

[REDACTED]

14 APR 86

EL SALVADOR: Reactions to Arrests

Current investigations of rightist civilians and military officers involved in kidnaping plots are likely to strengthen the government's credibility on human rights issues, but political problems may arise if the probe widens. [REDACTED] that at least 20 civilians, military officers, and enlisted personnel have been implicated in, and several arrested for, the criminal abductions of businessmen over the past three years. Initial public reaction to the arrests, even within conservative opposition groups and the armed forces, has been favorable. [REDACTED]

Comment. The government so far appears to have resisted the temptation to use these arrests to attack the rightist opposition. If the case widens to implicate additional prominent military and civilian personnel in other criminal or terrorist activities, however, conservative interest groups and the armed forces are likely to mount a campaign to force President Duarte to limit the scope of these investigations. [REDACTED]

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Approved for Release

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