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El Salvador: Civil Defense Unit Organized By Rightists In Wealthy Neighborhoods Disbanded

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On May 12, Defense Minister Gen. Eugenio Vides Casanova announced that the dismantlement of a civil defense unit organized by rightists in two wealthy San Salvador neighborhoods. President Jose Napoleon Duarte had expressed fear that the unit could produce death squads. According to Casanova, the 40-man group had been formed "with completely good intentions." The unit was disbanded "because of the misunderstanding of its function on the part of government authorities and the Church," he said. In the previous week, unit members took a loyalty oath and were given military instruction at the downtown headquarters of the 1st Army Brigade. Col. Rene Emilio Ponce, joint chiefs of staff head, told reporters May 11 the group would be under army supervision and deal primarily with "intelligence work." (Basic data from AP, 05/12/89)

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