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EL SALVADOR: Moves Toward Cooperation

The Constituent Assembly has extended phase III of agrarian reform, and Defense Minister Garcia [redacted] he will submit his resignation.

The liberal Christian Democrats reached a compromise last week with some hardline and moderate conservatives to win extension of the controversial "land to the tiller" program through the end of the year. Assembly leader D'Aubuisson and his National Republican Alliance voted against the proposal.

[redacted] recently told President Magana and the military high command that [redacted] offer a letter of resignation and honor it if necessary. Participants [redacted] agreed that a way must be found to convict and imprison National Guard Lieutenant Lopez Sibrian--accused of the assassination of two US labor advisers and the head of Salvadoran land reform in 1981.

Comment: The trend toward cooperation is continuing despite the fragility of the coalition government. In the past two weeks, rival political parties have agreed to a national pacification plan, a formal peace commission, an earlier date for presidential elections, and continued agrarian reform.

Renewed efforts to prosecute Lopez Sibrian could increase friction within the government and the military. The departure of Garcia, however, would help to ease tensions, at least temporarily.