

11-13-1992

Guatemala: President & Defense Minister Denounce Coup Plot

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Guatemala: President & Defense Minister Denounce Coup Plot." (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/7907>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Guatemala: President & Defense Minister Denounce Coup Plot

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, November 13, 1992

On Nov. 12, President Jorge Serrano told reporters his government had uncovered a plot to overthrow his administration and had identified the organizers. "We know who was behind this, but we don't want to release any names," he declared. Serrano added that, although noone had yet been detained, the plot does not represent a security threat. Serrano said "judicial measures" would be taken against the individuals involved, civilians and retired military officers, as well as at least one active duty officer. According to Defense Minister Gen. Jose Garcia, the army has launched an investigation into the plot. Garcia said those involved in the plot were backed by "frustrated politicians" and former military officers who were hoping to use a recent Constitutional Court ruling on Guatemala's diplomatic recognition of neighboring Belize as a pretext for launching their coup. In 1991, Serrano recognized Belize (formerly a British colony) as an independent, sovereign nation, although he upheld Guatemala's "territorial claim" pending negotiations over the future demarcation of the countries' border zones. In a ruling issued Nov. 10, the Constitutional Court upheld Serrano's diplomatic recognition, a ruling which may have come as a surprise to some in the armed forces who had expected the court to rule the move unconstitutional, thus paving the way for Serrano's eventual removal from office. Four Constitutional Court magistrates voted in favor of Serrano, while three voted that the recognition was in fact unconstitutional. According to Garcia, some of the plotters had taken part in previous coup bids. He said they had arranged to throw their support behind one high-ranking, active officer, whom he did not name, in the event the court ruling resulted in a power vacuum which they could take advantage of. According to a recent report in news magazine Cronica, military intelligence units had been closely monitoring the activities of ret. Gen Jose Efraim Rios Montt. Military sources cited in the report said Rios Montt had been promoting "destabilization" in trips around the country and in meetings with private sector leaders. Rios Montt came to power in a 1982 coup, and was himself deposed in a coup the following year. A few days before the Constitutional Court ruling, president of the legislature Edmund Mulet had also publicly accused Rios Montt of involvement in destabilization schemes. (Sources: Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, Agence France-Presse, 11/12/92)

-- End --