED THAT A SPECIAL JUDICIAL REVIEW BOARD (SIMILAR TO A U.S. GRAND JURY) BE ESTABLISHED AS A QUESTION WITNESS AND PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMETHING WAS BEING DONE TO SOLVE THIS CASE. WHEN THE INVESTIGATOR AND LEGAL ATTACHE AGREED THIS WOULD BE USEFUL D'AUBUISSON IMMEDIATELY CALLED THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND LITERALLY ORDERED HIM TO ESTABLISH THE REVIEW BOARD. IN RETROSPECT THIS WAS PROBABLY A PLOY ON D'AUBUISSON'S PART TO IMPRESS HIS AUDIENCE. THIS IS THE IMPRESSION BECAUSE, AS OF THIS WRITING, THE REVIEW BOARD IS NOT EVEN ESTABLISHED, MUCH LESS FUNCTIONING.

9. THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR ALSO INTERVIEWED CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALS AT THE UCA. IT BECAME EVIDENT EARLY ON THAT THE CHURCH WILL TAKE ON AN ADVERSARIAL ROLE IN THIS INVESTIGATION. TO DATE THE CHURCH HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO ACCUSE THE MILITARY OF COMMITTING THE CRIME. THEY HAVE ALSO ENGAGED IN OUTRIGHT OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE BY NOT ALLOWING THE UCA NUNS, WHOSE RESIDENCE IS NEXT TO THE CRIME SCENE, TO TESTIFY. THE JESUITS ALSO ARRANGED FOR ONE ALLEGED EYE WITNESS TO BE FLOWN OUT OF THE COUNTRY ON 10 DECEMBER. THIS INFORMATION WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH THE BRITISH CONSUL AND IS NOT CONFIRMED AS OF YET.

10. ON 7 DECEMBER D'AUBUISSON CALLED THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR AND REQUESTED A PRIVATE MEETING. AT THE MEETING, D'AUBUISSON SAID THAT HE HEARD FROM A SOURCE WITHIN THE SALVADORAN AIR FORCE (FAES) THAT FAES GENERAL JUAN RAFAEL ((BUSTILLO)) MAY HAVE HAD A PART IN THE MURDERS OF THE JESUITS. D'AUBUISSON SAID BUSTILLO SPOKE TO HIS SENIOR OFFICERS THE DAY BEFORE THE MURDERS AND STATED AT THAT MEETING THAT THE JESUITS "SHOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF". D'AUBUISSON ALSO IMPLICATED MAJOR ROBERTO ANTONIO ((LEIVA)) JACOB IN THE KILLING, BUT WAS VAGUE ABOUT LEIVA'S ROLE.

11. D'AUBUISSON'S MOTIVES FOR GIVING UP THIS INFORMATION ARE VERY SUSPICIOUS TO SAY THE LEAST. SEVERAL QUESTIONS ARISE AS TO WHY D'AUBUISSON GAVE THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR THIS INFORMATION. FIRST, AND FOREMOST, IS THE QUESTION OF WHY D'AUBUISSON WOULD "RAT" ON GENERAL BUSTILLO WHEN BUSTILLO IS SEEN AS A D'AUBUISSON MAN. IT IS NO SECRET IN THE MILITARY THAT D'AUBUISSON ADVOCATED BUSTILLO FOR THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE POSITION OVER GENERAL LARIOS. ALSO, LEIVA IS KNOWN TO BE OUT OF FAVOR AT THIS TIME, AND JUST RECENTLY WAS REMOVED FROM HIS POSITION AS FAES S-2. BECAUSE OF THESE QUESTIONS AND THE

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[REDACTED]

FACT D'ABUJISSON WAS THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION, THE TASK FORCE DECIDED NOT TO APPROACH BUSTILLO OR LLIVA DIRECTLY, BUT RATHER ALLOW THE INVESTIGATION TO CONTINUE AND SEE IF ANY SUBSTANTIATING EVIDENCE IS FORTHCOMING. AN EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO DISCREETLY DIRECT PONCE'S INVESTIGATION TOWARD THE FAES AS WELL, BUT NOT TO EXCLUDE THE OTHER SERVICES.

12. AS THE WEEK DREW TO A CLOSE A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION SET IN: THE CHURCH IS OBSTRUCTING THE INVESTIGATION, EYE WITNESSES ARE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND AND THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE IN THE WAY OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE. ADD TO THIS A LACK OF A SPECIFIC MOTIVE FOR THE KILLINGS AND AN INVESTIGATION THAT HAS NOT DEVELOPED ANY LEADS WHICH COULD NARROW THE INVESTIGATION TO A SPECIFIC GROUP. ALTHOUGH THE INVESTIGATION IS STILL YOUNG, TIME WILL WORK AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, AND POLITICAL PRESSURE WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE.

13. [REDACTED] WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS [REDACTED] FOR INFORMATION ON THE MURDERS. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE SANITIZED AND PASSED TO THE TASK FORCE FOR FOLLOW-UP. TO DATE THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR HAS BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE.

14. [REDACTED] HAS TASKED [REDACTED] CONTACTS TO DEVELOP INFORMATION AND/OR LEADS WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE INVESTIGATION.

[REDACTED] WHO CLAIMS TO BE IN CONTACT WITH AN EYE WITNESS TO THE MURDERS, THE EYE WITNESS IS TERRIFIED HIS LIFE IS IN DANGER AND REFUSES TO GO TO THE POLICE. [REDACTED] IS ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE [REDACTED] TO INTRODUCE HIM TO THE EYE WITNESS SO THAT [REDACTED] CAN CONVINCE HIM TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY. AT THIS POINT THE ONLY OBSTACLE TO THIS HAPPENING IS THE FACT THE EYE WITNESS DOES NOT TRUST THE U.S. EMBASSY; HE BELIEVES IT IS TRYING TO PROTECT THE MILITARY. [REDACTED] WILL CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO [REDACTED] AND IS OPTIMISTIC [REDACTED] WILL HAVE A PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH THE EYE WITNESS AS EARLY AS [REDACTED] DECEMBER. THE TASK FORCE HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THIS INFORMATION IN GENERAL TERMS AND IS PREPARED TO OFFER THE EYE WITNESS FULL PROTECTION IN RETURN FOR HIS TESTIMONY.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] FEELING IS THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY SINCERELY WANT TO SOLVE THIS CRIME, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THE FACT U.S. AID COULD BE ENDANGERED IF THERE IS A COVER-UP.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]