

Top Secret

BOLIVIA: Military Plotting

Key hardline commanders reportedly are talking with moderate members of the officer corps about ousting junta leader General Garcia Meza.

The immediate cause of the unrest is intraservice rivalries--two unit commanders in the La Paz area fear Garcia Meza is planning to remove them from their commands. These and other officers could be seeking an alliance with the moderates rather than trying to substitute another hardliner as the country's leader, as earlier reporting had indicated.

The officers' objective probably is to install a new military government that would win international approval. They believe that Garcia Meza's performance has been a major obstacle to gaining wide diplomatic recognition and probably consider support from the US and other developed countries essential for any Bolivian government.

Troop welfare also is an issue. The Army was not paid at the end of last month, and the prospects are not good that the government will issue paychecks in the near future.

In addition, there are reports that officers and enlisted men are upset over the regime's involvement with drug traffickers and the discredit this is bringing to the armed forces. As a result, some are refusing to follow orders.

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