

file: army
massacre

Document No. A-230

Telegram No. 3588, dated November 10, 1981, from the American Embassy San Salvador, El Salvador, to the Department of State. Two pages, originally and currently classified Confidential, denied in full.

This document reports conversations of the American Ambassador with a prominent Salvadoran private citizen and a high Salvadoran official. The contents consist of reports of a particularly violent military operation in El Salvador.

Of five paragraphs, the first consists only of an indication that the entire text is confidential. The second and third paragraphs provide an account by the citizen during conversation with the Ambassador and the above-mentioned Salvadoran official about reports of the military operation and his reaction to it. The fourth and fifth paragraphs consist of a report of the Ambassador's follow-up conversation with the high Salvadoran official the next day on the same topic, the Ambassador's comments about the impact of this incident and a request for any additional information from the Department of State.

The disclosure of the information in the second and third paragraphs would lead to identification of a confidential source who provided information to the American Ambassador on this matter. This disclosure would clearly inhibit this and other sources from confiding in U.S. Government officials in the future, thereby depriving the United States of information important to

developing foreign policy and conducting foreign relations. This would, in turn, damage U.S. national security. This information is currently and properly classified pursuant to sections 1.3 (a) (9), 1.3 (b), and 1.3 8 (c) of Executive Order 12356 and is withheld pursuant to 5 USC 552 (b) (1). See paragraph 8 (c), above.

The disclosure of the foreign government information provided in confidence by the Salvadoran official in the fourth paragraph would cause officials of the Salvadoran Government and other foreign governments to doubt the ability and intention of U.S. officials to preserve the confidentiality of diplomatic exchanges. This would, in turn, inhibit the willingness of foreign officials to provide U.S. officials with information necessary for the effective conduct of foreign relations. This would impair the U.S. Government's ability to conduct foreign relations effectively in El Salvador and thus would damage the national security. This information is currently and properly classified pursuant to Sections 1.3 (a) (3), 1.3 (b) and 1.3 (c) of Executive Order 12356 and is withheld pursuant to 5 USC 552 (b) (1). See paragraph 8 (a), above.

Disclosure of the Ambassador's confidential comments in the fourth paragraph on the Salvadoran official's probable reaction to this incident could enable foreign elements

hostile to U.S. objectives to create friction and misunderstanding that would hamper cooperation between the U.S. and El Salvador in foreign relations matters of common concern, thereby causing damage to U.S. foreign relations and to U.S. national security. The information is currently and properly classified under Executive Order 12356, Sections 1.3 (a) (5) and 1.3 (b) and is withheld from release pursuant to 5 USC 552 (b) (1). See paragraph 8 (b), above.