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quickly to disband a 600-man secret police unit and made some 80 changes in police leadership. In addition, Cerezo has sought foreign training, especially in investigations, to help bolster police performance [redacted]

[redacted] the recent charging of two police officers with the death of a prisoner is symptomatic of a new attitude of police accountability and reflects a commitment to reform. Although [redacted] this has produced some grumbling among officers—especially the appointment of civilians as directors—the majority of officers reportedly approve of internal reforms and Cerezo's stated plans to professionalize and upgrade equipment. [redacted]

Relations With the Military. Cerezo has worked hard to establish a good working relationship with his Minister of Defense, General Hernandez, and the rest of the high command. He has held open discussions with senior and junior officers on a wide range of topics, including his position toward the insurgents. He also publicly has acknowledged that the military's counterinsurgency program and support for democratization made possible a smooth transfer to civilian government. To back up his support for the armed forces, he has promised to continue the model village program, and said that he will civilianize—but not disband—the 915,000-strong Civil Defense Forces. Both programs [redacted]

[redacted] are seen as critical to combating the guerrillas. [redacted]

[redacted] although Cerezo has placed the Interinstitutional Coordinating Committees—the military's rural development program—under civilian control, he will ensure continued military participation. In our judgment, the formal request for moderate levels of US military assistance will further reassure the high command that Cerezo does not intend to confine the armed forces to the barracks. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Outlook

We believe Cerezo's relatively cautious policy toward implementing domestic reforms reflects his recognition that the long-term success of his government depends in large measure on his ability to avoid antagonizing the military. We expect that he will continue to seek to build bridges to the military by consulting closely with the high command on

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Latin America Review

Articles

**Guatemala: Cerezo's
Early Moves**

President Cerezo's initial domestic political initiatives appear to have won widespread public backing. Cerezo's low-key, pragmatic style has helped reduce concerns in the military and private sector that the Christian Democratic President would embark on a more populist course. By emphasizing consensus and compromise rather than confrontation, he has been able to begin to deal gradually with domestic political issues, reforming the security apparatus and developing a counterinsurgency strategy acceptable to the military. Over time, however, Cerezo is likely to find it increasingly difficult to prevent criticism of Guatemala's economic difficulties from spilling over into attacks on his handling of political affairs.

Cerezo has firm control of his government and reserves the right to make all major decisions.

Early Political Moves

Human Rights.

Cerezo, since his inauguration, has attempted to balance the need to avoid provoking political conflict by focusing on past abuses with promises to oppose further violations. Cerezo, for example, has met on several occasions with the leaders and members of the

Mutual Support Group (GAM), the only domestic organization demanding that military officers be prosecuted for past human rights abuses. He has assured group leaders that they will have a voice in a new Human Rights Commission created to investigate disappearances and that the congress plans to elect an ombudsman to investigate any new abuses. At the same time, he has criticized the GAM for failing to work with the government and for making unreasonable political demands on him. Cerezo also has made it clear that he will not prosecute military officers for past crimes.

Cerezo has used the GAM's refusal to abandon its confrontational rhetoric to his advantage, staking out a moderate and constructive position.

the GAM's belligerency and personal attacks on Cerezo have isolated the GAM even from traditional supporters such as the Catholic Church. Moreover, the UN Human Rights Commission recently ended its mandate for a special rapporteur and issued its first report in eight years that does not condemn Guatemala for human rights violations. In our judgment, this is likely to undercut further domestic and foreign criticism while giving Cerezo more time to strengthen the independence of the judicial system and establish mechanisms to investigate new abuses.

Reforming the Security Forces.

Cerezo's moves to reform the police and control the military have won popular support without creating a strong backlash among security and military officials. The President, for example, appointed a reformist interior minister who moved

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civilian issues of concern to them and will avoid meddling in internal military affairs. For its part, we believe the military recognizes that its interests, at least in the short run, are best served by cooperating with Cerezo. [redacted]

In the civilian arena, we believe that Cerezo will try to use domestic political initiatives to blunt criticism of his economic policies. Although we believe this strategy probably will lengthen Cerezo's "political honeymoon," expectations among his political constituencies that he will implement substantive and wide-ranging reforms are high. Faced with a continuing economic slide and opposition to austerity measures, Cerezo may come to believe he has no choice but to risk embarking on a more politically dangerous populist course. [redacted]

[redacted]

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