



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Thursday
15 December 1983

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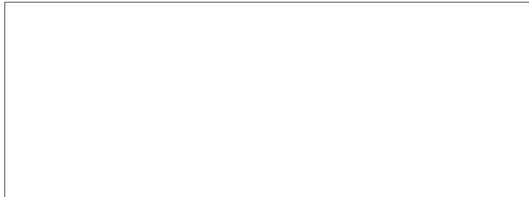
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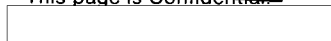
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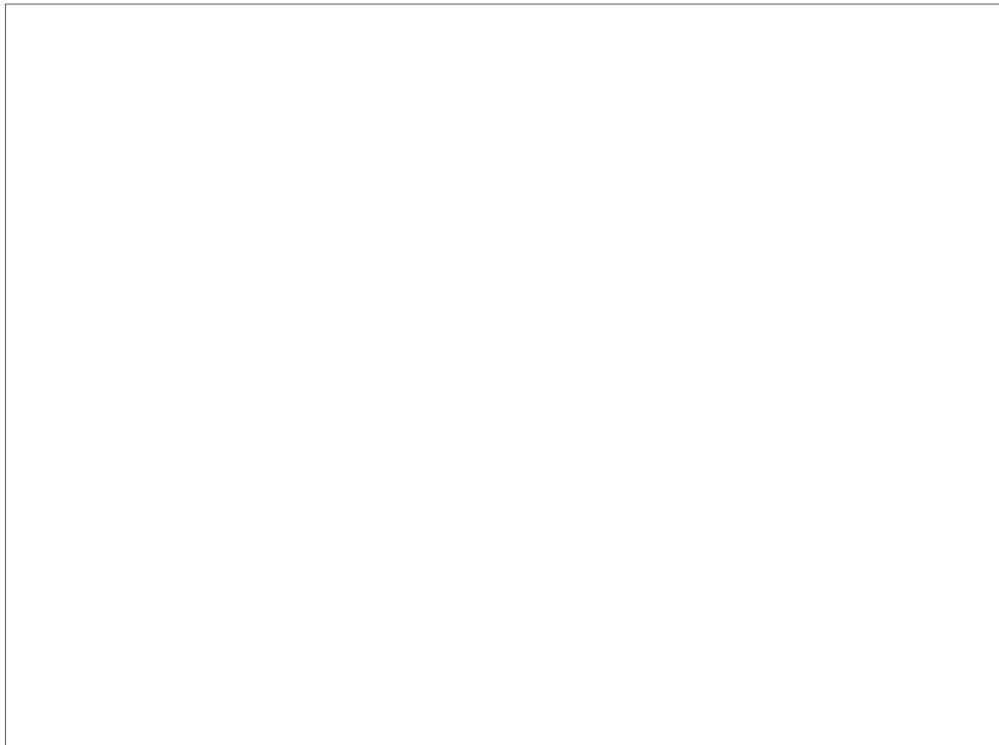
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El Salvador: Renewed Fighting 4



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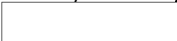
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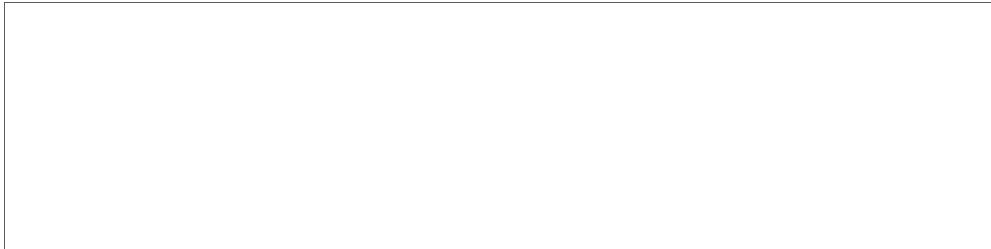
EL SALVADOR: Renewed Fighting

The recent lull in military activity has ended, and heavy fighting is under way in the east. 

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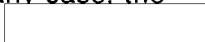
The US defense attache reports that on Tuesday guerrillas attacked a National Guard unit at Ciudad Barrios and a newly trained hunter battalion at nearby Cerro Cacahuatique. Other units—including airborne troops—have been sent by helicopter to reinforce the defenders, but the insurgents claim to have dislodged the battalion with heavy losses. Helicopters, A-37 ground attack aircraft, and some artillery are providing fire support for the government forces. 

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Comment: The attacks may be the beginning of the offensive the insurgents have planned for this month. Although their ultimate objective remains unclear, they may be hoping only to draw Army forces away from the central part of the country. In any case, the fighting will test the Army's new command structure. 

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The military has some 18 medium-lift helicopters, about half of which normally are fully operational, and 15 light helicopters. Its ability to assemble elements of two battalions quickly and transport them to the battlefield is likely to give the commanders a new confidence both in the mobility of their forces and in their own command and control. 

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