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WNINTEL INTEL SUBJECT: COMMENTS FOR [redacted] DRAFT

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[redacted] DRAFT OF A POLITICAL INSTABILITY PAPER ON EL SALVADOR.  
[redacted] FOR THEIR INPUT. ANY (b)(1)  
COMMENTS FOR INCLUSION OR CONSIDERATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY COB (b)(3) CIAAct  
MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1985.

PREFACE

THIS MEMORANDUM EXPLORES WHETHER AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES A MILITARY COUP IS LIKELY TO OCCUR IN EL SALVADOR. IT IS ONE OF A SERIES OF PAPERS THAT APPLIES A SET OF THIRTY-SOME COUP INDICATORS TO THE CURRENT SCENE AND THEN LOOKS SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AHEAD TO ASSESS COUP PROSPECTS IN A RIGOROUS, SYSTEMATIC WAY. THE PAPER IS DESIGNED FOR SPECIALISTS IN THE AREA AND OMIT'S BACKGROUND DETAIL. THE INDICATORS WERE CONSTRUCTED FROM EXTENSIVE RESEARCH OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED COUPS IN THE THIRD WORLD OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES. A FORTHCOMING INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, "MILITARY COUPS: LIKELY THIRD WORLD TARGETS," WILL LAY OUT THE METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES IN MORE DETAIL. (C)

OUR INTENTION IS NOT TO PINPOINT THE ACTUAL TIMING OF A COUP, BUT TO HIGHLIGHT INDICATORS THAT MIGHT ALTER PROSPECTS FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION OVER THE LONG TERM. WE ALSO DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS OF VARIOUS COUP SCENARIOS FOR US INTERESTS. EACH SECTION OF THE MEMORANDUM SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH A LIST OF COUP INDICATORS THAT APPEARS AS A FOLDOUT AT THE END OF THE PAPER. (C)

SUMMARY

WE BELIEVE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A MILITARY COUP IN EL SALVADOR OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS IS RELATIVELY LOW, ALTHOUGH THE MILITARY STILL VIEWS ITSELF AS THE ULTIMATE GUARANTOR OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND CONTINUES TO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE IF CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT. (S/NF)

AS REFLECTED BY OUR INDICATORS, THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IS GAINING MOMENTUM, AND RESPECT FOR

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CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP IS GROWING. TIES BETWEEN MILITARY LEADERS AND OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE WEAKENING, AND THE MILITARY IS BECOMING MORE PROFESSIONAL. FURTHERMORE, BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAS A STRONG PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP WITH EL SALVADOR, US LEVERAGE SUBSTANTIALLY MITIGATES THE PROSPECTS FOR A COUP. WE BELIEVE THAT SO LONG AS THE MILITARY REMAINS CONVINCED THAT THE CONTINUATION OF CIVILIAN RULE SERVES BOTH THE NATIONAL AND ITS CORPORATE INTERESTS, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF A MILITARY COUP. (~~S NF~~)

ON THE OTHER HAND, SALVADORAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS ARE YOUNG, AND THE GIVE AND TAKE OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS RELATIVELY NEW. THUS, IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO SEVERELY TEST THE MILITARY'S COMMITMENT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. TRADITIONALLY, THE MILITARY HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AND CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES COULD PROMPT THEM TO CONSIDER A COUP. (~~S NF~~)

SEVERAL INDICATORS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RISE FROM LOW OR MODERATE TO HIGH CONCERN OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT YEAR. SHOULD DUARTE THREATEN MILITARY PREROGATIVES OR ENDANGER WHAT THE MILITARY BELIEVES TO BE THE NATIONAL INTEREST, WE BELIEVE THE PROSPECTS FOR A COUP WILL RISE. DESPITE THE FACTIONALISM CREATED BY OFFICERS' LOYALTY TO THEIR MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATING CLASSES, WE JUDGE THAT A COUP INITIATED UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE LAUNCHED BY A UNITED OFFICER CORPS. (~~S NF~~)

THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR PRESENTS THE UNITED STATES WITH RISKS AS WELL AS OPPORTUNITIES. THE GRAVEST RISK, WE BELIEVE, IS THAT THE MILITARY, BUOYED BY INCREASED AID AND ENCOURAGED BY ITS SUCCESS AGAINST THE INSURGENTS, WILL SEE LESS OF A NEED TO COOPERATE WITH CIVILIAN POLITICIANS AND THE UNITED STATES. IN THE EVENT OF A COUP, THE UNITED STATES MIGHT FACE LESS SUPPORT IN THE CONTADORA PROCESS AND ON OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE UNITED STATES HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE THROUGH OFFERS OF CONTINUED ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC AID, AND PROBABLY WOULD MAINTAIN THIS ADVANTAGE IN DEALING WITH A POST-COUP REGIME. (~~S NF~~)

#### THE SETTING

##### THE POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT REMAINS MODERATELY COUP PRONE, BUT LESS SO THAN A YEAR AGO. (~~S NF~~)

AS OUR LIST OF INDICATORS SHOWS, EL SALVADOR EXHIBITS SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COUP PRONE SOCIETIES. SINCE 1956 THE MILITARY HAS STAGED FOUR FRAUDULENT ELECTIONS AND THREE COUPS. THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO PRESIDENT DUARTE'S SUCCESSOR IN 1989, IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL MARK THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL, DEMOCRATIC PASSING OF POWER IN 20 YEARS. ALTHOUGH SUCCESSION PROCEDURES ARE SPELLED OUT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, THE PROCESS HAS NOT BEEN TESTED, AND WE VIEW THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF POWER AS SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN. (~~S NF~~)

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PROMINENT IDEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS WITHIN SOCIETY, AS NOTED IN OUR LIST OF INDICATORS, ARE ALSO TROUBLESOME. A POWERFUL SEGMENT OF THE CIVILIAN ELITE TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN ALLIED WITH CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY, AND LEFTIST INFLUENCE IN TRADE UNIONS AND AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IS STRONG. THE LINKAGE BETWEEN CIVILIAN ELITES AND THE MILITARY IS WEAKENING, HOWEVER, AND TERRORIST INCIDENTS HAVE TARNISHED THE IMAGE OF THE EXTREME LEFT AS WELL. WE BELIEVE DUARTE HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN CARVING OUT A MODERATE CENTER BETWEEN THE TWO EXTREMES, BUT THE HISTORICAL SPLIT BETWEEN THE LEFT AND RIGHT--WHICH HAS BEEN A FACTOR IN PAST COUPS--STILL RATES A HIGH LEVEL OF CONCERN. (S ~~NF~~)

NEVERTHELESS, THE STRENGTH OF THE CONSENSUS BEHIND DUARTE'S REGIME IS GROWING, AND, IN OUR VIEW, THIS OUTWEIGHS THE HISTORICAL PREDISPOSITION OF NON-DEMOCRATIC REGIME CHANGE. WE JUDGE THAT RESPECT FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP, ALTHOUGH LACKING IN THE PAST, HAS GROWN. DUARTE HAS WON ADDITIONAL LEGITIMACY AS A RESULT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THIS SPRING, AND HIS CHIEF ANTAGONIST ON THE RIGHT--ROBERT D'AUBUISSON--HAS LOST GROUND. ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY, EL SALVADOR'S YOUNG POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE SURVIVED SEVERAL RECENT TESTS THAT IN THE PAST PROBABLY WOULD HAVE PROMPTED A COUP. (S ~~NF~~)

MOREOVER, THE PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EL SALVADOR--THE DOMINANT INDICATOR IN OUR ESTIMATE--WORKS STRONGLY AGAINST A COUP. THE SALVADORAN MILITARY RECOGNIZES ITS HEAVY RELIANCE ON US AID AND ADVICE IN THE WAR AGAINST THE INSURGENTS. THE MILITARY'S OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO CONTINUE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE PROVIDES THE UNITED

STATES WITH A POTENT LEVER. AS LONG AS THE NEED FOR US AID REMAINS GREAT AND DUARTE IS ABLE TO DELIVER IT, THE SALVADORAN MILITARY IS UNLIKELY TO ACT AGAINST THE REGIME. (S ~~NF~~)

ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF THE INDICATORS OF A COUP PRONE SOCIETY RATE ONLY MODERATE OR LOW CONCERN IN EL SALVADOR, CIVIL DISORDER AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES MERIT CLOSE WATCHING. BOTH ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE IN THE NEAR TERM AND TEST THE STRENGTH OF FLEDGLING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. SEVERAL RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE LEFT IS INTERESTED IN USING LABOR AND STUDENTS TO DESTABILIZE THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE US EMBASSY IS CONCERNED THAT A MUCH-NEEDED DEVALUATION OF THE COLON WILL HEAT UP INFLATION AND INCREASE THE BUDGET DEFICIT. IF BOTH INDICATORS BECOME CAUSES FOR SERIOUS CONCERN, THE CHANCES OF A COUP WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED. (S ~~NF~~)

#### THE BACKGROUND OF THE MILITARY

BASED ON OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE INDICATORS, WE RATE THE MILITARY AS MODERATELY COUP PRONE. (S ~~NF~~)

SINCE THE 1930'S, ELEMENTS OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY FREQUENTLY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN COUPS, COUNTERCOUPS, AND COUP PLOTTING. THE MILITARY ALSO HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS--OFTEN RUNNING ITS OWN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT AND ENSURING HIS VICTORY, BUT IN RECENT ELECTIONS THEY HAVE STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED PARTISAN POLITICS. NEVERTHELESS, DUARTE HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO CONSULT WITH HIS MILITARY LEADERS ON

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ALL KEY ISSUES. (S/NF)

DESPITE GRUDGING RESPECT FOR DUARTE'S ABILITIES, MANY OFFICERS REMAIN WARY OF THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, BUT TIES BETWEEN MILITARY LEADERS AND THE EXTREME RIGHT--WHO WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO URGE MILITARY INTERVENTION--HAVE LESSENERED. D'AUBUISSON HAS FAILED TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, AND HE LOST RESPECT AMONG MANY CONSERVATIVE OFFICERS BY ACCUSING THE MILITARY OF AIDING DUARTE IN THE LAST ELECTION. (S/NF)

WHILE BRIGADE COMMANDERS STILL RETAIN SOME DISCRETIONARY POWER VIS-A-VIS THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, US EMBASSY REPORTING INDICATES THAT IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY A DISGRUNTLED OFFICER WOULD ACT INDEPENDENTLY OF HIS PEERS. A SUCCESSFUL COUP WOULD REQUIRE THE SUPPORT--OR AT LEAST THE ACQUIESCENCE--OF MOST SEGMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES INCLUDING THE MILITARY'S FUNCTIONAL RIVALS IN THE SECURITY SERVICES. (S/NF)

TWO FACTORS, HOWEVER, WARRANT A HIGH DEGREE OF CONCERN IN ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL FOR A COUP--THE MILITARY'S SELF-IMAGE AND FACTIONALISM/COALITION BUILDING AMONG MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATING CLASSES. BOTH OF THESE FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO COUP PLOTTING IN THE PAST. (S/NF)

THE MILITARY TRADITIONALLY HAS DEFINED ITS ROLE BROADLY TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY THE DEFENSE OF THE NATION AGAINST EXTERNAL THREATS BUT ALSO AS THE PROTECTION OF DOMESTIC STABILITY. AS A RESULT OF US AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, THE MILITARY HAS BECOME MORE CONCERNED WITH PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE TO THE EL SALVADORAN PEOPLE AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES, MANY OFFICERS ARE GENUINELY DEDICATED TO RIDDING EL SALVADOR OF ITS "BANANA REPUBLIC" IMAGE BY STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONALIZING POLITICAL CHANGE. NONETHELESS, THE MILITARY'S TRADITIONAL TENDENCY TO BE THE ULTIMATE ARBITER OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST REMAINS STRONG. (S/NF)

IN THE PAST, FACTIONALISM BETWEEN REFORMIST JUNIOR OFFICERS AND THEIR MORE CONSERVATIVE SENIORS CAUSED FRICTION AND LED TO SEVERAL COUPS--THE MOST RECENT IN 1979. AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, THE BONDS OF CLASS LOYALTY SERVE TO REINFORCE COLLEGIAL DECISION MAKING, AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TANDAS HAVE DIMINISHED. A COALITION OF OFFICERS FROM THE 1963 AND 1964 MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATING CLASSES (TANDAS) ARE NOW SENIOR COLONELS AND, TOGETHER WITH THE JUNIOR COLONELS FROM THE 1966 TANDAS, CONTROL KEY MILITARY UNITS. PEER PRESSURE MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT A MAVERICK WOULD MOVE AGAINST DUARTE IF HIS COLLEAGUES CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, JUNIOR OFFICERS, WHO ARE REGULARLY CONSULTED BY THEIR COMMANDERS ON MATTERS CONCERNING MILITARY PREROGATIVES, ALSO ARE UNLIKELY TO MOVE AGAINST DUARTE OR THEIR COMMANDERS. (S/NF)

SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE, HOWEVER, AND KEY TANDAS LEADERS BECOME CONVINCED THAT DUARTE IS NOT ACTING IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE COUNTRY, WE BELIEVE THE CONSENSUS COULD CRUMBLE. WE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FISSURES DEVELOPING ONCE AGAIN AMONG TANDAS OVER POLICY ISSUES,

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INCREASING THE PROSPECTS FOR A COUP. (~~S-NF~~)

THE MOTIVES

THE MILITARY, IN OUR VIEW, IS TOO CONCERNED WITH WINNING THE WAR AND MAINTAINING US SUPPORT TO MOUNT A COUP AGAINST DUARTE. (~~S-NF~~)

DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN SEVERAL ACTIONS--LIKE THE LINE ITEM VETO OF THE ELECTORAL LAW, THE ATTEMPTED PROMOTION OF SECURITY CHIEF COLONEL LOPEZ-NUILA, AND THE CASHIERING OF A NEFARIOUS JUNIOR OFFICER--THAT THE MILITARY VIEWED AS ARBITRARY OR UNCONSTITUTIONAL. IT HAS RESPONDED, HOWEVER, BY TRYING--WITH MIXED RESULTS--TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT TO CHANGE HIS POSITION. WE BELIEVE THAT IF DUARTE ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE LOPEZ-NUILA IN THE NEXT PROMOTION CYCLE, THE MILITARY IS UNLIKELY TO REVOLT. THE US EMBASSY VIEWS THIS AS A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW THE MILITARY HAS CHANGED TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, AND WE JUDGE ISSUES OF PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY OVER MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS AND PROMOTIONS TO BE LESS SENSITIVE THAN A YEAR AGO. NONETHELESS, THE ISSUE IS NOT ENTIRELY RESOLVED. (~~S-NF~~)

SEVERAL OTHER POINTS OF CONTENTION REMAIN BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND DUARTE. TO THE CONSTERNATION OF A SMALL NUMBER OF EXTREME RIGHTWING MILITARY OFFICERS, DUARTE HAS ACTED TO END HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY CLEANING UP THE SECURITY SERVICES AND REMOVING A JUDGE WHO BLOCKED PROSECUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. LESS ARDENT RIGHTISTS, WHILE ACCEPTING DUARTE'S CONCERN ABOUT RIGHTWING TERRORISM, ALSO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT LEFTIST INFILTRATION OF LABOR AND STUDENT GROUPS, AND ESCALATING INSTANCES OF LEFTIST-DIRECTED TERRORISM. (~~S-NF~~)

WE JUDGE THAT TWO INDICATORS--DUARTE'S HANDLING OF URBAN TERRORISM AND HIS ABILITY TO COOPT OPPOSITION GROUPS--WILL BE CRITICAL TO WATCH. IF DUARTE APPEARS POWERLESS TO STOP MOUNTING TERRORIST ATTACKS, MILITARY OFFICERS MAY BE INCLINED TO ACT UNILATERALLY. ALTERNATIVELY, LEFTIST-INSTIGATED STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS COULD ATTRACT MORE SUPPORT FROM MODERATES IF DUARTE IS UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SOME OF THE LATTER'S DEMANDS. THE BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER OCCASIONED BY EITHER OF THESE INSTANCES COULD THREATEN THE STABILITY OF DUARTE'S REGIME. (~~S-NF~~)

DUARTE ALSO WOULD BE MORE VULNERABLE TO A COUP IF HE REACHED AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE INSURGENTS THAT THE MILITARY VIEWED AS UNACCEPTABLE OR ENTERED INTO A BORDER SETTLEMENT WITH HONDURAS THAT THE MILITARY BELIEVED SOLD OUT THEIR INTERESTS. OVER THE LONGER TERM, DUARTE COULD FACE GROWING PRESSURE FROM JUNIOR OFFICERS IF THE WAR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WINDS DOWN. THE WAR HAS CREATED A CADRE OF COMPETENT JUNIOR OFFICERS WHOSE PROSPECTS FOR PROMOTION WILL BECOME MORE LIMITED AS FIELD ASSIGNMENTS SHRINK. THE REMOVAL OF THE NEED FOR US AID BROUGHT ABOUT BY A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE WAR COULD EMBOLDEN THEM TO ACT AGAINST THE REGIME WITHOUT FEAR OF REPRISAL FROM THE UNITED STATES. (~~S-NF~~)

THE OUTLOOK AND POTENTIAL TRIGGER MECHANISMS

OUR INDICATORS SUGGEST THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR A COUP IN EL

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SALVADOR OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS ARE RELATIVELY LOW. NEVERTHELESS, SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS LOOM ON THE HORIZON THAT WE BELIEVE COULD CAUSE THE MILITARY TO REVERSE ITS PRESENT TENDENCIES AND MOUNT A COUP. INDICATORS RELATING TO URBAN VIOLENCE, LABOR AND STUDENT UNREST, AND THE ECONOMY WILL, WE JUDGE, BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN ASSESSING THE PROSPECTS FOR A COUP OVER THE NEXT 12 TO 18 MONTHS. A CHANGE IN THE INDICATORS CORRESPONDING TO THESE EVENTS FROM LOW OR MEDIUM TO HIGH WOULD SUGGEST THAT DUARTE IS APPROACHING A CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY. IN ADDITION, AN UNPOPULAR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE WAR OR DUARTE'S ASSASSINATION ALSO COULD HEIGHTEN PROSPECTS FOR A COUP, BUT WE BELIEVE BOTH OF THESE EVENTS ARE LESS PROBABLE. (S NF)

#### LEFTIST-INSPIRED URBAN TERRORISM

A POLITICAL CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN DUARTE PROVOKED BY HIS INEFFECTUAL HANDLING OF TERRORISM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRIGGER A COUP. IF TERRORIST INCIDENTS AGAINST SALVADORAN MILITARY PERSONNEL MULTIPLY, WE ANTICIPATE THAT MILITARY OFFICERS WILL BECOME MORE VOCAL IN THEIR CRITICISM OF DUARTE AND PRESS FOR BROADER POWERS TO DETAIN AND PROSECUTE THE SUSPECTED PERPETRATORS. IF DUARTE IS UNRESPONSIVE, CONSERVATIVE OFFICERS--DISSATISFIED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S OBSTRUCTIONISM--COULD RE-INITIATE DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITY AND RENEW TIES WITH THE RIGHTIST OPPOSITION. (S NF)

IN RESPONSE TO THE INCREASING THREAT TO THEIR PERSONNEL, SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE URGED DUARTE TO INITIATE ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION. THE PRESIDENT COULD PURSUE NEW LEGISLATION OR USE HIS CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO SPEED UP PROSECUTION OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS IN AN EFFORT TO CONVINCE THE MILITARY OF HIS COMMITMENT TO THEIR SECURITY. DUARTE'S ABILITY TO GAIN US FUNDS FOR POLICE TRAINING SHOULD HELP AVERT MILITARY DISCONTENT. (S NF)

#### LABOR AND STUDENT UNREST

LABOR AND STUDENT UNREST COULD ESCALATE TO THE POINT THAT IT PROVOKES A POLITICAL CRISIS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE MILITARY. LARGE AND BOISTEROUS STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, COULD LEAD TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH SECURITY FORCES. PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKES ALSO COULD INCREASE IN NUMBER AND DURATION RESULTING IN CLASHES WITH THE POLICE. CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES AND DEMONSTRATORS MIGHT POLARIZE THE LEFT AND RIGHT, COSTING DUARTE THE SUPPORT OF HIS MODERATE COALITION. (S NF)

SHOULD LABOR OR STUDENT UNREST INCREASE, THE PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST THE DISORDER THAT PROVES TO THE MILITARY HE IS IN CONTROL BUT ALSO ACCOMMODATES SOME OF THE LEGITIMATE DEMANDS OF DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS. FOR EXAMPLE, DUARTE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH DEMANDS FOR HIGHER WAGES WITHOUT TOLERATING LENGTHY STRIKES THAT DISRUPT PUBLIC SERVICES. (S NF)

#### ECONOMIC CRISIS

THE IMPOSITION OF UNPOPULAR ECONOMIC MEASURES COULD TRIGGER A COUP. FOR EXAMPLE, A DECISION BY DUARTE TO RAISE

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TAXES PRECIPITOUSLY TO SERVICE DEBT PAYMENTS AND MEET LABOR'S DEMANDS FOR WAGE INCREASES COULD COST HIM THE SUPPORT FROM THE BUSINESS SECTOR AND JEOPARDIZE CAPITAL THAT HAS BEGUN TO TRICKLE BACK INTO EL SALVADOR. IF A SERIOUS ECONOMIC CRISIS AROSE, DUARTE MIGHT HAVE TO CUT MILITARY EXPENDITURES AND MOST LIKELY WOULD DEVALUATE THE COLON, THUS RAISING THE COST OF CONSUMER GOODS AND BOOSTING INFLATION. (~~S~~-NF)

MOREOVER, AS POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUPS BECOME MORE ACCUSTOMED TO WORKING WITHIN THE SYSTEM, DUARTE WILL FACE MOUNTING DEMANDS ON EL SALVADOR'S LIMITED ECONOMIC RESOURCES. HE WILL NEED TO GET EL SALVADOR'S ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER AND ACQUIRE EXTERNAL ECONOMIC AID IF HE IS TO AVOID THE PERCEPTION THAT GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT IS UNDERMINING THE ECONOMY. (~~S~~-NF)

ACCOMMODATION WITH THE INSURGENTS AND/OR NICARAGUA

DUARTE COULD PROMPT A POLITICAL CRISIS CULMINATING IN A COUP IF HE OPTED FOR AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE INSURGENTS OR MANAGUA THAT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE MILITARY. ACCEPTANCE OF CONTADORA-SPONSORED INITIATIVE THAT CALLED FOR A MAJOR REDUCTION IN US AID WOULD FAN DISCONTENT AMONG SALVADORAN OFFICERS. MOREOVER, THE MILITARY WOULD BE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED IF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SOLD OUT GAINS MADE ON THE BATTLEFIELD--FOR EXAMPLE, BY OPENING THE WAY TO A POWER-SHARING ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INSURGENTS OR THE INTEGRATION OF THE REBEL ARMY WITH THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES. (~~S~~-NF)

DUARTE WILL HAVE TO KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO THE INSURGENTS OPEN TO DEFLECT LEFTIST AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TAKING A HARD LINE AGAINST REBEL DEMANDS IN ORDER TO KEEP THE MILITARY MOLLIFIED. THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID HE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE AS LONG AS URBAN TERRORISM CONTINUES AND WILL NOT ALLOW PEACE TALKS TO BECOME A PROPAGANDA FORUM FOR THE INSURGENTS. IF DUARTE APPEARED TO BE BACKPEDDLING ON EITHER COMMITMENT, HE WOULD BECOME MUCH MORE VULNERABLE TO A TAKEOVER ATTEMPT. (~~S~~-NF)

THE ASSASSINATION OF DUARTE

THE ASSASSINATION OF DUARTE COULD CAUSE A SUCCESSION CRISIS TRIGGERING THE MILITARY TO ASSUME POWER. THE US EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE COMMITMENT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IS SUCH THAT THE MILITARY WOULD ALLOW THE VICE PRESIDENT TO ASSUME POWER. NEVERTHELESS, THE UNCERTAINTIES OF A NEW REGIME COULD RAISE THE MILITARY'S CONCERNS--PARTICULARLY IF AN ECONOMIC CRISIS, DOMESTIC UNREST, OR TERRORIST VIOLENCE FOLLOWED THE PRESIDENT'S DEATH. (~~S~~-NF)

KEY PLAYERS

SHOULD A COUP OCCUR, IT PROBABLY WOULD BE INITIATED WITH AT LEAST THE TACIT APPROVAL OF ALL THE SIGNIFICANT MILITARY COMMANDS--THE SECURITY SERVICES, THE AIR FORCE, THE FIRST BRIGADE, THE AIRBORNE BATTALION, AND THE IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALIONS--THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMANDERS AND SENIOR OFFICERS FROM THE 1963, 1964, AND 1966 TANDAS. ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY, ANY TWO OF THESE COMMANDS COULD OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT IF THE NEUTRALITY OF THE REMAINDER OF THE ARMED

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FORCES WERE ASSURED. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THE ARMED FORCES WOULD ACT ONLY IF A MAJORITY OF KEY PLAYERS AGREED TO THE COUP. (S-NF)

THE INSTIGATORS MOST LIKELY WOULD INCLUDE AIR FORCE COMMANDER COLONEL RAFAEL BUSTILLO, FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL SIGIFREDO OCHOA, AND COMMANDER OF THE ARCE BATTALION COLONEL MAURICIO STABEN, ALL OF WHOM ARE WELL-KNOWN ANTAGONISTS OF DUARTE. CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF GENERAL ADOLFO BLANDON, DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL CARLOS VIDES CASANOVA, AND NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR COLONEL RODOLFO REVELO PROBABLY WOULD SUPPORT DUARTE AT LEAST INITIALLY. (S-NF)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

AS EVIDENCED BY THE SPATE OF RUMORS LAST WINTER, A COUP IN EL SALVADOR REMAINS A SERIOUS CONCERN. ALTHOUGH MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE COUP THREATS WERE ONLY A BLUFF, THE MILITARY'S PAST HISTORY LENT CREDENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A REVOLT. WELL-KNOWN POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND KEY MILITARY LEADERS FURTHER HEIGHTENED THE TENSION. (S-NF)

A COUP IN EL SALVADOR WOULD DAMAGE THE US POSITION IN CENTRAL AMERICA BECAUSE OF WASHINGTON'S WELL-PUBLICIZED SUPPORT FOR DUARTE. THE FALL OF THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT ALSO WOULD BOOST SANDINISTA MORALE AND COULD BECOME A PROPAGANDA PLUS FOR THE CUBANS AND THE SOVIETS. FURTHERMORE, THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE IN THE UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION OF EITHER SUPPORTING A NEW MILITARY REGIME OR WITHHOLDING SUPPORT FROM A STRATEGIC CENTRAL AMERICAN ALLY. (S-NF)

A COUP MOTIVATED BY DUARTE'S INEPT RESPONSE TO URBAN UNREST OR TERRORISM COULD BRING TO POWER A LESS COOPERATIVE REGIME WITH A MORE RIGHTIST AND ISOLATIONIST ORIENTATION. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE MILITARY COULD FAVOR A "GO IT ALONE" ATTITUDE, PERHAPS ATTEMPTING AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS. A MAJOR COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN COULD STRETCH MILITARY RESOURCES TO THE LIMIT, COMPLICATING EL SALVADOR'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT ANTI-SANDINISTA REBELS IN NICARAGUA OR REGIONAL INITIATIVES LIKE THE CONTADORA PROCESS. (S-NF)

A RIGHTIST REGIME MIGHT REVERSE THE PROGRESS DURATE HAS MADE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THE NEW GOVERNMENT MIGHT SUSPEND CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES AND GIVE FREER REIGN TO DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITY. THE NEW REGIME ALSO COULD TAKE A MORE MILITANT LINE VIS-A-VIS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE RED CROSS, CLAIMING EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS. REFORMIST OFFICERS, DISGUSTED WITH THE RETURN OF RIGHTWING VIOLENCE, MIGHT BREAK RANKS WITH CONSERVATIVES, THREATENING A COUNTERCOUP. (S-NF)

IF DUARTE WERE MURDERED BY A LONE ASSAILANT, THE US EMBASSY BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT'S DEATH COULD BE FOLLOWED BY A SMOOTH SUCCESSION, BUT A PERIOD OF INTENSE RIVALRY AMONG DUARTE'S WOULD-BE SUCCESSORS COULD WEAKEN THE NEW PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY. THE WEAKNESS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT PROBABLY WOULD INHIBIT ITS ABILITY TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED STATES. (S-NF)

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POWER UNCHECKED BY REGIME (UNIFIED COMMAND, LONG-STANDING  
FIELD ASSIGNMENTS)

ABSENCE OR WEAKNESS OF FUNCTIONAL RIVALS (NATIONAL GUARD,  
POPULAR MILITIA, SECURITY FORCE)

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

DISDAIN FOR CIVILIAN POLITICIANS AND POLITICAL  
INSTITUTIONS

CLOSE TIES BETWEEN SOME MILITARY LEADERS AND OPPOSITION  
GROUPS

OVERALL RATING OF THE MILITARY AS COUP-PRONE

THE MOTIVES: FACTORS MOTIVATING THE MILITARY TO INTERVENE

A MILITARY COUP RARELY IS A RANDOM EVENT BUT GROWS OUT OF A  
COUP-PRONE SETTING. IT ALSO INVOLVES THE ACCUMULATION OF  
MOTIVES THAT PROMPT THE MILITARY TO INTERVENE

RETENTION OF POWER BY GOVERNMENT LEADERS BEYOND  
CONSTITUTIONAL TIME LIMITS OR ATTEMPTS TO DO SO

EXTENSION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POWER INTO CONSTITUTIONALLY-  
PROHIBITED AREAS; ARBITRARY APPLICATION OF LAW

PERCEPTION AMONG MILITARY OF INCOMING GOVERNMENT  
LEADERSHIP AS ANTITHETICAL TO MILITARY'S INTERESTS

GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN MILITARY'S PROFESSIONAL  
AUTONOMY (ASSIGNMENTS, TRAINING, STRATEGIES)

GOVERNMENT ATTACKS AGAINST MILITARY'S CORPORATE INTERESTS  
(PAY, PROMOTION, BENEFITS)

MAJOR POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY  
LEADERS

GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION OR PROSECUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
ABUSES BY MILITARY OFFICERS

INABILITY OF GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP TO COOPT OR SUPPRESS  
OPPOSITION GROUPS

DIFFICULTY IN CONTAINING TERRORISM OR INSURGENCY

DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF GROSS GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT AS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

PUBLIC DISCONTENT OVER FLAGRANT CORRUPTION

TENSION BETWEEN MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT OVER BORDER  
CONFLICT OR FOREIGN WAR

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INDICATOR: TENSION BETWEEN THE MILITARY

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AND GOVERNMENT OVER UNPOPULAR SETTLEMENT WITH INSURGENTS

MILITARY'S OVERALL DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT  
SITUATION

OVERALL LEVEL OF CONCERN THAT A MILITARY COUP MIGHT BE  
ATTEMPTED WITHIN SIX MONTHS



(b)(1)  
(b)(3) CIAAct  
(b)(3) NatSecAct

END OF MESSAGE

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