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**Incipient Insurgency:  
Chile, Ecuador, and  
Argentina** 

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**An Intelligence Assessment**

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GI 86-10017  
March 1986

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# **Incipient Insurgency: Chile, Ecuador, and Argentina**


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**An Intelligence Assessment**

This paper was prepared by   
Office of Global Issues. It was coordinated with the  
Office of African and Latin American Analysis,  
and the Directorate of Operations. 

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
directed to the Chief, Foreign Subversion and  
Instability Center, OGI, 

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**Incipient Insurgency:  
Chile, Ecuador, and  
Argentina**

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**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 7 February 1986  
was used in this report.*

Through a detailed study of past insurgencies, we have identified a consistent pattern of signs that a revolutionary group is developing the organization, acquiring the resources, and undertaking the antigovernment activities associated with a serious insurgent threat. We used this analytic framework to assess the present incipient insurgent movements in Chile, Ecuador, and Argentina. We believe—

—that none of these countries faces an immediate insurgent threat. However, conditions in the three countries vary significantly:

- In Chile, the Communist Party (PCCh) with its affiliated terrorist group—the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR)—is developing the potential for a serious insurgent challenge to the Pinochet government within the next few years.
- In Ecuador, the group Alfaro Vive, Carajo! (AVC) is also developing—but at a much slower pace—into a viable insurgent organization.
- In Argentina, we find no indication of an emerging insurgent threat of any serious proportion.

Chile's current social and political environment is turbulent and conducive to the development of an insurgency. The PCCh is attempting to exploit these conditions by developing its armed faction, recruiting thousands of new members, acquiring extensive foreign assistance, stockpiling weapons, and—through the FPMR—perpetrating terrorist activities. Although their lack of broad-based popular support and conflict within their leadership currently hinder PCCh efforts, we believe the Communists are developing the organization and logistic base to support an armed insurrection within a few years. Moreover, Chile's smaller Movement of the Revolutionary Left is also rebuilding its support base, receiving extensive foreign assistance, and acquiring weapons at a significant rate.

Ecuador's relative tranquillity has started to fray at the edges. Although we believe a government-threatening situation is unlikely in the near future, the AVC has become an irritant to the Febres-Cordero administration. The AVC is attracting new members, expanding its guerrilla training activities, increasing its supply of arms, receiving military and political training from Colombia's M-19, and engaging in violent activities. Nevertheless, AVC initiatives are on a significantly smaller scale than those of the PCCh in Chile, and its political organization and program will require considerable development before the AVC can mount an effective challenge to the Febres-Cordero regime. Ecuador's incipient insurgent threat

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could be nipped in the bud if the government would press the military and police to cooperate, take prompt steps to improve the capabilities of both services, and succeed in obtaining counterinsurgency training and equipment from foreign sources.

We believe the current situation in Argentina is not propitious for an insurgency. Although political violence is on the rise in Argentina, it is primarily the work of scattered groups of rightwing radicals with no insurgent designs. Furthermore, the two formerly powerful insurgent groups—the Montoneros and the Worker's Revolutionary Party/People's Revolutionary Army—are currently restricted in their activity by a lack of internal leadership and popular support.



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**The Framework**

An insurgent organization must recruit and train personnel, obtain information on potential adversaries, locate and procure materials for its operations, raise funds, and produce and distribute services or products. An insurgent organization is distinguished from most others by the use of violence to accomplish the group's ultimate goal: to erode existing law, order, and authority and supplant them with its own.

- Evidence of multiple thefts of weapons.
- Evidence that a group has access to or has stolen special equipment—for example, multiple thefts of amateur band transceivers, hand-held VHF/UHF radios, directional antennas, cassette recorders, calculators, typewriters, and printing presses.
- Evidence of robberies, kidnap ransoms, narcotics income, or protection rackets linked to a radical group.

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Indicators that are manifestations of insurgent activities will become apparent as the group:

- Seeks where and how to obtain resources—people, food, materiel, finances, and information.
- Determines how to use and develop these resources—strategy, tactics, indoctrination, training, logistic support, and operations.
- Decides how to target the existing social, economic, and political structures.

**Outside Support:**

- Evidence of money, training, arms, and materiel provided by foreign governments.
- Evidence of assistance from or cooperation with foreign insurgent groups.

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**Actions/Use of Violence:**

- Emergence of radical violence, including bombings and attacks against government personnel and buildings, essential utilities, symbolic targets, or foreign-owned properties.
- Reports of infiltration into the government, labor unions, and political parties.
- Overzealous support of land reform, including non-government-sponsored expropriation of land or the establishment of squatters' encampments.
- Sightings of armed people in rural areas.
- Reports of meetings at which discussions center on initiating violence.
- Discovery of forgeries and counterfeiting capabilities.
- Assassinations of authority figures or religious leaders.
- Violence in foreign countries directed against the diplomatic community of the country of concern.
- Production and circulation of large quantities of radical propaganda.
- Establishment of front organizations.

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In addition to searching for signs of a potential insurgency, it is useful to assess the strength and depth of the alleged guerrilla movement. This framework presents indicators—which have both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension—designed to help an analyst determine whether a serious insurgency is developing. They are presented by functional category.

**Organization and Recruitment:**

- Sudden departure of large numbers of young and/or skilled people for some form of training or indoctrination.
- Defection of a noticeable number of members, especially leaders, from one political party or organization to a more radical party.
- Measurable increase in ideological proselytizing in rural areas.
- Increase in travelers from proinsurgency countries or the return of exiles.
- Reports of cells in urban areas.
- Press leaks on guerrilla plans or programs to change the country.

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**Training:**

- Reports of people training with arms or the identification of nongovernment military training sites.
- Reports of people receiving training outside the country or of travelers to countries sympathetic to the insurgents.

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**Acquiring Resources:**

- Discovery of arms and materiel caches, collections of police uniforms or military clothing, stockpiling of explosives.

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**Incipient Insurgency:  
Chile, Ecuador, and  
Argentina** [Redacted]

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**Introduction**

Government counteraction against insurgencies can be extremely effective if it is initiated early—during the incipient stage, when they are most vulnerable. Similarly, foreign support at this time for either the insurgents or the government can be crucial to the conflict's outcome. Identification of incipient insurgent movements before they become a full-blown threat to existing governments is, therefore, critical to all parties. [Redacted]

The concept "incipient insurgency" encompasses situations ranging from those in which subversive activity by a new insurgent group is a potential threat to those in which antigovernment incidents occur frequently and display organization and forethought. By definition, the outbreak of guerrilla warfare signals the passage of an insurgency from its incipient to a more advanced stage. [Redacted]

We developed a framework for evaluating the potential seriousness of an incipient insurgency and used it to assess the insurgency situation in Chile, Ecuador, and Argentina. These case studies were chosen because of the countries' diverse political systems, cultural traits, economic problems, propensity toward unrest, and the differing degree to which each country is faced with a developing insurgency problem. [Redacted]

**A Framework for Analyzing Incipient Insurgency**

While many developing countries experience some form of incipient insurgency, only a few of these nascent movements ever become a serious threat to the government. A full-blown, government-threatening insurgency is a large, complex, protracted political-military activity. Such an effort requires extensive organization. Any revolutionary group seeking to mount a formidable insurgent threat must develop an organizational structure, acquire weapons and supplies, recruit and train people, gather intelli-

gence, and broadcast beliefs and goals. It may also choose to incite riots or work stoppages, infiltrate the legitimate political apparatus, and engage in terrorism. These organizing activities are the defining characteristics of an insurgency in its incipient stage. [Redacted]

We have developed a conceptual framework, which encompasses these organizing activities, to help us identify those incipient insurgent movements with the potential to mount a serious challenge to an incumbent regime. Our framework assumes that the major preconditions for an insurgency are—to some degree—already in place: 25X1

- A predisposing environment—the existence of popular grievances and lack of faith in the government.
- A catalyst—a revolutionary group able to exploit these grievances and initiate the activities required for an infant insurgency to flourish. [Redacted] 25X1

We developed our framework by conducting an extensive review of the academic literature related to the incipient stage of every major insurgency since World War II. Special attention was devoted to the writings of insurgent leaders and others who described the developmental activities of various movements. Simultaneously, an external study to identify indicators of a growing insurgent threat was contracted and the results melded with our own research. [Redacted] 25X1

We divided the various signs of a growing insurgent threat into six categories: organization and recruitment, training, outside support, action/use of violence, and popular support (see inset, "The Framework"). Evidence of four occurrences should, in our judgment, be considered especially alarming: 25X1

[Redacted]

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insurgency. Political parties—all of which are technically illegal—are agitating for an early return to democracy, the economy suffers from inflation and high unemployment, and the radical left is actively engaged in terrorism. While we do not anticipate the outbreak of guerrilla war in the next two years, according to [redacted] press information, signs of a growing insurgent threat are already evident:

- Foreign governments have escalated their training, financing, and arming of radical leftists in Chile.
- A sizable Chilean exile community in Latin America and Europe actively funnels resources and personnel into Chile to aid radical leftists.
- Terrorism continues at a high rate despite government countermeasures.
- Some radical leftist groups are actively organizing and expanding their membership at significant rates.
- Radical leftist activities are becoming more widespread throughout the country. [redacted]

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#### The Social-Political Climate

President Augusto Pinochet, ruling dictator of Chile since the 1973 military coup that ousted Salvador Allende, heads a government that has now faced more than two years of frequent, violent demonstrations. In part, the problem has been Chile's faltering economy, which has endured three years of recession or stagnation, an unemployment rate officially pegged at 13 percent, and an inflation rate of about 30 percent. After experiencing healthy economic growth during the 1970s, an increasing number of Chileans are now faced with subsistence salaries and little hope of improvement in the next few years. In addition, widespread discontent has been fueled by the government's laborious transition to democracy. With the government's refusal to negotiate with the opposition coalition formed in 1985, tolerate a free press, or hold elections, popular frustrations have few outlets short of civil disobedience or—in the case of the radical left—terrorism (see photos). [redacted]

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- The receipt of substantial assistance—funds, arms, or training—from foreign governments or other insurgent groups.
- The receipt of extensive guerrilla training.
- The acquisition and caching of large quantities of weapons and supplies.
- The creation of an organization, with both a political and a military arm, which is capable of substantially increasing its membership. [redacted]

#### Chile: A Growing Insurgency Threat

The Chilean Government is currently faced with a series of interrelated problems that could fuel an

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Typical antigovernment demonstrations and riot scene in Chile.



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Pinochet has shown his willingness to deal forcefully with what he views as attempts to erode the stability of his regime, as evidenced by his declaring a state of siege during the countrywide riots in 1983 and 1984. Embassy reporting indicates that the Chilean security forces have sufficient resources to deal effectively with subversive actions. Fourteen Chilean police officers (Carabineros) have been implicated in the March 1985 slaying of three Communist Party members, and there is speculation in the press that the Carabineros were involved in the deaths of a police detainee in February of that year and a university student three

months later. Moreover, a rash of assaults on individuals linked to human rights advocates, exiles, and Communist Party members also occurred in 1985. Although the perpetrators have been "unidentified civilians," the press further speculates that active or retired security force members were involved.

For the present, considering the strength of the police, we believe the Pinochet government remains firmly in control and the threat of widespread insurgent violent

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in the near term remains low. We have seen no evidence to suggest that the Chilean populace is prepared to support insurgent violence or that centrist and rightist political elements would collaborate with the radical left to overthrow the Pinochet regime. Nevertheless, the radical left will continue to benefit from any further economic deterioration and from any additional government action that undermines the democratic opposition as a meaningful political actor.

Over the longer term, Pinochet's intransigence toward the moderate opposition and any further curtailment of human rights could cause the situation to deteriorate and provide an opportunity for the radical left to make gains through violence. Our analysis shows, for example, that two radical leftist groups in particular are mobilizing for action, one at an alarming rate.

**A Leading Actor and One Aspirant**

We believe the Chilean Communist Party (PCCh) is developing the organization and logistic base capable of supporting an armed struggle in the next few years. Another group—the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR)—has also shown some insurgent potential but is currently overshadowed by the PCCh.

**The PCCh.** A pro-Moscow party with legal status until 1973, the Chilean Communist Party once advocated a "peaceful road" to socialism, according to its official party line. Following the Pinochet coup, however, the PCCh was declared illegal and forced underground. This change in status—coupled with events in Nicaragua in 1979, and alleged Soviet urging—prompted the PCCh to revise its approach. In September 1980, the party's Secretary General publicly enunciated the essence of a new party line—armed struggle.

In late 1983, the PCCh reinforced its commitment to violence by supporting the formation of a new terrorist group—the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR). We believe that the PCCh did not create the FPMR but has made every effort to dominate and direct the organization:

- The FPMR was originally composed of leftist radical youths from a variety of organizations, but the PCCh is now placing an increasing number of its own trained youths in FPMR ranks.
- the PCCh is also installing its members at every level of FPMR leadership.

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During the past two years, numerous signs have pointed to the PCCh's becoming an insurgent threat of potentially serious proportions:

• *Organization and recruitment:*

- Despite a government crackdown on the PCCh and its isolation in the Chilean political sphere, Communist Party membership has grown and continues to grow at a significant rate.
- a 1984 recruitment drive doubled the PCCh membership to between 20,000 and 30,000 adult members and 20,000 youth members.
- This growth reinforces the PCCh's position as the second-largest political party in Chile.
- the size of the FPMR, we estimate that this group now numbers several hundred.
- The PCCh maintains a separate armed wing—possibly as large as 2,000 members—in a reserve status.
- the PCCh has organized local-level "Rodriguez Militias" to protect PCCh-controlled slum areas in the major cities.

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• *Training:*

- a sizable number of PCCh members—adults and

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youths—have received guerrilla training provided by the USSR, Algeria, East Germany, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Bulgaria. Reinfilitrated, often through Argentina, these trainees are subsequently assigned either to the party's armed reserve or to the FPMR.

aid in the form of arms, training, propaganda, and funds is received from the USSR, East Germany, Bulgaria, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Algeria. We believe that the Soviet Union is probably the most generous of these benefactors, and press and radio reports show that the PCCh Secretary General resides in Moscow.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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— Within Chile, the PCCh has conducted guerrilla training for members near Concepcion and in remote parts of the country [Redacted]

— The PCCh also receives support from foreign subversive groups. For example, [Redacted] the Argentine Communist Party and the Montoneros are providing training and weapons to the affiliated FPMR. 25X1

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• *Acquiring resources:*

• *Actions/use of violence:*

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— The PCCh is actively involved in arms smuggling. [Redacted]

— PCCh-sponsored terrorism and risk taking by affiliated FPMR members have escalated. The FPMR has—in the past two years—engaged in bombings, attacks on police stations, kidnappings, and disruptions of TV broadcasts. These actions have claimed police and civilian lives, as well as sacrificed FPMR members. [Redacted] 25X1 25X1

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[Redacted]

— [Redacted] the well-stocked Argentine Montoneros are providing weapons and ammunition to the PCCh, although we are unaware of the exact types.

[Redacted] future Communist plans call for increasing this violence but with an eye to being more selective and reinforcing PCCh objectives, such as expanding popular support. 25X1 25X1

— Well-organized PCCh exile components contribute extensively to the party's effort to expand its resources. Press reports indicate that PCCh fundraising campaigns abroad bring in hundreds-of-thousands of dollars every year, and the contributions are growing. [Redacted] [Redacted] exiles also help funnel arms and trained guerrillas into Chile.

— FPMR activities have shown increased bravado and tactical sophistication. Even during last November's state of siege, the FPMR was able to carry out activities—including power blackouts—that blanketed most of the country. According to a variety of press and Embassy reporting, the PCCh has also begun to hit American targets, including a car bombing at the American Consulate and bombings of Mormon churches and ITT and Chase Manhattan offices. 25X1 25X1

• *Outside support:*

— The PCCh receives extensive foreign government support. [Redacted]

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— PCCh-organized protests in early September 1985 were the best organized and most violent in two years. Although only a partial success, these protests reduced economic activity by disrupting businesses and transportation networks.

• *Popular support:*

— [redacted] the PCCh's organization is extensive; is active throughout the country; and is the guiding hand behind a number of front organizations, local help groups, and labor unions. Included in its fronts are the Metropolitan Poor People's Coordinator, the Cultural Coordinator, Women of Chile, the Committee in Defense of the Rights of the People, and the Committee in Defense of the Rights of the Youth. In labor, the El Surco Campesino Union, the Mine Workers' Union, and the Construction Workers' Union are PCCh dominated. The PCCh also influences the Metropolitan Workers' Command, the General Grouping of Chilean Educators, and the Chilean Human Rights Commission.

— According to Embassy reporting, the PCCh has also created the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD), a political front including other radical organizations, which is designed to compete openly in the existing political environment.

[redacted]

We believe, in the aggregate, these signs indicate that the PCCh is amassing the capability to pose a serious insurgent threat to stability in Chile within the next several years. Whether they will initiate widespread insurgent activity, however, will depend on political and economic developments inside Chile and on the PCCh's ability to rectify difficulties currently retarding their organizing efforts. [redacted]

Although the PCCh has successfully attracted supporters from various sectors of Chilean society, we believe it remains unable to fully mobilize these groups to achieve its goals. Many PCCh-sponsored strikes and demonstrations during 1984 and the first half of 1985 were abysmal failures; sporadic violence

was sparked, but physical control of neighborhoods and work stoppages could not be sustained. The partial success of the PCCh-sponsored demonstrations in September 1985 was significant because the moderate opposition and the Catholic Church discouraged participation. However, these demonstrations fell far short of the type of rioting that could bring the government to its knees. [redacted]

[redacted]

Finally, the PCCh continues to experience problems controlling its affiliate, the FPMR. [redacted] FPMR commando groups—still mostly composed of Cuban-trained PCCh youths and a variety of leftists from other organizations—have been known to initiate violent activities without official party approval. Some of these activities have been counterproductive, generating animosity instead of support among the public. [redacted]

*The MIR.* Another radical group—the Movement of the Revolutionary Left—is currently active in Chile, although it does not possess the resources, following, or cohesiveness of the PCCh. Founded in 1965, the MIR is a Marxist-Leninist, anti-US, Castroite guerrilla organization whose peak activity occurred during the Allende regime in the early 1970s. The MIR once boasted 10,000 members until it was targeted and decimated by government security forces following the 1973 coup. It is now trying to regain its strength after numerous setbacks. [redacted]

We currently see a few concrete indicators that the MIR is trying to increase its strength:

- MIR members—estimated active membership is 400—have received insurgent training in Cuba and

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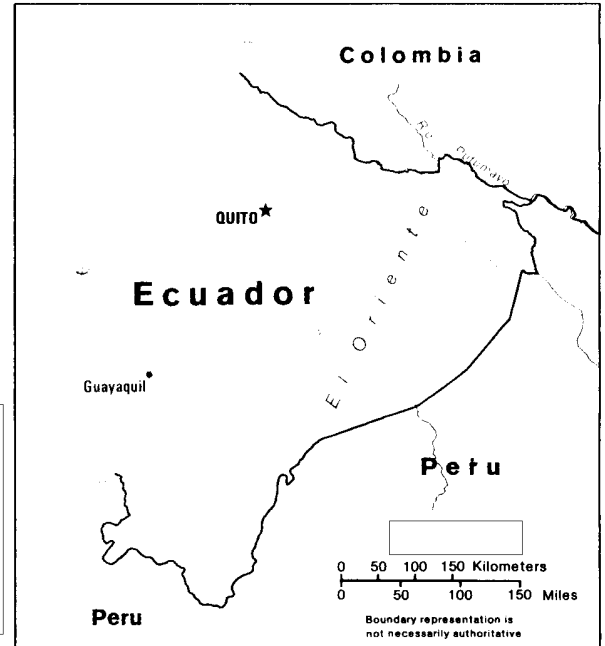
Libya, [redacted] Embassy reporting describes MIR guerrillas as better prepared and more professional than their FPMR counterparts.

- A raid on a safehouse in La Paz, Bolivia, uncovered a two-year-old arms smuggling operation that funneled weapons into Chile, possibly for the MIR. Additionally, press reports of a police capture of a large arms shipment—which included antitank weapons—in the Peruvian-Chilean border area linked the weapons to the MIR.

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[redacted]

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While these signs and the MIR's past reputation are sufficient to cause concern for the Pinochet government, we believe this insurgent group is not large enough and currently lacks the organizational capabilities, resources, and political savvy to mount a serious insurgent threat. Should the PCCh and the MIR pool their resources, however, a more serious situation could develop. [redacted]

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[redacted] the two may cooperate in political matters—through the MPD—but each generally maintains its distance and autonomy in organizing activities and armed actions. [redacted]

- Foreign governments and insurgents are providing increasing amounts of arms, money, and effective guerrilla training to Ecuadorean leftist groups.
- A new phenomenon, the use of violence by leftist groups, has emerged, with some incidents resulting in deaths. 25X1
- Subversive activities are occurring in both urban and rural areas of the country.
- Some guerrilla training is taking place within Ecuador. 25X1

[redacted]

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**Ecuador: A Potential Insurgency Threat**

Latin American analysts have long considered Ecuador to be a peaceful haven in a continent ravaged by revolution, but its relatively tranquil existence is starting to fray at the edges. An examination of the country's political, economic, and social climate reveals a complex mesh of problems and unsettling changes. While we believe a government-threatening situation is unlikely in the near future, some signs of a potential insurgent threat are already in evidence,

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[redacted]

**The Social-Political Climate**

Ecuador, like most developing countries, has experienced economic difficulties in recent years. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the country experienced the classic "boom-bust" cycle of a single-export economy: its economy soared following the discovery of oil reserves in the Oriente, then collapsed in 1982 with the drop in oil prices. While the government has been

successful—compared with other Latin American countries—in reversing the recent recession, its economic adjustments and belt-tightening have contributed to the frustrations of workers and the middle class who had grown accustomed to the rising wealth of the 1970s. [redacted]

The current administration, elected in 1984 and headed by President Febres-Cordero, is characterized in the Ecuadorean press as a fiscally conservative, pro-US government that supports free enterprise and encourages foreign investment. Open sources show that Febres-Cordero has been successful in rescheduling Ecuador's debt and has lured some foreign investors to help boost his country's economy. However, his policies have done little to improve housing and human services. Consequently, Febres-Cordero has been an easy target for the left, which depicts him as a puppet of foreigners and unconcerned with the plight of Ecuador's poor. [redacted]

Ecuador's universities have served—since the return to civilian rule in 1979—as a haven for many of these leftists whose criticisms have begun to wear at the patience of the Febres-Cordero government. While Febres-Cordero's predecessor championed a human rights policy that supported the Latin American tradition of autonomy for universities and prevented police and military troops from entering campus grounds, Febres-Cordero has stated publicly that he intends to crack down. [redacted]

[redacted] he is trying to alter university funding to deny certain groups financial support and ensure that academic trips do not include travel to Soviet Bloc countries. Febres-Cordero's "get tough" policy was also evident in his government's reaction to a widely publicized kidnaping by leftists of a Guayaquil businessman in late August 1985. Several of the kidnapers—some while in police custody—as well as the innocent victim were killed. [redacted]

We believe these minimal crackdowns will, however, do little to combat the growing tide of subversive activity, terrorism, and insurgent organizing now evident throughout Ecuador. Combating these problems will require an enhanced effort by a government bureaucracy and security forces currently ill prepared for the task. Ecuador's loose, [redacted] legal

system lacks strong ant subversion laws, and a strong habeas corpus writ aids leftists in gaining rapid release from jail. Moreover, the government has been reluctant to admit that it is confronted with a potential insurgency problem and has, therefore, not allocated the resources to cope with it. Our Embassy reports that the Ecuadorean military does not have a career intelligence branch, lacks a planning directorate for civic action problems, will not cooperate or share information with the police, and has insufficient funding to allow for the development of dedicated counterinsurgency units. Against this backdrop, at least one Ecuadorean group is hard at work building toward an insurgency. [redacted]

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**One Leading Actor and Three Aspirants**

We believe the group Alfaro Vive, Carajo! (AVC) is becoming a significant insurgent organization. Three other groups—the Communist Party of Ecuador/Marxist Leninist (PCMLE), the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Ecuador (PSRE), and the Ecuadorean Communist Party (PCE)—show virtually no signs of becoming serious insurgent threats and are currently engaged in only limited subversive activities. Their motivations, convictions, and strategies require extensive development before these groups will be able to challenge the government. [redacted]

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*The AVC.* Alfaro Vive, Carajo!'s <sup>2</sup> beginnings as an insurgent organization in 1983 were hardly auspicious. Seventeen of its members were arrested in Esmeraldas Province during one of the group's first military exercises, and its other activities were little more than minor media events. In 1984, more members were arrested by the police, and their confessions led to the discovery of safehouses and foiled AVC plans. [redacted]

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During the past year, however, the AVC has begun to establish a more impressive performance record, including a successful attack on a naval base, a clever

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<sup>2</sup> Roughly translated, Alfaro Vive, Carajo! means Alfaro Lives, Damn It! and is a tribute to a popular Ecuadorean revolutionary, Eloy Alfaro, who led an unsuccessful revolt in the early 1900s. [redacted]

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prison break that freed four AVC members, and a well-planned raid on a poorly guarded Quito police warehouse in which more than 100 weapons were stolen. As a result, the AVC is becoming a growing irritant—if not yet a challenge—to the Febres-Cordero government. [redacted]

new paramilitary training sites. [redacted] some AVC members travel to El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Cuba to receive guerrilla instruction.

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The AVC is significantly expanding its indigenous resource base—funds, personnel, training, and materiel— [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted] We believe the most definitive signs of a deepening AVC threat are the following:

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• *Organization and recruitment:*

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— The AVC is attracting new members at a substantial rate; we estimate its size has tripled since 1984. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted] we peg the membership at somewhere between 300 and 500. We also estimate that fewer than 300 are highly dedicated, action-oriented participants. Most of the AVC's members are probably recruited from college campuses, where the AVC has extensive contacts. [redacted] the AVC's future recruitment efforts will also target farmers and workers.

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• *Training:*

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— The AVC has expanded its insurgent training activities. In addition to the training it has previously conducted in Esmeraldas Province, [redacted] the AVC is now conducting paramilitary training in the east Ecuadorean jungle and that several AVC members were sent to the Oriente to identify

• *Acquiring resources:*

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[redacted]

— Weapons are also obtained through AVC raids on government installations. In March 1985, the AVC raided a Quito police station, obtaining 100 rifles and 20 pistols, according to press accounts. In May 1985, [redacted]

[redacted] the AVC stole weapons during a 25X1 raid on the Manta Naval Base. 25X1

• *Outside support:*

— There is substantial evidence of a close relationship between the AVC and the M-19, the well-established Colombian insurgent group. The AVC has received extensive military and political training from the M-19, [redacted] and we believe this relationship is a major reason for the recent sophistication and success of AVC operations. [redacted]

[redacted] the AVC's 25X1 governing body, the Central Committee, is headquartered in Colombia, [redacted]

[redacted]

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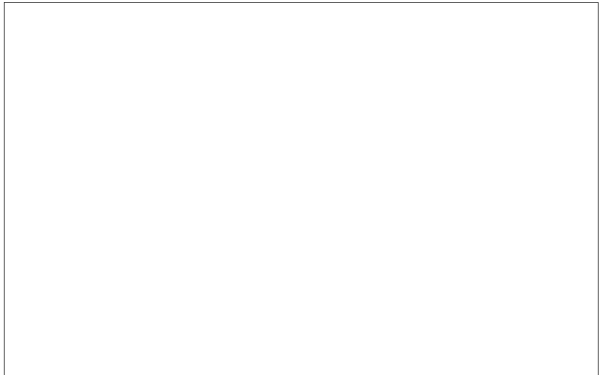
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— [redacted] the AVC is also seeking closer coordination and support from other Latin American liberation fronts. [redacted] [redacted] the group has received arms from Nicaragua, and [redacted] [redacted] some AVC members have served with guerrillas in El Salvador.

• *Actions/use of violence:*

- The AVC has shown a determination to expand operations beyond Quito and Guayaquil by conducting activities in both rural and urban areas. [redacted] part of the AVC strategy is to establish operational bases in all areas of the country.
- Recent AVC insurgent activities have increasingly demonstrated the group's ability to plan complex operations and its willingness to take risks. For example, in August 1985, the AVC conducted its first serious kidnaping—a virtual rite-of-passage for guerrilla groups. The operation, a joint effort with the M-19, ended when Ecuadorean security forces stormed the building in which the kidnap victim was being held. Although seven insurgents died as a result of this operation, the AVC has announced it will continue to kidnap Ecuadorean "oligarchs."



• *Popular support:*

- The AVC leadership has indicated that they want to expand their organization by developing

a political arm to augment their military capabilities. [redacted] the AVC wants to gain the political backing of "progressive" representatives in Congress and to establish a front to represent the group publicly and convey its political beliefs. [redacted]

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We believe the AVC's newfound capabilities and plans represent impressive gains for an inchoate insurgent organization. However, the AVC is far from achieving the status and potential of several other Latin American insurgents—for example, Peru's Shining Path; El Salvador's FMLN; or the AVC's patron saint, the M-19. The AVC still lacks the extensive organization and resources of these groups

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[redacted] Should the government improve its capabilities and dedicate resources to countering insurgent activity, the AVC would be vulnerable. While President Febres-Cordero has made some improvements and pledged to enact needed reforms, we judge that not enough has been done.

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The AVC also currently lacks a broad base of popular support. Although intrigued by the AVC, the Ecuadorean public generally remains opposed to violence. Consequently, we believe, on the basis of Embassy reporting, that the AVC has not received backing from any sector of the populace, except for students. Furthermore, we believe the AVC lacks the political leadership required to generate popular support and elicit cooperation from other Ecuadorean leftist groups. While AVC rhetoric espouses a desire to change the Ecuadorean economic and political systems—"to establish a people's government"—its political goals form a generic, leftist wishlist that fails to offer the public a viable political alternative. [redacted]

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**The PCMLE.** The Communist Party of Ecuador/Marxist Leninist shows only minor signs of incipient insurgent activity. [redacted]

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[redacted] Albania is the sole source of foreign government support for the PCMLE, and the group's

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only known source of external paramilitary training is a Colombian insurgent group, the People's Liberation Army. The PCMLE's main activities are political and often legal. The PCMLE holds key positions in Ecuador's legal Popular Democratic Movement, is active in militant student groups, and is influential in labor organizations. [redacted]

In July 1984, the PCMLE did conduct paramilitary training for its entire organization over a three-day period [redacted]. This annual training reportedly included hand-to-hand combat, party discipline, small-arms training, molotov cocktail design, judo, and clandestine cross-country movement. However, we have seen no sign that the PCMLE plans to put this training to use. [redacted]

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[redacted] the group recognizes that its small size and insufficient resources limit its destabilizing potential. Rather, the group aims to exert its influence and create unrest through student groups and through its own youth movement—the Revolutionary Youth of Ecuador. Additionally, the PCMLE reportedly doubts its ability to withstand a government backlash and subsequent repression should it engage in more violent activity. [redacted]

**The PSRE.** The few incipient insurgent indicators associated with the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Ecuador are generally insubstantial ones. [redacted] the PSRE receives some assistance from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, and Nicaragua—vehicles, printing presses, arms, money, and guerrilla and propaganda training—and is maintaining some guerrilla capability. However, we do not believe its resource base is of worrisome proportions, [redacted] and the PSRE's known record of criminal activity consists of two bank robberies in 1983. Resembling those of the PCMLE, the PSRE's activities have primarily been political. The PSRE has organized strikes and demonstrations, and recently one of its members was elected Prefect of Esmeraldas Province. [redacted]

**The PCE.** The pro-Moscow Ecuadorean Communist Party is the most passive of Ecuador's subversive groups. The PCE, like the PCMLE and the PSRE, engages primarily in political activities. [redacted]

[redacted] the PCE controls the Broad Leftist Front party and Ecuador's largest labor federation—the Ecuadorean Confederation of Workers. The PCE also maintains a significant influence in the Workers' Unity Front. [redacted]

We have seen no evidence of foreign-supplied arms, guerrilla training, or links between the PCE and foreign insurgents. Moreover, the party appears undecided about whether to develop a guerrilla capability. [redacted]

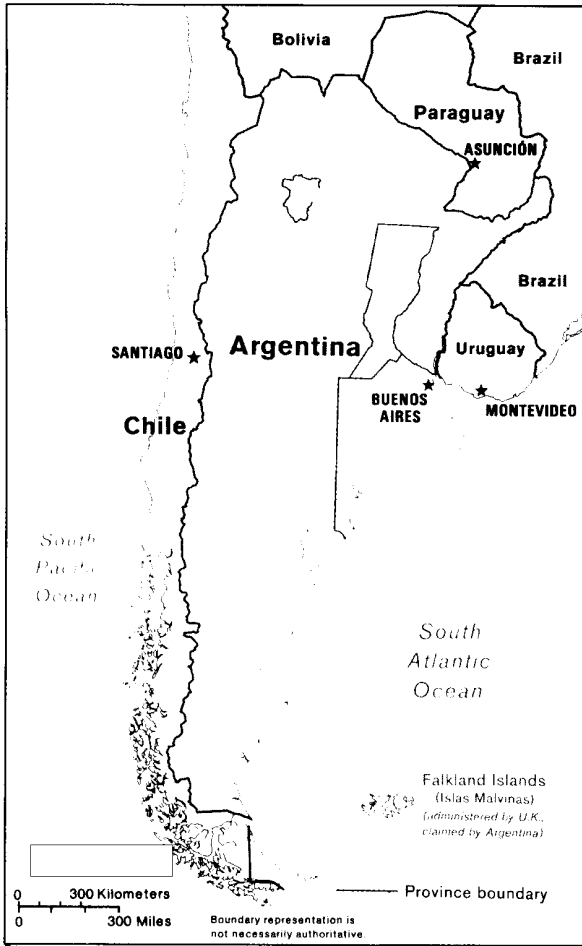
[redacted]

**Prospects for Group Cooperation.** Unification of Ecuador's subversive groups would pose a significant threat to the country's stability by challenging the government with a radical leftist front that—in the aggregate—would possess significant resources. Nonetheless, we do not believe such a union will evolve in the near future. AVC efforts to promote a cohesive leftist challenge to the Febres-Cordero government have been largely unsuccessful. [redacted] both the PCMLE and the PSRE refuse to support the AVC, partially to protect their own autonomy and out of fear of government retribution. Furthermore, we see no indication of cooperation between the PCMLE, the PSRE, and the PCE. [redacted]

**Argentina: A Minor Insurgency Threat**

Violence has long been a factor in Argentine politics and its sources historically have been indigenous—the government, often military juntas, forcefully quelling discontent or guerrilla groups at war with the regime. While the current political situation in Argentina is [redacted]

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characterized by the sporadic outbreak of violence, we see none of the signs of a growing or serious insurgent threat:

- Despite an increase in terrorist activity during the past year, the overall level of terrorism remains low.
- Although police raids have uncovered some arms caches and evidence of arms smuggling, the quantities have not been alarming compared with other Latin American situations.
- [redacted] no indications of guerrilla instruction have been observed.

- While exiled members of insurgent groups are trying to obtain foreign support, we have little evidence of success.
- Although radical leftists are infiltrating student and agricultural groups, we believe these activities currently pose a minor threat. [redacted]

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Moreover, the most serious of the indicators listed above—terrorism and arms caches—generally are not attributable to actions by the left. Rightwing extremists have most often been the source. Because they lack organization and resources, however, we do not believe that these extremists constitute an incipient insurgent movement. [redacted]

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**The Social-Political Climate**

We believe the current situation in Argentina is not conducive to insurgency, although the country's social and political culture has often been characterized by extremism that gravitates toward chaos. The current civilian democracy—the latest government in 50 years of flip-flopping civilian and military regimes—is widely popular, and there is little indication of any support for a violent solution to the country's lingering problems. [redacted]

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Alfonsín inherited a plethora of problems when he succeeded the military junta in October 1983; these included a shattered economy, political fallout from the Falklands defeat, and a grassroots demand for justice following the abuses and repression of a massive counterterrorist campaign. To cope with these difficulties, Alfonsín:

- Launched a new economic program designed to reduce the federal deficit, lower the inflation rate, and appease the middle class. This program staved off economic chaos in 1985, and the International Monetary Fund was sufficiently pleased to recommend a rescheduling of Argentina's debts.

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- Brought the nine junta members who ruled Argentina during the antiterrorist campaign to trial; a few lower ranking officers may also be prosecuted for human rights violations. These trials should partially appease human rights groups that are currently agitating for justice. Simultaneously, by limiting prosecutions to a few military officers, Alfonsin should, for the most part, be able to avoid provoking the military.
- Balanced the military trials with the prosecution of Mario Firmenich—founder of the Montoneros guerrilla group—and other insurgent leaders. By forcing Firmenich's extradition from Brazil on charges of homicide and kidnaping, Alfonsin has shown the right wing he will not play favorites, while sending out a warning to the left that a resurgence of guerrilla activities will not be tolerated.
- Gutted the government's civilian intelligence services in order to purge them of individuals left over from the so-called dirty war against terrorism in the 1970s.
- Taken steps through significant trade and commercial agreements with Cuba and Nicaragua to persuade each to refrain from any future support for Argentine leftist movements, according to Embassy reporting. [ ]

officers. The arrests were clumsily executed, and Alfonsin subsequently declared a state of siege to justify the detentions. Although the arrests received popular support, Embassy reporting indicates that the bungling government procedures and state of siege only served to fuel military grievances. [ ] 25X1

[ ] press accounts indicate that many in the military are also disturbed by Alfonsin's assault on the security forces—especially his purging of officers associated with the dirty war—and his cuts in the defense budget, which they believe have weakened Argentina's defenses against resurgence of radical violence. Moreover, despite effective antisubversion laws, distrust, rivalry, and a lack of coordination and communication are typical of the various security organizations that must implement them, according to Embassy reporting. While the government probably could contain sporadic attacks by the left, a concerted effort by leftist insurgents or rightwing extremists could threaten the still fragile government. Fortunately, from Alfonsin's perspective, there is little evidence that such an effort is in the offing. [ ] 25X1

**The Floundering Left**

Argentina has long been the home of a number of insurgent groups, especially the once powerful and notorious Montoneros and the Worker's Revolutionary Party/People's Revolutionary Army (PRT/ERP). While these insurgents rocked Argentina's stability in the 1970s, [ ] their organizations are now weak and ineffective. Most of their members are still in exile, and their activities remain unpalatable in the political climate of a popular democracy. [ ] 25X1

**The Montoneros.** [ ] the once formidable Montoneros are now a factionalized radical organization in the midst of a search for its identity. [ ] 25X1  
 [ ] one of these factions—part of the Montoneros' provisional leadership—met in April 1985 to discuss the need for organizational cohesiveness and direction. We believe these discussions indicate that [ ] 25X1

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To Alfonsin's advantage, the advent of democracy in Argentina has allowed for greater political freedom and once again given Argentines a sense of stake in the system. It has also undermined the appeal of the radical left by removing the perception of a common enemy—the junta. But Argentina's nascent democracy remains troubled by persistent political factionalism. Because of the disarray in the Peronist party, we believe there is currently no credible civilian alternative to Alfonsin. Consequently, the only alternative remains the military, which is now staying out of politics but has a suspicious and defensive attitude toward Alfonsin that eventually could lead it to challenge civilian rule again. [ ]

In late October, Alfonsin exacerbated the tension between his administration and the military by arresting 12 alleged conspirators, six of whom were military

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the Montoneros are hoping to rebuild their organization in anticipation of an eventual return to prominence and violence. We have observed a few signs that support this belief:

- [redacted] the Montoneros are pressing hard to infiltrate student, labor, and political groups, including leftist factions of the Peronist party, the Peronist University Youth, and the Union of Secondary Students.
- [redacted] urban front organizations are being developed—for example, the Peronist Syndicates Association and the Peronist Trade Union Groups. [redacted]  
[redacted] the Montoneros have also developed a rural front strategy designed to capitalize on growing discontent in agricultural areas of the country and infiltrate rural cooperatives in Buenos Aires and Santa Fe Provinces.

[redacted]

- The Montoneros continue to keep their cause in the public eye by publishing the magazine *Latino America*.

[redacted]

The Montoneros are beset with leadership problems that will limit their effectiveness for the foreseeable future. Besides the recently extradited Firmenich, two other Montonero leaders were arrested upon their return to Argentina in December 1983. The rest of the Montonero top leadership, Robert Perdia and Fernando Vaca, are currently seeking political asylum abroad. [redacted]

**An Argentine Legacy: the Montoneros**

*The Montoneros are a nationalistic, antioligarchy organization with ideological roots in Peronism and Marxism-Leninism. Now primarily identified by their political arm, the Peronist Montonero movement, [redacted] the Montoneros seek to reunify the fragmented Peronist movement—or at least influence it—and work toward establishing a “national liberation movement.”*

*Originally organized as a legal Peronist youth group in the late 1960s, the Montoneros emerged in 1970 as a guerrilla organization. It was disowned by Peron upon his return to power in 1973. The Montoneros then merged with the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of Liberation—two other Argentine guerrilla groups—and incorporated Communist themes. [redacted]*

*Between 1970 and 1975, the Montoneros grew into a large, well-structured insurgent organization that engaged in assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings—the ransoms from which netted millions of dollars.*

*[redacted] the Montoneros had the capability to manufacture weapons and explosives and smuggle arms into the country. Many of these weapons probably still exist in hidden caches. [redacted]*

*When General Videla seized power in March 1976, he immediately mounted a major antiguerrilla campaign that succeeded in crippling the Montoneros. This campaign is now referred to as Argentina’s dirty war. Although the Montoneros weakly continued some activities, including terrorism, until the late 1970s, by 1979 most of what was left of the organization had fled the country. [redacted]*

*[redacted] its members now live in Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Spain, and Mozambique. [redacted]*

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Montonero membership also remains small, and external support for the Montoneros remains passive.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] We have no evidence that any foreign government or insurgent group is currently providing arms, training, finances, or material to the Montoneros. [Redacted]

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**The PRT/ERP.** The Worker's Revolutionary Party/People's Revolutionary Army is also a small, troubled group with the bulk of its members living in exile. Moreover, for the present, the PRT/ERP has adopted nonviolence as its party line. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

We believe the PRT/ERP probably retains resources from the 1970s and have observed a few signs that the group is rebuilding:

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- They are infiltrating Argentina's Intransigent Party, labor groups, and human rights organizations,

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- [Redacted]

- Press reports have stated that the ERP and the Montoneros may begin cooperating, including efforts to infiltrate labor unions.

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- The group maintains its foreign contacts in Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Bolivia [Redacted]

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- A small ERP group, possibly operating independently, was actively training members in rural areas in November 1984. [Redacted]

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**Terror From the Right**

[Redacted] most of the current political violence in Argentina is

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**The PRT/ERP: Argentina's Trotskyist Insurgents** 25X1

*The Trotskyist PRT/ERP evolved from a 1968 split in Argentina's Revolutionary Worker's Party between Guevarist and Leninist factions. The Guevarist faction—the Worker's Revolutionary Party (PRT) or El Combatiente—looked to the Cuban revolution as the model for bringing change to Argentina and favored immediate armed action. The PRT formed its armed wing, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), in 1970. While the PRT/ERP never achieved the size or wide support of the Montoneros, the group's military prowess was impressive. PRT/ERP attacks against military installations during the period 1973-75 at times displayed remarkable planning, execution, and firepower.* [Redacted] 25X1

*The PRT/ERP made a fatal move in the mid-1970s when it changed its strategy from urban to rural insurgency. This decision weakened the organization and made it more vulnerable to government attacks in both areas. Major defeats in 1976 virtually eradicated the organization. Some members managed to flee the country and tried to establish a PRT/ERP in exile. However, the group received little external support and eventually split into factions, according to Embassy sources.* [Redacted] 25X1

the work of rightwing radicals. These extremists engage in robberies, shootings, bombings, and kidnappings that target journalists, human rights activists, politicians, and union members. On the basis of Embassy reporting, we believe the participants are ex-military or former security officials—most of whom were purged from the security forces when Alfonsin took office—although current employees may also be involved. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] We have identified at least three rightist groups—the Brigade 10, the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, and the Iron Guard Group—that are involved in violent activities. These rightwing extremists do not, in our judgment, constitute an incipient insurgency, although they threaten Argentina’s stability. We have seen no evidence to suggest the existence of a coherent guerrilla organization, foreign support, or a political program. [Redacted]

Ecuador’s AVC is significantly expanding its indigenous resource base—funds, personnel, training, and materiel—and we expect this trend to continue in 1986. Additionally, the AVC has refined its actions and has shown a new capacity for terrorism, as evidenced by the attacks on a police warehouse and a naval base, the kidnaping of a wealthy businessman, and a successful prison break. Although the AVC has grown from a dozen members to several hundred, it still lacks extensive resources and benefits largely from the limited capabilities of the Ecuadorean security forces. Consequently, we believe that only a dramatic change in Ecuador’s political situation or in the quality of its security forces will alter the current balance. If the government is able to provide—or secure from abroad—improved counterinsurgency training and equipment, and achieve greater cooperation between the police and the military, we believe Ecuador’s incipient insurgency threat could be nipped in the bud. [Redacted]

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**Outlook**

During the past two years, the PCCh in Chile has mounted a determined and successful effort to recruit new members, provide training to its guerrillas, obtain increased foreign support, acquire weapons and resources, and garner popular support. The party has doubled in size to 30,000 members and controls an armed wing and neighborhood militias. Moreover, with the help of the Soviets and Bloc countries, arms and trained guerrillas are being smuggled into the country in an effort to build an insurgent support base. We expect such external support to grow unless Chilean security forces secure the borders better and stem the flow of weapons and foreign-trained guerrillas to the country. [Redacted]

Argentina’s formerly powerful insurgent groups—the Montoneros and the PRT/ERP—remain small, lack popular support, and receive little external support. Moreover, most of the current political violence in Argentina is the work of scattered groups of rightwing extremists. Because neither the radical left nor the radical right possess significant guerrilla resources, we believe an Argentine insurgency is highly unlikely in the next few years. Should the political/economic environment deteriorate drastically, a military coup challenging the nascent democracy is more likely to occur. [Redacted]

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Popular support for the insurgents is, in our view, the most important factor that will determine whether a full-blown insurgency develops in the next few years. Although Pinochet is currently keeping the lid on subversion, we believe certain actions within the country could cause the situation to deteriorate. Violent riots and demonstrations could prompt Pinochet to curtail human rights further and possibly give him an opportunity to crush the moderate opposition. Such repression would polarize Chilean society and might lead the moderates to throw their support behind the radical left, a development crucial to the launching of a successful PCCh insurgency. Additionally, PCCh assassinations of key government figures—possibly including Pinochet—might spark a repressive backlash severe enough to provoke popular revolution and unrest among the Carabineros and the military. [Redacted]

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