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EL SALVADOR: Increasing Pressure on Garcia

*Opposition to Defense Minister Garcia within the military is growing as a result of rightist Army field commander Ochoa's refusal to accept political exile. (S)*

Garcia now has the support of only about "60 percent" of the officer corps. Although many officers see Ochoa's public defiance as a serious threat to military unity, his demand that Garcia resign reportedly is supported by most of the Air Force, many junior Army officers, and some key field commanders. ~~(S NF NC OC)~~

There is no indication that Garcia is planning military action at this time against Ochoa's 1,000-man force in Cabanas Department. In response to the urging of a number of field-grade Army officers, the Defense Minister will convene a meeting of all commanders

and President Magana has called for a meeting of the government political commission. ~~(S NF NC OC)~~

Despite a strong warning from Garcia, Assembly leader D'Aubuisson is attempting to spur support for Ochoa within the armed forces.

Comment: The damage to military unity already appears substantial and will increase the longer the dispute continues. The crisis could hasten guerrilla plans for an offensive later this month. A Western news agency reports the guerrillas attacked the capital of Chalatenango Department yesterday. (S)

The quick development of sympathy and support for Ochoa underscores the depth of disgruntlement over Garcia's leadership and his widely criticized handling of the counterinsurgency. The opposition to the Defense Minister within the military is strengthening D'Aubuisson--his major political adversary--who probably will increase his efforts to oust Garcia. (S) ~~-CIA, NSA-~~

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