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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC-79-2822
29 May 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning
FROM : Acting National Intelligence Officer for Latin America
SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: Latin America

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- 1. Action Requested: None; for your information only.
- 2. El Salvador. Tension continues to increase in this troubled country. During the month of May, there were a series of dramatic and violent incidents which portend even more serious events in the near future.

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a. On 4 May, members of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR) occupied the Costa Rican and French Embassies holding the occupants hostage. They also occupied the San Salvador Cathedral. On 7 May, to the chagrin of the BPR, the hostages in the Costa Rican Embassy escaped. The three BPR terrorists who held them were granted asylum in Costa Rica. The French Ambassador and five members of his staff are still being held in the French Embassy as of this writing.

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b. On 8 May, the National Guard fired into what was apparently a peaceful demonstration on the steps of the cathedral. Twenty-three demonstrators and one policeman were killed (this incident was carried on US television on 9 May).

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c. On 11 May, the BPR occupied the Venezuelan Embassy. Although the hostages escaped on 20 May, the Embassy is still occupied by nine members of the BPR. Authorities have deprived them of food, water, and electricity. On 22 May, between 100

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and 150 students marched toward the Embassy with food but were stopped by a police barricade. In the ensuing melee, 14 demonstrators were killed. The next day, in retaliation for the death of the students, the Farabundo Marti Liberation Forces (FPL) assassinated the Minister of Education. That night, at the request of President Romero and the Council of Ministers, the Legislative Assembly declared a 30-day state of seige beginning on 24 May.

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d. The FPL terrorists also strafed an IBM installation on 20 May, calling the incident the beginning of "war against Yankee imperialism and liberty for political prisoners". The FPL communique holds the US directly responsible for the alleged killings, torturing, arrests, and disappearances in El Salvador. The Embassy reports that all US citizens and businesses in El Salvador are aware of the terrorists' threats, which it describes as "becoming increasingly credible".

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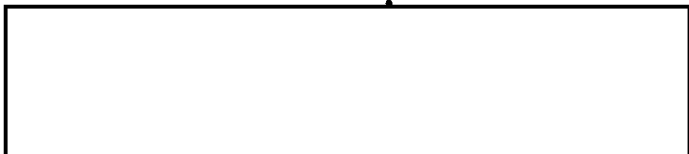
3. There are some 3,000 US citizens in El Salvador, with an official US presence of 263. Should the situation deteriorate to the extent that an evacuation of US citizens becomes necessary, most could probably get to Guatemala by road. The remainder could be evacuated by private aircraft, helicopter, or regular aircraft.

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4. Cuba. We are beginning to hear some rumblings of discontent from the island of Cuba. Cubans are expressing an unwillingness to serve in Angola. They are grumbling about rationing and the diversion of food to the meeting of Non-Aligned Movement and at the fact that the government now refuses to permit their relatives from the US to bring them gifts. While this has not yet reached a significant level, it is the first time we have heard murmurings of dissatisfaction in several years.

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