

8  
Top Secret

## BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

### BOLIVIA: Fragile Political Situation

*Colonel Natusch was dealt a severe setback over the weekend after the Bolivian congress and the labor sector rejected any cooperation with his regime.*

On Saturday, the million-member Bolivian Labor Central followed the lead of the Bolivian congress in turning down an offer by Natusch to participate in a new government and seek a formula for a political transition until elections are held. Congressional and labor leaders have agreed to continue to meet jointly to discuss further steps to oppose the Natusch regime.

The rejection leaves little room for compromise. The civilian leaders have indicated they will accept nothing less than a return to the status before the coup, though not necessarily with deposed President Guevara restored to office. The extreme rightwing military officers who back Natusch and constitute his inner circle of advisers are equally adamant that what they consider leftist subversives will not be given a chance to attack the armed forces again with impunity.

The military officers who participated in quelling last week's violent unrest that resulted in over 200 deaths fear that a return to democratic rule will result in their being tried. Former President Banzer's political coalition and some small rightwing parties are supporting military hardliners who are urging that Natusch take the offensive against his critics. Some may be urging that Natusch accuse the congress and the Bolivian Labor Central of negotiating in bad faith in order to justify a repressive campaign that could include the dissolution of congress and reimposition of tight controls on the labor unions.

Natusch has not indicated what he has in mind, but the regime may be digging in. the regime has brought troops and armor into La Paz from the interior. Natusch also has placed officers loyal to him in key military commands.

Top Secret

13 November 1979