IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJ: IR 6 829 0075 80 (U)

THIS IS AN INFO REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTEL

1. (U) CTRY EL SALVADOR (ES)

2. (U) TITLE: ARCHBISHOP ROMERO ASSASSINATED

3. (U) DATE OF INFO: 000324

4. (U) ORIG: USDAO SAN SALVADOR ES

5. (U) SOURCE: A. LOCAL MEDIA RADIO STATION YSU

6. B. EMBASSY OFFICIAL

7. (U) SUMMARY: AT 1825L, 24MAR80 THE ARCHBISHOP OF EL SALVADOR ARTURO ARNULFO ROMERO WAS ASSASSINATED AS HE WAS ABOUT TO DEPART THE CHAPEL OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL IN NORTHERN SAN SALVADOR COLONIA OF MIRAMONTE. ROMERO HAD JUST FINISHED SAYING A 'REQUIEM MASS IN HONOR OF THE DECEASED MOTHER OF JORGE PINTO

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PUBLISHER OF LEFT WING NEWSPAPER "EL INDEPENDIENTE" APPARENTLY OPERATING UNDER GUISE OF PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER THE GUNMAN MANAGED TO GET WITHIN POINT BLANK RANGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP, WHETHER FATAL ROUND WAS TRIGGERED BY CAMERA FLASH OR SIMPLY A WELL-COORDINATED 2-MAN EFFORT IS NOT KNOWN, ACCORDING TO SOURCE B FLASH AND GUNSHOT RETORT WERE SIMULTANEOUS. A SINGLE .22 CAL ROUND STRUCK THE ARCHBISHOP IN THE CHEST KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.

8A. (U) DETAILS: NONE
8B. (C) ORIG CMTS: RETALIATION HAS BEEN QUICK. 12 BOMBS EXPLODED SHORTLY AFTER 5 A.M. 25MAR80. AT LEAST 1 OF THE 12 WAS EXPLODED IN UPPER CLASS RESIDENTIAL AREA OF COLONIA ESCALON AT OFFICE OF ITT. ALL REMAINING OFFICIAL AMERICAN DEPENDENTS (21 IN TOTAL) WERE EVACUATED VIA COMMERCIAL AIR TO GUATEMALA. A.M. 25MAR80. PHASE I OF E&G PLAN INITIATED. OBSERVATIONS THIS AM ARE THAT CITY IS TENSE, DOWNTOWN AREA DESERTED DURING NORMAL MORNING RUSH HOUR. ALL SALVADORAN MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN PLACED ON FULL ALERT IN ANTICIPATION OF FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS TO ARCHBISHOP'S ASSASSINATION. SOURCE AT AFGS REPORTS NO INFO RECEIVED AS OF YET ON POSSIBLE DISTURBANCES IN COUNTRYSIDE. IMPOSSIBLE TO PLACE BLAME FOR THIS ATTACK AS BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT COULD OBTAIN GOALS BY CARRYING IT OFF. EL SALVADOR NOW HAS IT'S CHAOS.