

SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SYSTEM II

30166

February 19, 1985

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SENSITIVE

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RM*

SUBJECT: Approach to the Hondurans regarding the Nicaraguan Resistance

Issue

What approach would best serve our interests in convincing the Hondurans to continue their support for the Nicaraguan resistance forces?

Facts

In recent weeks the Hondurans have been expressing increasing anxiety over the presence of large numbers of FDN freedom fighters gathered on their southern border. While they have continued their support to the FDN, there is increasing evidence that the Sandinistas are making every effort to intimidate the Hondurans into ceasing their assistance to the freedom fighters. The Intelligence Community estimates that between 40-60,000 Sandinista soldiers are gathered in northern Nicaragua with the mission of crippling the resistance in the next 60 days. We expect that there will be increasing numbers of artillery and rocket attacks into Honduran territory. Quick "in and out" raids by Sandinista special troops, possibly using their new HIND helicopters, are likely. These events could well cause the Hondurans to reverse their recent decision to continue support for the resistance.

Discussion

The CPPG convened on February 7, to consider the developments described above. The group agreed that we should make an approach to the Hondurans which emphasizes our commitment to their sovereignty and provides incentives for them to persist in aiding the freedom fighters. The group further agreed that the incentives should include:

- the release of some economic support (we are currently withholding disbursement of \$174M until the Hondurans commit to certain economic reform);

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cc Vice President

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- expedited security assistance deliveries (the Hondurans have experienced considerable delay in receiving a number of items which we could provide to them from our operating stocks); and
- enhancements to existing CIA programs [



The group further agreed that our commitment to their sovereignty should be included in a letter from you to President Suazo and that your letter should also address the matter of the resistance in very general terms. This letter is attached at Tab A. With your approval this letter will be telegraphically transmitted to our Ambassador for delivery to President Suazo.

Following my recent trip to the region, one of my staff had very private meeting with a number of those who are very close to Suazo. This meeting apparently resulted in the Hondurans reversing their stated intention to withdraw support from the freedom fighters and force them back into Nicaragua--many of whom would have been without arms or equipment. The CPPG agreed that an emissary should again proceed to Honduras carrying the signed copy of your letter and, in a second meeting, very privately explain our criteria for the expedited economic support, security assistance deliveries, and enhanced CIA support.

Recommendations

<u>OK</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>RR</u>	_____
<u>RR</u>	_____

1. That you sign the letter at Tab A and approve its telegraphic transmission.
2. That you authorize us to proceed as outlined above.

Prepared by:
 Oliver L. North
 Raymond F. Burghardt

Attachment
 Tab A - Letter to President Suazo

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. McFARLANE

SUBJECT: Approach to the Hondurans regarding the Nicaraguan
ResistanceIssue

What approach would best serve our interests in convincing the Hondurans to continue their support for the Nicaraguan resistance forces?

Facts

In recent weeks the Hondurans have been expressing increasing anxiety over the presence of large numbers of FDN freedom fighters gathered on their southern border. While they have continued their support to the FDN, there is increasing evidence that the Sandinistas are making every effort to intimidate the Hondurans into ceasing their assistance to the freedom fighters. The Intelligence Community estimates that between 40-60,000 Sandinista soldiers are gathered in northern Nicaragua with the mission of crippling the resistance in the next 60 days. We expect that there will be increasing numbers of artillery and rocket attacks into Honduran territory. Quick "in and out" raids by Sandinista special troops, possibly using their new HIND helicopters, are likely. These events could well cause the Hondurans to reverse their recent decision to continue support for the resistance.

Discussion

The CPPG convened on February 7, to consider the developments described above. The group agreed that we should make an approach to the Hondurans which emphasizes our commitment to their sovereignty and provides incentives for them to persist in aiding the freedom fighters. The group recommended that the incentives should include:

- the release of some economic support (we are currently withholding disbursement of \$174M until the Hondurans commit to certain economic reform);
- expedited security assistance deliveries (the Hondurans have experienced considerable delay in receiving a number of items which we could provide to them from our operating stocks); and

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-- enhancements to existing CIA programs [



The CTTG further proposed that our commitment to their sovereignty should be included in a letter from you to President Suazo and that your letter (Tab A) should also address the matter of the resistance in very general terms. Once you approve, this letter will be telegraphically transmitted to our Ambassador for delivery to President Suazo.

Following my recent trip to the region, one of my staff had very private meeting with a number of those who are very close to Suazo. This meeting apparently resulted in the Hondurans reversing their stated intention to withdraw support from the freedom fighters and force them back into Nicaragua--many of whom would have been without arms or equipment. The CPPG agreed that an emissary should again proceed to Honduras carrying the signed copy of your letter and, in a second meeting, very privately explain our criteria for the expedited economic support, security assistance deliveries, and enhanced CIA support.

Although there was unanimous agreement at the CPPG, since that time the State Department has apparently reconsidered its position. State now believes there is no necessity for explicitly linking the expedited release of assistance to Honduran cooperation, with the Nicaraguan resistance. State therefore prefers that the letter be handled only by Ambassador Negroponte, that no freedom fighter issues be raised, and that no special emissary be dispatched.

On the basis of my own visit to Honduras last month, I continue to believe that it would be very useful for one of my staff to underline for those close to Suazo, the importance we attach to continued help for the freedom fighters.

Recommendations

<u>OK</u>	<u>No</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

1. That you sign the letter at Tab A and approve its telegraphic transmission.
2. That you authorize us to proceed as the CPPG originally proposed, including the dispatch of an emissary.

Prepared by:
Oliver L. North
Raymond F. Burghardt

Attachment
Tab A - Letter to President Suazo

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

In my State of the Union message of February 6, I made clear the priority we give to Central America and our determination to continue to support freedom wherever it may be under siege. I reaffirmed our deep conviction in support of the cause of the Nicaraguan freedom fighters; and I called upon the Congress to continue all facets of our assistance to Central America.

The recent evidence of a growing concentration of Nicaraguan forces near your border and Nicaragua's record of past incursions give rise to serious concern. In view of this, I want strongly to reaffirm the message which I asked my National Security Advisor to give to you directly during his visit to Honduras several weeks ago. Our commitment under existing treaties to the defense of Honduran sovereignty is clear. As we face the challenges ahead, we must continue to work together to achieve our common objectives of democracy, well-being, and security in your country and throughout Central America. I hope that your government will continue to do all in its power to support those who struggle for freedom and democracy. I look forward to an opportunity to discuss our mutual commitment to liberty in Central America during your visit to Washington in May.

His Excellency
Dr. Roberto Suazo Cordova
President of the Republic of Honduras
Tegucigalpa

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