

[REDACTED]

19 November 1989

SUBJECT: Assassination of Ignacio Ellacuria and Five Other Jesuit Priests

o The assassination of Ignacio Ellacuria and five other Jesuit priests could have been perpetrated by extremists of the left or the right.

Leftist Extremists

o The attack on the priests occurred near the University of Central America (UCA) campus at 0300 hours 16 November 1989.

o Approximately 200 insurgents attacked the Police Academy near Ciudad Merliot, set up roadblocks on the Santa Tecla highway early morning 15 November 1989. Ciudad Merliot is two kilometers southwest of the site where the priests were killed.

o [REDACTED]  
Insurgents in staging areas west of the capital were to try to take over Santa Tecla on 16 November 1989. Santa Tecla is three kilometers west of the UCA.

o Insurgents in staging areas south of the capital, wearing National Police uniforms, were to attack the Armed Forces General Staff (EMC) and National Directorate of Intelligence (DNI) 16 November. They also were to attack the homes of selected individuals. The EMC and DNI is one kilometer north of the UCA.

o Although insurgents from the staging area did not move into the capital, insurgent Urban Commandos also planned to attack the EMC and DNI during the night of 15 November. Increased armed forces security prevented the insurgents from inflicting casualties.

o Public statements by Ellacuria in September and October 1989 differed from earlier declarations, in that they were increasingly favorable to the Salvadoran Government and detrimental to the Salvadoran insurgency.

o On 15 September Ellacuria said President Cristiani has proved to be his own man and not just a puppet of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party.


o On 18 September Ellacuria said the insurgents should drop demands that the 1991 elections be moved up; that the FMLN not make postponement of elections a key issue; and expressed skepticism the insurgents can negotiate, integrate into the political process, demobilize troops, and prepare for elections in only one year.

o On 11 October Ellacuria called FICMAFAM's (insurgent front group) armed takeover of the Costa Rican Embassy a tactical error.

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

[REDACTED]



Rightist Extremists

o On 15 November 1989, during a discussion on the insurgent offensive, Roberto D'Aubuisson, Honorary President for Life of ARENA, commented that by the following day (16 November) everything would be taken care of.

o D'Aubuisson berated Jesuit priests teaching at UCA, and accused the priests of brainwashing the students and being responsible for their joining the insurgents.

o D'Aubuisson named several priests at UCA he claimed came to El Salvador only to take over the country. He specifically named UCA Rector Ignacio Ellacuria, among others.

o On the evening of 15 November Ellacuria and two other priests mentioned by D'Aubuisson were among the six Jesuit priests killed near the UCA campus.

