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Tab D

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TOP SECRET [redacted]

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

24 January 1980


ALERT MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM FOR: The National Security Council

SUBJECT : Threat of a Leftist Extremist Takeover
in El Salvador

1. Leftist extremists in El Salvador continue to make important gains in military and political strength. Meanwhile, the governing junta is riven by divisions and its support among the politically active population is dwindling. Under these circumstances, a leftist extremist thrust for power--through widespread military action or nationwide strikes and disorders--could come at any time, and with little warning. If there is an outbreak of civil war, or simply a collapse of the government with attendant anarchy, the odds would favor an extreme left victory, especially in the short term. (S)

2. I believe the situation in El Salvador demands close attention at this time, and I am making you aware of my concern. (U)


STANSFIELD TURNER

Attachment
[redacted]

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This memorandum is downgraded to SECRET when separated from attachment and caveat.

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

24 January 1980

ALERT MEMORANDUM*

El Salvador

The extreme left appears determined to seize power in El Salvador during 1980. Bolstered by its own growing military strength and popular support, and by the declining support and weakness of the governing junta, the extreme left could make a thrust for power at almost any time. Moreover, during the next couple of months, debilitating general strikes, an attempted coup by conservative military officers or some other serious incident could touch off a revolutionary showdown. The odds increasingly favor the extreme left in a conflict, because of political divisions in the junta and the poor state of readiness of the military and security forces.
(S)

The extreme left is in an increasingly advantageous position for an armed struggle. Its timetable and tactics may not yet be fixed, and may be affected more by events--such as a rightwing coup--than by planning. (S)

Leftist extremists have been expanding the numbers of their armed guerrillas as well as their political activists and organizers. They have also made significant strides in unifying and coordinating both their military and political activities.

**The Alert Memorandum is an interagency publication issued by the Director of Central Intelligence on behalf of the Intelligence Community. Its purpose is to ensure that senior policymakers are aware of impending potential developments that may have serious implications for US interests. It is not a prediction that these developments will occur. This memorandum has been coordinated at the working level with CIA, DIA, NSA, and State/INR.*

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Derivative

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