

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
10 JUL 87

### Special Analysis

EL SALVADOR:

#### Progress on Human Rights

*El Salvador has made considerable progress in improving its human rights record since President Duarte was inaugurated in 1984. Official government links to rightwing death squads have ended, political killings have decreased dramatically, and [REDACTED] the insurgents now are responsible for most of the violence against civilians. Problems remain, however, including a corrupt and inefficient judiciary, periodic abuses by individual military units and security forces, and the failure to prosecute high-ranking officers for past violations.* [REDACTED]

For the most part, [REDACTED] allegations of government abuses are fabricated by guerrilla-controlled front groups. A special UN report on El Salvador last year noted that one group consistently counts guerrilla casualties as civilians. Moreover, the insurgents have falsely alleged indiscriminate bombings and mistreatment by the military in operations in rural areas. [REDACTED]

#### An Improved Performance

Most observers give the government good marks for correcting human rights violations. [REDACTED] that decisive government measures to end formal military links to death squads and appoint reform-minded officers to head the security services have reduced political murders from more than 5,000 in 1983 to about 260 in 1986. The guerrillas [REDACTED] now are responsible for most of those. [REDACTED]

The government measures to reduce violations continue. Police are required to attend courses on human rights, and soldiers receive periodic instructions from the Catholic Church and the Red Cross. In addition, state-of-emergency provisions that gave the authorities wide latitude in processing and interrogating prisoners are no longer in effect, although many officers want such measures reinstated. Furthermore, the police and Army must give the Red Cross and the government human rights commission access to arrested subversives. [REDACTED]

continued

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### Problems That Remain

[REDACTED] that some mistreatment of prisoners occurs, and from time to time some prisoners and human rights groups still make allegations of rape, electric shock, and beatings. The latter are seldom verified, however. In addition, some civilians have been killed by soldiers, but these have been attributed to personal vendettas or criminal activity. [REDACTED]

The fact that no senior officer accused of human rights violations has been convicted also tarnishes the military's reputation. A cumbersome, often incompetent, and corrupt judiciary, officer cronyism, and fear that the Army will retaliate against jury members have inhibited the resolution of longstanding cases of abuse. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, guerrilla violence against civilians has increased. Most of the casualties are civilians involved in government civic action programs, peasants who refuse to cooperate with the guerrillas, or suspected informants. [REDACTED] indicate the insurgents maintain civilian hit lists. [REDACTED] that the guerrillas also have indiscriminately machinegunned civilian road traffic and mined farmlands to intimidate the population. Guerrilla contact land mines killed at least 31 civilians and wounded another 172—many of them children—during the first half of 1986 alone. [REDACTED]

### Outlook

Unable to document significant government atrocities since Duarte's human rights reforms were initiated, the guerrillas have begun to lose credibility, particularly as their own record has gotten worse. Nevertheless, Duarte's preoccupation with the war and his reliance on the military for political support will preclude much progress on cleaning up the judiciary or prosecuting officers involved in past abuses. [REDACTED]

The guerrillas have also resorted to kidnaping to extort money and forms of support from the victims' families. In addition, they often use kidnapings to replenish their ranks. [REDACTED]

