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ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	INR-07	EUR-00	SS-00	CIAE-00	NSCE-00
	NSAE-00	SSO-00	L-03	PM-10	EAP-00	INRE-00	SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1234
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN//DOI/LAI//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 00917

CINCSO AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR INTAFF

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR
TAGS: DGOV, PTER, MARR, PREL, NU, AR
SUBJ: NOSIGLIA SPECIFIES TIES TO SANDINISTAS
- OF TERRORISTS AT LA TABLADA

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLCOUNS JANUARY 27, INTERIOR MINISTER NOSIGLIA DISMISSED ALLEGATIONS OF JUNTA COORDINADORA INVOLVEMENT WITH MTP AS PART OF A DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM AND HIS GROUP BEING CONDUCTED BY SECTORS OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (SEPTEL). HE SAID IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT A NUMBER OF
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TERRORISTS AT LA TABLADA HAD SERVED IN SANDINISTA ARMY AND POLICE FORCE. NOSIGLIA THOUGHT THAT WHEN FACTS BECAME FULLY ESTABLISHED, PRESIDENT ALFONSIN WOULD ADOPT A TOUGH APPROACH TOWARD NICARAGUA. NOSIGLIA

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ALSO OPINED THAT TERRORISTS HAD ESSENTIALLY SHOT THEIR WAD AT LA TABLADA. WHILE THERE IS STILL GENUINE DANGER OF ISOLATED TERRORIST ACTS, HE DID NOT ACCEPT NOTION THAT ARGENTINA WAS CONFRONTING RECRUDESCENCE OF EXTREME LEFT VIOLENCE SIMILAR TO THAT OF 1970'S. LIKE OTHERS, HE REMAINS UNCERTAIN OF TERRORIST MOTIVES AT LA TABLADA, BUT IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE "HIT-AND-RUN" THEORY. POLCOUNS FOUND NOSIGLIA SOMEWHAT NERVOUS WHEN DISCUSSING POSSIBLE CLANDESTINE DEALINGS WITH MTP. HE MAY WELL BE HIDING A PAST OPERATION WHICH COULD BE EXTREMELY EMBARRASSING TO GOA AND UCR AT THIS TIME IF IT BECOMES GENERALLY KNOWN AND BELIEVED TO BE TRUE. END SUMMARY

3. POLCOUNS MET WITH MINISTER OF INTERIOR NOSIGLIA JANUARY 27 TO DISCUSS ASPECTS OF THE LA TABLADA SITUATION. POLCOUNS NOTED THAT WE WERE TROUBLED BY ALLEGATIONS MAKING ROUNDS, AND NOW BEING VOICED PUBLICLY BY TOP PERONISTS, THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE HAD A HAND IN INSTIGATING EVENTS AT LA TABLADA. ALLEGATIONS WERE OBVIOUSLY POLITICAL DYNAMITE. NOSIGLIA RESPONDED THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE SIMPLY FALSE. HE SAID MENEM AND HIS GROUP WERE LISTENING TO MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS MOUNTING A DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM AND THE JUNTA COORDINADORA. THIS WAS NOT NEW. THE SAME GROUP HAD BEEN OPERATING AGAINST HIM FOR PAST SEVERAL YEARS. NOSIGLIA CALLED MENEM HIGHLY IRRESPONSIBLE, A MAN WHO PERSISTENTLY REPEATS THE LAST THING HE IS TOLD BEFORE A MICROPHONE

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IS PLACED UNDER HIS CHIN. HE NOTED THAT REFORM PERONISTS LED BY CAFIERO WERE ADOPTING A FAR MORE CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE ON THIS QUESTION.

4. NOSIGLIA SAID IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT TERRORISTS AT LA TABLADA HAD STRONG LINKS TO SANDINISTAS. PRODUCING LIST WITH NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS, THEIR ASSIGNMENTS AND WEAPONS ASSIGNED TO EACH, WHICH WAS FOUND ON BODY OF ONE OF TERRORISTS KILLED, NOSIGLIA IDENTIFIED FOLLOWING:

A. "GORDO". ROBERTO SANCHEZ. FORMER VICE CHIEF OF MANAGUA POLICE. APPARENTLY ESCAPED.

B. "NEGRA". SANCHEZ'S WIFE. APPARENTLY ESCAPED.

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C. "CLAUDIA". CLAUDIA LAREU. FORMER OFFICER IN SANDINISTA ARMY. KILLED AT LA TABLADA.

D. "MARTIN". KNOWN AS "EL INGLES". FORMER CAPTAIN IN SANDINISTA ARMY.

POLCOUNS ASKED NOSIGLIA HOW HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT ALFONSI MIGHT REACT TO THIS APPARENT SANDINISTA CONNECTION. MINISTER RESPONDED THAT HE EXPECTED THAT WHEN ALL FACTS ARE AVAILABLE PRESIDENT'S REACTION WOULD BE HARSH ("DURA").

5. ASKED ABOUT ARMS CAPTURED, NOSIGLIA OPINED THAT THIS WAS NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. NONE OF ARMS WERE NEW OR HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED. THE FALS WERE APPARENTLY

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BRITISH MANUFACTURED. THERE WERE ASSORTED RIFLES. ARMY HAD ALSO FOUND SMALL SOVIET AND CHINESE ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND SOME GRENADE LAUNCHERS. INDIVIDUAL TROOPS HAD INDEED WALKED AWAY FROM LA TABLADA WITH SOME OF THESE WEAPONS AS BOOTY, BUT THESE WERE GRADUALLY BEING TURNED BACK TO AUTHORITIES. HE DID NOT THINK THAT RUNNING CHECKS ON SERIAL NUMBERS OF WEAPONS WOULD YIELD ANY BENEFIT IN TERMS OF ESTABLISHING EXTERNAL LINKS TO TERRORISTS.

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6. NOSIGLIA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF CONCERN ELSEWHERE IN GOA THAT LA TABLADA SIGNALLED INITIATION OF MAJOR NEW WAVE OF TERRORIST SUBVERSION IN ARGENTINA. HE KNEW SOME BELIEVED THAT FIGHTING FORCE OF 50-60 IMPLIED A REASONABLY EXTENSIVE LOGISTICAL AND SUPPORT NETWORK. HIS OWN READING OF FACTS AVAILABLE TO DATE IS THAT THIS IS NOT CASE. TERRORISTS AT LA TABLADA APPEAR TO HAVE PUT EVERYTHING THEY HAD INTO THIS EFFORT. ASSASSINATIONS AND ISOLATED BOMBINGS REMAIN EXTREMELY LIKELY IN LA TABLADA AFTERMATH, GIVEN FACT THAT A NUMBER OF TERRORISTS ESCAPED, BUT HIS ANALYSIS IS THAT EXTENSIVE CADRES OF TERRORISTS SIMPLY DO NOT EXIST IN ARGENTINA AT THIS TIME.

7. ASKED ABOUT TERRORISTS' MOTIVATIONS, NOSIGLIA STATED THAT HE WAS STILL WORKING WITH DIFFERENT HYPO-

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THESES, AS WAS EVERYONE ELSE. HE WAS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT GROUP INTENDED A HIT-AND-RUN STRIKE COUPLED WITH PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO BLAME ATTACK ON SEINELDIN AND RICO GROUPS WITH VIEW TO FURTHER DESTABILIZING SITUATION IN ARMY AND COUNTRY AS WHOLE. FROM ANY PERSPECTIVE, GROUP'S ACTION BORDERED ON INSANITY. IT HAD NEVER HAD ANY REALISTIC CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING. PRETENSE THAT HIT-AND-RUN STRIKE HAD BEEN PERPETRATED BY SEINELDIN/RICO SUPPORTERS COULD NOT HAVE CONVINCED ANYONE FOR MORE THAN MATTER OF HOURS. NOSIGLIA THOUGHT IT EQUALLY OFF-THE-WALL FOR TERRORISTS TO HAVE BELIEVED THERE WAS THE KIND OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THEM WHICH COULD HAVE SUSTAINED A PROTRACTED POSITION AT LA TABLADA FOLLOWED BY POPULAR UPHEAVAL.

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8. COMMENT. NICARAGUA ANGLE IS EXTREMELY INTERESTING. IF THESE TIES CAN BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED, THEY WILL OBVIOUSLY HELP TO PERSUADE OTHERS IN LATIN AMERICA ABOUT DANGERS OF SANDINISTA REGIME. POLCOUNS HAD IMPRESSION THAT NOSIGLIA WAS DISTINCTLY UNCOMFORTABLE, EVEN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY NERVOUS, IN DISCUSSING ACCUSATIONS OF POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN JUNTA COORDINADORA AND MTP. GIVEN NOSIGLIA'S RECORD AS A POLITICAL MANIPULATOR WE DO NOT RULE OUT SUCH LINKS FOR PURPOSE OF PERPETRATING POLITICAL DIRTY TRICKS ON OPPOSITION. NOSIGLIA'S VIEW THAT THREAT FROM LEFT WING EXTREMISTS IS LIMITED CONFLICTS WITH OPINION OF OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS, BUT IT IS NOT ILLOGICAL. EVENTS AT LA TABLADA CAUGHT COUNTRY BY SURPRISE. IT IS EASIER TO CAMOUFLAGE A FIFTY MAN ORGANIZATION THAN A FAR LARGER ONE. INDEED, THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN SOME OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AT LA TABLADA WERE NOT HARDENED TERRORISTS BUT RATHER AGITATORS WHO WERE DUPED BY GROUP'S LEADERS. (SEPTTEL)

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