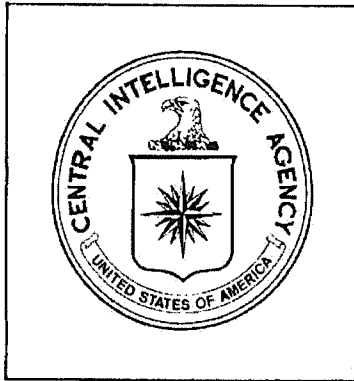


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STAFF NOTES:

Latin American Trends

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August 20, 1975
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El Salvador: Coup Plotting Reported

The bloody confrontation between students and security forces on July 30 has generated coup plotting and further demonstrations, but several of the ingredients necessary for a viable challenge to the Molina government seem to be missing.

Several sources have told [] of coup plots, but none appears to be well organized and there has been no indication that key commanders are ready to line up with the plotters. Nor has any strong military figure emerged to exploit concern over Molina's failure so far to generate enough popular support to ensure an honest victory in the legislative elections scheduled for next year.

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President Molina, after taking an initial tough public line against the opposition and blaming events on a communist conspiracy, is moving to make the best of a bad situation. He has met with the cabinet and government legislators and the diplomatic corps to explain his position, and the administration plans to take its story directly to the barracks as well. Security forces monitored a massive demonstration on August 14 protesting the earlier bloodshed but did not intervene. Efforts by the major opposition Christian Democratic Party--anathema to the military--to organize a legislative investigation of the clash were beaten back by the government party majority.

As the elections approach, however, Molina's problems are certain to grow, especially if the opposition takes an aggressive line. []

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