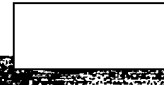




Director of
Central
Intelligence

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Selected Items From the National Intelligence Daily

Thursday
31 October 1985

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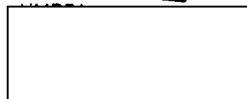
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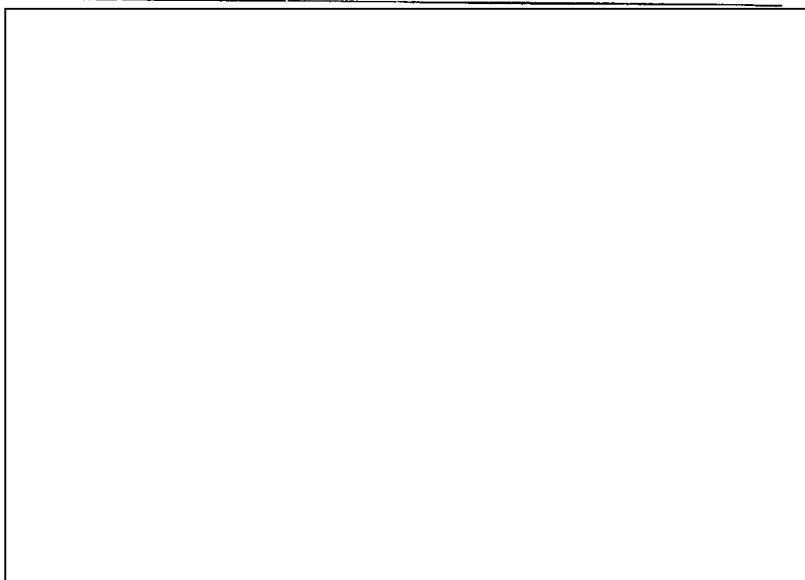
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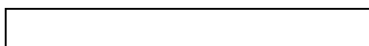


Contents



Guatemala: Election Outlook

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[redacted]

Special Analysis

GUATEMALA:

Election Outlook

The centrist parties are leading as Guatemalans prepare to go to the polls Sunday to elect the first civilian government in 19 years. No candidate appears able to win a majority, however, making a runoff likely on 8 December. Whoever wins will favor close ties to the US and will lobby for substantial US economic and military aid. [redacted]

Eight presidential candidates are running, and election rules require the winner to have an absolute majority or face a runoff with the number-two votegetter. There are 14 political parties competing for 100 seats in the new congress and for hundreds of municipal offices. The new government is scheduled to take office for a five-year term on 14 January. [redacted]

The Campaign

[redacted] most candidates have avoided politically sensitive issues that could give the military grounds to postpone or delay elections. In any event, few substantive issues divide the front-runners. The campaign has been conducted amid worsening economic conditions, but the major contenders have offered little more than vague economic panaceas. For its part, the Army has kept its promise to remain impartial and has refused to endorse any candidate. [redacted]

The Front-Runners

Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo of the Christian Democratic Party is the clear front-runner. He is a center-leftist who has assured the military he would respect its interests, who confines his economic reforms to such moderate measures as improving tax collection, and who is unlikely to try more extensive and politically risky austerity or land reform measures. [redacted]

Jorge Carpio Nicolle of the National Centrist Union—a progressive moderate who has sought to appeal to all but extremists—is running second, according to [redacted] polling data. Divisions within his party and his lack of personal appeal have hurt his chances. [redacted]

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[redacted] among the lesser candidates, Jorge Serrano Elias of the centrist Democratic Party of National Cooperation is the most serious political threat to Cerezo and Carpio. He has run an aggressive campaign that at the very least will give him considerable leverage in a runoff and might push him into second place on the first ballot. Cerezo reportedly believes Serrano would be a tougher opponent in a runoff than Carpio. [redacted]

Polls show the ultrarightist candidate running a distant fourth, but the party still is likely to win a significant number of congressional seats, [redacted]

The Insurgents

Leftist insurgents have not seriously disrupted the electoral process despite earlier reported plans to wage a campaign of terrorism and assassination. [redacted] rebels have been limited to hit-and-run attacks and propaganda activity against the election in rural areas and that they lack the ability to disrupt voting seriously in urban areas. Nevertheless, isolated acts of violence to intimidate voters and cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election probably will occur. [redacted]

Outlook

A runoff between Cerezo and Carpio is likely to be close. Each, however, recognizes the fragility of the electoral process as well as the sensitivities of the military and is likely to try to keep politicking within tolerable bounds. [redacted]

A second-place showing by Serrano—who already has claimed that the military is rigging the election against him—might precipitate a political crisis. The armed forces view him as politically unacceptable. [redacted]

All three major candidates support the Contadora process but will probably stay on the sideline. Carpio and Serrano are more skeptical of Sandinista intentions than is Cerezo but probably see negotiations as ways to improve relations with Mexico and return to the international scene. All three favor closer ties to the US and are counting on large infusions of economic and military aid to alleviate the country's grave economic problems. [redacted]

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