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21256

AMERICAN EMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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 RUESGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE 9708
 RUESAL/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE 8326
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MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 12065: GDS--7/28/88 (ENDERS, TOM)
 TAGS:MPOL, HO
 SUBJECT: POSSIBLE HONDURAN PREEMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST NICARAGUA

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT
2. WE AGREE COMPLETELY WITH YOUR MESSAGES OF CAUTION TO PRESIDENT SUAZO AND GENERAL ALVAREZ. OUR VIEW IS THAT PREEMPTIVE STRIKE IS UNLIKELY TO YIELD SUCCESSFUL MILITARY RESULTS AND, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, WOULD GIVE NICARAGUA THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AS THE AGGRIEVED PARTY.

 PREEMPTIVE STRIKE BY HONDURAS WOULD ISOLATE GOH INTERNATIONALLY AND LIMIT USG OPTIONS BY UNDERCUTTING PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT.
3. RATHER THAN PREEMPTIVE STRIKE WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH MILITARY AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION ADVANTAGES WOULD ACCRUE TO GOH IF HONDURANS WERE TO PLAN FOR RAPID COUNTERATTACK TO NICARAGUAN INCURSION WITH VIEW TOWARD POSSIBLY ISOLATING AND INFLECTING DEFEAT ON AGGRESSING UNITS.
 YOU SHOULD, AS APPROPRIATE, REITERATE THESE POINTS TO SUAZO AND ALVAREZ. YOU MAY TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE STEPPED UP INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION EFFORT AND HOPE TO HAVE FIRST RESULTS JULY 30.
4. FYI: WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF CONDUCTING JOINT COMMAND POST EXERCISE WITH HONDURANS OVER COURSE OF NEXT FEW WEEKS. PURPOSE WOULD BE TO REHEARSE COMPLEX COMMAND AND CONTROL PROCEDURES NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVELY COUNTERING NICARAGUAN INCURSION. OUR PARTICIPATION WOULD ALLOW POSSIBLE TRAINING SPINOFFS AND GIVE US BETTER IDEA ON ROLE WE MIGHT USEFULLY PLAY IN CASE OF INCURSION. REQUEST EMBASSY VIEWS ASAP.
5. YOU SHOULD TELL THE HONDURANS THAT THEY CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT THE \$20 MILLION IN RESOURCES WILL BE FORTHCOMING DESPITE VAGARIES OF CONGRESSIONAL PROCESS. SHULTZ

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Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
 () Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify
 Date 6/2/98 Exemption

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