



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS/CIS

(b)(3) CIAAct  
(b)(6)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

CI# 285

# National Intelligence Daily

Friday  
23 December 1983

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS NID 83-299JX  
TCS 2999/83  
23 December 1983

Copy 285

~~Top Secret~~

(b)(3) NatSecAct

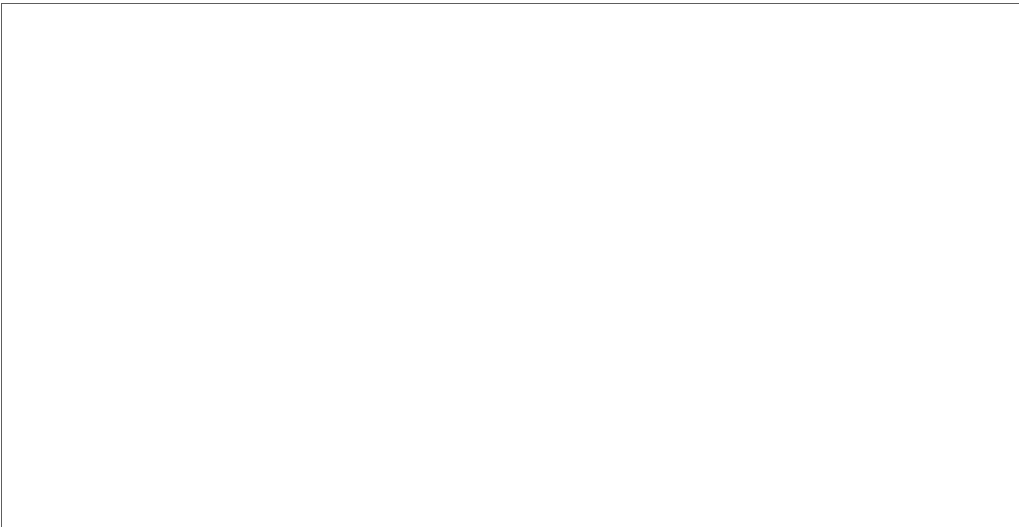
**Contents**



NR Record

**El Salvador: Government Operation in the North** ..... 8

**El Salvador: Crackdown on Death Squads** ..... 8



NR Record

(b)(3) NatSecAct



~~Top Secret~~

TCS 2999/83

23 December 1983

~~Top Secret~~

(b)(3) NatSecAct

**EL SALVADOR: Government Operation in the North**

The Army has launched a multibattalion operation against insurgent strongholds in northern Morazan and northeastern San Miguel Departments. The US defense attache reports that elements of the US-trained Arce immediate-reaction battalion were transported by helicopter to San Fernando. The Army states that several towns in the area already have been retaken. Guerrilla forces on Wednesday attacked Ciudad Barrios, but the Army has sent reinforcements and claims to have them surrounded. [redacted]

(b)(3) NatSecAct

**Comment:** The offensive, which is led by one of the Army's most capable field commanders, probably is in reaction to the mauling of a government battalion last week at Cerro Cacahuatique. A military success north of the Torola River—a key insurgent base area—will help improve the Army's sagging morale. The guerrilla attack on Ciudad Barrios almost certainly was designed to relieve government pressure north of the Torola River. [redacted]

(b)(3) NatSecAct

**EL SALVADOR: Crackdown on Death Squads**

Government efforts to discourage death squad activity evidently are having some effect. Police arrested an Army officer implicated in the murder of US labor officials in 1981, and they reportedly have warned civilians associated with death squads to leave the country or face arrest. According to a spokesman of the Catholic Church, the number of deaths attributed to the squads has decreased substantially over the past three weeks. He claimed only three such deaths were recorded last week. [redacted]

(b)(3)  
NatSecAct

**Comment:** The reduction in activities of the death squads may be only temporary. The recent ratification of the new constitution with its controversial land reform articles may have removed the motive for some of the intimidation by the death squads. Once the election campaign begins in earnest, however, there is likely to be a resurgence of both leftist and rightist violence. [redacted]

(b)(3)  
NatSecAct~~Top Secret~~

TCS 2999/83

23 December 1983