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Western Hemisphere

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GUATEMALA

Guerrillas and intriguing politicians continue to pose problems for the Peralta government. The regime, however, seems well informed of the cabals and is ready to take precautionary protective measures.

The arrest on 6 September of a key urban guerrilla leader seems to have thwarted terrorist plans to cause trouble in Guatemala City during this week's independence celebrations. Some reports indicated that an assassination attempt against Peralta was being planned.

The guerrillas may yet spark some violent disturbances. They reportedly have alternate plans for disruptive activities which they hope will provoke repressive actions by the government, thus arousing antigovernment sentiment which could be exploited to their own advantage.

Meanwhile, plotting has become prevalent among high-ranking officers and politicians dissatisfied with their lot under Peralta. There seems to be a

renewed effort recently to coordinate the activities of the plotters, whose political views range from the right to far left. They will probably move cautiously, however, as long as the government remains alert to opposition plans.

Internationally, the Guatemalan Government is preoccupied with its campaign to block London's plan--which has Mexico's blessing--to grant eventual independence to British Honduras. The Guatemalan Constituent Assembly has recently reaffirmed Guatemala's claim to Belice, the local name for the area. In British Honduras, however, interest in association with Guatemala is only negligible.

High-level talks between a British official and the Guatemalans are scheduled in Guatemala later this month on the Belice problem. The mutually incompatible position of the two countries, however, seems to preclude any significant movement toward a mutually satisfactory settlement. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

*MMIS 981494*

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