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Intelligence Information Cable

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CITE [redacted]  
DIST 29 APR 81

25X1, E.O.13526

COUNTRY: GUATEMALA

SUBJECT: [redacted] VERSION OF THE COCOB  
MASSACRE (DOI: 23 APRIL 1981)

SOURCE: [redacted]

1. [redacted] RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT THE GUERRILLA ARMY OF THE POOR (EGPL) UNIT WHICH ATTACKED AN ARMY PATROL NEAR NEBAJ (15.24N, 91.06W) ON 15 APRIL 1981, KILLING ONE OFFICER AND FOUR SOLDIERS, WAS OPERATING OUT OF THE VILLAGE OF COCOB (15.24N, 91.40W). ON 17 APRIL 1981, A REINFORCED COMPANY OF AIRBORNE TROOPS ENTERED THE VILLAGE TO INVESTIGATE. A LARGE AND UNRULY CROWD OF VILLAGERS GATHERED AND SOME PELTED THE PATROL WITH ROCKS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE TROOPS RECEIVED AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE FROM NUMEROUS HOUSES. THE TROOPS RETURNED THE FIRE AND, IN THE CONFUSION OF THE FIRE FIGHT, OPENED FIRE ON THE VILLAGERS. IN THE ENSUING BATTLE MANY VILLAGERS WERE KILLED, AS WERE A NUMBER OF EGP GUERRILLAS. THE AIRBORNE COMPANY SUFFERED ON SOLDIER KILLED AND SEVERAL WOUNDED.

2. ONCE THE VILLAGE WAS SECURED, THE AIRBORNE TROOPS CONDUCTED

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A HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCH AND DISCOVERED WEAPONS, A LARGE QUANTITY OF AMMUNITION, EGP PROPAGANDA, UNIFORMS AND OTHER MILITARY SUPPLIES. INCLUDED AMONG THE ARMS WERE TEN M16 AUTOMATIC RIFLES, ONE .30 CALIBER CARBINE, AND ONE 9MM MAOZEN SUB-MACHINE GUN, PROPAGANDA MATERIAL FOUND REVEALED THAT THE EGP UNIT BELONGED TO THE "JUAN SOUZA FRONT," WHICH HAS RECENTLY BECOME ACTIVE IN THE AREA. IN A SEARCH OF THE AREA SURROUNDING THE VILLAGE, THE TROOPS FOUND A SERIES OF SOPHISTICATED FOX HOLES SIMILIAR TO THE "BPIDER HOLES" USED BY THE VIET CONG. ONE SOLDIER ALMOST FELL INTO THE ENTRANCE OF ONE HOLE AND WAS KILLED AT POINT-BLANK RANGE BY A FEMALE GUERRILLA HIDDEN INSIDE. THE GUERRILLA WAS IMMEDIATELY KILLED BY OTHER TROOPS.

3. [REDACTED] EXPLAINED [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THAT THE VILLAGE WAS TOTALLY UNDER CONTROL OF THE EGP AND THAT THE LOCAL POPULATION APPEARED TO FULLY SUPPORT THE GUERRILLAS. DURING THE BATTLE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE ACTUAL GUERRILLAS AND INNOCENT CIVILIANS, AND ACCORDING

[REDACTED] THE SOLDIERS WERE FORCED TO FIRE AT ANYTHING THAT MOVED. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE GUATEMALAN AUTHORITIES ADMITTED THAT

"MANY CIVILIANS" WERE KILLED IN COCOB, MANY OF WHOM UNDOUBTEDLY WERE NON-COMBATTANTS. THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THIS INCIDENT WILL REFLECT NEGATIVELY AGAINST THE ARMY THROUGHOUT THE AREA.

THE AUTHORITIES POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE EGP APPEARED TO COMPLETELY CONTROL THE VILLAGE, AND ENJOYED THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE

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ENTIRE POPULATION.

ACCOUNT OF THE MASSACRE IN COCOB, AND FOR DETAILS OF A

THE EGP HAS THREATENED TO

TARGET THE FAMILIES OF THE CGG MILITARY IN RETALIATION FOR THE  
MASSACRE.)

4. ACQ: GUATEMALA, GUATEMALA CITY (23 APRIL 1981)

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