

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Public Release Approved
2021 Dated Information

EL SALVADOR

MEF G-2: CG I MEF//G-2//
Telephone: STU-III AV 365-9103

Theater J-2: USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//J-2//
Telephone: STU-III AV 282-3209

DIA DB Desk Code: DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-3C//
Telephone: STU-III AV 243-3096

Embassy Defense Attache: USDAO SAN SALVADOR ES//DATT//
Telephone: 503-26-7100, EXT 2400/2401; DIRECT
503-26-3062

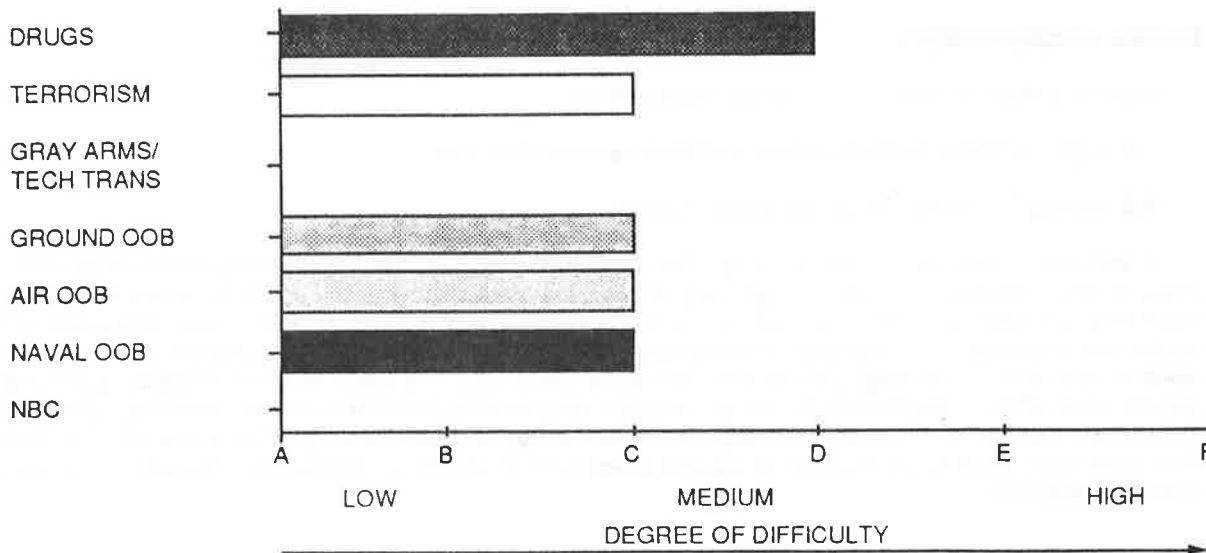


SUMMARY

In **El Salvador**, recent conflict has caused Government instability and extreme hardship for the population. Right-wing death squads financed by wealthy exiles commit assassinations and acts of terrorism. Left-wing guerrillas, supported by **Cuba** and the **Nicaraguan Sandinistas**, conduct raids and disruption; while **U.S.**-backed Government forces battle both sides. Land reform continues to be the central issue of dispute. **U.S.-Salvadoran** relations have been cordial and close. The **U.S.** provides assistance to the **Salvadoran** Government in its efforts to build democratic institutions and promote stability. **El Salvador** is reported to be a transit point for cocaine enroute to the **U.S.** from **South America**. The terrorist group FMLN operates in this country, primarily in **San Salvador**, and is sponsored and supported by **Cuba**, the **Nicaraguan Sandinistas**, the **Soviet Union**, and **Vietnam**. In the **Western Hemisphere**, **El Salvador** constitutes a serious problem due to its internal turmoil and its involvement in terrorism and narcotics. The country has moderate sized armed forces which, through support from the **U.S.**, has improved its capabilities against the insurgents.

With a hot, humid climate and mountainous terrain with dense ground cover, **U.S.** military operations in **El Salvador** would present some difficulties. Due to steep hills and mountains, cross-country movement of tracked vehicles would be impractical in most of the country. The dissected land and thick vegetation would limit the average standoff distance for engagement by line of sight weapons (intervisibility) to less than 1,000 meters. There are parts of the northern border with **Honduras** which lack coverage by 1:50,000 scale maps. A major shortfall in **El Salvador** is that it has no major ports that can accommodate strategic sealift. The estimated response time for a MEU on the **U.S.** east and west coasts to embark on amphibious ships and move to **El Salvador** is in excess of six days.

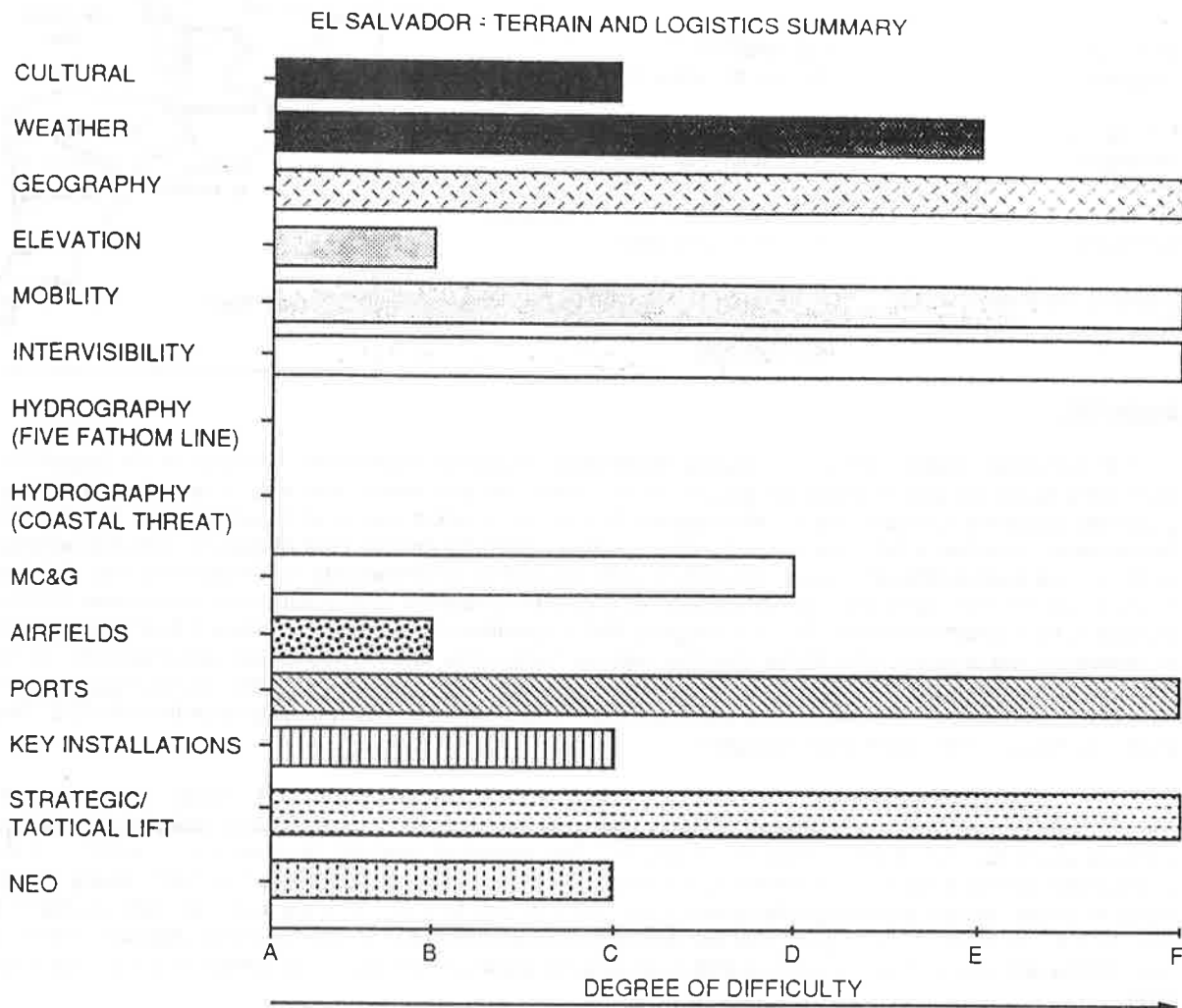
EL SALVADOR - THREAT SUMMARY



El Salvador - 1

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY



Existing Ongoing Conflicts

- Right-wing death squads are financed by wealthy exiles.
- Left-wing guerrillas supported by **Cuba** and **Nicaragua** conduct raids.
- **U.S.** backed Government forces battle both factions.

Land reform has been a central issue. The Government developed a strong land-reform policy, but its implementation has been sporadic and right-wing critics have tried to stop the program. Moderates in **El Salvador**, those who have not fled or been slain, press for a centrist "government of national reconciliation" that would try to incorporate all but the most extreme political elements. This is almost as impossible as trying to stop the right-wing death squads and the left-wing guerrilla raids and terror bombings. The Government is trying to convince the peasants that reform is progressing, to stop left- and right-wing violence, and to ensure continued **U.S.** support. The Government also claims that putting an end to outside support for left- and right-wing violence is beyond its means. Right-wing death squads are financed by wealthy exiles living in **Miami** and elsewhere. The left is supplied by **Nicaragua** and **Cuba**.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

The right wing wants to roll back land reform. Assassination and terror are its tactical methods. The right wing says that labor organizers and clergy who talk about the health needs of peasants are just troublemakers. It argues that the old patriarchal system provided stability.

Left-wing rebels plan to remain in the field. They will continue hitting isolated army posts, seizing and holding villages until the army responds, then engaging Government main-force units when such units are vulnerable. Urban hit-and-run raids and economic disruption also play a part in their strategy. The rebels dynamite electric generators, bridges, and railroads, damaging the economy. Shooting up buses and trucks further weakens the transportation-and-distribution networks. And the right-wing rebels have no monopoly on terror. Assassination of key opponents remains a classic revolutionary tool; the ideal is to shift the blame to someone else.

U.S. Equities in El Salvador

- Non-communist Government which is trying to promote democracy in the region.

U.S.-Salvadoran relations have traditionally been cordial and close. The **U.S.** provides assistance to the **Salvadoran** Government in its effort to build democratic institutions and promote stability in the **Central American** region.

The **U.S.** receives 46 percent of **El Salvador's** exports and provides 32 percent of its imports.

Direct Inv (Mil of \$)	Exports (Mil of \$)	Imports (Mil of \$)	U.S. Aid (Mil of \$)	Total Equity (Mil of \$)	U.S. Citizens	\$ Rating Rating	Total Numerical Rating	Overall U.S. Equity
13	352	354	414	1,133	51	3 1	4	Low

Drug Threat

Drug Production	Drug Processing	Precursor Chemicals	Money Laundering	Transit Point
				X

El Salvador has been reported to be a transit point for cocaine enroute to the **U.S.** from **South America**.

Terrorism

- FMLN operates in this country sponsored by **Cuba, Nicaragua, U.S.S.R., and Vietnam**.

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) is a Marxist-Leninist group supported by **Cuba, Nicaragua, the U.S.S.R, and Vietnam** which operates against the Government of **El Salvador**. In 1988, the FMLN stated its intention to increase terrorism in the capital of **San Salvador** and have since carried through with this intention. The guerrillas have warned that **U.S.** personnel would be targeted and there have been a number of terrorist incidents against **U.S.** facilities.

Consolidated Threat

In the **Western Hemisphere, El Salvador** constitutes a serious threat in the combined areas of narcotics and terrorism.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

General Ground OOB

Infantry	Tank OOB	Artillery	Army Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Reg/Exp	LAV	Howitzers	39	8	127	C

Ground OOB includes about 39,000 troops which includes some conscripts. The U.S. provides training and support which has improved capabilities against insurgents. Tanks: AMX-13, M-3; Artillery: M-101, M-102, M-114.

General Air OOB

Air OOB	Close Air	AAW (IAD)	Air Force Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Day/VFR Jets	Day Jet Atk	EW Radar	2	8	80	C

Fighter Aircraft: Super Mystere; Close Air: Cessna A-37, Magister; Air Defense: AA guns.

General Naval OOB

Naval OOB	S/S Missiles	Patrol Craft	Navy Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Small Surface	None	Lg Gun Boats	2	8	50	C

Ships: none; SSM: none; Patrol Craft: 3 Large Gun Boats (100 displacement tons); 8 Small Gun Boats; 20 Small Coastal Patrol Craft.

Culture (Language and Religion)

Primary language - Spanish
Primary religion - Catholic

There is a relatively small cultural difference between **El Salvador** and the **U.S.**

Weather

Average Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit)	Average Relative Humidity (Percent)	Average Annual Rainfall (Inches)	Rating
64-90	56	70	Wet/Hot

The climate of **El Salvador** is semitropical with distinct wet and dry seasons.

General Geographic Conditions

URBAN	DESERT	JUNGLE	MOUNTAINOUS
			X

Operational Elevation

<2,000 FT	<4,000 FT	<6,000 FT	>6,000 FT	>9,000 FT	>12,000 FT
	X				

Mountains separate the country into three regions: the southern coastal belt; central valleys and plateaus; and northern mountains.

General Cross-Country Mobility

- **El Salvador** is generally unsuited for cross-country movement of tracked vehicles.

Cross-country movement of tracked vehicles would be impractical in most of **El Salvador**. Steep hills and mountains, very rough lava flows, and mangrove swamps would preclude vehicular movement at all times in about 70 percent of the country.

Intervisibility (Line of Sight)

- Poor, with line of sight distances generally less than 1,000 meters.

Steep hills and mountains, frequent lava flows, and covered mangrove swamps preclude line of sight distances beyond 1,000 meters over most of the country.

Hydrography (Five Fathom Line)

- NGF platforms are able to approach the coast to provide satisfactory support for operations ashore.

DMA Chart #	5 Fathom Line from Shore (Meters)	NFG Rating
21520/21524	1,000	Good

Hydrography (Coastal Threat)

- Limited coastal threat.

Maximum Capability Coastal Defense Weapon	Maximum Range of Weapon (Meters)	Rating (Compared with 5"/54-cal)
155 mm M-114	14,600	U.S. NGF Advantage

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

MC&G Shortfalls

- Limited map coverage.

1:50 New	1:50 Old	Some 1:50	MSI Avail	1:250 New	None
		X			

1:50,000 scale map coverage is available for most of **El Salvador** except for parts of its northern border with **Honduras**.

Airfields

- Accessible by air, with one airfield at **San Salvador (Cuscatlan)** which can accommodate C-5 aircraft.

Number of Airfields	Type Aircraft (C-5, C-141B, C-130) Accommodated	Airfield Utility (Unconstrained/Constrained)	Rating
12	1 C-5 1 C-141B 4 C-130 6 None	1/11	1/C-5

Airfields	Type Aircraft	Comments
Cangrejera	C-130	Daylight/VFR only.
Casas Nuevas (La Carrera)	C-130	Daylight/VFR only. Low runway WBC.
El Obrajuelo	None	-
El Papalon	None	-
San Salvador International (Cuscatlan)	C-5, C-141B, C-130	-
El Triunfo	None	-
Golfito	None	-
Hacienda La Mesitas	C-130	Daylight/VFR only. Low runway WBC.
Hacienda Madre Sal	None	-
Ilopango (San Salvador)	C-141B, C-130	Airfield has obstacles. Daylight only.
Laguna de Maquigue	None	-
Tamarindo	C-130	Daylight/VFR only.

Ports

El Salvador has no major ports that can accommodate strategic sealift.

Key Installations

With numerous economic and financial problems, communications, transportation, and industrial facilities in **EI Salvador** remain austere.

U.S. Embassy	Communications	Highways	Railroads	Major Ports	Primary Airfields	Pipeline	Oil Field	NBC
San Salvador	- Radio relay system - Microwave connection - 79 Radio stations - 5 TV stations	10,000 km	602 km	0	12	None	None	None

Strategic and Tactical Lift

The time required for a MEU on the **U.S.** east and west coasts to embark on amphibious ships and sail to **EI Salvador** is in excess of six days. The AAF/ACB can arrive within 24 hours but these elements do not possess a forcible entry capability.

NEO

- Based on the few number of potential evacuees (131) and the short distance (177 nautical miles) to the likely evacuation site (**San Salvador**), NEO conducted by a MEU under normal circumstances would not be difficult.

Embassy Staff	Evacuees	Inland Objective (nm)	Rating
80	51	17 (San Salvador)	C

Note: In **EI Salvador** the following factors are of little significance;

- Gray Arms/Technology Transfer
- NBC

