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10 Dec. 1980

EL SALVADOR: Civilian-Military Agreements

*Negotiations between military leaders and the cogoverning Christian Democrats have apparently produced a temporary resolution of the latest government crisis, but prospects are dim for a successful long-term relationship.* [REDACTED]

The Christian Democrats have extracted tentative concessions from the military in exchange for their continued participation in the government. Both sides have agreed in principle on the restructuring of the government; several ministers and subministers are to be replaced with private sector technocrats. [REDACTED]

Two key personalities--Colonel Gutierrez and Christian Democrat Duarte--will officially both gain from the ongoing shakeup; the weekend ouster of Colonel Majano leaves titular armed forces chief Gutierrez as sole military spokesman, while Duarte could be appointed provisional president of the junta. In practice, however, the conservative high command will continue to manipulate centrist Gutierrez, and Duarte will likely exercise little effective control over military matters. [REDACTED]

The military has promised to investigate the recent killings of six leftists and four US Catholic women, while also agreeing to transfer some officers associated with human rights abuses--Lt. Col. Moran, director of the notorious treasury police, [REDACTED] among those destined for removal. Nevertheless, the makeup of the Defense Ministry remains one obstacle, because the high command so far refuses to replace the powerful conservative officers who have handled the ministry since the October 1979 coup. [REDACTED]

Both the military and the civilians appear genuinely interested in presenting a reunited image internationally--especially one that will be acceptable to the US and potential foreign lenders. The partnership will remain very fragile, however, as many military officers favor a military solution to the problem of the far left, while the civilians will likely be seeking some kind of political accommodation with leftist groups. [REDACTED]

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