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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC 07157-84  
24 December 1984

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [redacted]  
Acting Assistant National Intelligence Officer  
for Latin America

SUBJECT: Latin America Warning and Forecast Meeting  
December 1984

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1. The Warning Meeting of 19 December 1984 addressed recent and potential developments in Chile, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Chile

2. State/INR holds that Pinochet's declaration of a state of siege on 6 November, coupled with his adamancy in dealing with opposition parties, portends further delays in the transition to democracy.

- The state of siege has not curbed the violence; indeed the violence has grown worse.
- The radical leftist opposition has become more than just a collection of terrorists; it is now an armed insurgency.
- Pinochet's support within the military Junta may be wavering.
- Time is working against US interests, because the more the transition to democracy is delayed, the greater the likelihood of serious instability.

3. DIA representatives take issue with at least two of INR's arguments. Most analysts at this meeting agree with DIA.

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-- They maintain that Pinochet's support from the military high command remains firm.

-- The armed opposition is not yet an insurgency and has serious vulnerabilities. For example, one of the groups, the MIR,

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[redacted] lack significant popular support.

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El Salvador

5. There is general consensus that the FMLN has adopted a harder line in negotiations with the government. Yet its capabilities to engage in large-scale combat operations remain low.

-- Militarily the FMLN seems to be emphasizing urban terrorism, attacks on less well-equipped and less well-commanded Salvadoran army units, attempts to disrupt the coffee harvest in Western El Salvador, and perhaps an occasional attack on a departmental capital.

-- Meanwhile the government may undergo serious internal strains in the next few months. Duarte may come under pressures of various kinds from the military over his attempts to promote Lopez Nuila to General and possibly make him Minister of Interior. Moreover, the military will have to decide whether its future leadership will be dominated by pragmatists like Blandon or hardline rightists such as Bustillo.

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Nicaragua

7. There is general consensus that the Contras are unlikely to collapse in the next three months.

- DIA holds a somewhat lower numerical estimate of the Contras than CIA: 11-12,500 in the FDN; 600-1200 in ARDE and Pastora's group; 350-550 in MISURA; up to 350 in MISURASATA.
- DIA agrees with CIA that the trend line in FDN strength in recent months has been upward.
- DIA judges, with more certainty than CIA analysts, that the ARDE/Pastora forces have nearly fallen apart, and that the burden of combat in the south will have to be borne by the FDN.
- The Contras are getting more external support than anticipated.

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8. There was also a general consensus that the military balance between the Sandinista armed forces and the Contras is now tilting in favor of the Sandinistas.

- The Sandinistas are becoming more efficient at coordinating combat operations and effectively using the newly-arrived equipment.
- On the other hand, the size of Sandinsta armed forces is not increasing greatly, partly due to casualties, but more clearly because of draft evasions and desertions--some units are suffering a desertion rate of over 40 percent.

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