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Deborah Tyroler

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Military Chief Claims Subversion A "reality" In Honduras

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 19, Honduran armed forces chief Gen. Arnulfo Cantarero Lopez told AP that the military is preparing another crackdown on leftists. According to Cantarero Lopez, guerrillas have infiltrated the military and planned a wave of attacks. He added, "Subversion is a reality in Honduras." Consequently, said the commander, Honduras may "return to the era of the doctrine of national security," in reference to the 1982-84 period when the military adopted a policy of detaining leftists in advance of attacks. Human rights organizations have accused the armed forces of killing about 300 people and causing the disappearance of 150 others during that period. According to Cantarero Lopez, "The armed forces have been infiltrated by leftist guerrillas who are now trying to obtain resources to finance a wave of terrorism in Honduras." The general said the leftists "could be financed by international drug trafficking...This is logical because traditionally Honduras has been used as a trampoline for drug traffic between Colombia and the United States." Cantarero Lopez continued: "The armed forces will do everything possible to block the communists from taking power in our nation...and in this fight we hope to count on the aid of our people...The armed forces are vulnerable... and have been infiltrated by subversion." He said a foiled bank robbery on Aug. 15 in El Zamorano, located east of Tegucigalpa, "was the work of the Cinchoneros [rebel group]." The Cinchoneros emerged in Honduras in 1979 as an armed wing of the Communist Party, which has operated clandestinely since 1920. No group has admitted attempting that robbery, which resulted in the deaths of six alleged guerrillas, three policemen, a bank guard and two other people. Six security agents were injured. "The native guerrillas have been strengthened by the return of numerous Honduran leftists who for the past decade were in exile in Nicaragua," Cantarero Lopez said. "The local insurgents have been trained for the past 10 years in the Soviet Union, Cuba and Libya. Because of that, they are well consolidated...We don't want to frighten the people, but the genesis of leftist violence has already been introduced in Honduras." (Basic data from AP, 08/19/90)

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