

On 23 March in San Salvador leftist terrorists assassinated retired Gen. José Alberto Medrano, a tough anti-Communist considered by many of his critics to be the originator of organized rightwing violence in El Salvador. We believe that Medrano's assassination, as well as the recent killing of the Armed Forces spokesman and prominent conservative leaders, is part of an insurgent strategy to increase urban warfare. The selective murders are probably intended to provoke a response from rightwing extremists, who have been inactive for some time, or from the Salvadoran military and security forces, who have reined in their use of violent tactics. The guerrillas would propagandize such a reaction as evidence that human rights abuses continue to be a serious problem in El Salvador, despite President José Napoleon Duarte's reformist efforts. [REDACTED]

No specific guerrilla group has yet claimed responsibility for Medrano's murder, but [REDACTED] indicates that other "hated executioners" will meet a similar fate. It was Medrano, a former director of the National Guard, who created the now defunct National Democratic Organization (ORDEN), a rural paramilitary force that from 1964 to 1979 was responsible for the intimidation, murder, and disappearance of Salvadorans suspected of involvement with the extreme left. Many former associates of Medrano's were subsequently linked to death squad activities in the early 1980s, including extreme rightwing political leader Roberto D'Aubuisson. [REDACTED]



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