

CIA/CR/79-16137 - - [redacted]

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(b)(3)

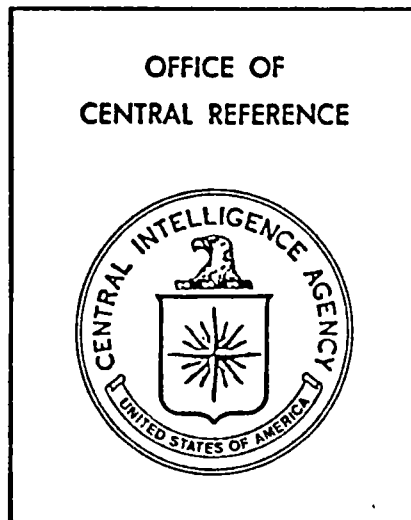
José Guillermo GARCIA Merino
(Phonetic: garSEEah)

EL SALVADOR

MICROFILMED

Minister of Defense and
Public Security (since
22 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 honesty and integrity. A moderate, he was considered by the military as a possible successor to President (1971-77) Arturo Molina in 1977; in the long run, however, they decided on Carlos Romero, who was the successful candidate [redacted]

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[redacted] he was serving as 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]

(b)(1)

[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 reportedly used his influence to release illegally held prisoners. [redacted]

(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, 46, is married to the former Martha del Carmen Rodríguez and has four daughters. [redacted]

(b)(3)

CR M 79-16137
24 October 1979

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