

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

July 22, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky *mv*

SUBJECT: El Salvador-Honduras Conflict -- Current Situation and Prospects

The cease fire which went into effect on Friday appears to be holding, although there are indications that El Salvadoran troops have made further advances into Honduran territory. OAS Observer Teams are deploying to the front to verify reported violations and encourage mutual restraint. Both countries are seeking weapons abroad. Reliable reports indicate that El Salvador has acquired three additional combat aircraft. The Honduran government has made several desperate requests to us for ammunition and equipment. President Somoza of Nicaragua is reportedly preparing military equipment to assist Honduras.

The 96-hour period established by the OAS for the completion of the withdrawal of El Salvadoran troops from Honduran territory ends tonight at midnight EDT. El Salvador has indicated that it will not comply with the OAS resolutions on troop withdrawal unless a series of conditions relating to "effective guarantees" for the El Salvadoran citizens in Honduras are met. Public enthusiasm for a continued hard line apparently has made El Salvadoran officials fearful of a coup if they show any weakening of their intransigent position. The El Salvadorans are considering by-passing the OAS and may bring their case to the UN as a further delaying tactic.

The OAS Council acting as the organ of consultation sent messages to both countries yesterday urging El Salvador to comply with the OAS resolutions, and thanking Honduras for having unconditionally accepted them. The Council meets again today to consider what actions it should take if El Salvador fails to comply with the troop withdrawal resolution. There are three basic options open to the Council:

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- To condemn El Salvador as the aggressor for the July 14 invasion and apply appropriate sanctions. (Possible measures range from breaking of diplomatic relations to embargo of strategic materials.)
- To determine that Honduras is the victim of an armed attack and call upon member states to assist GOH in measures of collective self defense.
- To censor the GOES for failure to comply with the OAS resolutions and order measures necessary to compel compliance.

The range of measures under the latter two options run from providing arms to Honduras for defense against further El Salvadoran action to creation of an inter-American Peace Force for purposes of either:

- interposing between the two sides; or
- expelling El Salvadoran troops from Honduras.

The State Department has instructed our Embassies to consult with other OAS nations on the various options open to the Council (Tab A). State is indicating that:

- We would not expect to contribute combat forces to an Inter-American Peace Force in the event one is called for by the OAS Council, but we would be ready to give it logistical support.
- We are not presenting proposals, and hope and expect that the Latin American countries will take the lead.

Decisions on sanctions and the possible creation of an inter-American Peace Force will probably be taken within the next few days. The OAS Council may call for a meeting of Foreign Ministers to reach final decisions on these important questions.

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