

29 Nov 1980

EL SALVADOR: Growing Rightist Dominance

The kidnapping and killing of prominent leftists in El Salvador on Thursday is the latest indication of growing rightwing dominance there.

Five of the seven abducted leftist coalition leaders reportedly have been found dead. Despite government denials, the operation almost surely was carried out by security forces--possibly in retaliation for the brutal slaying last week of a ranking colonel and his family.

The reform programs are in danger of becoming so incidental to the counterinsurgency as to lose their impact. Last week, a leading agrarian official charged that the high violence on agricultural reform properties was part of an official campaign to destroy the political center and sabotage reform efforts.

The left, despite losses, has shifted back to attacks on military targets designed to provoke a right-wing coup, and it is making progress toward its objective.

The left will derive enormous propaganda value from these actions in its campaign to make the Salvadoran Government an international pariah. One of the victims was a former minister in the first reform junta and a highly respected national and international figure.

Approved for Release
NOV 1983