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Guatemalan President Seeks Military Aid In Paris

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On Oct. 6, Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo initiated an official visit in France. According to statements by both governments, Cerezo's visit is focused primarily on obtaining military aid. Guatemalan Defense Minister Jaime Hernandez told the daily (Guatemalan) newspaper PRENSA LIBRE on Aug. 4 that his government expects to receive $20 million in military aid from France toward the purchase of fighter planes and tanks. Hernandez's statement was confirmed three days later in a statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Francisco Villagran published by the daily EL GRAFICO. Also on Aug. 7, PRENSA LIBRE published a statement by the president promising the army funding for 15 helicopters before year-end 1986. At present, the French government is seeking to expand aid to US allies in Central America, while withdrawing somewhat from aid commitments to Nicaragua. The French communist party's daily newspaper L'HUMANITE dedicated a full page in its Oct. 6 edition to the Guatemalan situation, including continuing human rights abuses after the civilian government took office in January. In an article titled, "French Support Murder," the party criticized the Cerezo government and the president's visit to France in search of military aid.

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