

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

José Guillermo GARCIA Merino
(Phonetic: garSEEah)

EL SALVADOR

Minister of Defense and
Public Security (since
October 1979)



Addressed as:
Mr. Minister

Col. José García is one of the most popular and intelligent officers in the Salvadoran Army and has a reputation for integrity. A moderate, he was considered by the military as a possible successor to President Arturo Molina in 1977; in the long run, however, they decided on Carlos Romero, who was the successful candidate in an election [redacted]

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[redacted] Throughout the summer and early fall of 1979 García may have been involved in several plots to overthrow Romero [redacted]

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[redacted] he was commander of the Department of San Vicente, a position he had held since July 1978. [redacted]

(b)(3)

García is anti-Communist and friendly toward the United States. [redacted] he is sympathetic toward the US human rights policy. Local politicians consider him one of the few officers who are seriously concerned about human rights in El Salvador; in the past he has used his influence to release illegally held prisoners. [redacted]

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(b)(3)

After enlisting in 1956, García rose rapidly through the ranks. He attended the War College in Mexico during 1966-70 and took an orientation tour of the Panama Canal Zone in 1963. During 1974-77 he was president of the National Telephone Company. García is married to the former Martha del Carmen Rodríguez and has four daughters. He will be 47 on 23 June. [redacted]

(b)(3)

CR M 80-13089
9 June 1980

[redacted]

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