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Latin America Review

7 November 1986

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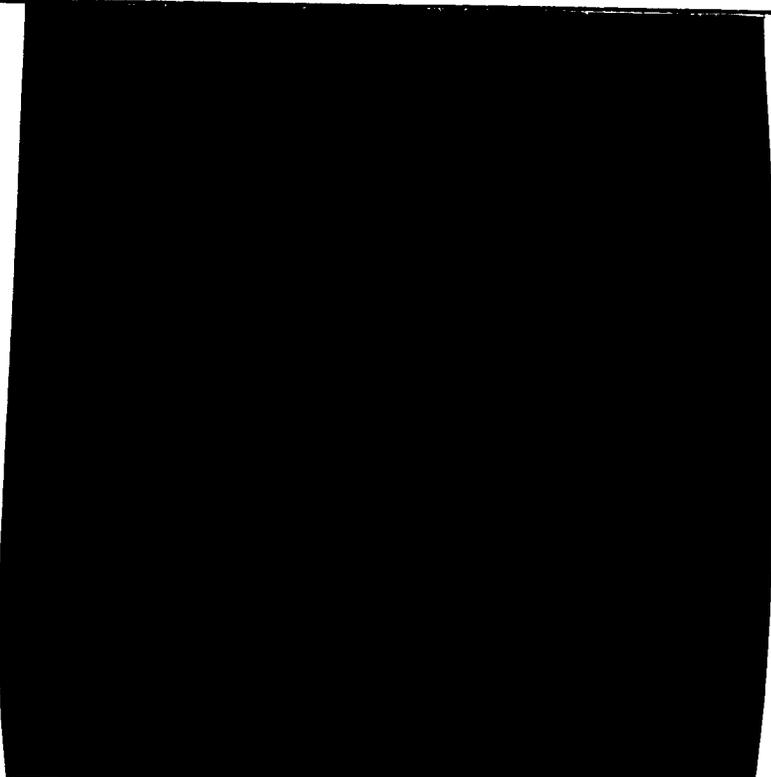
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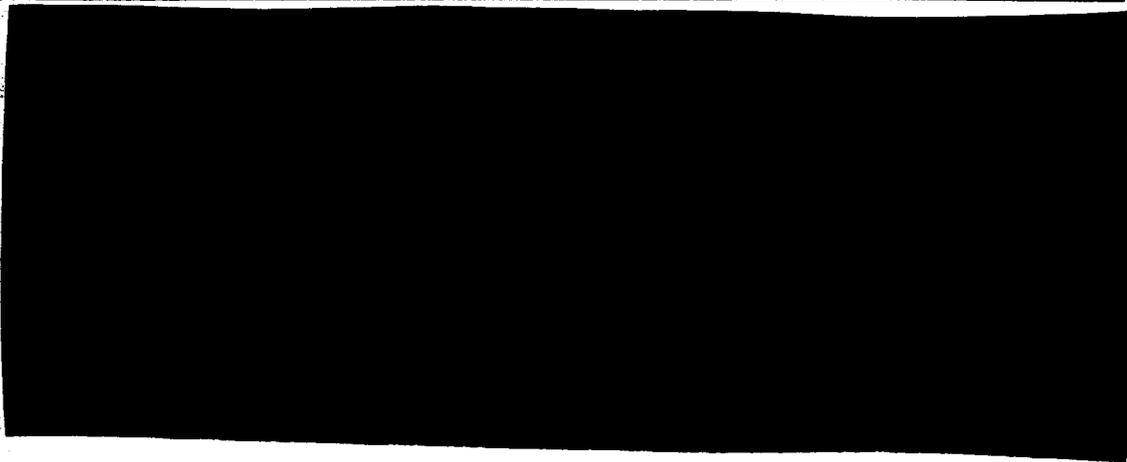


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**Latin America
Briefs**



Guatemala

Vying for the Defense Ministry

Efforts by Defense Minister General Hernandez to keep his Cabinet post past January are likely to fail, but they nevertheless are causing frictions within the officer corps and with President Cerezo.

Most officers are pushing for Hernandez's removal because they see him as corrupt and unwilling to carry out internal reforms and modernize the armed forces. Hernandez and some of his followers — a small group of older officers hoping to retain their positions beyond the 33-year limit — reportedly are under investigation for a variety of criminal activities.

In our view, the President probably will enforce the military's retirement rules, pressure Hernandez to resign, and name Gramajo the next defense minister. Gramajo has a good working relationship with Cerezo and generally is regarded as an honest, efficient, and professional officer. The choice of another candidate for the position would put Cerezo at odds with most of the military, the support of which is essential for his 10-month-old government.

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