

United States General Accounting Office

**GAO**

Report to the Honorable

Alan Cranston, U.S. Senate

December 1992

**EL SALVADOR**

**Efforts to Satisfy  
National Civilian Police  
Equipment Needs**



148109

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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-251492

December 15, 1992

The Honorable Alan Cranston  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Cranston:

We reported in September 1992<sup>1</sup> that the government of El Salvador had not provided sufficient funds to meet the needs of its new National Civilian Police. We also pointed out that, except for \$6 million provided by the United States, international donors had failed to provide promised support. Subsequently, you asked us to determine whether equipment, facilities, and supplies were available in El Salvador to meet the needs of the National Civilian Police. This report addresses (1) whether existing equipment, facilities, and supplies held by the National Police and the El Salvadoran military can be used to meet the needs of the National Civilian Police; (2) the status of equipment provided by the United States to the public security forces over the last several years; and (3) the government of El Salvador's estimates of the costs to provide the needed equipment and facilities.

## Background

A peace agreement signed on January 16, 1992, by the government of El Salvador and the opposition Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front ended 12 years of civil war. The United States and other donors pledged \$800 million to support the peace process. A major aspect of the peace agreement was the dissolution of three existing security forces and the establishment of a new police force. Two of the three security forces have been disbanded. The third force, the National Police,<sup>2</sup> is to remain in existence during a 2-year transition phase to the new police force, called the National Civilian Police.

Under the peace agreement, the National Civilian Police is to be entirely new, with new officers, training, organization, and doctrine, and is to be controlled by civilian authorities independent of the military. It is to be equipped according to traditional civilian police standards. Currently, the National Civilian Police has no equipment although the first members are

<sup>1</sup>Aid to El Salvador: Slow Progress in Developing a National Civilian Police (GAO/NSIAD-92-338, Sept. 22, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>With oversight from the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, the National Police provides for public security only in non-conflictive zones. The U.N. mission provides for public security in the conflictive zones.

graduating from the police academy and are expected to begin their duties in January 1993.

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## Results in Brief

We could not verify the extent to which equipment belonging to the National Police and the Salvadoran military are available to meet the needs of the National Civilian Police; however, we found that generally it is old, inoperable, or in poor condition. Officials we spoke with, corroborated by our own observations, indicated that the few items of equipment they are likely to provide will not meet the needs of the new National Civilian Police. Consequently, much of its needs will have to be met through new acquisitions. The government of El Salvador has budgeted \$14 million for the new police for 1993, but this will be used primarily for salaries and benefits, not new equipment.

The United States provided El Salvador with \$12.86 million in equipment and supplies for public security assistance during the period 1986 to 1991. Handguns, communications equipment, and vehicles account for about 64 percent of this assistance. (See app. I for a listing of items provided.) We found that (1) all 1,000 9-mm pistols provided were accounted for, but only about 12 percent were being used by the National Police; and (2) 297 of the 665 hand-held radios and 23 of the 173 vehicles could not be accounted for.

The budget submitted by the National Civilian Police for 1993 and 1994 shows that the new force requires \$40.3 million for equipment, facilities, and supplies. However, we were told by U.S. officials that the budget is significantly understated and that the new police force may need up to twice this amount. The government of El Salvador has not allocated funds to procure the equipment, facilities, and supplies and the international donor community has not responded to appeals for funding assistance.

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## Equipment May Not Be Available From National Police Inventories

The proposed civilian police budget for 1993 and 1994 did not provide enough information on specific equipment to allow us to compare equipment inventory records maintained by the National Police with the equipment needs of the National Civilian Police. However, our review indicated that some vehicles, radio communications equipment, and handguns could be transferred, but the number that can would not come close to meeting the equipment needs of the National Civilian Police for its first 2 years of operation.

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U.S. officials agreed that existing articles of equipment discussed in this report can serve at least a short-term need for the National Civilian Police. However, we were cautioned that used equipment may cause long-term support problems and compatibility problems.

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## Vehicles

According to its budget, the National Civilian Police need 1,000 vehicles. The National Police have 208 vehicles in inventory but only 160 are considered by U.S. and Salvadoran officials to be operational due largely to spare parts shortages. According to these officials, many vehicles that are operational are in poor condition and the Salvadorans cannibalize other vehicles to keep them running. In addition, some vehicles are used sparingly because of their poor gas mileage. U.S. officials we spoke with believed that while some vehicles may be transferable, such transfers may create longer-term maintenance and general support problems for the force.

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## Radio Communications Equipment

The National Civilian Police need 2,000 hand-held radios, while the National Police have only 368 on hand. Inventory records did not specify how many of the 368 radios are operational. Assuming these radios are operational, transferring them to the National Civilian Police would reduce the equipment procurement requirement by about \$793,000. The National Civilian Police budget was not sufficiently specific about its other needs for us to compare the requirement to the other radio communications equipment on-hand in National Police inventories.

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## Handguns

According to National Police records, it has 5,164 handguns in its inventory—2,319 revolvers, 2,776 9-mm semi-automatic pistols, and 69 pistols of other types. The National Civilian Police estimated that it needs 4,000 handguns for the first 2 years. Some of its needs, at least in the short-term, can be satisfied with the existing inventory. However, according to the National Police Director, many of the handguns are old, have not been used in over a decade, and have not been maintained properly.

The U.S. Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) is advising and assisting the National Civilian Police in developing its equipment needs. ICITAP believes that it is preferable to equip the force with revolvers rather than 9-mm pistols because they are cheaper and easier to train personnel to use.

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Nevertheless, the 1,000 9-mm semi-automatic pistols provided by the United States could be available to equip the new members of the National Civilian Police that will be graduating from the police academy in January 1993 and thereafter. Using them would also reduce the total procurement costs for equipment by an estimated \$350,000.

The National Civilian Police have budgeted \$400,000 for 1,000 shoulder weapons—primarily shotguns. The National Police have 7,653 shoulder weapons on hand, but most of them are automatic rifles loaned to them by the military. ICITAP considers automatic weapons unsuitable for a civilian police department because of the military image they convey.

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## Equipment Transfer

The National Civilian Police are expected to replace the National Police by May 1994. Some equipment transfers between the two forces were expected to take place intermittently as new recruits graduate from the police academy beginning in January 1993. However, instead of phasing down, the National Police is continuing to expand (from 10,400 to 12,000). The Director of the National Police stated that as long as the National Police are unable to fully equip its own force, it will not be releasing equipment to the new police force.

U.S. officials are concerned that while some equipment may be suitable for the National Civilian Police now, attrition, wear and tear, and the continued lack of maintenance over the remainder of the transition period may render equipment unusable. Adding to this concern, the Director of the National Police told us that his force is no longer receiving support from the Ministry of Defense, which has reduced the National Police's ability to maintain and care for equipment. Therefore, U.S. and Salvadoran officials indicated that it is unlikely that much equipment will be available.

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## Salvadoran Military Likely to Provide Little Equipment

Like the National Police, the El Salvadoran military will probably have little equipment and supplies to give to the National Civilian Police. Based on an analysis by police experts working for ICITAP, the military has some equipment and supplies appropriate for a civilian police force. However, the military is constrained by a shortage of equipment brought on by 12 years of war and reduced operating budgets. Moreover, notwithstanding a significant reduction in force levels, U.S. and Salvadoran officials told us the military is still not equipped sufficiently, even for its peacetime mission.

While the peace agreement requires the size of the armed forces to be cut in half, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics for the El Salvadoran military said that there will be no peace dividend and no excess equipment and supplies for the National Civilian Police. He stated that there were several reasons for this. First, during the war, the focus was primarily on combat, not maintenance. As a result, the equipment has not been properly maintained. Second, the United States provided primarily sustainment assistance during the war for only existing equipment. Third, the budget and assistance the armed forces receives is being significantly reduced. The U.S. military assistance has been reduced by 59 percent from requested levels, and the government of El Salvador has sharply reduced the armed forces' budget.

Our first hand observations at the Logistics Support Command, a maintenance facility, and an active cavalry regiment tended to corroborate the information provided by U.S. and Salvadoran military personnel. At each location, we saw equipment that was over 20 years old, in very poor condition, and being refurbished. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics stated that although its new structure has not been finalized, the military knows that it will have equipment shortfalls. He stated that, of the 20 light infantry battalions that constitute the core of the new military, only 3 can be fully equipped. Because of these expected shortfalls, the military does not plan to provide the new civilian police with equipment.

## Unresolved Facility Needs

Our review indicates that there is little likelihood that unused U.S., existing police, or military facilities will be available to the National Civilian Police. The National Civilian Police had hoped to obtain facilities from the National Police, the Salvadoran military, and/or the U.S. government to avoid having to procure new facilities. The 1993 and 1994 National Civilian Police budget allocates \$5 million for facility leases. The budget indicates a need for a headquarters/operations center, 5 regional offices, 14 state-level offices, and 235 posts or suboffices. The budget acknowledges that the number of facilities needed can be reduced some if the regional offices are collocated with state-level offices.

The facilities used by the current National Police in El Salvador are, for the most part, either leased or on loan from the military. The only potential facility for transfer from the National Police is the headquarters building, which serves as metropolitan police headquarters in San Salvador, but it will not be available until May 1994.

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The number of personnel in the armed forces is being halved and the military will be vacating five installations throughout the country. These installations housed the now dissolved immediate reaction battalions. According to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, the military will turn the facilities over to the government of El Salvador. He did not know what the government planned to do with the installations. No formal analysis of suitability had been made.

With the building of the new U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, the former chancery and the U.S. Agency for International Development buildings are now vacant. The government of El Salvador has not requested that these buildings be made available for the National Civilian Police. Based on assessments by ICITAP, the old chancery would be suitable for the police. We were told by U.S. officials that both buildings are to be sold—the chancery has an estimated market value of \$3 million to \$5 million and the Agency for International Development building has an estimated market value of \$5 million to \$7 million.

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## The Status of Some U.S.-Provided Equipment Is Unknown

In 1986, Congress authorized the Department of Defense to provide \$17 million in assistance to the public security forces in El Salvador.<sup>3</sup> The equipment was delivered to and accounted for by the Salvadoran military because public security was its responsibility.

The U.S. Military Group El Salvador is required by the Defense Department's Security Assistance Manual to maintain surveillance over the status and use of U.S.-provided equipment in Salvadoran military inventories and to report and resolve any discrepancies between what was provided and what is on hand. According to an official of the U.S. Military Group El Salvador, the group does not have enough staff to perform periodic end-use checks or to administer a formal reporting system. Consequently, the group does not systematically review and report on U.S.-provided equipment and did not have any inventory reports we could use to determine the status or disposition of the equipment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Although in 1973 and 1974 foreign assistance legislation (P.L. 93-189 and P.L. 93-559) prohibited U.S. agencies from using foreign assistance or military assistance funds to assist foreign police, beginning in 1981, Congress exempted certain assistance activities from this prohibition. Congressional authorization has been provided for El Salvador for police training.

<sup>4</sup>According to an Office of the Secretary of Defense response to a recommendation made in a GAO report, *El Salvador: Accountability for U.S. Military and Economic Aid* (NSIAD-90-132, Sept. 21, 1990), the U.S. Military Group El Salvador is conducting random checks of Salvadoran military major end items. At the time of our review, however, no inventory checks had been made on the items provided for under U.S. public security assistance and therefore none were available for our review.



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Our review of U.S. foreign assistance documents and inventory records maintained by the Salvadoran military and the National Police for selected items—handguns, vehicles, and communications equipment showed the following:

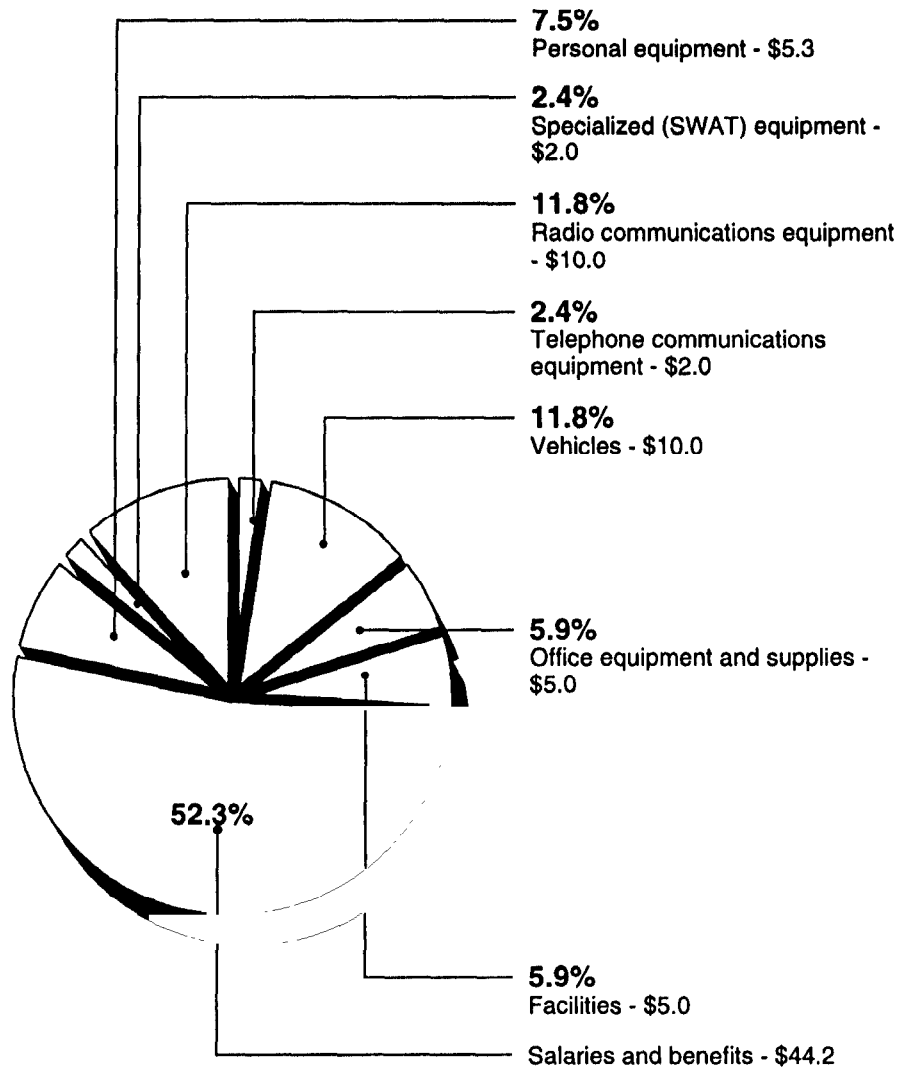
- All of the 1,000 9-mm pistols (obtained at a cost of \$541,097) provided to the public security forces were accounted for; however, only 124 are in the hands of the National Police. The rest were being used by U.S. and Salvadoran military officers, members of the Salvadoran special forces units, or were in a military warehouse.
- Of the 665 hand-held radios (part of a \$3.8 million communications equipment package) provided, the records indicated an inventory shortage of 297 radios worth an estimated \$640,000. The status of these radios was not shown and there was no indication the missing radios could be accounted for through war losses. U.S. and Salvadoran military officials we spoke with were unaware of the shortage and could not explain the inventory discrepancy.
- Of the 173 U.S. supplied vehicles, the records indicated a shortage of 23 pickup trucks valued at \$391,368. While wear and tear as well as wartime conditions may reduce inventories, in this case, an entire shipment of vehicles was unaccounted for and no explanation was available.

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## U.S. Officials Believe El Salvador's \$40.3 Million Estimate for Equipment Is Understated

President Cristiani has not approved the budget for the National Civilian Police. However, a budget submitted to President Cristiani in October 1992, estimates that \$84.5 million will be needed to equip and operate the National Civilian Police for 2 years. (See app.II.) Of this, \$40.3 million is for facilities, supplies, and equipment, with the rest for salaries and benefits. Figure 1 illustrates how the \$84.5 million is allocated by budget category.

Figure 1: Proposed 2-Year Budget for the National Civilian Police



U.S. officials advised us that the budget has not yet been approved and continues to be revised. They estimate that costs for the first 2 years may exceed earlier estimates by an additional 100 percent or more.

### Limited Funding

The \$14 million allocated for the National Civilian Police by the government of El Salvador for 1993 and the estimated \$26 million for 1994 will go toward salaries and benefits, not equipment. Officials told us that

existing Salvadoran military and National Police stocks will not provide much of the needed equipment. While the United States plans to procure minor office equipment from the \$6 million it has already committed, U.S. Embassy officials advised us that Congress would have to appropriate funding for any additional U.S. procurements.

U.S. officials told us that the government of El Salvador on November 10, 1992, formally requested additional international donor support from the United Nations for this effort. However, the prospects of receiving significant funding for this purpose appear dim at this time. As we reported in September 1992, two prior United Nations' appeals to international donors resulted in no funding.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

For the long-term development of El Salvador's National Civilian Police, the United States will need to continue to help the government of El Salvador (1) develop a realistic and sustainable plan for equipping and operating the National Civilian Police, (2) ensure that the National Civilian Police receive the appropriate priority relative to other Salvadoran government activities, and (3) identify and work to overcome impediments which discourage international donors from providing the assistance promised to El Salvador in March 1992. As an immediate measure in this regard, we recommend the Secretary of Defense instruct the U.S. Military Group El Salvador to work with the Salvadoran military and National Police to accomplish the following:

- Locate or otherwise determine the disposition of the 297 hand-held radios and 23 pickup trucks provided to the Salvadoran public security forces that are not in the National Police and Salvadoran military inventories. For those items located that are suitable for use by the National Civilian Police, assist the National Police and the Salvadoran military in taking the necessary measures to make these articles available to the new members of the National Civilian Police as they assume their duties beginning in January 1993.
- Retrieve the 876 9-mm semi-automatic pistols that are presently not in the hands of the National Police. These pistols should be transferred to the National Civilian Police for its immediate and continuing needs beginning in January 1993.

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## Scope and Methodology

We interviewed and obtained relevant documents from officials of the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Embassy, Agency for International

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Development, ICTAP, government of El Salvador, El Salvadoran military, United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, and United Nations Development Program in El Salvador. To determine the status of U.S.-provided equipment, whether National Police inventories maintained by the National Police and the Salvadoran military were consistent, and whether Salvadoran military inventories contained equipment that may be available to the National Civilian Police, we reviewed documents and inventory records of these agencies as well as that of the U.S. Military Group El Salvador. In addition, we made visits to three police and military installations to observe the availability and condition of equipment.

We conducted this review from September to October 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As you requested, we did not obtain agency comments; however, we discussed the draft report with program officials of the Departments of State, Justice, and Defense and incorporated their comments where appropriate.

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We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, the Attorney General, and appropriate congressional committees. We will also make copies available to others upon request.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please call me on (202) 275-5790. Major contributors to this report were Donald L. Patton, Assistant Director; Oliver G. Harter, Issue Area Manager; Christopher H. Conrad, Evaluator-in-Charge; and David W. Bennett, Evaluator.

Sincerely yours,



Harold J. Johnson  
Director, Foreign Economic  
Assistance Issues



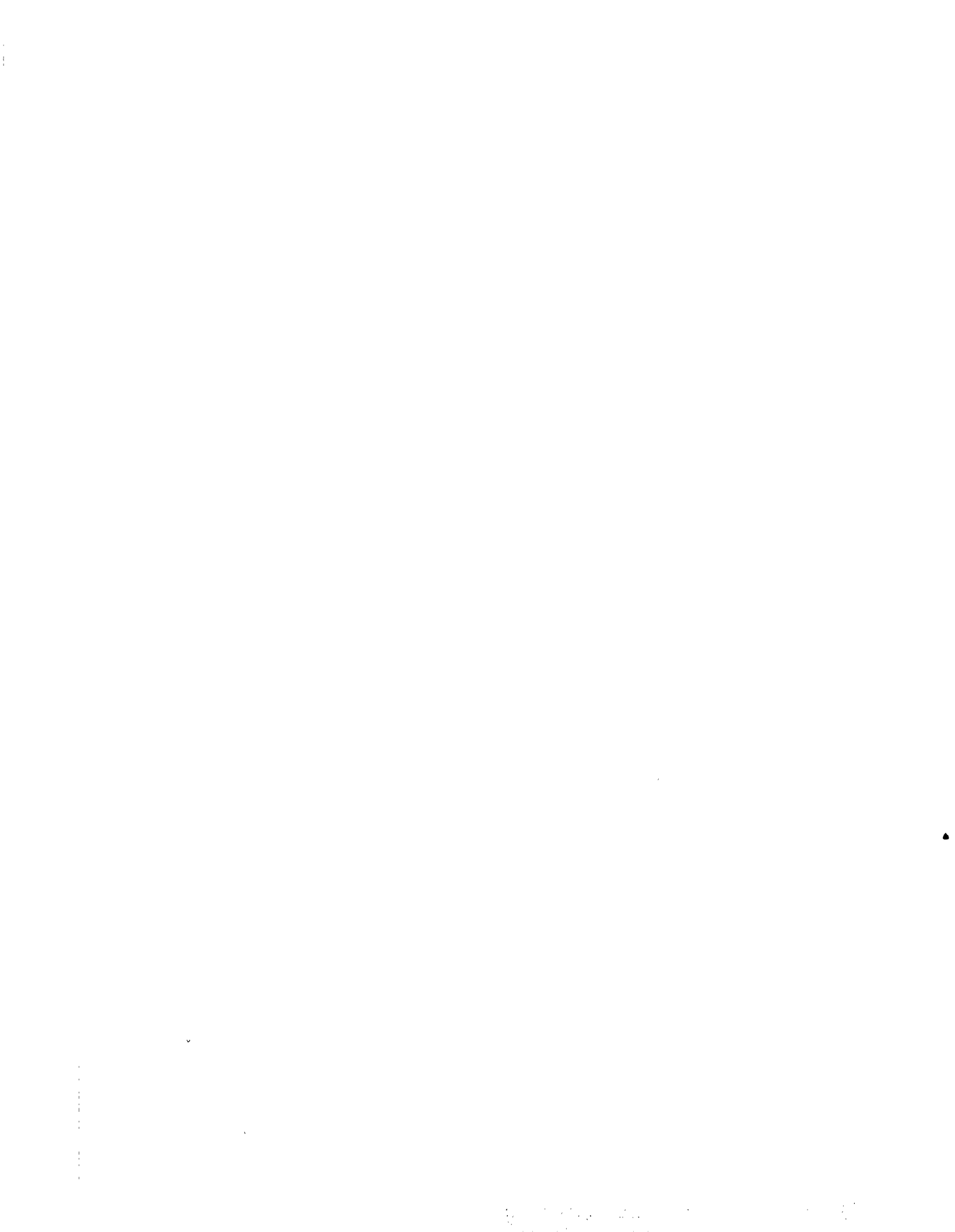
# U.S. Assistance Delivered to Salvadoran Public Security Forces Between 1986 and 1991

Quantity	Equipment	Value
50	AN/GRC-160 Radio Sets, Fieldpacks W/O Lines, Fieldpack Frame	\$146,225
<sup>a</sup>	Equipment for radios	275,284
<sup>a</sup>	Commercial repair parts	200,000
<sup>a</sup>	BPA commercial vehicle repair parts	1,845,694
<sup>a</sup>	Tool sets	36,226
<sup>a</sup>	Communication lab equipment	80,727
<sup>a</sup>	Other support equipment	11,532
<sup>a</sup>	Tool sets	199,689
32	Radio base station	} 3,053,305
28	Repeater stations/links	
<sup>a</sup>	Hand-held radios	
96	Chevrolet K30 pickup trucks	} 3,921,178
16	Chevrolet C-70 trucks/benches	
3	Chevrolet 16 ton wrecker	
1	Chevrolet water tank	
1	Chevrolet fuel tank	
<sup>a</sup>	Support equipment	22,364
50	Binoculars M-22, 752 antigas mask	124,202
20	Antenna RC-292	23,330
500	Sets-riot control equipment	525,650
<sup>a</sup>	Clothing individual equipment	425,118
1,000	M9 pistols	541,097
33	Ford Crown Victoria sedans	779,138
5	2500 Series console, power supplies	210,648
135	Shotguns	43,693
23	Ford pickup trucks	391,368
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$12,856,468</b>

<sup>a</sup>Quantities were not available in the inventory records of the U.S. Military Group-EI Salvador.

# 1993 and 1994 National Civilian Police Budget Requirement

Category	1993	1994	Total
<b>Salaries &amp; benefits</b>			
- Police personnel	\$10,042,870	\$18,635,580	\$28,678,450
- Support personnel	6,811,100	6,811,100	13,622,200
- Government benefits	758,429	1,145,100	1,903,529
<b>Personal equipment</b>			
- Individual issue	2,316,600	1,544,400	3,861,000
- On duty use	2,437,600	0	2,437,600
<b>Specialized equipment (SWAT)</b>	2,000,000	0	2,000,000
- 200 members (\$10,000 each)			
<b>Radio communications systems</b>	6,000,000	4,000,000	10,000,000
- Regional console systems			
- Mobile units			
- Inter region/inter city system			
<b>Telephone communication systems</b>	1,200,000	800,000	2,000,000
- Office telephones			
- Cellular phones (200)			
<b>Vehicles (All types)</b>	6,000,000	4,000,000	10,000,000
- 1,000 (\$10,000 average)			
<b>Office equipment &amp; supplies</b>	3,000,000	2,000,000	5,000,000
- Computers, copiers, FAX, furnishings			
- Office supplies			
<b>Building leases &amp; rents</b>	3,000,000	2,000,000	5,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,566,599</b>	<b>\$40,936,180</b>	<b>\$84,502,779</b>





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