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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**Military  
Intelligence  
Summary**

**SECTION XI  
LATIN AMERICA (U)**



JUNE 1976

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (MIS) (U)

DDI-2680-11-76

Information Cutoff Date: 1 April 1976

Section XI

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina	Haiti
Bolivia	Honduras
Brazil	Jamaica
Chile	Mexico
Colombia	Nicaragua
Cuba	Panama
Dominican Republic	Paraguay
Ecuador	Peru
El Salvador	Uruguay
Guatemala	Venezuela
Guyana	

DDI-2680-11A-75, MIS, Section XI, 1 October 1975  
is superseded and should be destroyed.

~~NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION~~  
~~Unauthorized Disclosure Subject~~  
~~to Criminal Sanctions~~

This is a Department of Defense Intelligence Document prepared by  
the Western Area Division, Directorate for Intelligence,  
Defense Intelligence Agency.

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (MIS)

PREFACE

The Military Intelligence Summary (MIS), published in eleven volumes, is a synopsis of military intelligence worldwide. Intended to serve as a ready reference, the MIS presents a compilation of intelligence on those forces which contribute to the military security of each country, and on the political and economic factors affecting the country's military capability. Published semiannually, the MIS serves to update other DIA publications.

The intelligence data in the MIS is that available in DIA as of the first day of the month of publication except where otherwise indicated.

Comments and suggestions are invited. These should be addressed to the Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C. 20301.

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## MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

### GUATEMALA

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#### A. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ Political Military Situation

Guatemala is a republic with popularly elected President and legislature. Brig Gen Kjell Laugerud Garcia (Army, Ret), former Minister of National Defense, was inaugurated as President on 1 July 1974 for a four-year term. Although politically inexperienced, President Laugerud has taken tight hold of the reins of government, particularly since an earthquake devastated Guatemala on 4 February 1976. Disaster relief appears to have been well organized, and the country now is on the road to recovery. Internationally, Laugerud generally has supported the United States, although he has been more independent than his predecessor on some questions. Tensions with the United Kingdom over Belize, sporadic for many years, heated up again in the last half of 1975, Guatemala increased its military strength in the Petén region bordering the British colony, and the UK reinforced its defenses in Belize to discourage any untoward move by Guatemala. Since that time, some British units have returned to the United Kingdom, and negotiations over the future of Belize were being resumed between the UK and Guatemala in April 1976.

Guatemala's armed forces are capable of defending the country against invasion by any of its Central American neighbors. They could conduct successful small-scale operations against El Salvador, Honduras, or-- provided British elements were not present--Belize. The armed forces are adversely affected by a topheavy senior officer corps, absence of a career program for NCO's, and obsolescent equipment. Officially designated the Army of Guatemala, the armed forces consist almost exclusively of a ground element (popularly called the Guatemalan Army), plus a small Air Force and Navy. The President is titular Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, with control highly centralized under the Minister of National Defense, who normally is a senior Army officer. The military establishment theoretically is commanded by the Army Chief of Staff. In practice, however, the Minister of National Defense tends to communicate directly with the Chiefs of the Air Force and Navy. The armed forces are generally pro-West, particularly pro-United States, and have experienced no significant Communist penetration. Their public image, although poor in the past, has been generally improving because of increased emphasis on professionalism and participation in civic action projects. Currently, because of disaster relief activities, the armed forces enjoy a particularly good public image.

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SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 2  
DECLASSIFY ON DECEMBER 31, 2006~~

1 April 1976

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GUATEMALA

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B. (U) Key Officials:

President: Kjell Laugerud García (Brig Gen, Army, Ret)  
Minister of Foreign Relations: Adolfo Molina Orantes  
Minister of Government and Interior: Brig Gen René Leonel  
Vassaux Martínez (Army)  
Minister of National Defense: Brig Gen Fernando Romeo Lucas  
García (Army)  
Army: Chief of Staff, Brig Gen Otto Guillermo Spiegler Noriega  
Navy: Chief, Capt José Antonio Contreras Roca (Acting)\*  
Air Force: Chief, Col Roberto José Francisco Salazar Asturias  
National Police: Director General, Col Ricardo Antonio  
Escalante Gonzales

C. (U) Population and Military Manpower:

Population: 5,934,000 as of 1 January 1976.  
Males (ages 15-49): 1,457,000; physically fit, 948,000.  
Ethnic Divisions: Indian--41.4%, Ladino\*\*--58.6%.  
Literacy: about 30%.

D. (U) Military Budget:

\$33,900,000 proposed for fiscal year ending 31 December 1976;  
6.7% of the proposed central government budget and about 1.0% of estimated  
GNP. No service allocation is available. Dollar value converted from  
quetzals at the exchange rate of one quetzal equals US \$1.00.

E. ~~(S)~~ Army:

Personnel Strength: 12,330 (1,055 officers, 1,545 NCO's, 6,690 privates,  
2,470 specialists, and 570 students and cadets). Reserve--35,000,  
semitrained.

Major Units: 4 brigades, 4 separate battalions (1 infantry, 1 parachute  
infantry, 1 military police, 1 engineer), and 2 separate battalion-  
equivalent units (Mobile Military Police, Presidential Guard). In  
addition, there is a 400-man Tactical Group, stationed at La Aurora Air  
Base for airport security.

Major Equipment: 13 75-mm pack howitzers, 12 105-mm howitzers, 10 M113  
armored personnel carriers, 20 armored cars, and 6 M3A1 light tanks.

F. ~~(S)~~ Navy:

Personnel Strength: 522 (36 Navy officers, 10 Marine officers, 232  
enlisted Navy, and 244 enlisted Marines). No reserve.

Ships: 11 patrol boats (6 PB, 5 PBR), 1 mechanized landing craft (LCM).

\* The Chief of the Navy, Vice Adm Ricardo Peralta Méndez, currently is  
serving as Executive Director, National Committee of Reconstruction.

\*\* Westernized Indian, mestizo, and white.

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Units: The Navy is a small patrol force, with two naval bases (one on the Caribbean and one on the Pacific coast) and one Marine company (on the Caribbean, with one additional platoon on the Pacific Coast).

G. ~~(S)~~ Air Force:

Personnel Strength: 370 (75 officers and 295 enlisted men), including 60 pilots. No reserve.

Units: 1 attack, 1 transport, 1 reconnaissance, and 1 helicopter squadron.

Aircraft: Total 43: 11 jet (all fighters); 6 turboprop (transport); 20 prop (10 transports, 10 utility); 6 helicopters (all turbine (5 of 10 Israeli Arava aircraft have been delivered; 3 UH-1H are on order.))

H. ~~(C)~~ Paramilitary:

None. The civil police consist of two distinct agencies, both subordinate to the Ministry of Government. Personnel Strength: National Police--5,570; Treasury Police--1,058.

I. (U) Key U.S. Officials (all in Guatemala City except as indicated):

Chief of Mission: Ambassador Francis E. Meloy  
Chief, AID Mission: Edward A. Coy  
Defense Attache and Army Attache: Col John F. Hook  
Naval Attache (Mexico City): Capt Eddie F. Best  
Air Attache (Tegucigalpa): Col Delmore L. Fessenden  
MILGP Commander and Chief, Army Section: Col Charles D. Corbett  
Chief, Navy Section: Cdr William S. Brown, Jr.  
Chief, Air Force Section: Col Robert E. Waller

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