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 ACTION SS-25

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 FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2432

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EXDIS - PROPER LADY - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

DECAPTIONED

E.O.12356: DECL: 12/10/88  
 TAGS: PTER, GT  
 SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN COUNTER TERRORISM CAPABILITIES

CAPTION: EXCLUSIVE JSOC FOR LTC BRUCE ALLEN

REF: STATE 316707

1. SECRET ENTIRE TEXT.

2. ON PAPER, THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA (GOG) HAS A COUNTER TERRORIST CAPABILITY WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, THE G-2 AND THE ARMY. THE G-2 OPERATIONAL SECTION IS THE PRIMARY COORDINATOR OF COUNTER TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND CALLS UPON THE NATIONAL POLICE AND ARMY TO RENDER SUPPORT UNDER G-2 DIRECTION. WITHIN THE G-2 THERE EXISTS AN OPERATIONS UNIT, HEADED BY MAJOR JOSE ((SOTO)) SALAN THAT RESPONDS TO TERRORIST SITUATIONS SUCH AS EMBASSY SEIZURES. ACCORDING TO TWO G-2 OFFICERS THERE IS NO SPECIAL TRAINING GIVEN TO THIS G-2 UNIT NOR ANY SPECIAL WEAPONS OR EQUIPMENT. THE ONLY ADVANCE PREPARATION THAT EXISTS IS A LARGE MAP OF THE CITY WHICH HANGS ON A WALL AND IS DIVIDED INTO OPERATIONAL SECTIONS.

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2. THE G-2 HANDLED THE SEIZURE OF THE BRAZILIAN EMBASSY WHICH OCCURRED IN MAY 1982. THEIR RESPONSE WAS TO SURROUND THE BUILDING, CUT OFF POWER, WATER

AND FOOD TO THOSE INSIDE AND WAIT WITHOUT ACCENDING TO ANY TERRORIST DEMANDS AS DIRECTED BY PRESIDENT RIOS MONTT. THE SEIZURE WAS RESOLVED BY PERMITTING THE TERRORISTS TO DEPART TO MEXICO, A DECISION MADE BY PRESIDENT ((RIOS)) MONTT, HIMSELF. WHEN ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WAS SEIZED, A G-2 OFFICER RESPONDED THAT ANY COUNTER TERRORIST REACTION WOULD DEVELOP 'ACCORDING TO THE SITUATION.'

3. THE NATIONAL POLICE "CAPABILITY" IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ON-THE-SPOT RESPONSE TO A TERRORIST SITUATION. ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL POLICE HAS A SWAT TEAM, ITS MEMBERS HAVE NO SPECIALIZED TRAINING, EVEN IN MARKSMANSHIP. IN A TERRORIST SITUATION, COUNTER TERRORIST MEMBERS ARE SELECTED ON AN AD HOC BASIS FROM PERSONNEL PRESENT AT THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS. THERE ARE NO PRIOR PLANS. THE ONLY EXPERIENCE THE COUNTER TERRORIST TEAM HAS LIES IN THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE RESPONDED PREVIOUSLY TO A TERRORIST SITUATION-- IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE WHO HAVE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING.

4. A SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTS WITHIN THE ARMY. THERE IS NO SPECIALIZED TRAINING, NO SPECIAL WEAPONS OR EQUIPMENT, NO PRIOR PLANNING, AND COUNTER TERRORIST MEMBERS ARE SELECTED ON THE SPOT FROM VOLUNTEERS AS THE CRISIS OCCURS. NOTE, THE MILITARY HAS A RANGER (KAIBILE) UNIT AT THE MARISCAL ZAVALA BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS WHICH HAS BEEN CALLED A COUNTER

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TERRORIST UNIT. IT IS ACTUALLY A RANGER TYPE MILITARY UNIT, HOWEVER, AND IS NOT SPECIFICALLY TRAINED FOR TERRORIST BARRICADE SITUATIONS, ETC. THIS UNIT HAS RECENTLY BEEN DEPLOYED TO THE PETEN, AND IS NOW OPERATIONALLY UNDER THE POPTUN MILITARY BRIGADE.

5. IN SUMMARY, MISSION BELIEVES THAT NO FORMAL COUNTER TERRORIST CAPABILITY EXISTS WITHIN THE GOG. IF A TERRORIST SITUATION WERE TO ARISE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE BEST BET WOULD BE TO COORDINATE U.S.G. ACTIVITIES WITH G-2.

7. IT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION RECENTLY, HOWEVER, THAT SIX ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE/SECURITY ADVISORS ARE WORKING WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT,

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THE GENERAL ARCHIVES AND SUPPORTING SERVICES PRESIDENTIAL STAFF (AFSAEMP). IT WAS THESE SIX ADVISORS WHO PLANNED THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION RELEASING JORGE MARIO ((RIOS)) MUNOZ, THE NEPHEW OF PRESIDENT EFRAIN ((RIOS)) MONTT, ON 22 NOVEMBER 1982. IT IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS TIME WHETHER THEIR ASSIGNMENTS ARE PERMANENT, OR ON A TEMPORARY BASIS. THERE HAVE BEEN PRIVATE SECTOR REPORTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ADVISERS WORKING WITH THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY IN THE FIELD, BUT NO ELEMENT OF THE MISSION HAS EVER OBTAINED INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE THESE RUMORS. CHAPIN

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