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WE UNDERSTAND, AND ARE SYMPATHETIC TO, THE PRESSURES YOU FACE FOR SWIFT AND DECISIVE ACTION IN THE WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S BRUTAL KILLINGS OF THE FIVE SPANISH-BORN JESUIT PRIESTS AND THEIR COMPANIONS.

--WE HAVE NOTED YOUR RECENT STATEMENT CONCERNING THESE SLAYINGS AND CALLING FOR A CEASE-FIRE AND NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FMLN.

--AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE ALSO PUBLICLY CONDEMNED LAST WEEK'S BRUTAL KILLINGS AND HAVE CALLED FOR THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION.

--THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SALVADORAN AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUESTED

YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THIS INVESTIGATION AND HOPE YOU WILL BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE.

--FOR OUR PART, WE WILL PROVIDE ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO ENSURE A SWIFT, COMPLETE AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION. WE WANT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU AND THE SALVADORAN AUTHORITIES TO ASSURE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CRIMES ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

--IN DETERMINING NEXT STEPS, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO TRY TO REINFORCE PROSPECTS FOR A SERIOUS INVESTIGATION OF THE KILLINGS AND TO PROMOTE AN END TO THE VIOLENCE.

--IN OUR VIEW, AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE, MEASURES SUCH AS WITHDRAWAL OF AMBASSADORS, OR SUSPENSION OF ECONOMIC OR HUMANITARIAN AID, WOULD ONLY REINFORCE THE EFFORTS OF THE FMLN GUERRILLAS TO POLARIZE THE SITUATION FURTHER. THE FMLN WANTS TO USE VIOLENCE TO ASSURE THAT THE PROMISE OF THE TELA AGREEMENT IS NOT ACHIEVED.

--CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO ASSURE THAT THESE EFFORTS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL AND THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PROCESS MOVES FORWARD.
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 373874

E.O. 12336: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PIKR, SP, ES
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON SPANISH POLICY TOWARD EL SALVADOR

REF: (A) MADRID 14816, (B) MADRID 14842

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

DEPARTMENT HAS HEARD REPORTS THAT SPANISH AID TO EL SALVADOR HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN THE WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S KILLINGS OF THE FIVE SPANISH-BORN JESUIT PRIESTS IN EL SALVADOR AND THAT FURTHER RETALIATORY ACTIONS ARE UNDER DISCUSSION IN MADRID. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND SPAIN'S DESIRE TO PRESS THE CRISTIANI GOVERNMENT TO MAKE SWIFT PROGRESS IN ITS ANNOUNCED INVESTIGATION INTO THE JESUITS' KILLINGS,

WE ARE CONCERNED THAT TOO MUCH PRESSURE AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT COULD PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE FMLN GUERRILLAS.

3. THE AMBASSADOR IS REQUESTED TO APPROACH SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS IMMEDIATELY TO COUNSEL THAT SPAIN PROCEED WITH CAUTION IN POLICY STEPS TOWARD EL SALVADOR AND TO OFFER OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR PURSUING THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION INTO LAST WEEK'S KILLINGS. YOU SHOULD DRAW ON TALKING POINTS BELOW.

4. TALKING POINTS:

--WE WANT TO STAY IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH YOU ON THE DANGEROUS TURN OF EVENTS IN EL SALVADOR.

--WE ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNED BY THE CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF VIOLENCE, UNDERSCORED BY THE TERRORIST ATTACK AGAINST THE HOTEL IN SAN SALVADOR. THE GUERRILLA OFFENSIVE POSES A VERY SERIOUS SECURITY THREAT, WITH NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE ESQUIPULAS PEACE PROCESS IN EL SALVADOR AND ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION.

--WE SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE CRISTIANI GOVERNMENT TO COUNTER THE GUERRILLA MILITARY THREAT. THE CURRENT FMLN OFFENSIVE, WHILE NOT CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING A MILITARY VICTORY, THREATENS TO REVIVE THE DESTRUCTIVE CYCLE OF FAR LEFT/FAR RIGHT VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR AND THEREFORE COULD SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR FURTHERING THE ESQUIPULAS, TESORO BEACH AND TELA ACCORDS.

--WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS RESPOND WITH CAUTION TO THE RECENT UPSURGE IN VIOLENCE.

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