

[REDACTED]

17 Dec. 1980

EL SALVADOR: Military Attitude Toward Compromise

The recent compromise with the governing Christian Democrats promises little change in the military's autonomy or ultimate control of the government. [REDACTED]

The military is more unified and its chain of command more consolidated than at any time since the coup in October 1979. The Defense Ministry retains complete control of all military affairs and has significant veto power over other government policy through junta Vice President Colonel Gutierrez, the official military spokesman in the civil-military alliance. [REDACTED]

Moreover, the military's commitments to crack down on human rights abuses by security forces and to eliminate rightwing paramilitary terrorism--even if genuine--will at best only marginally effect the level of officially inspired or condoned violence. [REDACTED] suggest that the military will even drag its feet on transfers of officers associated with human rights abuses and rightist plotting. For example, the deputy defense minister--a key rightist officer targeted for removal by the Christian Democrats-- [REDACTED] will remain in office at least temporarily.

The prospects remain poor for lasting civil-military cooperation. By themselves, the Christian Democrats cannot arrange a political solution with leftist groups. [REDACTED]

The armed forces are set on eliminating the revolutionaries through indiscriminate warfare and probably would reject moves viewed as hampering that effort. Some military officers still consider replacement of the junta with a single military chief of state as the only viable alternative. [REDACTED]

Approved for Release

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