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## **Notes On Assassinated Salvadoran Rightist Leader, Francisco Jose Guerrero**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Nov. 28, one of El Salvador's most prominent rightist leaders, Francisco Jose Guerrero, was shot to death as he rode on a downtown street with two bodyguards, said military sources. No one immediately took responsibility for the killing. The police said one attacker was killed by Guerrero's bodyguards, described by police as a guerrilla in his late 20's in civilian dress. Guerrero was president of the legislature from 1962 to 1968, and foreign minister from 1968 to 1971. While a member of the Supreme Court from 1984 until June this year, he was the architect of a ruling that blocked an investigation into the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. In December 1988, he ruled the testimony of a key witness in the Romero case was not valid, and that the extradition of Alvaro Saravia, implicated in the killing and living in Miami, could not proceed. Guerrero helped found the conservative National Conciliation Party (PCN), which served as a vehicle for virtual military rule in the 1960s and 1970s. A conservative landowner and president of the Cotton Growers' Association, Guerrero ran for president in 1984 for the PCN. According to the New York Times, Guerrero had served as a behind-the-scenes adviser to the US Embassy. In the 1984 election, he was secretly supported by the CIA in an attempt to split rightist votes and insure that Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon triumphed over Roberto d'Aubuisson. Critics often described Guerrero as one of El Salvador's political leaders most responsible for obstructing social, political and economic change. Guerrero represented El Salvador's oligarchy of 14 families and other large landowners who quashed efforts in the mid-1970s to reduce extreme land tenure inequity. Next, the PCN and the military were accused of stealing the 1972 election from Duarte. As a representative of the PCN and private sector interests, he served as an adviser to the commission established by President Alfredo Cristiani to organize dialogue with the rebels. In recent weeks, the PCN formed an alliance with the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) to approve legislation that gives the army and the government broad powers to suppress dissent. (Basic data from New York Times, Washington Post, 11/29/89; Notimex, 11/28/89)

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