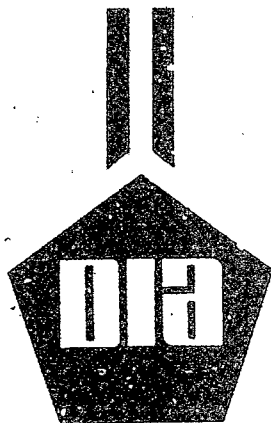


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GUATEMALA

1. (~~C/NOFORN~~) Political-Military Situation: Guatemala is a republic with a popularly elected President and legislature. The military are a pervasive part of the system of government, both national and local. The present level of military influence is considered high and is not expected to diminish for the foreseeable future. The current president, Maj Gen Fernando Romeo Lucas Garcia, was inaugurated on 1 July 1978 for a 4-year term. The next presidential election is scheduled to be held in March 1982, and the victorious candidate will assume office on 1 July 1982. It is most likely that Lucas will personally choose a candidate from within the military to be one of the contenders.

(~~C/NOFORN~~) President Lucas' record to date has not been impressive. His administration has made few policy innovations, and its performance thus far places it well within the conservative mold of its predecessor while being far more repressive. Lucas himself has not provided inspirational leadership, the level of competence of his Cabinet is weak, and administrative corruption is high. More attention is being paid to socio-economic problems and major infrastructure projects. The Government is making an effort to implement a land reform measure largely in the northern region of the nation. In addition, a national 3-year campaign is underway to diminish the widespread illiteracy that is endemic to the country.

(~~C/NOFORN~~) Early in its term, the Lucas government served notice that it would not tolerate the same degree of public disruption and opposition previously allowed during the more permissive regime of ex-President Laugerud. In October 1978, widespread strikes and labor unrest degenerated into rioting, which was supported by leftists, in protest against an increase in the bus fare. Reacting to heavy criticism from the sectors which had backed his campaign, after 9 days of violence Lucas ordered the National Police to gain control of the situation. The rioting was then quelled, but the bus fare increase was canceled.

(~~C/NOFORN~~) Since the riots, there has been no diminution in violence--quite the contrary. The Government of Guatemala has cracked down on all sectors offering opposition to its various policies to include the clergy, labor, education, and political leaders. There is credible evidence implicating the Government in political murders and disappearances, which have been attributed to a largely nonexistent "Secret Anticommunist Army (ESA)." The Government's actions have polarized the nation's society and have galvanized opposition forces against the Lucas regime. Antigovernment terrorist activities, both urban and rural, have increased significantly.

(~~C/NOFORN~~) The four main guerrilla groups--the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres) EGP; Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (Organizacion Revolucionario del Pueblo en Armas) ORPA; Rebel Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes) FAR; and the Guatemalan Labor (Communist) Party-Dissident Faction (Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo) PGT/D--have agreed to cooperate and coordinate their activities through an umbrella entity called the National Revolutionary Union (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional) URN. Guerrilla actions include hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations carried out against military units and national and provincial leaders, as well as proselytizing and propaganda sessions during takeovers of small towns and farms. The total guerrilla strength is estimated at between 2,000

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and 2,500 armed combatants and 4,000 active supporters. There is evidence of Cuban and Nicaraguan support for Guatemalan guerrillas. Some have been trained in Cuba. Guerrilla leaders have been known to travel to Nicaragua and Cuba for strategy meetings. Reports have also been received indicating that Mexico provides some discreet financial, political, and moral support to Guatemalan guerrillas, as well as sanctuary for the nation's political exiles. Additionally, unconfirmed reports state that Mexico has allowed Guatemalan guerrillas to enter Mexico for rest, recuperation, and resupply. Most Guatemalan military officers are convinced that Mexico is also funneling arms to the guerrillas and serves as a route of infiltration. Recent evidence shows that the Cuban-Nicaraguan supply pipeline extends to Guatemala, not just to El Salvador. US weapons from former Vietnam stocks (M-16s, AR-15s, and M-79 grenade launchers) have found their way to Guatemalan insurgents. Also, Soviet-type handgrenades and Communist Chinese rocket-propelled grenades have been captured by Guatemalan military forces.

(C/NOFORN) Of the four main guerrilla groups in Guatemala, the EGP and ORPA are the most active and militant. They have shown an increased capability to successfully ambush Army convoys and attack police stations. The EGP is concentrated primarily in the Indian highlands of the Departments of El Quiche, Huehuetenango, Alta Verapaz, and Chimaltenango, while ORPA operates mainly in the southern Departments of Quezaltenango, San Marcos, Retalhuleu, and Suchitepequez. More recently, they have operated in the interior Departments of Solola and Totonicapan. PGT operations are mostly in and around Guatemala City and the Departments of Escuintla and Santa Rosa. The FAR is most active in the Departments of El Peten and, to a lesser degree, Izabal. Only the southeastern departments are relatively free of guerrilla activity. Guerrilla objectives are to topple the Government by gaining popular support; by discrediting the Armed Forces, causing them to overreact; by crippling the economy; and by isolating the Government from international support. While the Government is not in immediate danger of being overthrown, the guerrillas have achieved a number of successes, which have prompted the Armed Forces to overreact by taking reprisals against leftist suspects. Foreign and domestic investment has dropped noticeably, and the Lucas administration is now branded internationally as repressive. Guerrilla-initiated violence is on the rise and has become commonplace in many areas previously considered safe. As the Government faces increasing pressure from the left, the right is calling for it to restore law and order, while the US and international pressure groups try to prevail upon the Government to exercise moderation and show respect for human rights.

(C/NOFORN) Other challenges facing the Government are an economic slowdown, growing inflation, widespread corruption, the upcoming presidential election, resolution of the lingering dispute over Belize, and relations with a new US administration. Inflation increased 12 percent, and the Government was forced to raise the rural minimum wage by 186 percent last year. Urban minimum wages were also raised accordingly. Higher labor costs threaten to accelerate farm mechanization, which will lead to higher rates of rural employment. Guerrilla attacks and kidnappings targeted against farm/estate management have caused a flight of agro capital and labor. Some markets for previously traditional lucrative crops have closed, and world coffee prices have continued their downward path. Official corruption is widespread and erodes the Government's popular support and credibility. Traditionally in Guatemala, the period before the

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