

[REDACTED]

### Rightwing Terrorism

The ultraright in El Salvador has a long history of using violence as a political tool, perhaps marked most vividly by the widespread repression and murder of campesinos following the unsuccessful peasant rebellion in 1932. In the 1960s, a surge of political activity among peasants and urban workers inspired the creation of many new rightwing organizations, both official and clandestine.

One such government-sponsored group--the National Democratic Organization (ORDEN)--was comprised of tens of thousands of conservative rural peasants and served as a tool of the landed elites. It included many former armed forces personnel who were part of the nation's reserve force, the Territorial Service. ORDEN served principally as an intelligence-gathering organization--identifying real or suspected enemies of the regime--but it also occasionally took direct action against them.

Augmenting the semiofficial organizations were a variety of secret vigilante groups that have faded in and out of existence. Traditionally, rightwing death squads have included civilian mercenaries, idealists tied to particular wealthy elites, and active and retired security force personnel. Given the impunity with which death squads continue to operate today, it is clear that security force personnel continue to cooperate with and participate in vigilante terror.

### Leadership and Organization

Information on the leadership and organization of rightwing terrorist groups is sketchy. A small group of wealthy Salvadorans living in Miami, however, is believed to be behind the kidnaping and intimidation of businessmen who have shown sympathy for the civil-military government or for US policy in El Salvador. These individuals also may have ordered the assassinations of the two US AFL-CIO representatives in January. Tied to this group of wealthy expatriates are businessmen in El Salvador who belong to the Broad National Front, headed by Major D'Aubuisson and a young ultraconservative, [REDACTED]

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The extreme right wing therefore has limited need for external support, given its financing by millionaire exiles. The terror squads use a broad range of side arms, machine pistols, and rifles that are readily available on the regional black market and in the United States. The involvement of security force personnel in the rightist terrorism ensures a further supply of arms and license to use them. For example, the March attack on the Nicaraguan Embassy in San Salvador by assailants using RPG-2 rockets followed the capture of a substantial supply of these weapons by government troops.

Membership in rightwing terrorist groups probably approaches several hundred, but our information in this area is limited. Security force personnel operate on their own or are employed in an off-duty capacity by civilians. Mercenaries outside armed forces ranks are also utilized.

The rumor that foreign personnel--usually Nicaraguans or Guatemalans--are active in rightwing activities is heard frequently, but there is little hard evidence. Following Somoza's overthrow, some 1,300 Nicaraguan National Guard troops arrived in El Salvador, the vast majority of whom were enlisted personnel. [REDACTED] suggested a large number of them were to be integrated into the Salvadoran armed forces, but this was never confirmed and the numbers actually integrated were probably quite modest. Many others may have been recruited into the private guard forces of the elite. Members of either group could easily be involved in rightwing violence, but it is impossible to estimate numbers accurately.

[REDACTED] also constantly charge that Guatemalan paramilitary forces are active in El Salvador. Contacts and consultations between rightwing Salvadoran and Guatemalan officials do occur--and some civilian terrorist personnel may have trained in Guatemala with like-minded organizations--but there is no persuasive evidence that significant assistance has been given. It seems extremely unlikely that the Guatemalan Government would have authorized the dispatch to El Salvador of government personnel, in mufti or otherwise, under prevailing conditions.

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Nevertheless, even prior to the self-exile of El Salvador's conservative economic elite, there were frequent contacts between hardlining businessmen in Guatemala and El Salvador and some soliciting of funds from the Guatemalan brethren. The travels of Major D'Aubuisson attest to continuing contacts, [REDACTED] have discussed the possibility of providing funds or men to the Salvadoran right wing. Although the current level of rightwing activities in El Salvador could easily be maintained without resort to outside aid, in the event of a major Salvadoran crisis a segment of the Guatemalan right would probably provide concrete assistance if asked.

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