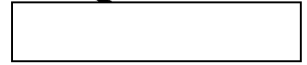




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MEXICO

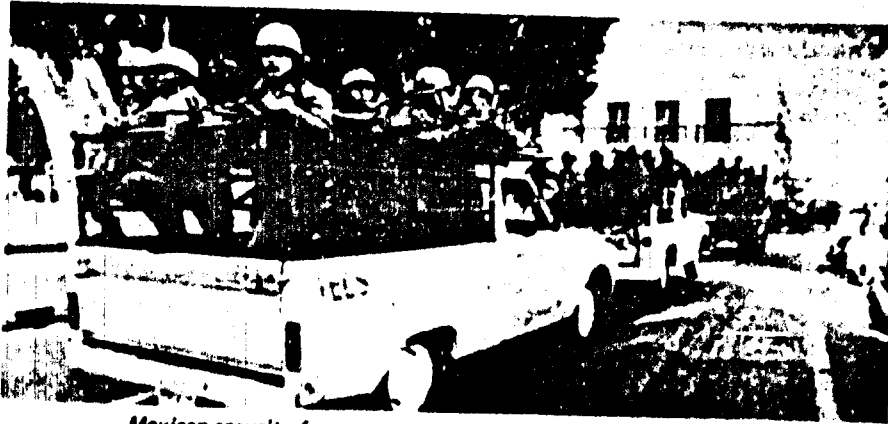
In past years, guerrilla groups in Mexico have not caused the government serious problems. Nevertheless, since the early 1970s several groups have staged spectacular incidents: the kidnappings of a US Consul-General, President Echeverria's father-in-law, the daughters of the Belgian Ambassador, the rector of the national university, and several prominent businessmen; the murder of industrial magnate Garza Sada; a coordinated wave of 27 bombings in three major cities; and the attempted kidnaping or assassination of the sister of Jose Lopez Portillo, who was at the time Mexico's President-elect. These operations drew international attention, but they give an exaggerated impression of the overall capabilities of the guerrillas and do not reflect the effectiveness of the government's countersubversive effort.

[redacted] the Mexican Government is very tough on home-grown guerrillas. It stamped out the last significant rural guerrilla movement--that of Lucio Cabanas--in 1974 with a massive concentration of troops in Guerrero. It has established a special army/police antiterrorist unit, [redacted] which has been very effective in the past year.

Although guerrilla groups such as the People's Union (UDP) and the People's Revolutionary Armed Front (FRAP) have reportedly attempted to join forces on two past occasions, there is presently no prospect for coordinated terrorist activities in Mexico. National leftist political organizations--currently courting government favor to secure legal registration--apparently have rejected the violent guerrilla groups.

At present, the most active guerrilla organization in Mexico is the 23rd of September Communist League, which was established in 1973, taking its name from a 1965 clash between terrorists and troops in Chihuahua. The league has a Marxist-Leninist philosophy and promotes the armed overthrow of the existing social, political, and economic order in Mexico. It has approximately 150 active members nationwide, [redacted]

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*Mexican security forces responding to threat of terrorist activity*

[REDACTED]

In August 1976, the league's leader, David Jimenez Sarmiento, was killed in the attempt to kidnap or assassinate the sister of then President-elect Lopez Portillo. The league command reportedly withdrew [REDACTED] because of their losses and the subsequent government crackdown.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In recent months, however, government forces have killed several members in shootouts in the capital, Chihuahua, Juarez, and Sinaloa. This government pressure has put the league on the defensive, forcing it into greater compartmentation and scaled-down operations. During 1977, the league kidnaped some industrialists for ransom, but most of its attention-getting activities were killings that came about accidentally when police, workers, or managers attempted to interfere with propaganda distribution at factories. Because of its current notoriety,

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the league is often charged with acts committed by other groups or criminals.

Another group that has been active recently is the People's Union (UDP), a Marxist-Leninist organization. Since its formation in 1972 under Jose Maria Ortiz Vides, the UDP has specialized in bombings, but it had been dormant for some time prior to 13 September when it set off 27 bombs in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Oaxaca. At that time the UDP apparently had no more than 125 members, some of whom had received training in Cuba. The government responded to the September bombings with intensive countersubversive measures that reportedly have almost destroyed the UDP.

A third guerrilla group, which has been around for years, but inactive until recently, is the People's Revolutionary Armed Front (FRAP). The FRAP's strength has always been centered in Guadalajara, where in 1974 it kidnaped President Echeverria's father-in-law. In the past few months, FRAP members have staged some small-scale operations, including hijacking a busload of hostages last August to demand the release of colleagues. There is no current estimate of the strength of FRAP, but it is unlikely that the group has more than 50 guerrillas.

#### Outlook

Guerrilla activity in Mexico is currently at a low ebb, and the government, though sensitive to international human rights concerns, is keeping the pressure on. The 23rd of September Communist League and the FRAP still have the capabilities to stage a spectacular act at any time, but they do not represent a threat to the government and are not likely to challenge a military or police force. In addition, the government will soon legalize some leftist opposition parties, a move which the Lopez Portillo regime hopes will channel some potentially violent opposition into legal political activities.