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left is mounting an intimidation campaign against the elections: Faribundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) posters in eastern El Salvador reportedly say, "Those who vote, we will kill," and Christian Democratic candidates have received letters telling them they've signed their "own death sentence."

Cocklin says the more acute problem would be if Duarte's junta was *not* holding elections. But, since he plans to hold them, "you have to start from there."

The elections "will be a watershed," says Taylor, who once taught at West Point.

"I don't doubt the elections will have problems," he says, adding that he questions the wisdom of the United States pressuring Duarte to do what he doesn't want to do — to participate in a negotiated settlement. (Duarte may fear a right-wing backlash or a military coup.) "What is the morality of

that kind of position? What is its political viability?"

"A mass slaughter wouldn't put the revolutionaries in a very good light, would it?" adds Taylor.

Green says it's "a choice between a government that has elections and one that wouldn't."

Klare couldn't disagree more: "Anybody who thinks this is going to be a free election should be hospitalized in a mental hospital."

## 'Vietnam Two'

All of this talk — "defend against Communism," "progress in human rights," "free elections" — sounds disturbingly familiar to some people. Sounds like Vietnam.

"I have to refrain from using expletives . . ." says Klare. "There's a real chance we could get involved in another Vietnam." U.S. involvement in

El Salvador is "akin to early U.S. involvement in Vietnam," he says, adding that it's very likely there will be more infusion of advisors and — although months or years away — troops sent to El Salvador.

John Lawrence, founder of the University Veterans Association and a former medic in the Vietnam war, says U.S. policy in El Salvador has a similar "gradualism that took place in Vietnam." El Salvador is "kinda like Reagan's Cuba — the old Monroe Doctrine coming back."

But he is quick to add "I can't see a real heavy involvement" in the future. In 1978, Lawrence says, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared they were only committed to the Persian Gulf and West Germany. And military equipment is now primarily geared for desert battles, he adds.

The future could see 1,500-2,000 U.S. military advisors in El Salvador and the bombing of guerrilla bases, Lawrence says, but if troops are sent there, it would be a large number of troops sent for a short and intense conflict.

Shoup also describes parallels to Vietnam: an unpopular dictatorship with "very few roots in the people," U.S. advisors and monetary aid "pouring in" to the country, and a mass movement against a repressive U.S.-backed regime.

There are differences, however: El Salvador is a "much narrower geographic area" (Vietnam had a larger "rear area" for inviolate guerrilla bases); more significant stakes are involved because El Salvador is "so much closer to the United States"; and the American people have a higher consciousness of the perils of foreign involvement.

Although Americans are "shy" about intervening in a foreign land, El Salvador is "very difficult to call," Shoup adds. A great deal depends on how much the populace demands that Reagan support a negotiated settlement — which would "save a lot of bloodshed," he says.

Cocklin says the critics are premature: "I think it's a mistake at this stage of the game for people to say we're getting off into another Vietnam."

"It could be a new Vietnam," says Taylor, "if this administration pursued it like Vietnam. But I don't think there's any likelihood of that." The secretary of state has had years to reflect on Southeast Asia, he says. "So many lessons have been learned: I don't think there is any possibility of this being Vietnam Two."

can't campaign anywhere besides on television.

"The main problem is the extreme inequality. This is why a solution must be economic and political; a military solution there wouldn't go to the root of the problem."

The FMLN-FDR is composed of many students, educators, church people and professionals. "The majority of the movement is not Marxist."

"There cannot be free elections because not all people are involved in the political process; if they decided to do so, they would immediately be killed."

Duarte "has almost no power there" and will be removed through this election. "This is a rightest government — it will get more rightest" after the elections.

"Most of the killings made by the army are civilians." There has been more than 30,000 killings since October '79. "Most of the killings of the Salvadoran people have not been in combat."

Training troops in the United States is "a pretty overt intervention in El Salvador. I don't really think this will solve the situation there." More military involvement by the United States will bring a more prolonged conflict.

The FMLN is willing to negotiate, but "the army there, and U.S. government here, don't accept that."

"I don't expect a lot of people will go to the elections."

Great Britain is the only country who will send observers to the elections; others don't see the election as viable. "At times we could think everyone is supporting the junta; that's not true."

"The gospel is really directed to the poor people there — the majority. It's against the gospel to avoid preaching these realities."

"We all really want to have peace, but we won't have peace unless the basic structure that caused the problem is changed."

U.S. administrations "never have recognized anything about the history of El Salvador, how inequalities have developed there." As long as they don't recognize this, things will continue like they are. "I think they may know, but they don't want to recognize that — I think they may fear they will appear they are wrong once again."

A negotiated settlement is needed: it would include the restructuring of the government and the army, as well as "some form of land reform."

In El Salvador "nobody can say he or she is safe."

Perez says he doesn't know yet whether he'll go back to his country.

*If it's not safe for Perez, how safe is it for Uncle Sam? Back to the domino theory.*

*The dominoes are stacked. (Or are they?) And our old friend has some momentous decisions ahead: Should he retire from dominoes competition? Or employ a risky "Vietnam Two" strategy to win the match in El Salvador and points north?*

*Uncle Sam is like a lot of us — and we all hate to lose.*

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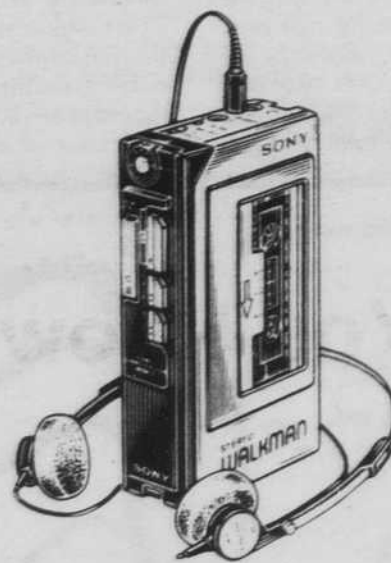
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