



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

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SI 285

# National Intelligence Daily

*Friday*  
*9 December 1983*

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CPAS NID 83-287JX  
TCS 2987/83  
9 December 1983

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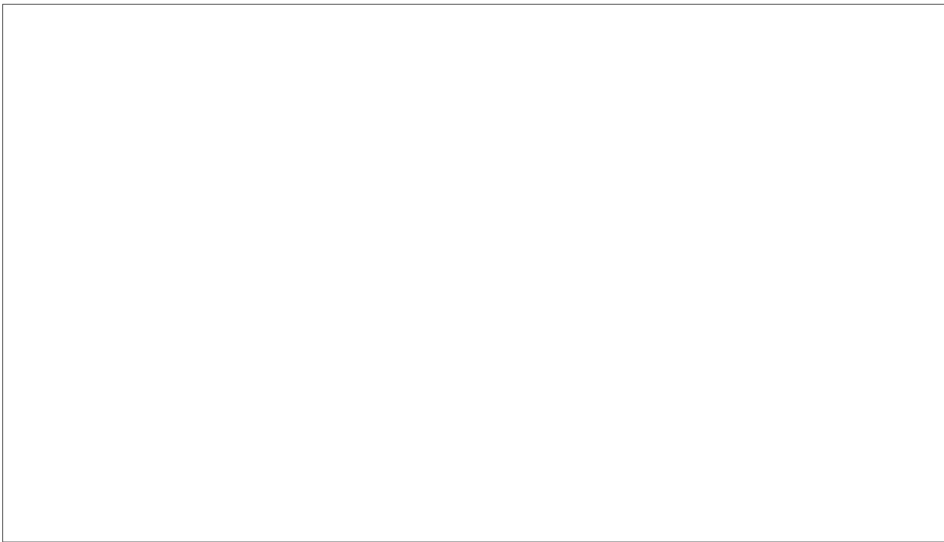
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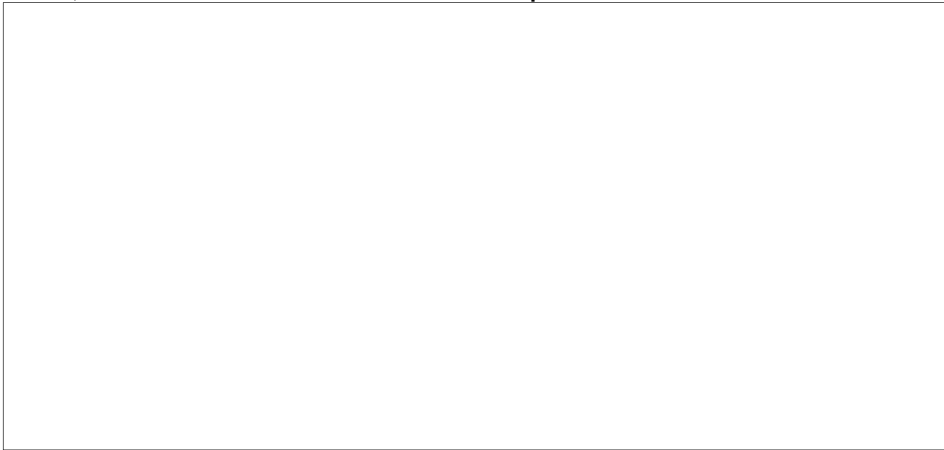
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NR Record

**EL SALVADOR: Vides and the Death Squads**

Defense Minister Vides, in meetings with US officials today in Washington, is expected to request US aid in investigating and prosecuting personnel involved in death squad activities, according to the US Embassy. Vides recently has begun a vocal campaign to eliminate rightwing terrorist groups and has privately told staff and field commanders that extremist violence is undermining democratization and jeopardizing relations with Washington. The US defense attache says that last week Vides appointed National Guard intelligence chief Arango to investigate death squad activities in the armed forces. [Redacted]

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**Comment:** Vides previously has refrained from linking armed forces personnel to rightwing violence, and his new approach may reflect his growing confidence in his authority in the military. Nevertheless, he cannot succeed without overwhelming support from military commanders. Many commanders have strong rightist sympathies, and they probably would reject any moves that would weaken the standing of the officer corps. In 1979, Arango reportedly served as a leader of a death squad in the National Guard. [Redacted]

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