

[REDACTED]

FRIDAY, 20 January

EL SALVADOR: Continued Detention of Murder Suspect

The announcement of the continued detention without specific charges of Captain Avila, who is implicated in the murder of two US labor officials in 1981, may cause serious legal and political problems for the Salvadoran Government. [REDACTED] President Magana, Defense Minister Vides, and several top military and security officials reluctantly agreed to detain Avila beyond the legal 30-day period, which expired on Wednesday. [REDACTED] that he expects problems from all sides — especially from the Supreme Court and the Legislative Assembly — but that he is prepared to risk his own position by illegally detaining Avila. [REDACTED]

Comment: Public reaction against the decision is likely to be strong, and the government's concern is justified. Moreover, extreme rightist officers, charging US interference with the military establishment, may again try to oust Vides. Unless new charges can be lodged soon against Avila, the government probably will have to release him. [REDACTED]

Approved for Release ·

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