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VOLUME XV

CENTRAL AMERICA



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Volume XV

Central America

Editor Nathaniel L. Smith
General Editor Adam M. Howard

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About the Series

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the U.S. Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The staff of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, plans, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102-138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991. Section 198 of P.L. 102-138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State's Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the U.S. Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the *Foreign Relations* series is guided by the principles of historical objectivity and accuracy; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The *Foreign Relations* statute requires that the published record in the *Foreign Relations* series include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. It further requires that government agencies, departments, and other entities of the U.S. Government en-

gaged in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support cooperate with the Department of State historians by providing full and complete access to records pertinent to foreign policy decisions and actions and by providing copies of selected records. Most of the sources consulted in the preparation of this volume have been declassified and are available for review at the National Archives and Records Administration (Archives II) in College Park, Maryland.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have complete access to all the retired records and papers of the Department of State: the central files of the Department; the special decentralized files ("lot files") of the Department at the bureau, office, and division levels; the files of the Department's Executive Secretariat, which contain the records of international conferences and high-level official visits, correspondence with foreign leaders by the President and Secretary of State, and the memoranda of conversations between the President and the Secretary of State and foreign officials; and the files of overseas diplomatic posts. All of the Department's central files for 1977–1981 are available in electronic or microfilm formats at Archives II, and may be accessed using the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) tool. Almost all of the Department's decentralized office files covering this period, which the National Archives deems worthy of permanent retention, have been transferred to or are in the process of being transferred from the Department's custody to Archives II.

Research for *Foreign Relations* volumes is undertaken through special access to restricted documents at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and other agencies. While all the material printed in this volume has been declassified, some of it is extracted from still-classified documents. The staff of the Carter Library is processing and declassifying many of the documents used in this volume, but they may not be available in their entirety at the time of publication. Presidential papers maintained and preserved at the Carter Library include some of the most significant foreign-affairs related documentation from White House offices, the Department of State, and other federal agencies including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Some of the research for volumes in this subseries was done in Carter Library record collections scanned for the Remote Archive Capture (RAC) project. This project, which is administered by the National Archives and Records Administration's Office of Presidential Libraries, was designed to coordinate the declassification of still-classified records held in various Presidential libraries. As a result of the way in which records were scanned for the RAC, the editors of the *Foreign Relations* series were not always able to determine whether attachments to a given document were in fact attached to the paper copy of the docu-

ment in the Carter Library file. In such cases, some editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have indicated this ambiguity by stating that the attachments were “Not found attached.”

Editorial Methodology

Documents in this volume are presented chronologically according to time in Washington, DC. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance from the General Editor and the Chief of the Editing and Publishing Division. The original document is reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Texts are transcribed and printed according to accepted conventions for the publication of historical documents within the limitations of modern typography. A heading has been supplied by the editors for each document included in the volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in the documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words or phrases underlined in the original document are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations and terms is included in the front matter of each volume. In telegrams, the telegram number (including special designators such as Secto) is printed at the start of the text of the telegram.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted. Entire documents withheld after declassification review have been accounted for and are listed in their chronological place with headings, source notes, and the number of pages not declassified.

All brackets that appear in the original document are so identified in the footnotes. All ellipses are in the original documents.

The first footnote to each document indicates the sources of the document and its original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the *Foreign Relations* statute, monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation of the series and declassification of records. The Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 13526 on Classified National Security Information and applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this volume, which began in 2013 and was completed in 2015, resulted in the decision to withhold 0 documents in full, excise a paragraph or more in 5 documents, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 61 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this volume and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and edito-

rial notes presented here provide a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of the Carter administration's policy toward Central America.

Adam M. Howard, Ph.D.
General Editor

Stephen P. Randolph, Ph.D.
The Historian

Bureau of Public Affairs
May 2017

Preface

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations Series

This volume is part of a subseries of volumes of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important issues in the foreign policy of the administration of Jimmy Carter. The subseries will present a documentary record of major foreign policy decisions and actions of President Carter's administration. This volume documents the policies of the administration toward Central America.

Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XV

The purpose of this volume is to document the foreign policy of the Carter administration toward Central America. The six compilations included in the volume illustrate the formulation of U.S. policy toward the Central American region as a whole and U.S. bilateral relations with six countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Documentation on Belize and Guatemala has been combined into one compilation, which covers bilateral relations and the negotiations on the future independence of Belize from the United Kingdom, which was finalized in September 1981. A compilation on regional policies contains documents applicable to multiple Central American countries and regional approaches planned and undertaken by the Carter administration. The compilations are ordered to replicate, as close as possible, the chronology of the policies crafted during Carter's presidential term.

The Carter administration's preferred policy toward Latin America—stressing human rights and non-interventionism—was severely tested by events in Central America. Guatemala's territorial claims on Belize and its poor human rights record created challenges and limitations to U.S. efforts to settle a secure basis for Belize's independence. In Nicaragua, the January 1978 assassination of Nicaraguan journalist Pedro Chamorro helped to catalyze a civil war between Nicaraguan President Anastasio Debayle Somoza's National Guard and Sandinista National Liberation Front guerrillas. The Carter administration criticized Somoza, a close U.S. ally prior to the Carter presidency, for human rights violations and the lack of an open political process in the country. The United States undertook efforts to mediate a moderate political solution and minimize bloodshed from October 1978 to July 1979, when the Sandinistas assumed power. Thereafter, the Carter administration took pains to sway the revolutionary Government of

National Reconstruction toward moderate economic and political policies.

Bilateral relations with Costa Rica were dominated by the tumult produced by the Nicaraguan revolution, particularly due to Costa Rica's territorial proximity to Nicaragua, and then by the political instability in El Salvador. Costa Rica also worked with the Carter administration in responding to a refugee crisis in Cuba. In Honduras, the United States responded to changes in the make-up of the ruling military Junta and advocated for elections and a broadly based government. In El Salvador, a military government faced growing popular opposition and radicalization on the leftist and rightist fringes. Hoping to improve the situation, Carter opted for a quid-pro-quo policy of military and economic aid in exchange for improvements in human rights practices and progress toward open elections. Following a coup d'état against President Carlos Humberto Romero in October 1979, a Revolutionary Governing Junta received U.S. support, but continued to struggle to stabilize a political situation that saw attacks by leftist-Marxist guerrillas and violence perpetrated by right-wing extremists.

Acknowledgments

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The editor conducted the research for this volume and selected and annotated the documentation under the supervision of Kathleen B. Rasmussen, Chief of the Global Issues and General Division. She and Assistant to the General Editor Kristin L. Ahlberg reviewed the volume. Chris Tudda coordinated the declassification review under the supervision of the Chief of the Declassification and Publishing Division Carl E. Ashley. Stephanie Eckroth and Margaret Ball performed the copy and technical editing.

Nathaniel L. Smith
Historian

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Sources

Sources for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XV

The files at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, in Atlanta, Georgia, are the single most important source of documentation for those interested in U.S.-Central American relations during the Carter administration. Foreign policy research in the Carter Presidential Library centers around two collections: National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, and National Security Affairs, Staff Material. Within the Staff Material the North/South, Pastor Files are particularly helpful.

The editor also had access to the Carter Intelligence Files at the National Security Council, the files of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Department of Defense records. The files of the Central Intelligence Agency, were essential for intelligence reports and assessments on which the Carter administration based its policy decisions. The Department of State's Central Foreign Policy File, consisting of D, P, and N reels, replaced the pre-1973 paper subject-numeric file. The P (Paper) reels consist of microfilmed versions of memoranda of conversation, letters, briefing papers, airgrams, and memoranda to principals.

Speeches and policy statements were garnered from a number of published sources, the most important of which were the *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* and the *Department of State Bulletin*.

In addition to the paper files cited below, a growing number of documents are available on the Internet. The Office of the Historian maintains a list of these Internet resources on its website and encourages readers to consult that site on a regular basis.

Unpublished Sources

Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Central Foreign Policy File. These files have been transferred or will be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

P Reels

D Reels

N Reels

INR/IL Historical Files

Files of the Office of Intelligence Coordination, containing records from the 1940s through the 1980s, maintained by the Office of Intelligence Liaison, Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

XIV Sources

Lot Files. These files have been transferred or will be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

Lot 6D379, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Intelligence Research Reports

Lot 81D64, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files

Lot 84D241, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980

Lot 88D100, Office of the Secretariat Staff, 1977–1981 Cuban Files (Peter Tarnoff S/S)

Lot 90D413, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, U.S. Permanent Mission to the OAS, Luigi Einaudi Files

Lot 92D630, Executive Secretariat's Special Caption Documents, 1979–1989

National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, Maryland

RG 59, General Records of the Department of State

Lot 81D113 (Entry P-14), Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher

Lot 82D298 (Entry P-9), Records of the Director of the Policy Planning Staff Anthony Lake, 1977–1981

Lot 83D66, Subject Files of Edward S. Muskie, 1963–1981

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, Georgia

Donated Material

Zbigniew Brzezinski File

Papers of Walter F. Mondale

National Security Affairs

Brzezinski Material

Agency File

Brzezinski Office File

Subject Chron File

Cables File

Country File

General Odom File

President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File

Subject File

Trip File

Staff Material

Freedom of Information/Legal

North South, Pastor Files

Office

Special Projects File

National Security Council

Institutional Files

Office of the Staff Secretary

Handwriting File

Presidential File

Plains File

President's Personal Foreign Affairs File

Presidential Materials

President's Daily Diary

Vertical File

White House Central File

Central Intelligence Agency

Office of Congressional Affairs

Job 81M01032R, Subject Committee Files (1943–1980)

Job 82B00035R, Committee Files

Job 97M00733R, Policy Files

Office of the Director of Central Intelligence

Job 81B00112R, Subject Files

Job 81M00919R, Executive Registry Subject Files (1977–1979)

Job 82M00501R, 1980 Subject Files

Office of Support Services, Directorate of Intelligence

Job 80T00634A, Production Case Files (1978)

National Security Council

Carter Administration Intelligence Files

Washington National Records Center, Suitland Maryland

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FRC 330–82–0205–26, 1979 Official Records of the Secretary of Defense

FRC 330–82–0263–1, ASD/ISA Policy Files 1980

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U.S. Department of State. *The United States and the Security of Central America and the Caribbean: U.S. Public Statements and Related Documents, 1959–1984.*

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1977–1980.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981.

Washington Post.

Yearbook of the United Nations, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980. New York: United Nations Office of Public Information, 1981.

Abbreviations and Terms

A/AID, Office of the Administrator, Agency for International Development
ABC, American Broadcast Company
ACDA, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
AFB, Air Force base
AFL, American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFP, *Agence France-Presse*
AG, Andean Group
AI, Amnesty International
AID, Agency for International Development
AIFLD, American Institute for Free Labor Development
AMB, Ambassador
AN-26, Cuban/Soviet airplane
ANACH, National Association of Honduran Campesinos
ANC, Conservative National Action Party (Nicaragua)
ANEP, Salvadoran Business Group
ARA, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
ARA/CCA, Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
ARA/CEN, Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
ARA/PPC, Office of Policy Planning, Public and Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
ARA/RPP, Office of Regional Political Programs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
ART, article; artillery
ASAP, as soon as possible
ASARCO, mining company
ASEAN, Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWACS, Advanced/Airborne Warning and Control System

BBC, British Broadcasting Company
BHN, basic human needs
BPR, Popular Revolutionary Block (El Salvador)
B.S., bullshit

CA, Central America
CA, covert action
CAB, Civil Aeronautics Board
CABEL, Central American Development Bank
CAC, Central America and the Caribbean
CACAR, Central America and the Caribbean
CACM, Central American Common Market
CADIN, Nicaraguan Chamber of Industries
CAL, caliber
CAP, Carlos Andrés Pérez
CARICOM, Caribbean Community

CBS-TV, Columbia Broadcasting System Television
CCC, Commodity Credit Corporation; also Civilian Conservation Corps
CDB, Caribbean Development Bank
CDU, Christian Democratic Party
CENTO, Central Treaty Organization
CFF, Compensatory Financing Facility
CGT, Honduran General Confederation of Workers
CGT-I, Nicaraguan Independent General Labor Confederation
CIA, Central Intelligence Agency
CIACAEC, International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation
CINCPAC, Commander in Chief, Pacific Command
CINCSO, Commander in Chief, Southern Command
CINC SOUTH, Commander in Chief, Southern Command
CNA, Salvadoran National Analysis Center
COB, close of business
CODEL, Congressional Delegation
COHDEFOR, Honduran State Forestry Corporation
COHEP, Honduran small business association
COL, Colonel
COM, Chief of Mission
COMECON, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
COMUSMILGP, Commander of the United States Military Group
CONADI, Honduran National Investment Corporation
CONDECA, Central American Defense Council (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua)
CONNG, Committee to Oversee Negotiations for a New Government (Nicaragua)
COPECODECA, Central American Defense Council
COPEFI, Permanent Council of Armed Forces (El Salvador)
COPEI, *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (Committee of Independent Electoral Political Organization), Venezuelan political party
COS, Chief of Station
COSEP, Superior Council for Private Enterprise (Nicaragua)
CR, Costa Rica
CRM, Revolutionary Coordinator of Masses (El Salvador)
CUS, Nicaraguan Labor Organization
CUTS, United Confederation of Salvadoran Workers
CV, Cyrus Vance

D, Deputy Secretary of State
DA, David Aaron
DAO, Defense Attaché Office
DATT, Defense Attaché
DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
DCI, Director of Central Intelligence
D-Day, departure day
DDCI, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
DDO, Deputy Director of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency
DDO/LA, Deputy Director of Operations for Latin America, Central Intelligence Agency
DDT, insecticide
DGI, Cuban General Directorate of Intelligence
DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency
DIN, Honduran Investigative Police
DMZ, demilitarized zone
DN, Sandinista National Liberation Front National Directorate
DOD, Department of Defense

DOD/ISA, International Security Agency, Department of Defense
DOLS, dollars
DOS, Department of State
DR, Dominican Republic
DRU, Unified Revolutionary Directorate (El Salvador)

EB/IFD/ODF, Office of Development Finance, International Finance and Development,
 Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Department of State
EGP, Guerrilla Army of the Poor (Guatemala)
EMB, Embassy
EMP, *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (El Salvador)
EPL, Popular Army of Liberation (El Salvador)
ERP, *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (Popular Revolutionary Army; El Salvador)
ESF, Economic Support Fund
EUR, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State
EUR/NE, Office of Northern Europe Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of
 State
EXDIS, exclusive distribution
EXIM, Export Import Bank of the United States

FAN, *Frente Amplio Nacional* (Salvadoran right-wing group)
FAO, *Frente Amplio* (Nicaraguan broad opposition front)
FAO-PC, FAO Political Committee (Nicaragua)
FAPU, Unified Popular Action Front (El Salvador)
FAR, Rebel Armed Forces (Guatemala)
FARN, Armed Forces of National Resistance (El Salvador)
FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCO, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (United Kingdom)
FDR, Revolutionary Democratic Front (El Salvador)
FDR/DRU, Revolutionary Democratic Front and the Unified Revolutionary Directorate
 (El Salvador)
FDRL, Revolutionary Democratic Front (El Salvador)
FM, Foreign Minister
FMC, Federal Maritime Commission
FMLN, Farabundo Martí Liberation Movement
FMS, Foreign Military Sales
FONMIN, Foreign Minister
FPL, Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Forces (El Salvador)
FPN, Nicaraguan National Patriotic Front
FPN-MPU, Nicaraguan National Patriotic Front and the United People's Movement
FRG, Federal Republic of Germany
FSLN, Sandinista National Liberation Front (Nicaragua)
FSLN-GPP, Popular Prolonged War faction of the Sandinista National Liberation Front
FSLN/PG, Sandinista National Liberation Front Provisional Government
FSLN-T, Tercario Faction Sandinista National Liberation Front
FSLN-TP, Proletarian Tendency faction of the Sandinista National Liberation Front
FSO, Fund for Special Operations, Inter-American Development Bank
FSN, Foreign Service National
FUR, United Front of the Revolution (Guatemala)
FUSEP, Honduran Public Security Force
FY, fiscal year
FYI, for your information

G-2, Military Intelligence Unit

G-12, Group of Twelve

Gen., General

GC, *Guardia Civil* (Costa Rican security force); also, Office of the General Counsel, Agency for International Development

GN, *Guardia Nacional* (Nicaraguan National Guard)

GNP, gross national product

GNR, Government of National Reconciliation (Nicaragua)

GOB, Government of Belize

GOC, Government of Canada; Government of Cuba

GOCR, Government Costa Rica

GOES, Government of El Salvador

GOG, Government of Guatemala

GOH, Government of Honduras

GOM, Government of Mexico

GON, Government of Nicaragua

GOP, Government of Peru

GOV, Government of Venezuela

GP, Provisional Government (Nicaragua)

GPP, Popular Prolonged War faction of the FLSN (Nicaragua)

GRN, Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua

GSP, Generalized System of Preferences

GTMO, Guantanamo

HA, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of State

HA/HR, Office of Human Rights, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of State

HEG, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala

HIG, Housing Investment Guarantee

HMG, Her Majesty's Government

HONDUTEL, Honduran telephone company

HQS, headquarters

IADB, see IDB

IAGS, Inter-American Geodetic Survey

IAHRC, Inter-American Human Rights Commission

IAP, International Authority of the Plebiscite (Nicaragua)

IAPA, Inter-American Press Association

IAPF, Inter-American Peace Force

IBRD, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

ICA, International Communications Agency

ICJ, International Commission of Jurists

ICRC, International Committee of the Red Cross

IDA, International Development Association

IDB, Inter-American Development Bank

IDCA, International Development and Cooperation Administration

IE, Intelligence Estimate

IFIs, international financial institutions

IG, Intergovernmental Group

IIM, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

IL-62, Cuban/Soviet airplane

IMET, International Military Education and Training

IMETP, International Military Education and Training Program

IMF, International Monetary Fund

- INCAE**, Central American Institute for Business Administration, Graduate School of Business and Public Administration
- INDE**, Nicaraguan National Development Institute
- INR**, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- INR/DDC**, Deputy Director for Coordination, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- INR/IL**, Intelligence Liaison, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- INR/INC**, Office of Narcotic Control, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- INR/RAR**, Office of Research and Analysis for the American Republics, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- IO**, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
- IO/UNP**, Office of United Nations Political Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
- IRS**, Internal Revenue Service
- ISA/IA**, International Security Affairs, Inter-American Region, Department of Defense
- ISTA**, Salvadoran Agrarian Reform Agency
- JC**, Jimmy Carter
- JCS**, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- JRG**, Revolutionary Governing Junta; Junta of Revolutionary Government of El Salvador (*Junta Revolucionaria de Gobierno*)
- LA**, Latin America; Latin American
- LAC/CEN**, Office of Central American and Panamanian Affairs, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Agency for International Development
- LAC/DR**, Office of Development Resources, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Agency for International Development
- L/ARA**, Legal Advisor, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
- LAFTA**, Latin American Free Trade Area
- LDC**, less developed country
- LDX**, long distance xerography
- Leg Att**, Legal Attaché
- LIMDIS**, limited distribution
- LOA**, Letter of Agreement
- LP**, Popular League of February 28 (El Salvador)
- LP-28**, Popular League of February 28 (El Salvador)
- L/PM**, Office of the Legal Advisor, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State
- Lt.**, Lieutenant
- M**, million
- MAP**, Military Assistance Program
- MDB**, Multilateral Development Bank
- MDF**, Multinational Defense Force
- MDN**, Nicaraguan Democratic Movement
- MFM**, Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States
- MIL**, military
- MILGP**, Military Group
- MINGOV**, Minister of Government
- MIR**, Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Chile)
- MLC**, Constitutionalist Liberal Movement (Nicaragua)
- MM**, millimeter
- MNC**, multinational corporation

XXII Abbreviations and Terms

MNR, Salvadoran Socialist Party
MOD, Minister of Defense
MODLOK [MODLOC], miscellaneous operations details, local operations
MON, Memorandum of Notification
MPU, United People's Movement (Nicaragua)
MRP, Popular Revolutionary Movement (Costa Rica)
MTT, Army Mobile Training Team
MUP, Popular Unity Movement (Honduras)
M-X, missile

NAM, Non-Aligned Movement
NBC, National Broadcasting Company
NCOIC, Non-commissioned Officer in Charge
NG, Negotiating Group (for Nicaragua) OAS Commission for Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation; International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation
NGR, Negotiating Group (for Nicaragua)
NIACT, Night Action; Needs Immediate Attention
NID, National Intelligence Daily
NIO, National Intelligence Officer, Central Intelligence Agency
NODIS, No distribution
NOFORN, Not releasable to foreign nationals
NP, National Police
NPA, National Plebiscite Authority
NSC, National Security Council
NSC-IG/ARA, National Security Council Interagency Working Group with Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

OAS, Organization of American States
OASGA, Organization of American States General Assembly
ODA, Official Development Assistance
ODECA, Organization of Central American States
OFDA, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OMB, Office of Management and Budget
OP, Operations
OPIC, Overseas Private Investment Corporation
ORDEN, National Democratic Organization (El Salvador)
ORIT, Nicaraguan Labor Organization
OSD, Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSD/ISA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Bureau of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense
OSN, Office of National Security (El Salvador)

PAA, Pan American Airlines
P, page; President; Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
PCD, Nicaraguan Conservative Democratic Party
PCES, Communist Party of El Salvador
PCH, Communist Party of Honduras
PCN, Nicaraguan Conservative Party
PCN, Party of National Conciliation (El Salvador)
PCT, percent
PDC, Christian Democratic Party (El Salvador, Honduras)
PDCH, Christian Democratic Party of Honduras
PEP, Personal Exchange Program
PERMREP, Permanent Representative

PG, Provisional Government (Nicaragua)
PGT, Communist Party of Guatemala
PIA, Plebiscite International Authority
PINU, Honduran Innovation and Unity Party
PJ/FSLN, Provisional Junta of the Sandinista Liberation Front
PL, Public Law
PLI, Independent Liberal Party of Nicaragua
PLN, Liberal Party of Nicaragua
PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization
PNG, persona non grata
PNH, National Party of Honduras
Polad, political adviser
PPSC, Social Christian Party (Nicaragua)
PR, public relations
PRC, Policy Review Committee
PRD, Revolutionary Party (Dominican Republic)
PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico)
PRM, Presidential Review Memorandum
PSD, Nicaragua Social Democratic Party
PSN, Socialist Party of Nicaragua
PSN, likely Packet Switch Network, an information system in the White House used to identify telegrams
PSRE, Socialist Revolutionary Party (Ecuador)
PTP, people-to-people
PTs, points
PVP, Popular Vanguard Party (Costa Rica)

QTE, quote

RE, regarding
RI, Karl “Rick” F. Inderfurth
RG, Record Group
ROCAP, Central America Regional Aid Mission (AID)
RP, Robert Pastor
RPG-2, rocket propelled grenade
RPT, repeat
R&R, rest and relaxation

S, Secretary of State
SALT, Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SC, United Nations Security Council
SCC, Special Coordinating Committee
SCC(I), Special Coordinating Committee on Intelligence
SDC, Honduran Superior Defense Council
SELA, *Sistema Económica de Latinoamérica*; Latin American Economic System organization
Septel, separate telegram
S.I., Socialist International
SIGINT, signals intelligence
SOUTHCOR, Southern Command
S/P, Policy Planning Staff, Office of the Secretary of State
SPECAT, Special Category Message
S/R, Ambassador at Large, Office of the Secretary of State
SR-71, Air Force Blackbird
S/S, Executive Secretary, Office of the Secretary of State

XXIV Abbreviations and Terms

SSCI, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

S/S-I, Information Management Section, Office of the Secretary of State

S/S-O, Department Duty Officer, Operations Center, Office of the Secretary of State

SWAPO, South West Africa People's Organization

T, Terciario faction of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Nicaragua)

TCP, Torrijos, Carazo, and Pérez

TDY, temporary duty

TP, Proletarian Tendency faction of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Nicaragua)

UCS, *Union Comunal Salvadoreña*; Labor Union (El Salvador)

UDEL, Nicaraguan Union of Democratic Liberation

UDN, National Democratic Union (El Salvador)

UGB, White Warriors Union (El Salvador)

UH-1H, (Huey) transport helicopter

U.K., United Kingdom

UN, United Nations

UNESCO, United Nations Educational and Social Council

UNGA, United Nations General Assembly

UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHRC, United Nations Human Rights Commission

UPI, United Press International

U.S., United States

U.S.A., United States of America

USAID, United States Agency for International Development

USCINCSO, Commander-in-Chief, Southern Command

USDA, United States Department of Agriculture

USG, United States Government

USICA, United States International Communications Agency

USLO, United States Liaison Officer

USOAS, U.S. Representative to the Organization of American States

USSOUTHCOM, United States Southern Command

USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USUN, United States Mission to the United Nations

VIP, very important person

W.O., Washington Office on Latin America

WPA/CCC, Works Progress Administration

Wnintel, With Intelligence

WR, Weekly Reading

X-M, Exim Bank

Z, Zulu (Greenwich Mean Time)

ZB, Zbigniew Brzezinski

Persons

Aaron, David, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Aguero, Ferdinand, Nicaraguan Leader of a faction of the Conservative Party

Aguilar Calderon, Carlos Francisco, Costa Rican Foreign Ministry Chief of Cabinet

Aguirre, Danilo, Editor at *La Prensa* (Nicaragua)

Albright, Madeleine, Congressional Relations Officer, Press and Congressional Liaison Office, National Security Council, from March 1978 until January 1981

Alfaro Rodriguez, Jose Miguel, Costa Rican 2nd Vice President

Allen, Lew, Jr., General, USAF; Director of the National Security Agency from August 1973 until July 1977; Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, from July 1, 1978, until June 30, 1982

Alvarez, Enrique, Revolutionary Democratic Front leader (El Salvador)

Alvarez, Gustavo, Colonel; Member of the Honduran Superior Defense Council

Alvarez Montalban, Emilio, Nicaraguan politician

Alvarez Ruiz, Donald, Guatemalan Minister of Government and Interior

Amador Khriel, Cesar, Member of the *Frente Amplio*

Amin, Hafizula, President of Afghanistan from September 16, 1979, until December 27, 1979

Anderson, David, Executive Secretariat staff member

Anderson, Kathy, Desk Officer for Honduras

Andino, Mario Antonio, Member of the Revolutionary Government Junta of El Salvador

Andrews, George R., Staff member, U.S. Embassy Guatemala City

Arana Osorio, Carlos Manuel, President of Guatemala from 1970 until 1974

Arbenz, Jacobo, President of Guatemala from 1951 until 1954

Arias, Celeo, Member of the Liberal Party of Honduras

Arias, Juan Angel, Lieutenant Colonel; Honduran Secretary of State for Government and Justice

Arguedas, Carlos, Costa Rican Vice Minister of Government, Public Security Minister

Arguello, Montiel, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister

Armacost, Michael, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; East Asia and China Affairs, National Security Council, from January 1977 until July 1978

Astacio Lopez, Julio Ernesto, Salvadoran Vice President

Avalos Navarrete, Jose Ramon, Member of the Salvadoran Revolutionary Governing Junta from January 1980

Azcona, Jose, Honduran politician, Member of the Liberal Party's Central Committee

Azofeifa, Willy, Official in Costa Rican Ministry of Public Security

Baker, Howard Henry, Senator (R-Tennessee)

Bayh, Birch, Senator (D-Indiana), Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Baltorano, Emilio Pallais, Nicaraguan businessman; President of a human rights advocacy group

Baltadano, Danilo, Secretary to the Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua Junta

Barnebey, Malcom Richard "Dick", Director of the Office of Andean Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State; Consul General-designate to Belize

Bartch, Carl, Chargé d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa

- Bartholomew, Reginald**, USSR and East Europe Affairs, National Security Council, from November 1977 until April 1979; Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs from July 1, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Bass, Kenneth, III**, Council for Intelligence Policy, Department of Justice
- Batista, Fulgencio**, President of Cuba from 1940 until 1944 and from 1952 until 1959
- Batres, César**, Adviser to Honduran President Melgar
- Beckel, Robert G.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations
- Bell, Griffin**, Attorney General from January 21, 1977, until July 19, 1979
- Bennett, Douglas**, Administrator, Office of the Administrator, Agency for International Development
- Bennett, John**, Chargé d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy Guatemala City
- Bergland, Robert**, Secretary of Agriculture
- Bermudez, Roger**, Government of Nicaragua Press Secretary
- Bertrand Galindo, Francisco**, Salvadoran Ambassador to the United States from 1974 until 1977
- Betancourt, Romulo**, President of Venezuela from 1945 until 1948 and from 1959 until 1964
- Benson, Lucy Wilson** Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs from March 28, 1977, until January 5, 1980
- Bittner, Edward**, Staff member, Department of Treasury
- Binns, Jack Robert**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in San José, from July 1979; U.S. Ambassador to Honduras from October 1980 until October 1981
- Blacken, John Dale**, Executive Secretary, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, from March 1980 until September 1978; Deputy Political Counselor in October 1978; Country Director, Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from March 1980 until July 1981
- Blanco, Bonilla**, Colonel, Member of the Honduran Superior Defense Council; Honduran Military Logistical Center
- Blatchford, Joseph**, Former Director of the Peace Corps; Committee on the Caribbean
- Blessing, Miguel**, Colonel, Nicaraguan National Guard
- Bodan, Harry**, Nicaraguan Vice Foreign Minister
- Bodden, Hubert**, Colonel; Member of the Honduran Superior Defense Council
- Bonner, Raymond**, *New York Times* journalist
- Borge Martinez, Tomas**, FSLN National Directorate Member; Nicaraguan Minister of Interior
- Borgonovo Pohl, Mauricio**, Foreign Minister of El Salvador until May 11, 1977
- Boster, Davis E.**, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala from October 13, 1976, until January 17, 1979
- Bowdler, William G.**, U.S. Ambassador to South Africa from May 14, 1975, until April 19, 1978; thereafter Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research until December 17, 1979; Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from January 4, 1980, until January 16, 1981; member of the International Commission for Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation (Negotiating Group for Nicaragua)
- Bowie, Robert**, Deputy Director of the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency
- Bray, Charles W., III**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1976 until 1977
- Bremont, Marshall**, USSR and East Europe Affairs, National Security Council, from May 1979 until January 1981
- Brewster, Kingman**, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom from June 3, 1977
- Brown, George S.**, General, USAF; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from July 1, 1974, until June 20, 1978
- Brown, Harold**, Secretary of Defense

- Brown, Richard**, Latin America and Caribbean Affairs, National Security Council, from December 1978 until May 1979; Deputy Director of the Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew**, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- Bucaro Garcia, Hugo Tulio**, Colonel; Guatemalan Finance Minister
- Bueso, Guillermo**, President of the Honduran Central Bank
- Bueso, Rosa**, Colonel; Officer's School; Member of the Honduran Superior Defense Council
- Burnham, Forbes**, Prime Minister of Guyana from 1966 until 1980
- Bushnell, John**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
- Bustamente y Rivero, Jose Luis**, Former President of Peru; Mediator for Honduras-El Salvador border dispute
- Byrd, Robert Carlyle**, Senator (D-West Virginia)
- Calderon Berti, Humberto**, Venezuelan Minister of Energy and Mines
- Calderon Fournier, Rafael Angel**, Costa Rican Foreign Minister
- Calero, Adolpho**, leader of the "Autentico" faction of the Conservative Party; representative of Coca-Cola
- Callaghan, James**, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from April 5, 1976, until May 4, 1979
- Callejas Deshon, Alfonso**, PLN Leader and former Vice President of Nicaragua
- Callejas Romero, Rafael Leonardo**, Honduran Minister of Planning and Natural Resources; Honduran Deputy Foreign Minister
- Cancinos Barrios, David**, Major General, Guatemalan Army Chief of Staff
- Carazo Odio, Rodrigo**, President of Costa Rica from 1978
- Carbaugh, John**, Adviser to Senator Jesse Helms
- Cardozo, Hilarion**, Venezuelan Organization of American States Representative
- Carias, Gonzalo**, Deputy Director of the Honduran Central Bank
- Carlucci, Frank C.**, U.S. Ambassador to Portugal from January 24, 1975, until February 5, 1978; Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from February 10, 1978, until February 5, 1981
- Carpio, Salvador Cayetano**, Head of the Unified Revolutionary Directorate from June 1980 (El Salvador)
- Carranza Rivera, Nicolás**, Colonel; Salvadoran Under Secretary of Defense from October 1979
- Carrick, R.J.**, United Kingdom Counselor
- Carrington, Peter**, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from May 1979
- Carter, Hodding, III**, Department of State Spokesman
- Carter, James "Chip,"** Son of President Carter
- Carter, Jimmy**, President of the United States
- Casanova, Eduardo Sandoval**, Lt. Col., Salvadoran Ambassador to Guatemala
- Casco, Mario Ivan**, Honduran Secretary of State for Communications, Public Works, and Transport
- Case, Clifford Philip**, Senator (R-New Jersey)
- Castaneda y Castaneda, Oscar Ruben**, Colonel; Guatemalan Military Attaché
- Castañeda y Alvarez de la Rosa, Jorge**, Mexican Foreign Minister
- Castellanos, Francisco**, Colonel in Guatemalan Army, G-3
- Castillo Valdez, Rafael Eduardo**, Guatemalan Foreign Minister
- Castro Ruz, Fidel**, Premier of Cuba from February 16, 1959; First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba from October 3, 1965; President of the Council of State and Minister from December 3, 1976
- Cavazos, Richard**, Major General, Department of Defense

- Celeste, Richard F.**, Director of the Peace Corps from April 27, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Cesar, Alfredo**, Executive Secretary of the Junta; Director of the International Reconstruction Fund (Nicaragua)
- Chamorro Cardenal, Pedro Joaquin**, Director of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*
- Chamorro, Jaime**, Co-owner and Editor of *La Prensa*
- Chamorro Barrios, Violeta**, Member of Nicaraguan Provisional Junta
- Chamorro, Xavier**, Director of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa* after the assassination of his brother Pedro
- Chapin, Frederic L.**, Consul General at the U.S. Embassy in Sao Paolo from 1972 until 1978
- Chavez Mena, Fidel**, Lawyer, Salvadoran Christian Democratic Party member, Salvadoran Foreign Minister
- Chavez, Mendieta**, Lt. Col., Nicaraguan National Guard
- Chavez, Rogelio**, Salvadoran Supreme Court President
- Cheek, James "Jim"**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
- Christopher, Warren**, Deputy Secretary of State from February 25, 1977, until January 16, 1981
- Church, Frank**, Senator (D-Idaho); Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
- Civiletti, Benjamin R.**, Attorney General from August 16, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Claramount, Ernesto**, Salvadoran General and Presidential Candidate
- Claytor, W. Graham, Jr.**, Secretary of the United States Navy from February 14, 1977, until July 26, 1979; Acting Secretary of Transportation in 1979; Deputy Secretary of Defense from August 24, 1979, until January 16, 1981
- Clift, Denis**, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
- Clough, Susan S.**, Personal Assistant and Secretary to President Carter
- Cohen, Stephen**, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
- Colom Argueta, Manuel**, Leader of the Guatemalan United Front of the Revolution party
- Consalvi, Simon Alberto**, Venezuelan Foreign Minister from July 1977 until March 1979
- Cortazzi, Hugh**, U.K. Deputy Minister of the Foreign Office
- Courtenay, Vernon Harrison**, Belizean Minister of State; Ambassador to Caricom
- Coussin Bogran, Luis A.**, Honduran Minister of Health
- Coy, Edward W.**, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Agency for International Development
- Cruz, Arturo Jose**, Nicaraguan Central Bank President
- Cuadra, Isaias**, Colonel, Nicaraguan National Guard
- Cummings, Eldon**, Colonel, USA; Commander of the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador
- Cutler, Lloyd N.**, Counsel to the President from 1980 until 1981
- Cutter, Bowman**, Executive Associate Director of Budget, Office of Management and Budget
- D'Aubuisson, Robert**, Major; Salvadoran Vice Director of Intelligence
- Dada Hirezi, Hector**, Foreign Minister of El Salvador; Member of the Revolutionary Governing Junta until March 1980
- Deal, Tim**, International Economics Affairs, National Security Council, from January 1977 until April 1979 and from January 1980 until January 1981
- Debayle, Luis Manuel**, Uncle of Nicaraguan President Somoza, President of the Nicaraguan National Power Company
- Denend, Leslie G.**, Global Issues, National Security Council, from July 1977 until June 1979; Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from January 1980 until January 1981
- Denton, Hazel**, member, National Security Council Staff

- D'Escoto Brokman, Miguel**, Father and member of the Political Committee of the *Frente Amplio* and the Group of Twelve; Foreign Minister of the Nicaraguan Provisional Government of National Reconstruction; Nicaraguan Foreign Minister
- Derian, Patricia M.**, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from June 17, 1977, until January 19, 1981
- Deshon, Alfonso Callejas**, Former Vice President of Nicaragua
- Diaz, Julian Lopez**, Ranking Cuban Communist Party Intelligence official
- Dion, Mark Jerrold**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, from February 1980 until February 1981
- Discua, Adalberto**, Honduran Minister of Labor and Social Security
- Devine, Frank James**, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from October 1977 until February 1980
- Dodson, Christine**, Deputy Staff Secretary of the National Security Council from January 1977 until May 1977; thereafter Staff Secretary until January 1981
- Donovan, Hedley**, Senior Advisor to the President from 1980 until 1981
- Dreyfus, Enrique**, Nicaraguan Superior Council for Private Enterprise President
- Dreyfuss, John**, Special Emissary and Team leader
- Duarte, Jose Napoleon**, President of the Revolutionary Governing Junta of El Salvador from December 1980
- Duncan, Charles W., Jr.**, Deputy Secretary of Defense from January 31, 1977, until July 29, 1979; Secretary of Energy from August 24, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Echeverria, Jose Rafael**, Costa Rican Ambassador to the United Nations
- Echeverria Brealey, Juan Jose "Johnny"**, Costa Rican Minister of Government
- Ehrlich, Thomas**, Administrator-designate and Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency,
- Einaudi, Luigi R.**, Staff Director, NSC Interdepartmental Groups, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
- Elio Espinar, Luis**, Costa Rican businessman
- Elvir Sierra, Cesar**, Honduran Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
- Enders, Thomas O.**, U.S. Ambassador to Canada from February 17, 1976, until September 14, 1979; United States Representative to the European Communities from November 6, 1979, until May 27, 1981
- Erb, Guy**, International Economics Affairs, National Security Council, from November 1977 until January 1980
- Escobar Bethancourt, Romulo**, Panamanian diplomat
- Estep, Hunter L.**, Director of the Office of Research and Analysis for American Republics, South America Division, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Evans, Rowland "Rollie"**, Journalist
- Facio Segreda, Gonzalo J.**, Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1970 until 1978
- Fallows, James M.**, Speechwriter for President Carter
- Fascell, Dante Bruco**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Florida)
- Feinberg, Richard**, Member of the Policy and Planning Staff, Department of State
- Fernandez, Armando**, Nicaraguan National Guard Chief of Staff
- Fernandez Holman, Ernesto**, Manager of Banco de America
- Ferre, Maurice**, Mayor of Miami
- Fiallos, Mariano Francisco**, Nicaragua National University Rector; Chief, North American Division, Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry
- Figueres Ferrer, Jose, "Pepe,"** 32nd, 34th, and 38th President of Costa Rica,
- Flanegin, Robert L.**, Director, Office of Narcotic Control, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Fletcher, Edward N.**, Colonel, Defense Attaché in Guatemala
- Flores, Carlos**, Liberal Party of Honduras

Flores, Ulises, Salvadoran right-wing politician

Fraser, Donald McKay, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Minnesota); Chair of the Subcommittee on International Organizations

Fulbright, James William, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Arkansas) from 1943 until 1945; Senator (D-Arkansas) from 1945 until 1974

Gamero, Manuel, Editor of the Honduran newspaper *El Tiempo*

Garcia Merino, Jose Guillermo, Colonel; Salvadoran Minister of Defense and Public Security from October 1979

Garcia Bedoya, Carlos, Peruvian Ambassador from 1976 until 1979; Foreign Minister of Peru in 1979

Gates, Robert M., Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from April 1979 until December 1979

Gelb, Leslie H., Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs from February 23, 1977, until June 30, 1979

Genie, Samuel, General; Nicaraguan Chief of Intelligence in 1977; Minister of Finance from 1977 until 1979

Gerardi, Juan, Bishop of Quiche Diocese, Guatemala

Gilligan, John J., Administrator of the Agency for International Development from March 30, 1977, until March 31, 1979

Giron Lemus, Roberto, Guatemalan Secretary of Public Relations

Goldberg, Arthur J., U.S. Ambassador at Large and U.S. Representative to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Chairman of the U.S. Delegation from September 23, 1977, until July 27, 1978

Goldwater, Barry, Senator (R-Arizona); Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Gomez Vides, Alejandro, Salvadoran Sub-Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Gonzalez, Raymond Emmanuel, U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador from July 31, 1978

Gonzalez Revilla, Nicolas, Panamanian Minister of Foreign Relations, Democratic Revolutionary Party Secretary General

Gonzalez, Rodrigo "Rory", Colonel, Panamanian Deputy Commander of National Guard

Graham, Richard "Dick", Alternate Director of the Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from December 1976; International Relations Officer from September 1979; Director of the Office of Human Rights from June 1980

Gregg, Donald, Intelligence Coordinator, National Security Council, from May 1979 until January 1981; East Asia and China Affairs, National Security Council, from January 1980 until January 1981

Grove, Brandon H., Acting Inspector General of the Department of State and the Foreign Service from May 1978 until July 1978; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs

Guerra y Guerra, Rene, Salvadoran Lieutenant Colonel

Guerra, Carlos Enrique, Costa Rican owner of an air transport company

Guerrero, Orlando, Brigadier General, Nicaraguan National Guard

Gutierrez, Jaime Abdul, Colonel; Vice President of the Revolutionary Governing Junta of El Salvador; Commander of the Armed Forces

Gutierrez, Julio, General, Nicaraguan Ambassador to Japan

Guzman, Antonio, President of the Dominican Republic

Guzman, Ralph, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from October 1978

Habib, Philip C., Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from July 1, 1976, until April 1, 1978; Secretary of State ad interim from January 20, 1977, until January 23, 1977

- Hall, George E.**, U.K. Assistant Under Secretary of State
- Hammer, Michael**, American Institute for Free Labor Development official
- Harding, Bill**, Latin America Director, U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Harrison, Lawrence E.**, Agency for International Development Mission Director in Nicaragua from September 1979
- Hassan Morales, Moises**, Member of Nicaraguan Provisional Junta
- Healey, Timothy**, President of Georgetown University
- Heaton, Edward**, Defense Intelligence Agency Analyst
- Heavner, Theodore "Ted"**, Director, Office of Operations and Policy, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from August 1977
- Helms, Jesse**, Senator (R-North Carolina)
- Hemenway, Brewster R.**, Director, Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from January 1979 until July 1980
- Hennessey, James**, U.K. Governor of Belize
- Henze, Paul**, Intelligence Coordinator, National Security Council, from January 1977 until December 1980
- Hernandez Sanchez, Plutarco**, Sandinista National Liberation Front leader
- Herrera, Diaz, Lt. Colonel**, Panamanian Executive Secretary of the National Guard, Torrijos' cousin
- Herrera Campins, Luis**, President of Venezuela
- Hervas, Anthony**, Interpreter, Department of State
- Hollings, Ernest Frederick**, Senator (D-South Carolina)
- Holman, Carlos**, Director of *La Prensa*
- Howard, Richard B.**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, from February 1979 until February 1980
- Huntington, Samuel P.**, National Security Planning, National Security Council, from February 1977 until August 1978
- Hutcheson, Richard "Rick", III**, White House Staff Secretary
- Huyser, Robert E.**, General, USAF; Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, from September 1, 1975 until 1979
- Inderfurth, Karl "Rick", F.**, Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from January 1977 until April 1979
- Iraheta, Jose Eduardo**, Colonel, Salvadoran Sub-Secretary of Defense
- Irving, Frederick**, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs from April 28, 1976, until March 26, 1977; Ambassador to Jamaica
- Jamieson, Don**, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs from September 14, 1976, until June 3, 1979
- Jaramillo, Mari Luci**, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras from 1977 until 1980; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
- Jayne, Randy**, Defense Coordinator, National Security Council, from January 1977 until May 1977; Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs, Office of Management and Budget
- Jimenez Castro, Francisco Salomon**, President of the Honduran Supreme Court
- Jimenez Reyes, Ramon Emilio**, Vice Admiral, Dominican Republic Foreign Minister; Chairman of the Commission for Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation (Negotiating Group for Nicaragua)
- Jerez, Alvaro**, Nicaraguan Democratic Movement official; member of *Frente Amplio* representing Robelo
- Johnson, Donald Crandall**, International Relations Officer, National Security Council, from August 1976

Johnson, James H., Brigadier General, USA; Deputy Director, Current Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Jones, David C., General, USAF; Chief of Staff, United States Air Force from July 1, 1974, until June 20, 1978; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, from June 21, 1978, until June 18, 1982

Jordan, Hamilton, Assistant to the President from 1977 until 1979; thereafter White House Chief of Staff until May 1980

Jorden, William J., U.S. Ambassador to Panama from April 17, 1974, until August 25, 1978

Kennedy, Edward, Senator (D-Massachusetts)

Kimmitt, Robert, Legal Counsel, National Security Council, from August 1978 until January 1981

Knoche, Enno Henry, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from July 7, 1976, until August 1, 1977

Koch, Edward Irving "Ed", member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York); Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations

Komer, Robert W., Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from October 24, 1979, until January 20, 1981

Kramer, Frank, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

Kreisberg, Paul H., Deputy Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, from April 1977

Kreps, Juanita, Secretary of Commerce from January 23, 1977, until October 31, 1979

Kux, Dennis, Counselor of Political Affairs in Ankara from August 1978; Foreign Affairs Coordinating Officer from July 1980; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Coordination, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State from October 1980

Lacayo Debayle, Rene, Nicaraguan businessman and first cousin of Somoza; Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States

Lake, W. Anthony, Director of Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, from January 21, 1977, until January 20, 1981

Lamport-Rodil, Jorge, Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States in 1978

Landau, George W., U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay from October 13, 1972, until October 14, 1977; U.S. Ambassador to Chile from October 15, 1977

Lanusse, Alejandro A., General; President of Argentina from 1971 until 1973

Larga Espada Baez, Fulcencio, Lt. Col., Chief of Staff of the Nicaraguan National Guard

Larios, Bernardo, Lt. Col., FSLN Air Force Commander, ex-Nicaraguan National Guard officer

Laugerud García, Kjell Eugenio, President of Guatemala until July 1978

Laugerud, Helen Losi, Wife of Guatemalan President Laugerud

Lazarus, Roberto, U.S. Ambassador of Honduras from 1977 until 1978

Lefko, Len L., staff member, International Communication Agency

Lemus, Giron, Guatemalan Secretary of Public Relations

Lewis, Gabriel, former Panamanian Ambassador to the United States

Lievano Aguirre, Indalecio, Columbian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1974 until 1978

Lindo, Dean, Belizean politician (United Democratic Party of Belize)

Linowitz, Sol Myron, President's Personal Representative on Panama Canal Treaties

Lleras Camargo, Alberto, President of Colombia from 1958 until 1962

Long, Clarence, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Maryland); Chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee

Lopez Contreras, Carlos, Honduran Vice Foreign Minister

Lopez Portillo, Jose, President of Mexico from December 1976 until November 1982

- Lozano, Ignacio E.**, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from August 31, 1976, until June 1, 1977
- Lubensky, Earl Henry**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, from July 1976 until March 1977
- Lucas Garcia, Fernando Romeo**, Major General, President of Guatemala from July 1978 until March 1982
- Lucey, Patrick Joseph**, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico from 1977 until 1979
- Luers, William Henry**, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs; U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela from October 9, 1978
- Lugar, Richard Green**, Senator (R-Indiana)
- Macdonald, Donald G.**, Assistant Administrator for Program Management, Agency for International Development, from June 1977
- Mack, James**, International Relations Officer, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from September 1979
- Majano Ramos, Adolfo Arnoldo**, Colonel; Member of the Salvadoran ruling Junta from October 15, 1979
- Maldonado, Abundio**, Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States in 1977
- Manley, Michael**, Prime Minister of Jamaica from March 2, 1972, until November 1, 1980; Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1972 until 1977
- Mansfield, Michael Joseph**, U.S. Ambassador to Japan from May 1977
- Marin, Munoz**, Colonel, Costa Rican Civil Guard Chief
- Marks, Lee**, Principal Deputy Legal Advisor, Department of State, from October 1977
- Martinez, Nelson**, Propaganda/Press/Radio section of the Tercerio Faction Sandinista National Liberation Front
- Martinez, Praxedes**, Director of Honduran Central Bank
- Martinez Zepeda, Alvaro Ernesto**, Salvadoran Minister of Foreign Relations from July 1977
- Matheny John**, Office of the Vice President
- Matthews, Wade Hampton Bynum**, Director of the Office of Central American Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from May 1977 until August 1979; Principal Officer in Guayaquil from July 1980
- Mayorga Quiroz, Roman**, Rector of the Salvadoran Jose Simeon Canas Central American University; Member of the Revolutionary Governing Junta of El Salvador;
- McAfee, William**, Deputy Director for Intelligence and Research Coordination, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from August 1973; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence Coordination from March 1980; Director of the Office of Intelligence Liaison from October 1980
- McAuliffe, Dennis P.**, General, USA; Commander in Chief, Southern Command, from July 1975 until 1979
- McCall, Richard Lee, Jr.**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs from June 10, 1980, until January 21, 1981
- McEntee, Peter Donovan**, Governor of Belize
- McGee, Gale W.**, United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States from March 30, 1977, until May 27, 1981
- McGiffert, David E.**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs from April 4, 1977 until January 20, 1981
- McIntyre, James T.**, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and the Budget in 1977; Director from March 24, 1978, until January 20, 1981
- McMahon, John**, Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency
- McNeil, Francis "Frank" J.**, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica from 1980
- Medrano, Luis**, Nicaraguan Secretary General of the AIFLD-Affiliated Confederation of Labor Unification

- Mein, John Gordon**, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala from 1965 until 1968.
- Mejia, Federico**, Colonel, Commander of the Nicaraguan National Guard after Somoza's departure
- Melendez, Carlos Eduardo**, Colonel, Salvadoran Chief of Armed Forces General Staff
- Melgar Castro, Juan Alberto**, Brigadier General; President of Honduras until August 1978
- Mendieta Herdocia, Constantino Alberto**, Lieutenant Colonel, Nicaraguan National Guard
- Mendoza, Valentín de Jesús**, Honduran Secretary of State for Finance and Public Credit
- Mendoza Palomo, Luis Rene**, Brigadier General, Chief of Staff of the Guatemalan Army
- Menges, Constantine**, Consultant to the National Security Council
- Meyer, Edward C.**, General, USA; Chief of Staff, United States Army, from June 22, 1979, until June 21, 1983
- Midence Soto, Ricardo**, Honduran Ambassador to the United States
- Middleton, Jim**, White House Staff
- Mikulski, Barbara**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Maryland); member of Congressional Delegation to Honduras
- Miller, G. William**, Chairman of the Federal Reserve from March 1978 until August 1979; thereafter Secretary of the Treasury until January 20, 1981
- Millington, Joe**, U.K. First Secretary, British Embassy
- Mohr, Alberto Fuentes**, Leader of the Guatemalan Social Democratic Party.
- Mojica, Inocente Otto**, Colonel, Nicaraguan National Guard
- Molina-Orantes, Adolfo**, Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1974 until 1978
- Molina, Roque**, Salvadoran Colonel
- Molina, Arturo Armando**, President of El Salvador from 1972 until 1977
- Moncada Lau, Nestor**, Deputy Chief of Security Services, Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction
- Mondale, Walter F.**, Vice President of the United States
- Montalvan Batres, Hector**, Colonel, Guatemalan Army and adviser to Lucas
- Montealegre, Eduardo**, Nicaraguan banker
- Montealegre, Enrique**, Costa Rican Minister of Public Security
- Montenegro, Orlando**, National District Minister and delegate to the *Frente Amplio*-Liberal Party of Nicaragua talks under Negotiating Group auspices
- Monterroso, Felipe Doroteo**, General; Guatemalan Ambassador from 1979 until 1981
- Mora, Antonio**, Nicaraguan Minister of Government
- Morales Bermudez, Francisco**, President of Peru from 1975 until 1980
- Morales Erlich, Jose Antonio**, Secretary General of the Salvadoran Christian Democrats; Member of the Revolutionary Governing Junta; Director of Agrarian Reform
- Moran, Francisco**, Salvadoran Treasury Police Commander
- Moreno, Alberto**, Lieutenant Colonel in Nicaraguan National Guard
- Morris, Diana**, Office of Research and Analysis for American Republics, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Moss, Ambler Holmes**, U.S. Ambassador to Panama from 1978
- Murphy, John**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York); Chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee
- Muskie, Edmund S.**, Senator (D-Maine) from January 3, 1959, until May 7, 1980; Chairman of the Budget Committee from 1973 until 1980; Secretary of State from May 8, 1980, until January 20, 1981
- Nalle, Beauveau B.**, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate in Belize, from April 1978 until January 1981
- Neslin, Michael H.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Multilateral Affairs from January 1980; Acting Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs from April 1980

Newsom, David D., U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia from February 27, 1974, until October 6, 1977; Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from April 19, 1978, until February 27, 1981

Niehaus, Bernd, Costa Rican Vice Foreign Minister

Nooter, Robert Harry, Acting Deputy Administrator, Agency for International Development, from March 1977; Deputy Administrator from July 1977

Nutting, Wallace, Lieutenant General, USA; Chief of Southern Command

Obando y Bravo, Miguel, Archbishop of Nicaragua

Obiols, Alfredo Gomez, Acting Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs; member of the OAS Commission for Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation (Negotiating Group for Nicaragua)

Odom, William E., Lieutenant General, USA; Military Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 1977 until January 1981

O'Donnell, Thomas J., Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Managua, from July 1977 until October 1979

Oduber, Daniel, President of Costa Rica from 1974 until 1978

O'Malley, Edward J., Assistant Director, Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Oqueli, Hector, Under Secretary of Foreign Relations of El Salvador

Orantes, Cesar A., Economic Counselor, Guatemalan Embassy

Orellana Solis, Octavio, Salvadoran Minister of Agriculture

Orfila, Alejandro, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States from May 18, 1975, until March 31, 1984

Ortega Saavedra, Daniel, Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua National Directorate Member; Member of Nicaraguan Provisional Junta; Member of Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction

Ortega Saavedra, Humberto, Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua National Directorate member

Ortiz, Francis "Frank" Vincent, U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and Grenada from July 1977; U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala from June 1979

Owen, Henry David, Special Representative for Economic Summits, National Security Council, from 1977 until January 1981; Ambassador at Large and Coordinator for Economic Summit Affairs from October 20, 1978, until January 21, 1981

Oxman, Stephen, Special Assistant, Office of the Deputy Secretary of State

Padilla, Pedro, Dominican Republic Sub-Secretary; Assistant to Jimenez on the NG

Padilla, Granera, Nicaraguan Senator, assassinated by Sandinista National Liberation Front in 1978

Padron, Jose Luis, Cuban official

Pallais Debayle, Luis, Cousin of Nicaraguan President Somoza; Director of *Novedades* and Liberal Party Spokesperson

Palma Galvez, Roberto, Colonel, Honduran Minister of Foreign Relations

Pastor, Robert, Latin America and Caribbean Affairs, National Security Council, from 1977 until January 1981

Pastora Gomez, Eden, Tercerio Faction Sandinista National Liberation Front Commander, "Commandante Zero"

Patterson, Percival J., Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Tourism until 1980; Deputy Prime Minister in 1980

Paz Garcia, Policarpo, Brigadier General; Honduran Armed Forces Commander in Chief; Honduran President from August 1978

Pearlman, Mark, American Institute for Free Labor Development official

Pellas, Alfredo, Nicaraguan businessman

- Peralta Mendez, Ricardo**, General; Guatemalan Christian Democratic Presidential Candidate
- Perez, Carlos Andres**, President of Venezuela until March 1979
- Perez Cadalso, Eliseo**, Honduran Foreign Minister from July 1979 until August 15, 1980.
- Perez Jimenez, Marcos**, President of Venezuela from 1952 until 1958
- Perry, Jack**, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State from August 1978; U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria from October 1979
- Pezzullo, Lawrence**, U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay from 1977 until 1979; U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua from 1979
- Pfeifle, Linda**, Office of Security Assistance and Sales, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State
- Pinochet Ugarte, Augusto**, General; Chairman of the Chilean Military Junta from September 11, 1973, until 1981
- Plaza Lasso, Galo**, Ecuadorian President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal; President of Ecuador from 1948 until 1952; Organization of American States Secretary General from 1968 until 1975
- Poats, Rutherford**, International Economics Affairs, National Security Council, from September 1978 until January 1981
- Ponce de Leon, Rodolfo**, Argentine national
- Poveda Burbano, Alfredo**, Vice Admiral, Ecuadorian President of the Supreme Council of Government
- Prendes, Ray**, Salvadoran Christian Democratic Party Secretary General
- Price, George Cadle**, Belizean Premier and Minister of Finance
- Pustay, John**, Lieutenant General, USAF; Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Quintana, Julio**, Foreign Minister of Nicaragua and delegate to *Frente Amplio*-Liberal Party of Nicaragua talks under Negotiating Group auspices
- Quinonez Mesa, Roberto**, Salvadoran Ambassador to the United States in 1978
- Ramos, Pedro**, U.S. citizen indicted for the murder of P.J. Chamorro
- Reagan, Ronald**, U.S. President-elect
- Reboso, Manuel**, Vice Mayor of Miami
- Reinhardt, John E.**, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs from April 22, 1975, until March, 22, 1977; Director of the Information Agency—renamed International Communications Agency on April 1, 1978—from March 23, 1977, until August 29, 1980
- Rener, Pablo**, President of the Nicaraguan Senate until July 1979
- Renfrew, Charles**, Deputy Attorney General
- Resor, Stanley**, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Revilla, Gonzalez**, Panamanian Foreign Minister
- Reyes, Ismael**, Nicaraguan Red Cross President
- Reyes, Jose Eduardo**, Salvadoran Minister of Planning
- Reina Idiaquez, Jorge Arturo**, Dean of the National Autonomous University of Honduras until 1979
- Ridley, Nicholas**, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Rivas Gasteazoro, Noel**, Legal Advisor to the *Frente Amplio* Political Committee; Nicaraguan Minister of Industry and Commerce
- Rivas, Rafael Cordova**, Nicaraguan Union of Democratic Liberation and *Frente Amplio* leader
- Rivera Lopez, Mario**, National Party of Honduras
- Rixse, Jay**, member, National Security Council Staff
- Robelo Callejas, Alfonso**, Nicaraguan businessman and founder of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement; Member of Nicaraguan Provisional Junta

Robertson, W.D., Rear Admiral, Vice Director for Operations, Defense Intelligence Agency

Rodriguez Porth, Jose Antonio, Salvadoran Foreign Minister

Roel García, Santiago, Mexican Foreign Minister

Rogers, William "Bill", former Under Secretary and Co-Leader of the Special Presidential Mission to El Salvador

Rojas Paredas, Armando Leonidas, General; Salvadoran Minister of Interior

Roldos, Jaime, President of Ecuador

Romero Mena, Carlos Humberto, Salvadoran General and President from July 1977

Romero, Oscar Arnulfo, Roman Catholic Archbishop of El Salvador

Rondon, Fernando, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, from July 1978 until September 1980

Rosenberg, Robert, Intelligence Coordinator, National Security Council, from January 1977 until March 1980

Rowlands, Edward, U.K. Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Deputy Foreign Minister

Royo, Aristides, President of Panama

Rusk, Dean, Former Secretary of State

Sacasa, Ramiro, Nicaraguan Constitutionalist Liberal Movement member

Salamin, Marcel, Torrijos's Political Adviser

Salazar Brenes, Alvaro, Salvadoran former Air Force Major

Sanchez, Heberto, General; Nicaraguan Minister of Defense

Sancho Sanchez, Luis, Member of the *Frente Amplio* and National Socialist Party

Sanders, Edward, Deputy Associate Director for International Affairs/ Assistant Director for National Security and International Affairs, Office of Management and Budget

Sandino, Rene, Party of National Conciliation leader

Sapia-Bosch, Al, National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency

Sarbanes, Paul Spiros, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Maryland)

Schneider, Mark, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from April 1977

Schuller, Gordon, Admiral; Director, Inter-American Region Department of Defense

Schweitzer, Robert L. Major General, USA; Director of Strategy Plans and Policy, U.S. Army

Sevilla Sacasa, Guillermo, Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States from 1977 until 1979

Shelton, Sally Angela, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from August 1977 until April 1979

Shelton, Turner Blair, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua from 1970 until 1975

Shoman, Assad, Belizean Attorney General

Shuler, Robert Lee, Counselor for Economic and Commercial Affairs in Guatemala

Silva, Rodolfo, Costa Rican Ambassador from 1977 until 1978

Sinn, Melvin, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Guatemala City from August 1980 until September 1981

Skinner-Klee, Jorge, Former Guatemalan Foreign Minister

Smart, William, Operations Coordinator, U.S. Embassy in San Salvador

Smith, Carl, R., Brigadier General, USAF; Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense

Smith, Norman Shaw, Deputy Director of the Office of Policy Planning for Public and Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from July 1977; International Relations Officer from October 1979 until February 1980

Smith, William Y., Lieutenant General, USAF; Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Soluan, Mauricio, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua from September 1977 until February 1979

- Solomon, Anthony**, Under Secretary of the Treasury
- Somoza Debayle, Anastasio**, President of Nicaragua until July 1979
- Somoza, Jose R.**, Inspector General, Nicaraguan National Guard; President Somoza's brother
- Somoza Portocarrero, Anastasio "Tachito"**, Commander, Infantry Basic Training School, Nicaraguan National Guard; Son of Nicaraguan President
- Somoza Portocarrero, Hope**, President of the Nicaraguan National Institute of Social Security; Wife of Nicaraguan President Somoza
- Spadafora, Hugo**, Former Panamanian Minister of Health
- Spiers, Ronald I.**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in London, from 1974 until 1977; Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research from January 28, 1980, until October 4, 1981
- Spreti, Carl von**, Federal Republic of Germany Ambassador to Guatemala
- Squire, William**, U.K. First Secretary, British Embassy; Counselor
- Starrs, Francis R.**, Alternate Representative to the Organization of American States from August 1978
- Stedman, William Perry Jr.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from June 1977
- Stockman, Charles James Jr.**, Deputy Mission Director, U.S. Embassy in La Paz, Agency for International Development, from September 1977; Regional Development Officer from July 1978
- Stoddard, Philip**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Current Analysis, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, from July 1980
- Stroessner, Alfredo**, President of Paraguay
- Studds, Gerry Eastman**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Massachusetts); Member of Congressional Delegation to Honduras
- Suazo Cordoba, Roberto**, Liberal Party of Honduras leader
- Swett, Ted**, Colonel, USA; Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Defense Board; U.S. Military Group Commander in Nicaragua
- Tablada Solis, Alcedo**, delegate to *Frente Amplio*-Liberal Party of Nicaragua talks under Negotiating Group auspices; Nicaraguan Ambassador-designate
- Taraki, Nur Muhammad**, Prime Minister of Afghanistan from 1978 until 1979
- Tarnoff, Peter**, Executive Secretary of the Department of State from April 1977 until February 1981
- Tefel Velez, Reynaldo Antonio**, Nicaraguan member of the *Frente Amplio* Political Committee; Nicaraguan Director of Social Security Institute
- Tighe, Eugene**, Lieutenant General, USAF; Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency
- Tirado Lopez, Manuel Victor**, Member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front National Directorate
- Tito, Josip Broz**, President of Yugoslavia until May 4, 1980
- Theberge, James D.**, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua from August 11, 1975, until June 8, 1977
- Thornton, Thomas**, South Asia and United Nations Matters, National Security Council, from 1977 until January 1981
- Todman, Terence A.**, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica from March 17, 1975, until January 24, 1977; Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from April 1, 1977, until June 27, 1978
- Torres Arias, Leonidas**, Lieutenant Colonel, Member of the Honduran Superior Defense Council; Chief of Honduran Military Intelligence
- Torrijos Herrera, Omar**, Brigadier General, Commander of the Panamanian National Guard; Chief of Government from October 11, 1972, until October 11, 1978
- Trujillo, Rafael**, President of the Dominican Republic from 1942 until 1954

Tucker, Frank Mayer, Jr., Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy to Nicaragua, from April 1978 until July 1979

Tunnerman Bernheim, Carlos, Leader of the *Frente Amplio*; Member of the Group of 12; Nicaraguan Minister of Education

Turbay Ayala, Julio Cesar, President of Colombia from August 1978 until August 1982

Turner, Stansfield, Admiral, USN; Director of Central Intelligence from March 9, 1977, until January 20, 1981

Ungo Revelo, Guillermo Manuel, President of the Revolutionary Democratic Front from December 1980; Member of the Revolutionary Governing Junta of El Salvador

Urcuyo Maliaon, Francisco, Nicaraguan Congressman of Liberal Party; Interim President of Nicaragua in July 1979

Uribe Vargas, Diego, Colombian Foreign Minister

Urquia, Miguel Raphael, Salvadoran Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Vaky, Viron P. "Pete", U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela from July 26, 1976, until June 24, 1978; Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from July 21, 1978, until November 30, 1979

Valdez, Abelardo, Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Agency for International Development; Chief of Protocol, Department of State, from October 19, 1979, until January 21, 1981

Valle Salinas, Nicolas, Colonel; Chief of Police in Managua

Vance, Cyrus, Secretary of State from January 23, 1977, until April 20, 1980

Videla, Jorge Rafael, Brigadier General; Chairman of the Argentinean Military Junta and President of Argentina from March 24, 1976, until March 29, 1981

Vides Casanova, Carlos Eugenio, Colonel; Director of the Salvadoran National Guard

Viera, Rodolfo, Director of the Salvadoran Agrarian Reform Agency

Villagran Kramer, Francisco, Vice President of Guatemala from 1978 until 1980

Villaluz, Ascanio, Panamanian Assistant Secretary General of the Revolutionary Party (Dominican Republic)

Walker, Gerald, Lieutenant Colonel; Defense Attaché, U.S. Embassy in San Salvador

Warne, W. Robert, Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State

Webster, William H., Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation from February 23, 1978 until 1987

Weissman, Marvin, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica from 1977 until 1980; U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia from 1980

Welter, Daniel R., International Relations Officer, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, from June 1977 until December 1979

Wheelock Roman, Jaime, Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua National Directorate member; Nicaraguan Minister of Agricultural Development

White, Robert Edward, U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay from 1977 until 1980; U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from 1980 until 1981

Wickham, John A., Jr., Lieutenant General, USA; Acting Director, Joint Chiefs of Staff, from August 22, 1978, to June 22, 1979

Williams, Eric Eustace, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago

Wilson, Charlie, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Texas)

Wise, Phil, Appointments Secretary to President Carter

Winstanley, Ralph II, Regional Political Program, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State

Wright, James Claude Jr. "Jim," member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Texas)

Wunderlich, Julio Asenio, Former Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States

Yanes, Federico Castillo, Salvadoran Foreign Minister; thereafter Minister of Defense

Yatron, Gus, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Pennsylvania)

Yepez Boscan, Guillermo, Venezuelan Ambassador to Nicaragua

Young, Andrew, United States Representative to the United Nations from January 30, 1977, until August 15, 1979

Zambrano Velasco, Jose Alberto, Foreign Minister of Venezuela

Zamora, David, Deputy in the Nicaraguan Liberal Party

Zamora Rivas, Mario, Salvadoran politician with the Christian Democratic Party

Zeron Pepiton, Carlos Manuel, Honduran Minister of the Economy

Zorinsky, Edward, Senator (D-Nebraska)

Zuniga, Ricardo, Honduran National Party leader

Note on U.S. Covert Actions

In compliance with the *Foreign Relations of the United States* statute that requires inclusion in the *Foreign Relations* series of comprehensive documentation on major foreign policy decisions and actions, the editors have identified key documents regarding major covert actions and intelligence activities. The following note will provide readers with some organizational context on how covert actions and special intelligence operations in support of U.S. foreign policy were planned and approved within the U.S. Government. It describes, on the basis of declassified documents, the changing and developing procedures during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter Presidencies.

Management of Covert Actions in the Truman Presidency

The Truman administration's concern over Soviet "psychological warfare" prompted the new National Security Council to authorize, in NSC 4-A of December 1947, the launching of peacetime covert action operations. NSC 4-A made the Director of Central Intelligence responsible for psychological warfare, establishing at the same time the principle that covert action was an exclusively Executive Branch function. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) certainly was a natural choice but it was assigned this function at least in part because the Agency controlled unvouchered funds, by which operations could be funded with minimal risk of exposure in Washington.¹

The CIA's early use of its new covert action mandate dissatisfied officials at the Departments of State and Defense. The Department of State, believing this role too important to be left to the CIA alone and concerned that the military might create a new rival covert action office in the Pentagon, pressed to reopen the issue of where responsibility for covert action activities should reside. Consequently, on June 18, 1948, a new NSC directive, NSC 10/2, superseded NSC 4-A.

NSC 10/2 directed the CIA to conduct "covert" rather than merely "psychological" operations, defining them as all activities "which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if un-

¹ NSC 4-A, December 17, 1947, is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, Document 257.

covered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.”

The type of clandestine activities enumerated under the new directive included: “propaganda; economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberations [*sic*] groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. Such operations should not include armed conflict by recognized military forces, espionage, counter-espionage, and cover and deception for military operations.”²

The Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), newly established in the CIA on September 1, 1948, in accordance with NSC 10/2, assumed responsibility for organizing and managing covert actions. The OPC, which was to take its guidance from the Department of State in peacetime and from the military in wartime, initially had direct access to the State Department and to the military without having to proceed through the CIA’s administrative hierarchy, provided the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) was informed of all important projects and decisions.³ In 1950 this arrangement was modified to ensure that policy guidance came to the OPC through the DCI.

During the Korean conflict the OPC grew quickly. Wartime commitments and other missions soon made covert action the most expensive and bureaucratically prominent of the CIA’s activities. Concerned about this situation, DCI Walter Bedell Smith in early 1951 asked the NSC for enhanced policy guidance and a ruling on the proper “scope and magnitude” of CIA operations. The White House responded with two initiatives. In April 1951 President Truman created the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) under the NSC to coordinate government-wide psychological warfare strategy. NSC 10/5, issued in October 1951, reaffirmed the covert action mandate given in NSC 10/2 and expanded the CIA’s authority over guerrilla warfare.⁴ The PSB was soon abolished by the incoming Eisenhower administration, but the expansion of the CIA’s covert action writ in NSC 10/5 helped ensure that covert action would remain a major function of the Agency.

As the Truman administration ended, the CIA was near the peak of its independence and authority in the field of covert action. Although the CIA continued to seek and receive advice on specific proj-

² NSC 10/2, June 18, 1948, is printed *ibid.*, Document 292.

³ Memorandum of conversation by Frank G. Wisner, “Implementation of NSC-10/2,” August 12, 1948, is printed *ibid.*, Document 298.

⁴ NSC 10/5, “Scope and Pace of Covert Operations,” October 23, 1951, is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community*, Document 90.

ects from the NSC, the PSB, and the departmental representatives originally delegated to advise the OPC, no group or officer outside of the DCI and the President himself had authority to order, approve, manage, or curtail operations.

NSC 5412 Special Group; 5412/2 Special Group; 303 Committee

The Eisenhower administration began narrowing the CIA's latitude in 1954. In accordance with a series of National Security Council directives, the responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence for the conduct of covert operations was further clarified. President Eisenhower approved NSC 5412 on March 15, 1954, reaffirming the Central Intelligence Agency's responsibility for conducting covert actions abroad. A definition of covert actions was set forth; the DCI was made responsible for coordinating with designated representatives of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that covert operations were planned and conducted in a manner consistent with U.S. foreign and military policies; and the Operations Coordinating Board was designated the normal channel for coordinating support for covert operations among State, Defense, and the CIA. Representatives of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President were to be advised in advance of major covert action programs initiated by the CIA under this policy and were to give policy approval for such programs and secure coordination of support among the Departments of State and Defense and the CIA.⁵

A year later, on March 12, 1955, NSC 5412/1 was issued, identical to NSC 5412 except for designating the Planning Coordination Group as the body responsible for coordinating covert operations. NSC 5412/2 of December 28, 1955, assigned to representatives (of the rank of assistant secretary) of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President responsibility for coordinating covert actions. By the end of the Eisenhower administration, this group, which became known as the "NSC 5412/2 Special Group" or simply "Special Group," emerged as the executive body to review and approve covert action programs initiated by the CIA.⁶ The membership of the Special Group varied depending upon the situation faced. Meetings were infrequent until 1959 when weekly meetings began to be held. Neither the CIA nor the Special Group adopted fixed criteria for bringing projects before the

⁵ William M. Leary, editor, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents* (The University of Alabama Press, 1984), p. 63; for text of NSC 5412, see *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community*, Document 171.

⁶ Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, pp. 63, 147–148; *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate*, Book I, *Foreign and Military Intelligence* (1976), pp. 50–51. For texts of NSC 5412/1 and NSC 5412/2, see *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community*, Documents 212 and 250.

group; initiative remained with the CIA, as members representing other agencies frequently were unable to judge the feasibility of particular projects.⁷

After the Bay of Pigs failure in April 1961, General Maxwell Taylor reviewed U.S. paramilitary capabilities at President Kennedy's request and submitted a report in June that recommended strengthening high-level direction of covert operations. As a result of the Taylor Report, the Special Group, chaired by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy, and including Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman Lemnitzer, assumed greater responsibility for planning and reviewing covert operations. Until 1963 the DCI determined whether a CIA-originated project was submitted to the Special Group. In 1963 the Special Group developed general but informal criteria, including risk, possibility of success, potential for exposure, political sensitivity, and cost (a threshold of \$25,000 was adopted by the CIA), for determining whether covert action projects were submitted to the Special Group.⁸

From November 1961 to October 1962 a Special Group (Augmented), whose membership was the same as the Special Group plus Attorney General Robert Kennedy and General Taylor (as Chairman), exercised responsibility for Operation Mongoose, a major covert action program aimed at overthrowing the Castro regime in Cuba. When President Kennedy authorized the program in November, he designated Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale, Assistant for Special Operations to the Secretary of Defense, to act as chief of operations, and Lansdale coordinated the Mongoose activities among the CIA and the Departments of State and Defense. The CIA units in Washington and Miami had primary responsibility for implementing Mongoose operations, which included military, sabotage, and political propaganda programs.⁹

President Kennedy also established a Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) on January 18, 1962, when he signed NSAM No. 124. The Special Group (CI), set up to coordinate counter-insurgency activities separate from the mechanism for implementing NSC 5412/2, was to confine itself to establishing broad policies aimed at preventing and resisting subversive insurgency and other forms of indirect aggression in friendly countries. In early 1966, in NSAM No. 341, President Johnson

⁷ Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, p. 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁹ See *Foreign Relations, 1961–1963*, volume X, Cuba, 1961–1962, Documents 270 and 278.

assigned responsibility for the direction and coordination of counter-insurgency activities overseas to the Secretary of State, who established a Senior Interdepartmental Group to assist in discharging these responsibilities.¹⁰

NSAM No. 303, June 2, 1964, from Bundy to the Secretaries of State and Defense and the DCI, changed the name of “Special Group 5412” to “303 Committee” but did not alter its composition, functions, or responsibility. Bundy was the chairman of the 303 Committee.¹¹

The Special Group and the 303 Committee approved 163 covert actions during the Kennedy administration and 142 during the Johnson administration through February 1967. The 1976 Final Report of the Church Committee, however, estimated that of the several thousand projects undertaken by the CIA since 1961, only 14 percent were considered on a case-by-case basis by the 303 Committee and its predecessors (and successors). Those not reviewed by the 303 Committee were low-risk and low-cost operations. The Final Report also cited a February 1967 CIA memorandum that included a description of the mode of policy arbitration of decisions on covert actions within the 303 Committee system. The CIA presentations were questioned, amended, and even on occasion denied, despite protests from the DCI. Department of State objections modified or nullified proposed operations, and the 303 Committee sometimes decided that some agency other than the CIA should undertake an operation or that CIA actions requested by Ambassadors on the scene should be rejected.¹²

The effectiveness of covert action has always been difficult for any administration to gauge, given concerns about security and the difficulty of judging the impact of U.S. initiatives on events. In October 1969 the new Nixon administration required annual 303 Committee reviews for all covert actions that the Committee had approved and automatic termination of any operation not reviewed after 12 months. On February 17, 1970, President Nixon signed National Security Decision Memorandum 40,¹³ which superseded NSC 5412/2 and changed the name of the covert action approval group to the 40 Committee, in part because the 303 Committee had been named in the media. The Attorney General was also added to the membership of the Committee. NSDM 40

¹⁰ For text of NSAM No. 124, see *ibid.*, volume VIII, National Security Policy, Document 68. NSAM No. 341, March 2, 1966, is printed *ibid.*, 1964–1968, volume XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy; United Nations, Document 56.

¹¹ For text of NSAM No. 303, see *ibid.*, Document 204.

¹² *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities*, United States Senate, Book I, *Foreign and Military Intelligence*, pp. 56–57.

¹³ For text of NSDM 40, see *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969–1972, Document 203.

reaffirmed the DCI's responsibility for the coordination, control, and conduct of covert operations and directed him to obtain policy approval from the 40 Committee for all major and "politically sensitive" covert operations. He was also made responsible for ensuring an annual review by the 40 Committee of all approved covert operations.

The 40 Committee met regularly early in the Nixon administration, but over time the number of formal meetings declined and business came to be conducted via couriers and telephone votes. The Committee actually met only for major new proposals. As required, the DCI submitted annual status reports to the 40 Committee for each approved operation. According to the 1976 Church Committee Final Report, the 40 Committee considered only about 25 percent of the CIA's individual covert action projects, concentrating on major projects that provided broad policy guidelines for all covert actions. Congress received briefings on only a few proposed projects. Not all major operations, moreover, were brought before the 40 Committee: President Nixon in 1970 instructed the DCI to promote a coup d'etat against Chilean President Salvador Allende without Committee coordination or approval.¹⁴

Presidential Findings Since 1974 and the Operations Advisory Group

The Hughes-Ryan amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 brought about a major change in the way the U.S. Government approved covert actions, requiring explicit approval by the President for each action and expanding Congressional oversight and control of the CIA. The CIA was authorized to spend appropriated funds on covert actions only after the President had signed a "finding" and informed Congress that the proposed operation was important to national security.¹⁵

Executive Order 11905, issued by President Ford on February 18, 1976, in the wake of major Congressional investigations of CIA activities by the Church and Pike Committees, replaced the 40 Committee with the Operations Advisory Group, composed of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the DCI, who retained responsibility for the planning and implementation of covert operations. The OAG was required to hold formal meetings to develop recommendations for the President regarding a covert action and to conduct periodic reviews of previously-approved operations. EO 11905 also banned all U.S. Government employees from involvement in polit-

¹⁴ *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities*, United States Senate, Book I, Foreign and Military Intelligence, pp. 54-55, 57.

¹⁵ Public Law 93-559.

ical assassinations, a prohibition that was retained in succeeding executive orders, and prohibited involvement in domestic intelligence activities.¹⁶

Approval and oversight requirements for covert action continued to be governed by the Hughes-Ryan amendment well into the Carter administration, even as the new administration made alterations to the executive branch's organizational structure for covert action. President Carter retained the NSC as the highest executive branch organization to review and guide U.S. foreign intelligence activities. As part of a broader NSC reorganization at the outset of his administration, President Carter replaced the Operations Advisory Group (OAG) with the NSC's Special Coordination Committee (SCC), which explicitly continued the same operating procedures as the former OAG.¹⁷ Membership of the SCC, when meeting for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations on covert actions (as well as sensitive surveillance activities), replicated that of the former OAG—namely: the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; the Secretaries of State and Defense; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Attorney General and Director of the Office of Management and Budget (the latter two as observers). The designated chairman of all SCC meetings was the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Carter formalized the SCC's replacement of the OAG in EO 11985 of May 13, 1977, which amended President Ford's EO 11905 on "United States Foreign Intelligence activities."¹⁸ In practice, the SCC for covert action and sensitive surveillance activities came to be known as the SCC (Intelligence) or the SCC-I, to distinguish it from other versions of the SCC.

The SCC's replacement of the OAG was reaffirmed in E.O. 12036 of January 24, 1978, which replaced E.O. 11905 and its amendments. E.O. 12036 also reaffirmed the same membership for the SCC-I, but identified the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as full members of the Committee, rather than merely observers.

¹⁶ Executive Order 11905, "United States Foreign Intelligence Activities," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 12, No. 8, February 23, 1976.

¹⁷ The broader NSC reorganization sought to reduce the number of NSC committees to two: the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and the Special Coordination Committee (SCC). The SCC's jurisdiction included all intelligence policy issues other than annual budget and priorities reviews; the SCC also had jurisdiction over other, nonintelligence matters. Presidential Directive 2, "The National Security Council System," January 20, 1977, Carter Library, Vertical File, Presidential Directives. See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1983), pp. 59–62.

¹⁸ Executive Order 11985, "United States Foreign Intelligence Activities," May 13, 1977, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 13, No. 20 (May 16, 1977), pp. 719–720.

Also in the first days of the Carter administration, the SCC-I established a lower-level working group to study and review proposals for covert action and other sensitive intelligence matters and report to the SCC-I. This interagency working group was chaired by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (David Aaron), or in his absence, the NSC Director for Intelligence Coordination. The working group was named the Special Activities Working Group (SAWG). The SAWG was active in early Carter administration reviews of ongoing covert action, and remained active through at least 1978. NSC officials in mid-1978 sought to downgrade or abolish the SAWG and replace it as needed with ad hoc working groups. Internal NSC reviews at the end of the Carter administration state that the SAWG gradually fell out of use. By late 1979, the means for debating, developing, and guiding certain covert actions was an interagency working group chaired by Aaron at the NSC. This group was referred to by several names during the late Carter administration, including the Deputy's (or Deputies) group, the Aaron group, the interagency group, the Black Chamber, and the Black Room.

The Carter administration made use of a new category of presidential findings for "world-wide" or "general" (or "generic") covert operations. This continued a practice initiated late in the Ford administration in response to the Hughes-Ryan requirement for presidential findings. The worldwide category covered lower-risk operations that were directed at broad policy goals implemented on a worldwide basis as assets allowed. These operations utilized existing assets as well as existing liaison contacts with foreign intelligence or security services, and in some cases also consisted of routine training or procurement undertaken to assist foreign intelligence partners or other agencies of the USG. A new type of document—known as "Perspectives"—provided more specific tasking guidance for these general, worldwide covert activities. Perspectives detailed the themes to be stressed in furtherance of a particular policy goal. Riskier operations required their own presidential finding or Memorandum of Notification (see below). Perspectives were drafted by the CIA and cleared by the Department of State, so that the CIA could vet the operational feasibility and risks of the program while State could assess the diplomatic risks and verify that the program was consistent with overall foreign policy goals. At least initially, Perspectives did not require further coordination with the OAG, SCC, or the President. Once an agreed-upon Perspectives document was finalized by CIA and the Department of State, it was transmitted to the field, and posts were required to make periodic reports on any achievements under the Perspectives guidelines. Beginning in 1978, actions in this worldwide category were authorized by the President as specific line-item additions to a previously existing "world-wide" finding, though Perspectives were still used to provide additional details.

Another new document used during the Carter administration was the “Memorandum of Notification” (MON). MONs were initially used to introduce higher-risk, significantly higher-cost, or more geographically-specific operations under a previously-approved worldwide or general objective outlined¹⁹ in a Perspectives document. Like Perspectives, MONs had to be coordinated between the CIA and the Department of State, but they also required broader interagency coordination within the SAWG or SCC. MONs subsequently came to be used for significant changes to any type of finding, not just worldwide ones. Entirely new covert actions continued to require new presidential findings. The Hughes-Ryan amendment stipulated that Congress be notified of new findings “in a timely fashion,” but did not specify how much time that meant. During the Carter administration, the CIA typically notified Congress of new covert initiatives within 48 hours, including those outlined in Perspectives or MONs.

In October 1980, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1981—also known as the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980—scaled back the Hughes-Ryan amendment’s provisions for congressional oversight of covert action. While the requirement to notify Congress about presidential findings remained in place, the new Act limited the committees of Congress that had to be briefed to the two intelligence committees, and also explicitly clarified that this requirement to keep the committees “fully and currently informed” did not constitute a requirement for congressional approval of covert action or other intelligence activities. Moreover, the new Act stipulated that if the President determined it was “essential to limit prior notice to meet extraordinary circumstances affecting vital interests of the United States,” the President could limit prior notice to the chairmen and ranking minority members of the two intelligence committees, the Speaker and minority leader of the House, and the majority and minority leaders of the Senate—a group that came to be known as the “Gang of Eight.” If prior notice of a covert action was withheld, the President was required to inform the two intelligence committees “in a timely fashion” and provide a statement of the reasons for not giving prior notice.²⁰

¹⁹ Executive Order 12036, “United States Foreign Intelligence Activities,” January 24, 1978, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (January 30, 1978), pp. 194–214. Since E.O. 12036 governed foreign intelligence activities, all references in the E.O. to the “SCC” were effectively references to what was known in practice as the SCC (Intelligence), or SCC-I.

²⁰ PL 96-450, Sec. 407 (October 14, 1980). See also the description of the Hughes-Ryan amendment and its replacement by PL 96-450 in: Richard A. Best, Jr., “Covert Action: Legislative Background and Possible Policy Questions,” Congressional Research Service, RL33715, December 27, 2011, pp. 1–2; and L. Britt Snider, *The Agency and the Hill: CIA’S Relationship with Congress, 1946–2004*, Washington: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 2008, pp. 280–81.

Central America

Belize and Guatemala

1. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, March 11, 1977, 2304Z

1584. Subj: Guatemala Terminates US Military Assistance.

1. Summary. Embassy received third person note from Foreign Ministry "declining in advance any aid or sale of military equipment that is conditioned on judgments that any foreign government might make of matters that are exclusively internal concern" of Guatemala.² Foreign Minister Adolfo Molina has appointment with Secretary Vance at 5 pm Monday, March 14.³ GOG has made no public comment so far; should story break and Embassy be queried by press, we plan to confirm that report was prepared on Guatemala and given GOG, but any comment on GOG reaction must come from GOG.⁴ End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770085-0230. Limited Official Use; Niact Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to the Commander in Chief, Southern Command. Sent for information to the Secretary of Defense, Managua, San Salvador, San José, Tegucigalpa, and Belize City.

² Congress approved \$3.2 billion in foreign military aid for fiscal year 1978 on July 22. The legislation (H.R. 6884) reflected the House International Relations Committee's May 9 report that "sliced administration aid requests" for nations, including Guatemala, found in violation of human rights guidelines. (*Congress and the Nation*, vol. V, 1977-1980, p. 39) Carter signed the International Security Assistance Act of 1977 on August 5. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 1431-1432) The \$6.8 billion foreign aid appropriations bill for fiscal year 1978 (P.L. 95-148), signed by Carter on October 31, also included House provisions to prohibit military credit sales to Guatemala. (*Congress and the Nation*, vol. V, 1977-1980, pp. 45-46) For more information about human rights policy toward Latin America, see Document 462.

³ See Document 3.

⁴ Telegram 1405 from Guatemala City, March 4, confirmed Boster's delivery to Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina of the text of the Department of State's Annual Human Rights Report regarding Guatemala for 1976. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770076-1047) The Department of State submitted reports on human rights practices in countries proposed for security assistance in accordance with the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-329). The Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs prepared the reports. See Department of State, *Human Rights Practices in Countries Receiving U.S. Security Assistance*, pp. 119-120.

2. Embassy received 1400 Friday, March 11, following note from Guatemalan Foreign Ministry (informal translation): “. . . and has the honor to refer to its note number 33, of the 4th of this month, which was accompanied by a copy of the report of the Secretary of State in relation to Guatemala.

3. “The Embassy states that it is authorized to inform (the Ministry) that nearly 80 reports, one for each country that receives military assistance from the United States or that obtains military equipment from its government, have been sent to the Congress and could be made public by that organization at any moment.

4. “The Embassy also refers to the Embassy’s note of October 18, 1976, in which it informed the Government of Guatemala that, in accord with the amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act of the United States, the Secretary of State will be required in the future to send to the Congress each year ‘a full and complete report . . . with respect to practices regarding the observance of and respect for internationally recognized human rights in each country proposed as a recipient of security assistance.’⁵

5. “In reply, the Foreign Ministry informs the honorable Embassy of the United States of America that the Government as well as the people of Guatemala profoundly regret the assassination of a US Ambassador⁶ and an Ambassador of the FRG,⁷ accredited to the Government of the Republic in years past and both well and favorably remembered in our country, for their personal qualities and the excellent diplomatic effort they carried out in Guatemala. They were victims of a subversive organization that calls itself ‘the rebel armed forces’ and which constitutes the armed forces of the Communist Party which operates clandestinely and is responsible for the death of many Guatemalans, victims of indescribable terrorist acts.

6. “The Government and people of Guatemala deplore as well the murder of many diplomats and persons of various nationalities in diverse regions of the world, as a consequence of the generalized violence, a phenomenon from which not even US itself has been immune.

⁵ Telegram 7209 from Guatemala City, October 18, 1976, described the note sent to the Guatemalan Foreign Office with the pertinent provisions of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D760392–0202) See also *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–11, Part 1, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973–1976, Document 234.

⁶ Ambassador John Gordon Mein was assassinated on a Guatemala City street during an abortive kidnapping attempt in 1968. See *Foreign Relations*, 1964–1968, vol. XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico, Documents 114–116.

⁷ The FRG Ambassador to Guatemala, Count Karl von Spreti, was kidnapped and murdered in Guatemala in 1970.

7. "Foreign Ministry expresses to honorable US Embassy that GOG also shares the just concern of the US authorities for assuring the maximum protection of human rights and of the fundamental freedoms of man in all parts of the world.

8. "Inspired by this objective, the government has subscribed to various declarations and conventions destined to guarantee those rights and liberties through the collective action of the international community, and has incorporated within the fundamental provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala all the norms proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; these (rights) are protected by the courts and all the authorities of the government watch over their strict fulfillment.

9. "GOG nevertheless views with serious preoccupation and disquiet the possibility that there should be put into practice the doctrine that one government, in unilateral fashion, should arrogate to itself the power to judge another government with which it maintains relations of friendship, cooperation and solidarity, and on the basis of this unilateral judgment takes measures which in some way could affect the security or economic interests of the other.

10. "Such measures, even if they were guided by the most noble and worthy humanitarian motives, constitute an improper interference in the internal affairs of another state, which is totally inadmissible between sovereign states.

11. "In the history of the inter-American system, the principle of non-intervention has been consecrated as one of the fundamental duties of all states, and any type of improper interference of one state in the affairs within the internal competence of another state has always been rejected even when it might be based on ideas of tutelage of altruistic inspiration.

12. "GOG considers that the laudable effort of the illustrious Government of the USA to assure an effective protection of human rights could find a more adequate and acceptable channel in international agreements, both world-wide and regional. Such agreements not only avoid arbitrary procedures but also assign the function of judging cases of violations of human rights to special tribunals before which the accused government has the opportunity to defend itself against the accusations made against it in accordance with a pre-established procedure.

13. "Unilateral action, based on subjective judgments or on unproved charges by political groups in opposition to a government, can only prejudice the relations of friendship and solidarity between traditionally friendly governments, which cannot do less than resent the undue interference by one of them in matters that are of the exclusive competence of the other.

14. “For the reasons expressed above, the GOG declines in advance any aid or sale of military equipment that is conditioned on judgments that any foreign government may make on matters exclusively of (Guatemala’s) internal competence.

15. “The Foreign Ministry takes this opportunity to reiterate to US Embassy the assurances of its highest and most distinguished consideration.”

16. Comment: As Department knows, the attractiveness to Guatemala of our military assistance has considerably diminished over the past two years due to (a) the delays and indefinite postponements of certain military sales engendered by our concern over Belize dispute;⁸ (b) the termination of grant materiel aid; and (c) GOG awareness that Milg’s days are probably numbered. Nevertheless, Guatemalan decision in today’s note represents a considerable sacrifice to GOG in view of planned acquisition of US helicopters and other aircraft and spare parts for equipment previously supplied. The termination of training in US military schools and visiting mobile training teams will be a particularly serious loss to both countries.

17. In view of the fact that Foreign Minister has an appointment with the Secretary on Monday, Ambassador does not plan to seek an appointment with him prior to that time. However, Ambassador will see him off at the airport Sunday morning, Mar 13, and will express his personal regret at the GOG reaction and inquire what plans, if any, GOG may have for publishing text or substance of note (if story has not already broken by that time).⁹

18. At this point we assume that GOG will make known its views, if not immediately then probably on publication in US of Department’s report on Guatemala. Guatemalan press commented adversely yesterday and today on fact that no one in Foreign Ministry was available to tell press whether or not Guatemala is among those countries on which human rights reports being prepared by USG.

19. Should story break and Embassy be queried by press, we plan to limit ourselves to following statement: “U.S. law requires DOS to prepare an annual report on the status of human rights in each of the countries which receive security assistance from USG. Department has prepared reports on status of human rights in nearly 80 countries receiving such assistance, including Guatemala, and has submitted them, in accordance with the law, to the Congress of the United States.”

⁸ See footnote 2, Document 2.

⁹ In telegram 1585 from Guatemala City, March 13, Boster noted his conversation at the Guatemalan airport with Molina, who insisted that questions about human rights “should be pursued through multilateral and not unilateral channels.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770086–0692)

If specifically asked whether copy of report has been given GOG, we would confirm that it had. Any question on GOG reaction we will refer to GOG.

Boster

2. Study Prepared in Response to Presidential Review Memorandum NSC-17¹

Washington, undated

Presidential Review Memorandum NSC-17

Review of United States Policy

Toward Latin America

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Belize and Guatemala.]

—*Belize*: This colony, seeking independence from the U.K., poses a disproportionate problem in terms of its present population of 140,000. While the British are eager to give Belize its independence and be rid of a burden, Guatemala has threatened to invade Belize if its historical territorial claim is not satisfied. The U.S., for its part, is unwilling to compel the Belizeans to relinquish part of their territory to Guatemala. Guatemala has little international support for its claims, but current efforts to settle this dispute are foundering on the issue of territorial cession. The prospect of Cuban intervention cannot be ignored.

US policy has been to counsel moderation on both sides, while making clear that we do not intend to assume the role of a mediator, arbitrator, or guarantor at the present time. A US effort to mediate in

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 38, PRM/NSC-17 (1). Secret. Under a March 12 covering memorandum, Hornblow forwarded Presidential Review Memorandum NSC-17, dated January 26, directing a broad review of U.S. policy toward Latin America, including U.S. policies on the territorial dispute over Belize, to the Vice President; the Secretaries of State, Defense, Treasury, Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce; the Attorney General; the Representative to the United Nations; the Administrator of the Agency for International Development; the Special Trade Representative; the Chairmen of the Council of Economic Advisers and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the United States Information Agency. PRM/NSC-17 is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1977-1980, vol. XXIV, South America; Latin America Region. Printed here is a portion of an undated paper entitled "Territorial Disputes," attached at Tab 8 to the March 12 memorandum.

the late 1960's was an abject failure, used by both sides to avoid serious negotiations.²

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Belize and Guatemala.]

On the Belize issue, the options are:

Option A: Encourage the UK and Belize to make sufficient territorial concession to Guatemala so that the issue goes away.

Option B: Counsel moderation, leave it to the contending parties to work out a solution, and avoid involvement.

Option C: Encourage Guatemala to abandon its pretensions and claims to Belize territory.

Under the first or third option, we would align ourselves with one party or another in an intractable situation, would risk the same failure as greeted our mediation efforts in 1965–68, and would necessarily alienate as much support on one side as we might pick up on the other. Under Option B, which would satisfy neither contending party, we would keep the door ajar, counsel moderation on both sides, encourage others such as the IDB to get involved with a financial assistance package as part of an eventual settlement, and be prepared to involve ourselves in a constructive way if and when the contending parties might finally near a settlement on their own.

² British Honduras became a crown colony in 1862. The colony gained full internal self-government under a ministerial system in 1964. Guatemala's Constitution claimed all of the territory of Belize. The British and Guatemalan Governments formally requested direct mediation by the United States in the UK-Guatemala territorial dispute over British Honduras in 1965. Secretary of State Rusk authorized the proposal of "a prominent and distinguished citizen or citizens of the United States to undertake the mediation." The Department appointed Bethuel M. Webster, a New York City lawyer and former member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, as mediator with Ambassadorial rank. Despite numerous meetings over a 2-year period with the British, Guatemalans, and British Hondurans, Webster was unable to achieve a resolution to the dispute. Rusk presented the Guatemalan and British Ambassadors with a draft treaty in 1968. The British and Guatemalan Governments both indicated that the draft treaty was unacceptable. British Honduras was officially renamed Belize in 1973, and the colony gained independence on September 21, 1981. For documentation on the 1965–1968 mediation, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico, Documents 76–78, 103, and 113.

3. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, March 17, 1977, 1730Z

59477. Subject: Guatemalan Foreign Minister's Call on the Secretary.

1. This telegram is based on an uncleared memorandum of conversation and is subject to revision.

2. Foreign Minister Molina called on the Secretary on March 14. The Minister gave a detailed historical analysis of the Belize dispute, tracing the problem back to colonial times. He said that the U.S. had been involved previously as a mediator (1965–68) and it was Guatemala's opinion that all parties would welcome another U.S. effort, especially if negotiations now underway proved unsuccessful. In the interim, he asked the U.S. to help persuade the British to be more accommodating. The Minister emphasized that Guatemala could not accept Belizean independence without some territorial cession and that the situation could become explosive in the future. The Secretary replied that we were well aware of the problem and that the British had recently mentioned it to us again.² We understood that OAS Secretary General Orfila was attempting to be helpful in the matter. The Secretary said that we will look at the problem and will talk to Orfila but we were not in a position to promise anything. Amb Todman added that the U.S. had stayed out of active involvement in the matter since the late 1960's because we believed that agreement among all the parties directly involved was the only way to achieve a permanent solution.

3. The Foreign Minister then mentioned the cargo preference case pending before the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC).³ The Secre-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770092-0045. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information Priority to London and Belize City. Drafted by Platt, cleared in S, S/S, and EB/TT/MA; approved by Todman. A revised version, or other substantive record of conversation, has not been found.

² In telegram 37044 to multiple posts, February 17, Luers informed Boster that British Minister Moreton had noted that the negotiations with Guatemala over Belizean independence were heading toward a potential confrontation over the territorial issue and that London had instructed him to get a reading from the Carter administration on the issue. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770057-0966) During a March 11 meeting in the Secretary's conference room, British Foreign Secretary Owen asked Vance for support on the Belize issue. Vance replied that he was hesitant to "get involved" but would "stay in touch on the subject." (Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, March 11; Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Exdis 1977 Memorandum of Conversation for Secretary Vance.)

³ The case dealt with Guatemala's attempts to legislate preferences for Guatemalan flag lines in maritime commerce with the United States. The Federal Maritime Commission viewed Guatemala's policy as discriminatory. See telegram 53381 to Guatemala City, March 10. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770083-0311)

tary said that we faced similar problems with a number of countries. He added that we were looking at the U.S. legislation to determine if it needed to be changed. The administration had not yet taken a position on the question. The Commerce Department was taking the lead in examining the matter. The Secretary asked Ambassador Todman to inquire if a further postponement of FMC action would be possible until the administration could determine if a change in legislation was needed. Molina said that the FMC had given Guatemala a very short deadline to change their cargo preference practices. Changing the law was very difficult, thus he was asking for an extension of the deadline and proposed a working group from the two countries to consider the matter. F.Y.I. We are considering this matter urgently. We suggest that in your meeting with the President Friday⁴ you attempt to downplay the possibility of the FMC agreeing to any lengthy postponement. It may well prove that no further delay is possible. End F.Y.I.

4. The Foreign Minister then raised the subject of our human rights reports. He said that Guatemala would probably be joined by others in Latin America in rejecting military assistance that was tied to unilateral judgments by the U.S. about matters considered to be the internal affair of sovereign nations. Guatemala agreed with the U.S. objective but thought that a multilateral approach, perhaps involving some type of tribunal to hear cases of alleged abuses, would be better. In that way, governments would get a chance to defend themselves. The Foreign Minister also objected to what he termed inaccuracies and hearsay in our report. This included the use of comments by such groups as Amnesty International. Ambassador Todman said that he wanted to know about any inaccuracies. However, the legislation required the inclusion in our reports of comments by groups such as Amnesty International. The Secretary added that the administration's commitment to human rights was very deep. We appreciated constructive suggestions. He said that both the Executive and the Congress were considering how best to proceed in the future to make our human rights policy a constructive one.

Vance

⁴ March 18.

4. **Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Todman) to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, April 19, 1977

Belize Dispute: A More Active U.S. Role?

Issue for Decision

Should the U.S. lend a hand to help resolve the Belize dispute.

Setting

On April 1 you discussed with the British Foreign Secretary the possibility of having the U.S. attempt to ascertain the minimum Guatemalan territorial demand.² This memo lays out some of the options open to us. There is some time pressure as the next round of negotiations is set for late April or May.

Background/Analysis

Territory is the key to settlement. Guatemala insists that it must have a face-saving "slice". The British say they cannot force Premier Price to give up more than a "token amount", if that at all. The difference between a "slice" and a "token amount" has been exceedingly difficult to bridge.

Our Consul General in Belize believes that rather than cede territory as the price of independence, most Belizeans would prefer to remain a colony.

The Guatemalans are just entering a Presidential campaign in which being tough on Belize is a prerequisite of political life.³ It is our Embassy's assessment that the Guatemalan military and political leadership is unwilling to face up to signing a compromise settlement—without a substantial cession—in the midst of the campaign. They want only to stretch out the negotiating process.

In addition, Exxon is actively exploring for oil in the southern sector of Belize, in the area where the British have hinted at being willing to offer some cession.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P770065–1634. Confidential. Sent through Habib. Drafted by Platt. Charles Bray initialed the memorandum on Todman's behalf. A stamped notation indicates that Vance saw the memorandum.

² Vance was in London March 31–April 1 to discuss the recent arms control talks in Moscow. A substantive record of his conversation with Owen regarding Belize was not found.

³ Guatemala held Presidential elections on March 5, 1978. See footnote 2, Document 26.

If negotiations fail, as seems likely, and the U.K. decides to begin the independence process, the centerpiece of British strategy will probably be the next UN General Assembly. They will probably try for an explicit UN Resolution calling on HMG to grant independence within some specified time period. They will have to back it up with some type of defense arrangement and will want to involve the U.S. in some concrete way.

The U.S. tried to mediate this dispute in 1965–68.⁴ Our proposals were rejected out of hand by both sides and used for several years as an excuse to avoid serious negotiations.

The Options

Option 1. Maintain our present policy of neutrality and no active U.S. involvement.

ARA would inform the British that we have carefully considered their request and have determined that a more active U.S. role at this time is unlikely to alter the negotiating process in any significant way.

Pro:

—Keeps up the pressure on both sides to face up to the hard compromises necessary if a negotiated settlement is ever to be reached.

—Our involvement is unlikely to change the equation in any meaningful way, and we may be tarred with the brush of failure if we enter the fray.

Con:

—Is not responsive to oft-stated (and refused) British and Guatemalan requests for a more active U.S. role.

—With overwhelming support in each of the last two UNGA's, eventual independence for Belize is inevitable. Why is the U.S. not helping?

Option 2. Have our Ambassador in Guatemala call on the President and attempt to find out what their minimum territorial demand would be.

To assure ourselves of British seriousness, and to test whether agreement is possible, we may want to first ask the British to state privately to us their own *maximum* territorial position. If they are unwilling to provide the information, we may want to cut off our involvement.

Alternatively, we can approach only the Guatemalans. If they react positively to our approach and appear willing to talk seriously, and within a reasonable time frame, we could continue our efforts. We would make it clear to both sides that we are not committed beyond

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 2.

this initial fact-finding role. Subsequent to approaching both governments we could then decide whether to proceed further. One danger in this approach is that if the Guatemalan position remains inflexible the British may proceed to grant independence on the basis of our failed intervention in the negotiations.

Pro:

—Is responsive to the British request.

—Shows that we are concerned enough about the future of the area to at least try to help.

—May elicit from the Guatemalans a more realistic territorial position that could form the basis of a settlement.

Con:

—It will be difficult to limit our involvement to this one step. We might find ourselves drawn in as an active mediator with both sides depending on us to make the tough decisions and leaving them free to reject our proposals (as happened in 1968).

—One likely Guatemalan reaction would be that we are merely acting in behalf of the British. They might then confine themselves to repeating their *already stated demand* (about ¼ of Belize).⁵

—Alternatively, they might seize on this initiative as an indication of renewed U.S. involvement and because of their unwillingness to address the key issue try to string us along for as many months as possible.

Option 3. Promote an active mediatory effort by a "disinterested" third party such as OAS Secretary General Orfila.

This would be in keeping with President Carter's stated hope last Thursday that the OAS would become more involved in such situations.⁶ In addition, you told the Guatemalan Foreign Minister in March that we would be talking to Orfila about this.⁷ It would also keep the U.S. out of the middle.

Orfila has already discussed this problem with the Guatemalans and the British, although neither sees him as a serious mediator at this point.

Pro:

—Build up the OAS as a regional, problem-solving body.

⁵ Telegram 2263 from Guatemala City, April 14, noted Guatemala's 1975 rejection of any settlement less than all territory south of the Monkey River line, or about ¼ of Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770130-0538)

⁶ The text of Carter's April 14 address before the Permanent Council of the OAS is in *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, Document 33. See also *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 611-616.

⁷ See Document 3.

—The Guatemalans are aware of the weakness of their position. An impartial mediator may provide an “honorable” way out.

Con:

—The Belizeans would be highly skeptical that a “Latin” mediator would be impartial.

—Both the Belizeans and the Guatemalans would be free to reject the mediator’s proposals and blame him for the failure of the effort.

Recommendation:

ARA recommends Option 3. It offers some hope of success and would, at least, keep the U.S. out of the middle.⁸

ALTERNATIVELY, Option 1. It restates our position that a more active U.S. role is unlikely to change significantly the outcome of the negotiations.

ALTERNATIVELY, Option 2. We try to sound out the Guatemalan position, after having asked the British what their own maximum offer is.

OR, Option 2. We try to sound out the Guatemalan position *without* learning what the British maximum offer is.

⁸ Vance’s assistant, Jackie Cahill, initialed Vance’s approval of Option 3 on April 22. However, citing Vance’s April 1 offer to Owen to “consider sounding out the Guatemalan minimum territorial demand,” telegram 102154 to Guatemala City, May 5, instructed Boster to ascertain Guatemala’s requirements without proposing that the U.S. Government assume the role of mediator. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770157–0438) In telegram 2896 from Guatemala City, May 10, Boster reported that Guatemala’s minimum territorial position remained the Monkey River. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770164–1203)

5. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, June 15, 1977

PARTICIPANTS

US

The Secretary

Mr. Habib

Ambassador Todman

Janet Ruben, USOAS (notetaker)

GUATEMALA

Foreign Minister Molina

SUBJECT

BILATERAL BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND US

The conversation started with an expression of concern by the Foreign Minister for the Secretary's statement in support of the elimination of Article 8 of the OAS Charter.² Secretary Vance noted that the OAS is the only international organization which has such an Article in its Charter. Molina thinks that territorial disputes should be resolved before new states are accepted for membership.

They then went on to discuss the problem of mini-state membership in the OAS. Vance said that he feels strongly about the universality of membership. Molina said that if you extend universality too far, you end up with domination by the mini-states. For example, Dominica would have the same vote as the U.S. and Brazil in the OAS, were Dominica to be a member. He could not offer a solution to the problem of the mini-states, but referred to an idea which came up at the U.N.: that of relating voting power to the number of shares owned, as in a private corporation. Vance said that that system would never work at the U.N. because once the charter has been written, it is difficult to change. Molina agreed, noting that once application for membership in an international organization has been presented, no one is going to deny the country membership.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77-12/78. Confidential. Approved by Special Assistant William Twaddell in S on July 11. The meeting took place in St. George's, Grenada, where Vance was attending the OAS General Assembly meeting June 14-16.

² On June 14, during the seventh regular General Assembly meeting of the OAS held in St. Georges, Grenada, Vance called for the elimination of Article 8 of the OAS Charter, which barred American States from joining the OAS if they had a border dispute with a current OAS member. See telegram Secto 6003 from Grenada, June 14. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770212-0907) Vance informed Carter in telegram Secto 6011 from Grenada, June 16, that the Caribbean delegations at the OAS "spoke in favor of Belize independence and Guatemala made a strong defense of its position." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077-2180)

Vance asked how many new islands would be affected by a new policy on mini-states. Habib interjected that there would be four or more island-states in next two years: Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica, and St. Lucia. He added that Grenada, Barbados, and Surinam, all very small, already are members. Both men agreed on the need for a study on the situation, but neither could propose a solution. Molina did feel, however, that it was important not to end up with an organization composed of a silent majority of “Mini-States”.

Then they went on to discuss Belize which was the main issue in this bilateral. Molina reminded Vance that it is a very touchy subject for Guatemala. He referred to a Guatemalan constitutional provision written in 1945 which gives the reasons for the Guatemalan claim to the Belize territory. Short of being able to obtain the re-incorporation of Belize into Guatemala, which Guatemala considers a legitimate claim, Molina said that he would like to have some formula to resolve the issue which he would be able to use to persuade the Guatemalan public. Any acceptance of a different position than re-incorporation would require a change in the Guatemalan Constitution, he said. This would not be an easy process, but Guatemala does want to resolve the issue.

Vance expressed concern that the positions of Guatemala and Great Britain seem to be hardening and that inevitably this would lead to a collision course.³ Molina agreed that such a collision course would be a disaster, adding that Guatemala’s position is not inflexible. He said that Guatemala understands the position of Belize in the International community, where many are calling for independence for Belize.

Vance asked whether Guatemala would accept acquisition of territory up to less than the Monkey River. Molina stated that the Monkey River was the limit, and Vance asserted that if that is the case, then Guatemala is certainly on a collision course. He said that if Guatemala is willing to accept less territory, there would be a possibility of compromise.

³ In telegram 128822 to multiple posts, June 3, the Department reported that the British had “decided to move for Belizean independence as soon as possible” and that they were prepared to take the risk that the Guatemalans might respond militarily. Rowlands asked the United States to support the British decision, and Habib offered to consult Vance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770199–0129) In telegram 134268 to London and Guatemala City, June 10, Habib noted that Vance wished “to await the outcome of any Mexican mediation effort” and the UK-Guatemalan talks scheduled for July 6–7 before deciding on the U.S. position regarding Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070–0687) In telegram Tosec 60011/138379 to the Secretary’s delegation, June 16, Luers informed Vance that Owen did “not believe U.S. should take lead at OASGA in supporting Belizean independence, but would appreciate sympathetic and constructive support as appropriate for Caribbean Commonwealth initiative.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770212–1031)

At this point, Molina said that no concrete solution had been proposed so far. Vance asked what would happen if the British proposed some amount of territory less than up to the Monkey River and Molina hedged, saying that he did not know, and would have to see.

Habib interjected that Rowlands once had suggested the inclusion of rights to the territorial sea and access to the sea as one way to compensate Guatemala for giving up Belize. He asked whether this proposal were still alive. Molina said that it never amounted to anything and that this idea had been intimated but never formally presented. Habib suggested that the Moho River could be the limit for Guatemala under an alternative arrangement, and Molina answered that the territory between Guatemala and the Moho is mostly swamp land and not worth much. When Vance asked whether access to the seas was the most important factor for Guatemala, Molina replied that it was an important factor but only one of several. Habib said that the satisfaction of recognition of Guatemala's territorial claim would be an important element in a settlement.

When Vance mentioned that there would be a meeting with Rowlands on July 6 and 7, Molina noted that he previously had told Rowlands that compromise would require sacrifice for both sides. He said that he would be happy to take a proposal to Guatemala for discussion, but that in any case the Guatemalans would not accept the idea of financial compensation.

Vance reiterated the importance of not letting positions get frozen at this point, reminding Molina that this would lead to an impasse which could easily lead to a military confrontation over Belize.

Molina went on to say that he had recently spoken with the Mexican Foreign Minister about the possibility of his mediating the dispute. They decided that this would not work because of Mexico's own claim to a portion of the Belize territory.⁴ Vance then asked who would be able to mediate, and Molina replied that Vance would be an excellent mediator. Otherwise, he could see mediation by two or three people. Habib asked whether the OAS Secretary General could serve as mediator. Molina said that he would be fine as a friend of the parties, but that he would present a much less forceful image than the United States would in the resolution of the dispute.

Vance asked Molina's opinion on another formula through which each party would choose one mediator, and those two people would choose a third. Molina's reaction to this suggestion was positive. He recalled a boundary dispute some years ago between Guatemala and

⁴ Following its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico claimed inheritance rights over northern Belize.

Honduras in which this system was used to resolve the problem. In that case, the third member of the arbitration commission chosen was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. When Habib asked whether the U.S. could mention these ideas to the British, Molina agreed. Habib emphasized the pressure of time and importance of prompt action, and Molina agreed. Molina said that he wanted to settle the dispute before the Guatemalan elections which are to take place next March. He went on to say that he knows that Britain has been exerting heavy pressure on other countries on its behalf and against Guatemala. This was done most recently at the Commonwealth Conference where he said pressure was exerted on the English-speaking Caribbean countries.⁵ He also said that the British have been exerting their influence on the non-aligned group and at the U.N. Habib asserted that it was better to keep the discussion of this issue out of the U.N., for he doubts that the U.N. could solve it.

Vance reiterated that he would not rule out an American as the third person on an arbitration panel. For example, he thought Arthur Goldberg would be an excellent arbitrator. Molina agreed that such an arbitration panel would be a solution, should direct negotiations fail. Habib pointed out that there is direct pressure, especially on this Labor Government for Great Britain to rid itself of its last colony. Molina then went on to say that if Belize should gain its independence, Guatemala would cooperate fully in development plans of the country and to insure that Belize established comfortable relations with the rest of Central America. Guatemala might even offer financial assistance to Belize. He emphasized, however, that Guatemala's role in Belize's development was not a condition for compromise on the whole problem. Vance summed up by saying that we would propose a compromise territorial solution to the British or a mediation panel if a negotiated settlement were not possible. He emphasized that he did not want to see someone in Central America pushed to the limit and then explode.

Todman meanwhile encouraged Molina to think of a territorial settlement below the Monkey River, saying that we were not *proposing* this, but that it should be kept in mind as a possible alternative.

Vance then asked Molina for his views on the maritime rules. Molina said that a new law was being discussed in Congress when he left last week. He urged the U.S. to be patient and said that a solution would soon evolve. Vance noted with enthusiasm that this was a good

⁵ The Commonwealth meeting of Heads of Government met in London June 8–15 and issued a communiqué endorsing “early independence” for Belize and calling “upon all states to respect the right of the people of Belize to self-determination, independence and territorial integrity.” (*Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, vol. XXIII, 1977, pp. 28503–28505)

way to resolve the problem. Vance promised to be in touch before Molina's meetings on July 6 with the British and Molina thanked the Secretary and said that this would be a big help.

6. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, July 7, 1977, 0315Z

157293. For Ambassador or Principal Officer. Subject: Guatemala-Belize Dispute. Refs: (A) Guatemala 4191 (B) State 156404.²

1. Following highlights of Secretary's separate meetings afternoon July 6 with Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina and British Minister of State Rowlands; Under Secretary Habib, Assistant Secretary Todman were also present.

2. By pre-arrangement both sides tabled proposals morning July 6, but did not discuss them. Molina tabled territorial cession proposal with southern boundary Belize at Monkey River and Chiquibu [*Chiquibul*] River, with seaward extension just south of Cayo Pompion. He also filed protest at presence British frigate off Belize.

3. British proposed sea boundaries adjustment to guarantee Guatemala adequate access to Puerto Barrios and unspecified quote substantial unquote financing for major Guatemalan development project or projects.

4. In response to Secretary's query re position on ground, Molina said things were very tense as result British sending in frigate and quote extra troops unquote. He added that things were slipping beyond

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077-2394, N770004-0159. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information to London. Drafted by Matthews; cleared in S/S-O; approved by Todman. The telegram was sent unchanged to the White House for Brzezinski 3 hours later with same telegram number. (Ibid.) No other record of the meeting was found.

² In telegram 4191 from Guatemala City, July 6, Boster reported that Acting Guatemalan Foreign Minister Obiols had informed him that a British frigate had appeared off the Belizean coast and that Guatemalan President Laugerud "considered this an act of provocation and an act of intimidation on the eve of the initiation of the talks in Washington." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770238-1255) In telegram 156404 to Guatemala City, July 6, Vance instructed Boster not to reveal the information to the Guatemalans that six British Harrier jets, with permission to use the U.S. base on Bermuda for refueling and crew rest, would arrive in Belize on July 7, shortly before the talks in Washington ended. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077-2388, N770004-0145)

his control. The matter has stopped being primarily with the Foreign Office and is now with the Army. Guatemalan Ambassador interjected that Army was under great pressure to justify its existence. If it does not intervene in the absence of an acceptable solution, there may be a coup. Molina noted later, however, that he still would have control over developments if tomorrow's meeting has good results.

5. Both Molina and Rowlands indicated accomplishments of meeting would be made at private talks, particularly between Molina and Rowlands.

6. Molina insisted to Secretary that Monkey River was minimum territorial cession Guatemala could accept, and explained historical background and how this represented considerable withdrawal from earlier position. He said territory and secure outlet to sea were the two essential elements for Guatemala. Though some minor adjustment in the landward line was possible, the seaward terminal must be at the Monkey River. This much is essential to obtain minimum support to change Constitution. He added that with Monkey River line Guatemala would fully accept Belize independence; in fact, would even guarantee it. British territorial sea adjustment proposal was insignificant, and assumed Belizean sovereignty over Keys, which Guatemala does not accept.

7. Habib told Molina British simply do not feel they can go as far as the Monkey River, but willing consider less territory and throw in assistance, which they would call development assistance and Guatemala could perhaps call compensation, if it needed to. Even if agreement impossible this round, another round should be scheduled, either at time of UNGA or before. Molina agreed to take back any specific British territorial offer less than the Monkey River to his government, but noted that none had thus far been forthcoming.

8. Secretary concluded with Molina by saying he should feel free to call tomorrow or any time if necessary, and Molina noted he is willing to stay in Washington as long as necessary to reach a satisfactory resolution.

9. At meeting with Rowlands, Secretary summarized conversation with Molina. He noted that he felt Molina would take back less than the Monkey River, but that he must have a specific package including a territorial cession proposal from British.

10. Rowlands said he must say he had no authority to formally table a territorial proposal, but he is prepared to tell Molina UK is willing to look at Moho River line if Molina prepared to carry that back to GOG. He also explained assistance package as being joint UK development fund for Belize and adjacent Guatemalan departments plus some contribution to major Guatemalan development project, such

as pipeline. Rowlands unwilling to specify amount, but mentioned 7 million pounds in context of joint development project.

11. Rowlands said he intends to inform Molina early afternoon July 7 that British returning Harrier jets to Guatemala that afternoon, and expressed his dilemma as to how to keep this from blowing up the negotiation. He would naturally emphasize British military moves solely for defense of Belize and in reaction to Guatemalan reserve call-up³ military build-up and belligerent statements.

12. Secretary and Rowlands agreed the Guatemalans want to keep the negotiations going, and that it is essential to divorce the British reinforcement from the talks. Rowlands suggested a personal message from Prime Minister to Laugurud to coincide with Rowlands' message to Molina. The Secretary agreed this would be sensible.

13. Rowlands raised possibility that he imply to Molina that British might accept withdrawal of Harriers and frigate as precondition for next round of talks or in context of next round. Special mission by Rowlands to Guatemala to set up such conditions and next round was also discussed favorably.

14. There was agreement that there is danger of miscalculation and overreaction in tense situation, particularly after Harriers arrive. Rowlands wondered whether OAS observers might be useful and believed Price would accept that. Secretary believed, in absence of hostilities, other options should be tried first, including agreement to mediate. Venezuela was mentioned as possible mediator. OAS peacekeeping involvement was supported if hostilities break out or as last resort if talks stalled or other mediation unsuccessful.

15. Secretary responded to Rowlands' request that we counsel the Guatemalans on moderation by noting that the British Harrier decision will badly damage our credibility. Rowlands promised to be in touch with Secretary tomorrow (July 7).⁴

³ In telegram 4113 from Guatemala City, June 29, Bolster reported that "the signs we have seen which might be read as preparation for early military action—the training of reserves, the current maneuvers, the increasingly bellicose nature of GOG statements—are, in the Mission view, part of a calculated attempt by the GOG to influence British policy—to prevent a breakoff of talks and any move toward granting independence to Belize." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770234-0115)

⁴ In telegram 158599 to Guatemala City, July 8, the Department described Vance's July 7 private session with Rowlands and Molina, without the presence of the Belizeans, that included Rowlands's proposal to cede territory south of the Moho River and the cays. Molina agreed "to try to sell this as part of overall package (presumably including seaward concessions and financial assistance)." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077-2399, N770004-0178)

16. FYI. Rowlands mentioned the Harriers being ferried through Canada rather than Bermuda. Hercules and DC-10s carrying support personnel will transit Bermuda. End FYI.

Vance

7. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 8, 1977

PARTICIPANTS

<i>US</i>	<i>Guatemala</i>
The Secretary	Foreign Minister Adolfo Molina
Under Secretary Habib	Ambassador Abundio Maldonado
Assistant Secretary Todman	
Donald Johnson, ARA/CEN (Notetaker)	

SUBJECT

Belize Negotiations

The Secretary congratulated Foreign Minister Molina on his handling of a difficult situation. Molina expressed his appreciation for the help given by the U.S. The Secretary replied that we have done what we could to be helpful.

Molina said that he had built up good relations with Minister Rowlands. The communique which they had agreed upon will help relieve tension to some extent.² Mr. Rowlands had agreed to go to Guatemala to talk to President Laugerud, and would arrive within 10 days. The Secretary said Rowlands' visit would undoubtedly be helpful. The process of withdrawal of British troops from Belize might possibly proceed from these talks.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Belize: 2/77–10/80. Confidential. Drafted by Johnson on July 11. Cleared by Matthews, Todman, and Habib. Approved by Vance. Pastor initialed the top of the memorandum. Neither Habib nor Vance initialed the memorandum. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

² Telegram 158591 to Belize City and multiple posts, July 8, included the text of the joint communiqué signed by the British and Guatemalan negotiators. Both sides agreed to "take prompt and appropriate measures to decrease tension" and preserve peace in the area. It was also agreed that Rowlands would visit Guatemala to discuss "the next stages in the negotiations." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770242–0550)

The Secretary said we have been assured by the British that they will not take unilateral action on independence. Molina replied that was very good, because many people in Guatemala had feared the British “would spring something on us”.

The Secretary asked Molina his view of the results of the negotiations. Molina replied that they had made a small step forward, but that the two sides were still far apart. Guatemala had tabled a territorial proposal and neither the British nor the Belizeans had rejected it. The Secretary replied that Rowlands had said the Monkey River would be unacceptable. Molina replied that he was not happy with the Moho River, but he did not indicate that the offer was being rejected. He acknowledged that Guatemala must prepare public opinion for territorial compromise. The Secretary said he understood that in addition to territory, there might also be other items in a settlement package. Mr. Habib asked Mr. Molina whether he had asked Mr. Rowlands what he meant when he referred to contribution to Guatemalan economic development. Molina replied that Rowlands had alluded to port facilities but had gone no further.

Assistant Secretary Todman said that as the Belizeans had obtained more international support for their position, they have become less inclined to give anything. The Secretary said there will have to be give on both sides, and asked Mr. Habib for his impressions of his meeting with Price earlier in the day.³ Habib replied that Rowlands has a problem on his hands with the Belizeans. Belizean Premier Price had been anxious to proceed with internationalization of the Belize issue. The Secretary replied this was certainly not the time for such action. Mr. Habib said he and Ambassador Todman had made the same point to Mr. Price. Foreign Minister Molina expressed his appreciation. International pressure could not help the situation at all. It was largely because of international pressure that the latest tensions had arisen. Mr. Habib said his feeling was that our statements to Price had made an impression on him.

The Secretary remarked that he had talked to the Canadian Foreign Minister about the situation, and had told him tension had been reduced somewhat. He commented to Molina that this conversation was indicative of the concern and interest with which many people had been following the Belize situation. Molina replied that we should insure that “accidents” cannot happen, and the Secretary answered that Rowlands’ trip would be a constructive part of this process.

³ See Document 8.

Molina again thanked the Secretary for his involvement and stated that, as he had told Ambassador Todman earlier in the week, he was still “cautiously optimistic” about the course of the negotiations.

8. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Belize City and the Embassies in Guatemala and the United Kingdom¹

Washington, July 9, 1977, 0141Z

159685. Subject: Belize Dispute: Premier Price Adamant on Territorial Integrity.

1. Begin summary: Belize Premier Price called on Habib July 8 to discuss negotiations and make pitch for U.S. support at UN and guarantee of Belizean territorial integrity. We advised against early internationalization and disabused him of idea we might guarantee borders. Price showed no inclination to compromise on territorial integrity. Though he would wait until after Rowlands visit to Guatemala before reinitiating internationalization campaign, he intends do so shortly thereafter. Habib suggested Belize consider possibility of mediation to resolve remaining issues if Rowlands visit to Guatemala goes well. End summary.

2. Premier Price, accompanied by Belizean Ambassador to CARICOM V. Harrison Courtenay, called on Under Secretary Habib morning July 8. Assistant Secretary Todman also present. Price clearly felt less jubilant than British over negotiations and resulting communique, disputing Habib’s understanding that talks went well. Price emphasized that talks did not seem to advance independence and his perception that Guatemalans stiffened position by proposing border along north-west trending Monkey River rather than 1975 proposal of 16 degrees, 30 minutes latitude parallel inland from mouth of Monkey River. This, he alleged, was itself significant hardening of 1972 proposal which was for special economic relationship and integration into Central American system.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770244–0200. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to Bridgetown, Caracas, Georgetown, USUN, Kingston, Mexico City, and Port of Spain. Drafted by Matthews; cleared in S/S–O and P; approved by Todman. No other record of the meeting was found.

² See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972, Document 362; and the chapter on Guatemala and Belize in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–11, Part 1, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973–1976.

3. Price made five obviously prepared points to Habib. First: Belizean political parties are united behind independence with territorial integrity. Second: Conflict is wider than Belize and UK versus Guatemala. Commonwealth has now joined Caribbean countries and Canada is firmly supporting Belize's position. Third: He appreciates what U.S. is doing, but hopes U.S. will be more forthcoming in supporting independence with territorial integrity. Fourth: He welcomes new administration policy of more attention to Caribbean, especially economic assistance, and hopes Belize is fully included. Fifth: Belize will continue its effort to internationalize independence with territorial integrity and seeks U.S. support for such internationalization of campaign. (He did not specifically request U.S. support for UNGA resolution, but said he did at subsequent news conference.)

4. Habib responded to third point (that U.S. be more forthcoming) by noting that U.S. will never oppose process of self-determination but that problem is how to best achieve that goal. He disputed Price's firmly stated contention that U.S. has previously been on side of Guatemala by saying we have been and continue to be even-handed on dispute, and that Belize should realize that such even-handedness is highly useful to Belize in maintaining our influence with Guatemala. On fourth point (assistance) Habib assured Price that Belize is fully included in our Caribbean policy and that we support increased assistance through Caribbean Development Bank and other means. He noted that we are very impressed with efficient way Belize has planned and utilized development assistance. On fifth point (internationalization of dispute), Habib said he hoped Belize would let Rowlands play hand out in Guatemala before deciding whether to reinitiate internationalization campaign. Habib added he does not believe that rush back to international fora would at this point be in Belize's interest, though this tactic must obviously be kept in reserve. Price responded that there is no need to immediately resume campaign to internationalize, but implied campaign would be resumed before this fall's UNGA.

5. Habib emphasized that it is clearly in Belize's interest to reach negotiated agreement that Guatemalans can accept, since that would categorically end threat of military intervention. He suggested that Price keep mediation in mind as useful device for both Guatemala and Belize to achieve mutually satisfactory solution which neither side could afford politically to accept unless proposed by mediator. Price expressed reluctance to risk losing territory through mediation since Belize already has widespread international support.

6. Price said that he does not see how Belize can move to independence by conceding land. He feels an international guarantee of territorial integrity is essential and that U.S. can contribute very much to this guarantee. Habib responded that solution is to become part of interna-

tional system rather than specific guarantee, and he should realize that there is no chance in current political circumstances that the U.S. would give any such formal guarantee. Price said there is the perception by some that the U.S. is not saying “hands off Belize” for racial reasons, since Guatemala is white. Habib categorically rejected this, saying that our position is to keep settlement possibilities open and prevent armed confrontation.

7. Todman asked Belizeans to play out how they see solution to impasse. At Price’s request, Courtenay responded that Belize must first obtain independence, then work toward Guatemalan de facto acceptance of territorial integrity in the same way that Venezuela accepts Guyana’s territorial integrity on a de facto basis. Guatemala has unfortunately painted itself into corner which does not permit acceptance of territorial integrity. Habib responded that since Guatemalans have categorically stated they would attack if unilateral independence granted, this once again seems to recommend mediation to let Guatemalans get themselves out of corner. Mediation would also remove long period of uncertainty which still exists re Venezuela and Guyana.

8. Price brought up his concern about Miami Herald article saying he was targeted by DEA.³ He did not repeat not mention any other Belizean allegedly targeted. Habib said he would look into matter, and later in day sent him explanatory letter (Septel).⁴

Vance

³ Joe Crankshaw reported: “The prime minister of Belize and two ranking aides were targets last year of an aborted U.S. narcotics investigation, according to federal court documents filed in Miami.” (“Narcotics Agents Investigated Belize Leader, Aides,” *Miami Herald*, June 29, 1977, p. 8–A)

⁴ Telegram 159194 to Belize City, July 8, included the text of Habib’s letter to Price. Habib noted the absence of evidence of Price’s involvement with the alleged sale of heroin reported in the *Miami Herald* and expressed regret for any possible embarrassment caused by the article. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770243–0878)

9. **Action Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs (Stedman) to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, August 18, 1977

SUBJECT

Small Arms Ammunition Sale to Guatemala

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Should we approve the sale of 5 million rounds of small arms ammunition to Guatemala?²

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

We have gone to Ambassador Boster in Guatemala to seek his views on the amount of ammunition which we should sell Guatemala.³ He confirms our estimate that the full 5 million rounds would be a reasonable basic load for Guatemala, given their present small arms inventory. He also makes the point that he believes it would be better to discuss the need for forward movement on Belize at one meeting with Molina, and approval of the small arms ammunition sale at a subsequent meeting (following only by several days his meeting with Molina) with Laugerud. Finally, Ambassador Boster believes we have overloaded the circuits with our demarches on human rights. He believes we should defer any other demarche until a later time in the election campaign.

ARA is in full agreement with Ambassador Boster.

THE OPTIONS

1. That you approve the course of action suggested by Ambassador Boster: separate meetings on Belize and small arms ammunition with

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P770144-1540. Confidential. The August 18 date was stamped on the memorandum. Sent through Habib. Drafted by Johnson on August 19.

² Vance wrote, "No. Less than 5 million. 3 or at most 4 million," in the margin next to this sentence.

³ In telegram 195280 to Guatemala City, August 17, the Department requested Boster's views on the ammunition sale and stipulated that Boster's presentation to Guatemala, pending Vance's decision on the sale, should emphasize human rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770297-0122) In telegram 5226 from Guatemala City, August 18, Boster replied in favor of an approval of the sale of 5 million rounds of ammunition and advised divorcing the announcement from other issues, such as human rights, in an effort to improve "mutual confidence and goodwill between us." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770298-1114)

Molina and Laugerud respectively and no human rights demarche at this time.

Pro

—It is a gesture of our confidence in Laugerud's responsible behavior on this issue.

Con

—It is not as forceful as the British would probably like us to be.

2. That Ambassador Boster make our points on Belize with Laugerud at the time he notifies him of the approval of the 5 million rounds.

Pro

—Guarantees that our concern about forward motion is raised at the highest level.

Con

—The favorable impact of our notification on the sale will be greatly diluted by the formal demarche to Laugerud.

Recommendations:

That you approve Option 1.⁴

ALTERNATIVELY, that we do Option 2.

⁴ According to a stamped date next to the checkmark, Vance indicated his approval of Option 1 on August 19 and wrote: "as modified." In telegram 198357 to Guatemala City, August 24, Boster reported his confirmation to Laugerud of the approval of the sale of 4 million rounds of ammunition. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77–12/78)

10. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 31, 1977

SUBJECT

Peace-Keeping

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala.]

2. *Belize-Guatemala*

Our most recent intelligence reports from Guatemala indicate that President Laugerud wants to settle this issue before leaving office at the end of his term in March 1978. He apparently may bring maps with him to Washington to use in his discussions with you.

NSC supports State's recommendation that you strongly encourage Laugerud to accept the British proposal to accept the territory south of the Moho River as the price for Belizean independence.² The alternative for Guatemala is increased international isolation. This may be a major issue at the UN this fall, as it was at the OAS in June.³ You may want to hint that as support for Belizean independence in these organizations grows, it will be increasingly difficult for the U.S. to adhere to a position of neutrality.

Belize will hardly be happy to give up any land, but we are supporting the British proposal because we understand the need for a country like Guatemala to save face. A decision by Laugerud to accept the British proposal would signify a breakthrough to 100 years of tension.⁴

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala.]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 65, Territorial Disputes: 4/77-12/78. Confidential. The date is handwritten on the memorandum. Tab 1 is attached but not printed.

² Carter underlined the phrase "south of the Moho River." In a August 27 action memorandum from Stedman to Vance, sent through Habib, Vance indicated his approval, on August 29, of Option 3: "Tell Guatemala there seems to us to be no chance for anything more than a line drawn at or near the Moho." Vance deleted the following phrase, "and that if Guatemala rejects this offer we will be forced to reassess our position of 'neutrality' on this issue." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P770150-1482)

³ See Document 5.

⁴ Brzezinski wrote "(Tab 2)" in the right-hand margin next to this sentence.

Tab 2

Paper Prepared in the Department of State⁵

Washington, undated

PEACEKEEPING: BELIZE-GUATEMALA

ISSUE FOR DECISION

What formula should the President adopt for promoting a settlement of the Belize dispute?

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Territorial cession is the core problem of this dispute, which has lasted more than 100 years. If it can be solved, both parties believe other troublesome issues—oil rights and revenues, territorial sea boundaries, economic relations, Belizean neutrality—can be settled.

For Guatemala, territory is indispensable to a settlement. Its value is primarily symbolic: it allows the military to save face, but it also guarantees access to the Caribbean from the Bay of Amatique. Incumbent Belizean politicians believe that any territorial cession would be political suicide. Great Britain has been most reluctant to force Belize to give up any territory. Belize enjoys strong support and its supporters plan to raise the matter again at this year's UNGA.

Secretary Vance told David Owen in June that a peaceful settlement would require some sort of territorial deal.⁶ He has also told Guatemala's Foreign Minister that their demand for territory south of the Monkey River is totally unrealistic.⁷ Partly as a result of our pressure, in July the British "floated" with the Guatemalans the possibility of cession of land south of a line at or near the Moho River.⁸ Guatemala has not yet responded to the offer, but our Ambassador reports they believe the

⁵ Confidential.

⁶ Telegram 144622 to London, June 21, included the text of a letter from Vance to Owen which stated that "an embittered revanchist Guatemala would certainly not be the most noble birthright for Belize," and urged Owen "to give the most serious consideration to the possibility of making a territorial offer which Guatemala could accept." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770222-0142) In telegram 10383 from London, June 23, the Embassy confirmed delivery of Vance's letter to Owen's Private Secretary Ewen Fergusson on June 22. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770224-0955)

⁷ See Document 5.

⁸ See Document 6.

Moho would not be saleable at home, particularly during a Presidential election year.⁹

THE OPTIONS

1. Continue our policy of "neutrality," which we have maintained ever since the collapse of our 1965–68 mediation effort. We would encourage both sides to address the crucial issues, but avoid taking sides to compel a solution.

Pro:

- Keeps the burden of the negotiations on the parties concerned.
- Keeps us out of the middle of this long and difficult dispute.

Con:

—Will not prevent the parties from reaching an impasse on the territorial issue.

—Both sides would like us to be more involved.

2. Pressure the British to make a slightly more generous, and firm, territorial offer than the line at or near the Moho.

Pro:

—This is what the Guatemalans would like us to do; it would increase chances of a lasting settlement if the British agreed.

Con:

—The British would have great difficulty offering any more territory; they believe they have already been more than generous.

3. Press the Guatemalans to accept the line floated by the British. If the Guatemalans accept, insure that the British do not renege.¹⁰

Pro:

—This is the course of action most likely to please the British.

—It would have "shock therapy" value for Guatemala to realize that time is of the essence if they expect to get anything.

Con:

—Given the Presidential election campaign, it might be difficult for Guatemala to accept regardless of our encouragement.

⁹ In telegram 5332 from Guatemala City, August 23, Boster reported that he had urged Molina to settle the Belize dispute during President Laugerud's term. Molina replied that "it got down to the question of what the administration could sell to Guatemalan public opinion, and the President did not think that the Moho line could be sold to public opinion here." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770304–1182)

¹⁰ An unknown hand circled the number of this paragraph and placed a checkmark in the right-hand margin next to it.

4. Pressure both parties to submit the territorial issue to binding international arbitration or adjudication—through the International Court of Justice or a special arbitral panel.

Pro:

—Keeps the U.S. out of the middle in the dispute but moves the parties along the road to peaceful settlement.

Con:

—In previous contacts the British in particular have been most unenthusiastic about this formula.

Recommendations:

That you approve Option 3, to press the Guatemalans to accept the British offer of a line at or near the Moho.¹¹

ALTERNATIVELY, that we pressure the British to offer Guatemala slightly more territory.

ALTERNATIVELY, that we stay out of the middle as long as the parties are talking to each other.

ALTERNATIVELY, that we support binding international arbitration or adjudication.

¹¹ Carter indicated his approval of Option 3 and initialed in the margin next to it.

11. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 7, 1977, 2:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

President Carter/President Kjell Laugerud Garcia Bilateral

PARTICIPANTS

GUATEMALA

President Laugerud
Foreign Minister Molina
Ambassador Maldonado
Secretary of Public Relations, Giron Lemus

U.S.

President Carter
Vice President Mondale
Secretary Vance
Assistant Secretary Todman
Ambassador Boster
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. Robert Pastor, NSC

After an opening exchange of pleasantries, President Carter said he was pleased to hear that Mrs. Laugerud was feeling better, and that he looked forward to meeting her that evening. President Laugerud explained that she had been in a hospital in Houston, that her condition had been delicate, but that she was much better now, although she would have to watch her activities for some time yet.

The President referred to Guatemala's difficulties with Panama following a statement by General Torrijos and said he had informed President Laugerud (they had just returned from a private conversation in the President's office) that General Torrijos was eager to have normal relations restored.² He said the U.S. would like to see the problem resolved as it was not good for Panama, not good for Guatemala, and indeed not good for anyone. President Laugerud explained that in 1974 there had been a meeting with several of the Presidents in which they had agreed to mutually support each other and this had been repeated

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77-12/78. Secret. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room and lasted from 2:55 to 3:40 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials) Laugerud and Torrijos were in Washington for the Panama Canal Treaty signing ceremonies.

² No memorandum of this conversation was found. Relations between Guatemala and Panama soured after Panama voted in favor of Belizean independence at the 1976 UN General Assembly. Torrijos visited Belize on May 8 and offered comments supporting Belizean independence. According to telegram 3146 from Guatemala City, May 19, Guatemala suspended diplomatic relations with Panama on May 19, one day after the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* quoted Torrijos saying to a group of journalists: "Yes, I have stuck my hands into Belize and I'm not going to take them out . . . ever since Laugerud learned this he is angry with me. I am going to help George Price because he is a mystic (sic) and needs it and it doesn't matter to me that Kjell Laugerud is angry." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770179-0610)

in 1975. Nevertheless, there had been the unfortunate incident with President Torrijos which had deeply hurt his people. There had been a lot of criticism, he said, in the Guatemalan press about his joining Torrijos in Washington and he had explained that his action was in support of the Panamanian people. He noted that Guatemala had never had any problems with the Panamanian people, pointing out that there were still fourteen Panamanians in one of their military schools.

The President said he hoped that the matter could be solved peacefully. He said that we would try to use our good offices without interfering in any way.

The President then invited President Laugerud to speak about Belize, which he noted was a question we were very interested in without having any desire to interfere.

President Laugerud said that he had brought some maps to help illustrate the way things were at the moment. He recalled that all Central American countries had achieved their independence from Spain in 1821 without war or bloodshed. At that time Belize was part of Guatemala, although Spain had granted Great Britain permission to cut lumber in some parts of the area many years before. Great Britain, without any authorization from Spain, had started to move inland. They had had a treaty which just enabled them to cut lumber and not establish any military outposts but they did not respect the boundaries set by Spain. By 1856 they had reached south to the Sarstun River and had moved west to the present boundary. In none of the treaties signed at that time, President Laugerud pointed out, had there been any mention about the chain of keys off the coast, neither in the treaties with Spain nor with Guatemala.

President Laugerud then presented the map made in the US at the request of the US Senate from which it could be seen that the British were settled at various points along the Atlantic Coast but that Belize was not shown as occupied.³ Nevertheless, the British now claim that they own all the territory and want to give independence to the people of Belize. We recognize, President Laugerud said, the right of human beings to decide their own destiny, but not at the expense of our own territory. We have been negotiating for twenty years and have not received a concrete proposal from the British. We have tried to negotiate and feel both sides should give something to make a compromise possible. We do not want to humiliate the British, but we do not want to be humiliated ourselves.

During the last meeting with the British in Washington in July, President Laugerud continued, the situation became very tense, and

³ Map not found.

he kept in close touch with Ambassador Boster, personally and on the telephone.⁴ We received reports that Britain was going to grant independence to Belize in the first week of July, and the British thought that Guatemala was considering war. My country wants to solve this problem peacefully, the President said. Anyone can start a war, but no one knows how to end them. I am not mad, he said, and do not want to start a war.

Recalling the visit to Guatemala last year of British representatives Richards and Rowlands, he said he had been very clear with them about his desire to settle the issue with honor for both sides but that if there were a unilateral grant of independence, Guatemala would be humiliated and would have no choice but to fight. The Guatemalan constitution provides that Belize is part of Guatemala, and Guatemalan school children had been taught for years that this was so. It was deeply imbedded in the consciousness of the Guatemalan people that Belize was part of Guatemala.

Further, the Constitution said that the President was responsible for taking all actions to recover that part of their territory, and their armed forces were responsible for the honor, integrity and defense of the territory. In this day and age he was aware that Guatemala could not claim the whole territory; indeed, he was even willing to give away 4/5 of Belize to find a peaceful solution.

He noted that this possibility had not been presented to the Guatemalan people as they would have to negotiate a settlement first and then present the matter to Congress and the Council of State as only they could change the constitution, and would need then to consult the Guatemalan people. President Laugerud noted that he would need to present two options and explain that one would mean war, and the other would mean peace and dignity. But they were worried, he said, because they never seemed to get a concrete proposal from the British. President Laugerud then passed a map to the President showing the line which he said they had presented to the British in their last meeting in July, noting that this would give away 4/5 of Belize.⁵ He said he was not even sure the Guatemalan Congress would approve this line but he said they had to start in some way.

The President asked about the British response. President Laugerud said, presenting another map, that their response would make the President laugh.⁶ He said all the British were proposing was a water corridor, which was an insult to Guatemala. This was just an assurance

⁴ See Documents 6 and 7.

⁵ Map not found.

⁶ Map not found.

that Guatemala could sail its ships. The President asked if we could help. He noted that he already had enough problems but asked if President Laugerud knew any way we could be of assistance, noting that he did not have any feelings about it one way or the other.

President Laugerud replied that he hoped the British would negotiate, with the assistance of the US Government. He said that the British know that they are a nuclear power, and that we in Guatemala are a small country. "They know that they can beat the hell out of us, but we are still men and will stand for our rights." The President said he was sure the British did not want to fight; he asked if President Laugerud thought there was any prospect of acceptance by the two Governments of a mediator, who would make a proposal on territorial lines. Should we encourage the British to negotiate or would mediation be better? the President asked.

President Laugerud said that he had thought of requesting Carter's assistance as an intermediary because Britain has never made a constructive proposal. When Rowlands had been in Guatemala, he said he had told him very clearly that he could not go to the Congress and report to them that he had lost Belize.

The President noted that one of the international circumstances that now existed was the growing support for Belize's independence, even among Guatemala's own neighbors, and he felt that the longer the question was delayed the stronger would become the movement for Belize to receive independence with its present borders intact. So there was some pressure of time, the President said. He said he had heard the Moho River mentioned as a possible boundary. Was this line too far south to be considered, he asked President Laugerud. President Laugerud replied "yes;" south of the Moho was all swamp land.

The President asked how the people in the area felt; would they want to join Guatemala? Have they formed an allegiance to one country or the other? President Laugerud said that they really didn't have a high level of national consciousness, but he believes if there were no British pressure, they would freely choose to go back to Guatemala. He noted that many of the towns such as Punta Gorda had Spanish names. He said that they had made a survey and there were no more than 10,000 inhabitants in the area south of the Monkey River. Punta Gorda was the largest and had a population of only 2,100. Of these many were Mestizos, Caribes, and blacks but there were also Quiches, a tribe of Indians from Guatemala, Hindus and Mayans. President Carter asked if Punta Gorda was most important? President Laugerud said it was important, and it could become a free port, thereby solving the problem of international waters in the Bay of Amatique, which could cause serious problems with Honduras and Belize. President Carter asked if this could be a cause of permanent tension and President

Laugerud replied that it could. President Laugerud added that the British had talked of a substantial contribution for development but noted that this was a vague term. Secretary Vance said that what the British meant was a certain amount of money and that the amount could be established. President Laugerud commented that they did not want to be considered beggars.

President Laugerud recalled that Rowlands had told him that it would be very difficult for the British to explain to other countries in the Commonwealth how they could make 10,000 people move to the North. President Laugerud said he had been upset to hear this because in other places hundreds of thousands of people had been moved and he was not even sure the 10,000 in Belize would want to move. In any case, he said this would be better than burying 4,000 people if they went to war. That would be the last extreme, he said; they did not want war but they would not be humiliated.

The President asked if the language in the area was Spanish. President Laugerud explained that it was in the South, and it varied in the other parts of the country. The President asked if Punta Gorda were Spanish, and President Laugerud said that it was.

President Carter asked how the British would respond if someone like Sol Linowitz were to try to mediate and propose a solution that would enable all sides to save face. Secretary Vance suggested as an alternative that Britain and Guatemala first negotiate. After reaching agreement, they could appoint a mediator, who would legitimize the agreement, permitting both sides to save face.

President Laugerud didn't like either idea. Foreign Minister Molina said that the British contention that the Belizean people wanted independence was a great fallacy. He pointed out that a few weeks ago the opposition party had urged in a demonstration that the people should be consulted.

The President asked if there were a delineation north of Punta Gorda, and asked whether Guatemala would be willing to abide by a referendum taken with the people in the area, perhaps under UN supervision. President Laugerud replied that he would have to consult his Congress first as he did not have that authority. He would have to go to his Congress and present options to them. He went on to say that he appreciated, however, what the President had said a little earlier about the fact that the problem was going to get more difficult with the passage of time. He noted that President Carter had solved the Panama Canal problem by acting in good faith on this difficult issue, but they had never felt that the British had acted in good faith. Their proposal about the Moho River was an insult. The Guatemalan people would never accept a solution of that nature and would force their armed forces to take action. He said that, as a soldier, he knew the terrible consequences of such an action.

President Carter noted that this was a very serious problem. He asked President Laugerud if he would prefer to see a solution reached while he was still in office. President Laugerud said that he would. Noting that the problem had existed for years, he said he realized that the buck stops with him. He said he could postpone the problem, but that it was the problem of the past, and he did not want to do that. He would face his responsibilities, he said, but he would have to present a solution which could be accepted by the Congress and the people. The President said the Congress presumably did not want to take a position without knowing the options. President Laugerud noted that these possibilities, which they had been discussing, had not been revealed to the Guatemalan people, and the people would need to know. President Carter said that he gathered that as far as most Guatemalans were concerned, all Belize was part of Guatemala. President Laugerud said this was so, and, therefore, with President Carter's help, he must find a way to solve the problem with the British. He added that he did not want to humiliate the British.

Secretary Vance noted that the British felt constrained in giving away land that Belize felt was theirs. For the British, therefore, the easiest way was to throw the question to the United Nations. He said that he had urged them not to do that, but instead to stay with the negotiations with Guatemala. He said the problem was to get a realistic offer on the table.

The President noted that the British were willing to concede the territory south of the Moho. Guatemala responded that the line should be on the Monkey. Therefore, the important question was how the people in between these two lines felt. If these people wanted to be part of Belize, that would be an important factor in the eyes of the world. Another important factor might be the question of a financial contribution, but he gathered that President Laugerud felt this was not so important and would be embarrassing. He thought that a blunt discussion without restraint between the British and the Guatemalans should help toward a solution. He mentioned the possibility that someone, from the United Nations or perhaps a distinguished representative from the US, might try to mediate; perhaps he would come up with a compromise which all sides could say they didn't like, but that was the best they could do. President Laugerud said that he could think of one man to which no one could object as a mediator—President Carter. He went on to note that twice they had tried to go to the international courts on this issue, but the British had never agreed because they knew they would lose. They preferred to take the matter to the UN where it was treated as a political issue; however, the issue was really a legal question and not a political question. The President said he had not talked to the British, but thought they not only wanted to

save face, but also had to consider Belize's interests. President Laugerud said the British wanted to leave because there was nothing left in Belize; they had taken all the wood, all the mahogany.

Secretary Vance asked whether the date for the next meeting with the British was on September 27. Foreign Minister Molina confirmed that it was, and that it would be held in New York with Foreign Secretary Owen. The President said it might be good if President Laugerud would permit Secretary Vance to discuss this with the British and try to expedite a solution. He said we had no desire to be mediator but if they should think it desirable in the future that someone should be a communicator who could try to help delineate the problem, we could talk about it. He said he thought that President Laugerud had acted very constructively.

President Laugerud said that he had told a group of Panamanian newsmen last night that the Panama Canal problem had been solved because President Carter had had the moral courage to take a difficult decision. If the British had similar good faith, the two sides could reach a solution.

President Laugerud then recalled the crisis in July and noted that in his meetings and telephone conversations with Ambassador Boster, he had responded very fast to President Carter's suggestions. The President said he had monitored these discussions, and appreciated Guatemala's restraint. The President closed the conversation by asking that the talk be held very confidential.

NOTE:

During the ride back from the White House to the Guatemalan residence, Foreign Minister Molina commented to President Laugerud that they would have to think very seriously about President Carter's suggestion about a "communicator, an honest broker." He asked Ambassador Boster if he thought the President had any one particularly in mind. Ambassador Boster said not as far as he knew.⁷

⁷ Telegram 5829 from Guatemala City, September 14, reported that Laugerud considered his September 7 meeting with Carter to be a "substantial success" and that he "realized that the President could not make a commitment to settle the Belize issue, but he thought he would try to help." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770334-0056)

12. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, October 1, 1977, 0421Z

236273. Subject: Secretary's Bilateral With Guatemalan Foreign Minister: Belize. Ref: London 16136.²

1. The Secretary's abbreviated bilateral meeting with Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina at the UN September 27, cut short by the Secretary's need to return to Washington, was devoted entirely to Belize.

2. Molina, confirming that he was to meet the next day with British Foreign Secretary Owen on Belize, offered a generally positive reaction to the exploratory talks which had been held recently in London between a team of Guatemalan negotiators and British representatives (London 16136). He said that for the first time there had been real advances in the conversations. They had not come to any definite conclusions and no formal commitments had been made, but certain formulas had been advanced for consideration and the British had shown themselves more reasonable. At least, the British understood, Molina said, that an outlet to the sea was very important to Guatemala. He noted, however, that the two sides were still far apart.

3. After a map review of some of the possible territorial divisions which had been discussed in London and a reference by Molina to a possible demarcation line running west from the mouth of the Monkey River, the Secretary noted that he had talked with the British and that he thought that the Monkey River was out of the question as far as the British were concerned. He said that a settlement based on a line in the region of the Moho plus the Ranguana and Sapodilla Cays was something that the British could be pressed to do and we could lean pretty hard on them to do it. But the Secretary said he saw little flexibility north of the Moho and Aguacate Rivers.

4. Molina argued that the Guatemalan Government could not sell a Moho settlement to the Guatemalan public, quoting President Laugerud to this effect. The President had said, he noted, that what they

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770358–0623. Secret; Priority. Sent for information Priority to Belize City and London. Drafted by Boster; cleared by Todman and in S and S/S; approved by Matthews. No other record of the conversation was found.

² In telegram 16136 from London, September 27, Brewster described the recent "theoretical" talks between the Guatemalan delegation and U.K. Government: "Despite the apparent atmospheric and procedural success of the talks, it seems evident that HMG does not believe they will lead to early resolution of this difficult dispute." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770352–0249)

could try to sell was the Monkey. It was pointed out to Molina that the British could not sell the Monkey River to Price, and indeed would have a hard time persuading him to accept any territorial cession, especially a cession involving the cays. Molina observed that it was the Guatemalans who were being asked to relinquish all the territory. The Secretary said he would have to be honest and tell Molina there was not a chance in the world for a settlement on the Monkey.

5. Assistant Secretary Todman pointed out that what was happening was that there was more and more support, including among Latin Americans, for Belize's territorial integrity. Molina said he did not think this was true for the Latin American countries, except for Panama, but the Secretary said he knew of six such Latin American governments. Todman noted that the effect of this would be to strengthen the British position.

6. There was a general discussion of a joint program of development in the area, during which Molina noted the possibility of consulting the wishes of the inhabitants of the area after five years. He contended that the affected population of some 9,000 were largely Mayan in origin. He acknowledged the desirability of joint exploration of the cays area and said he thought, if oil were found, there should be arrangements to divide it.

7. The Secretary agreed to Molina's request that they meet again following Molina's meeting with the British Foreign Secretary.

Christopher

13. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala, the Embassy in the United Kingdom, and the Consulate in Belize City¹

Washington, October 10, 1977, 1529Z

243504. Subject: Secretary's Meeting With Foreign Minister Molina.

1. The Secretary, Mr. Habib and Amb Todman met with Foreign Minister Molina, Amb. Asensio Wunderlich and Amb Herrera on Oct 6 to hear Molina's report on his talk with Foreign Secretary Owen.

2. Molina said he was not very happy with his talk; the British had gone back on what they said in London. Owen had told him the two sides were far apart and Britain reserved the right to grant Belize independence at any moment. Molina said this was very disturbing and he had transmitted it to Laugerud who was also disturbed. Owen had said he couldn't promise that Premier Price would relinquish an inch; Molina commented if that is the British position he did not see how they could negotiate. Owen was interested in a saleable agreement, so was Guatemala. Owen mentioned the Moho-Aguacate line plus the 2 cays, but could not promise Belize would accept it. Belize would have a 3-mile territorial sea which Molina thought satisfactory. Owen had said the Monkey River was not negotiable and added the UK was negotiating only because of the wishes of the U.S. Molina explained that he asked about the territory between the Monkey and Moho. In London a development project and later consultations of the population had been suggested, but it seemed the Foreign Office officials' opinions were not necessarily those of Owen.

3. The Secretary said we have concluded the British can go no farther than the Moho, Aguacate plus the two cays and they would be willing to use their best efforts to persuade Belize to go along. We have heard from a number of Caribbean and Latin countries; there is a great deal of support for Belize. Molina mentioned statements of Cuba and Barbados supporting Belize and the Secretary noted that of Jamaica also.

4. Molina said they had been optimistic after the London talks and discussion of the possibility of a joint economic program which perhaps would be saleable in Guatemala, but the Moho line was not very saleable. He asked if it might be possible to have later consultations on the territory between the Monkey and Moho. The Secretary saw no

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770369–0917. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared in ARA/CEN, S/S, and P; approved by Todman. Telegram sent unchanged to USUN on October 23 with the same telegram number. (Ibid.) No other memorandum of conversation was found.

possibility and Mr. Habib said even the Moho and Aguacate would be difficult—they may have missed the boat. It is possible the Belizeans would be very difficult. Molina mentioned the possibility of hostilities.

5. Amb Todman noted the Commonwealth were all supporting Belize and were concerned that colonial borders be respected. There were complaints the U.S. was pro-Guatemala and supported an arrangement between Guatemala and the UK against the wishes of Belize. In addition, there is growing support for Belize outside Latin America. Some are thinking of calling on the UN to help guarantee Belize's borders. Molina agreed that some would try a UN resolution, but that would not solve the problem. The UN would not maintain a peace-keeping force in Belize forever; there was the danger of hostilities.

6. If there is a territorial settlement that Britain can sell, the Secretary urged Guatemala to consider it very seriously. Molina said he would take the information back to Laugerrud who would be disappointed, but Molina would inform him that they may have missed the boat. The President did not think the Moho line was saleable before but Molina would explain the situation. The Secretary noted the situation was getting more difficult; support for the Belizean position was more widespread.

7. Molina asked if the U.S. could do anything, perhaps through mediation. The Secretary and Habib said the British and Guatemalans would first have to reach a solution; then a mediator could be used to "save face" by presenting the same solution. Molina repeated that the situation was disturbing.

8. The Secretary told Molina that once Guatemala reaches a decision and a territorial settlement, we and the British would help try to get it through. Molina was concerned about the reaction of Guatemala, there was a critical period in July and another could occur. He said he would go to Laugerrud for a decision and let us know.

Vance

14. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 1, 1977, 5:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Belize

PARTICIPANTS

British

Mr. Ted Rowlands, Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs

Hugh Cortazzi, Deputy to Minister Rowlands

John Martin, Private Secretary to Mr. Rowlands

William Squire, Counselor, British Embassy

American

Secretary Vance

Under Secretary for Political Affairs Mr. Habib

Assistant Secretary for ARA, Mr. Todman

Donald Tice (notetaker)

Mr. Rowlands opened the discussion by saying that, in his view, by Thursday² it was possible there would be an agreement between himself and Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina on a Belize package. Rowlands said that the Guatemalans are “not coming up fighting” the way he had expected with regard to territory in addition to the Moho.³ On the other hand, Rowlands’ instructions had been to hold back on the cays and grant those as a final concession if necessary to obtaining an agreement. But, Molina had taken the cays for granted from the start and therefore Rowlands had already in effect had to concede them.

The central issue of the first day’s discussion was that of a major development project between the Monkey and Moho Rivers and its possible link to some type of consultations or plebisite. Rowlands said he was trying to talk the Guatemalans out of this because he could see no prospect for the British putting some 100 million pounds into a

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, unlabeled folder. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Tice on November 2 and approved by David Anderson (S/S) on November 8. The meeting took place in the Secretary’s office.

² November 3.

³ In telegram 254508 to Guatemala City, October 22, Vance noted that he was “convinced that the British have gone as far as it is possible for them” and instructed Andrews to advise Molina that “Guatemala should give very careful consideration to the British proposal,” which he described as “cession of territory up to the Moho River (along Aguacate Creek, but excluding the additional triangle from Orange Point), something on the cays and maritime frontiers, plus a joint development project.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770389–1043) In telegram 6581 from Guatemala City, October 22, Andrews confirmed that he delivered Vance’s message to Molina. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770390–0426)

project, which would be also funded by the Guatemalans, in an area for which there had been no final settlement with regard to sovereignty. In response to a question from the Secretary, Rowlands said that the idea of a joint development project had first been raised in the London talks by the British, but that it had become hopelessly complicated by the addition of the plebiscite link by the Guatemalans. The point Rowlands had made to the Guatemalans was why would they want to invest a lot of money in a project in an area where a subsequent referendum could very well go against them in a ratio of 9–1. Add to this the instability inherent in the unsolved sovereignty question implied by the plebisite and it did not seem to Rowlands that this made sense to either side.

Secretary Vance asked what in the economic sphere the British were prepared to offer in lieu of a joint project. Rowlands replied that the Guatemalans were eager to have some type of road system linking the Peten to the coast and he could propose the joint funding of such a system under which the British would bear some of the cost of the roads inside Guatemala.

Secretary Vance asked about the role of General Mendoza in these negotiations and whether he carries real authority. Rowlands replied that the British had been told quietly by the other Guatemalan negotiator, Skinner-Klee, that they should be solicitous of Mendoza because he would have a key role in delivering the military on any agreement.

Rowlands said that in his view there are five ingredients which will need to be included if an agreement is to be reached. These are:

1. a territorial settlement;
2. an agreement on the cays;
3. agreement on a development project or projects but without linkage to a plebiscite;
4. some provision for ongoing consultation with regard to feasibility of port construction and rights in connection with the ceding of the cays; and
5. how to process the whole package through to final agreement.

Secretary Vance said that the United States would, of course, be quite prepared to be helpful. Mr. Rowlands replied that the way in which we could probably be most helpful would be in mobilizing support for an agreement once it had been reached. Rowlands was no way near as sanguine as Mr. Habib seemed to be that Belizian Prime Minister Price would accept any agreement which entailed the ceding of territory. Price would be travelling to London next week and meeting with Rowlands. Rowlands would inform him of any agreement that had been reached with the Guatemalans and then it would be necessary for everyone that Price spoke with to stress to him the need to accept

the agreement. The Secretary mentioned that Price would be returning to New York and would be seeing Ambassador Young. The Secretary said that Rowlands should inform us immediately of Price's reaction so that we would know how to brief Andy Young for his discussion with Price.

Rowlands said that it would be key to obtaining support of the British Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean, that is, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados. In Rowlands' view, if we could have the Commonwealth countries and other key countries such as Canada, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia supporting the agreement, then Price would probably not "come out fighting" and would know that he had to accept the agreement.

Secretary Vance said that we understand the problem, that we will be thinking about it, and that we will be prepared to be helpful.

Rowlands then raised one final item which he said he considered to be key—this was the question of a security guarantee which he said loomed much larger in the Belizian view than it did to us. Mr. Habib asked whether an OAS guarantee would not take care of that since Belize would join the OAS upon gaining independence. Rowlands responded that there is a psychological problem there because the OAS is a Latin organization and Belize is not a Latin country. He felt that it might be more acceptable to Belize were there to be some type of expression of commitment or some type of guarantee jointly by the United States, Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean countries. Secretary Vance said that such things as commitments and guarantees pose us with some real problems with Congress, but that we would look to see what could be done in this area if in the final analysis an OAS guarantee would not be sufficient.

Mr. Habib said that one of the ways to reassure the Belizians would be for the British to leave a significant armed forces there for at least a couple of years after independence. This could be done under the guise of training the Belize military.

As the conversation ended Mr. Rowlands said that he would keep Mr. Habib, and through him the Secretary, informed of the progress of the talks.

15. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala, the Consulate in Belize City, and the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, November 10, 1977, 2120Z

269572. Subject: Belizean Negotiations.

1. On November 8 British Minister of State Rowlands told Belizean Premier Price that the UK in the last year veered between a defense guarantee and a negotiated settlement. They were unable to get the U.S. and several other governments on board on a defense guarantee. Pressure had now cracked the Guatemalans and the British believe they can get a negotiated settlement on the basis of the Moho, an adjustment in the western frontier and cession of the southern cays. They had gotten the Guatemalans to abandon the idea of a development project between the Moho and Monkey coupled with a plebiscite. Rowlands did not rpt not reveal that agreement was still lacking on a substitute development project. He also explained that a distinguished American mediator would overcome timing difficulties with both Guatemalan elections and forthcoming Belizean local elections and help put over an uncomfortable solution.²

2. Price said he could not agree to the package since it included territorial cession. On the basis of his November 7 conversation with Panamanian President Torrijos he believes a settlement without territorial cession will be possible under either of two Guatemalan Presidential candidates Generals Lucas or Peralta Mendez. Rowlands replied that the British disagreed with Torrijos' assessment, that Lucas in particular is a hardliner and that if no settlement reached now, it would be postponed for a long time. Price also stated that Torrijos said that if there were any cession of land in the South, the Mexicans would insist on cession in the North. Price acquiesced in Rowlands' proposal to seek the views of the Mexicans and to consult the Venezuelans, Panamanians, Canadians and other key governments to see if they would endorse a settlement involving minor territorial changes (i.e. what the British and Guatemalans have worked out).

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070-0921, P800020-0099. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared by Matthews and in S/S-O; approved by Habib. Telegram sent unchanged to the White House on November 11 with the same telegram number. (Ibid.)

² Municipal elections were held in Belize City on December 7. Price's party, the People's United Party, won no seats. The opposition United Democratic Party won all nine seats. (Telegram 864 from Belize City, December 8; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770457-0934)

3. Price on November 8 reiterated the same points to Foreign Secretary Owen and suggested maintaining the status quo for three years, and then seeking a better deal from a new Guatemalan administration. He was prepared to wait but was not prepared to contemplate cession of territory. He said he might be able to agree to some straightening of the western boundary and cession of the best cays, but nothing more. Price reiterated that Mexico would resurrect its claim if anything were ceded to Guatemala. Owen told Price: (1) it was clear at the Belize committee meeting in New York there was little chance of getting an international guarantee for Belize;³ (2) the British could not give Belize independence and defend it on their own in the face of Guatemalan hostility; (3) if Price wanted to maintain the status quo he could do so but he should reckon on 10 years rather than three and could not count on the British maintaining a large garrison or being able to reinforce every few months; (4) British willingness to support Belize depended upon the extent to which Belize was genuinely seeking settlement; and (5) if after consulting other countries in the region, the British concluded that territorial cession on the lines discussed with the Guatemalans was the best solution, the people of Belize should be consulted. If Price objected the British would be obliged to make their position public. Price said his own political future would be jeopardized by such a plan.

Vance

³ According to Young's report in telegram 3929 from USUN, October 20, the Commonwealth Committee met twice to discuss Belize in New York. The September 27 meeting produced the following proposals: "continued diplomatic efforts in Latin America to isolate Guatemala; call on the UK to begin arrangements for a constitutional convention 'for' Belizean independence," and "pursue the idea of an MDF in New York." The October 3 meeting focused on the Guatemalan-Belizean dispute over territorial cession. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770386–1082)

16. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala, the Consulate in Belize City, and the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, November 10, 1977, 2122Z

269573. Subject: Belize Negotiations.

1. Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina and British Commonwealth Secretary Rowlands met secretly in Washington November 1 to 3. They reached an agreement on cession of the territory south of the Moho-Aguacate line, straightening the western boundary and cession of the cays up to the Monkey River (Sapodilla and Ranguana). But the two sides are far apart on a development project. Guatemala asked the British to pave a road entirely inside Guatemala which would cost about \$70 million, considerably more than the British wish to spend. Secretary Vance met with Molina before and after the negotiations and with Rowlands during the negotiations.² Rowlands saw Under Secretary Habib after the negotiations.³

2. Molina told the Secretary before the negotiations that Guatemala favored a joint development project in the Toledo district followed by a plebiscite. The Secretary informed him that he thought the British could not accept a plebiscite. Molina stressed the importance of keeping any agreed settlement secret until after the March elections so Belize would not become a political issue. He thought the settlement could be made public in April and would pass the Council of State and Congress by May or June. He also emphasized the importance of a mediator, who would not mediate, but who was necessary in order to sell the agreement to the Guatemalan public.

3. Rowlands told the Secretary on November 1 that he was optimistic an agreement could be reached by November 3, but he was not very sanguine that Belizean Premier Price would accept any agreement which entailed ceding of territory. He said the U.S. could be helpful by mobilizing support for an agreement once it was reached. Support by the Caribbean Commonwealth and Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia would be very important in convincing Price that he had to accept an agreement. Rowlands brought up the question of a

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070-0917. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared by Matthews, Todman, Shelton, and in S/S-O; approved by Habib. Telegram sent unchanged to the White House on November 11 with the same telegram number. (Ibid.)

² No memoranda of conversation were found for Vance's two meetings with Molina. For Vance's November 1 meeting with Rowlands, see Document 14.

³ Not found.

security guarantee which loomed large to Belizeans. He related that Belize had psychological problems with an OAS guarantee since it was a Latin organization and mentioned a joint Caribbean, Canadian, U.S. expression of commitment. The Secretary said commitments posed real problems with Congress, but we would consider what could be done if an OAS guarantee would not be sufficient.

4. On November 3 after the negotiations, Rowlands told Habib the Guatemalans had requested black-topping of a 354 kilometer road wholly inside Guatemala at the cost of \$70 million. The British could not cede territory and also provide a large financial contribution. It was left that Rowlands would return to London and consult his government on what figure the British would be willing to provide with the understanding it would be much smaller than if it were not connected with territorial cession. Rowlands would talk to Price on November 8 and present the proposed territorial cession to him.

5. Molina told the Secretary on November 3 that the crucial problems—territorial boundary, maritime boundary, and the cays—had been resolved. The British did not accept the Guatemalan idea of a joint development project followed by a plebiscite so the GOG needed an alternative to sweeten the package presented to the Guatemalan people. They proposed the British pave a 354 kilometer dirt road running north-south in the Peten and eastern Guatemala. The preliminary estimated cost was \$70 million, but it might only cost \$50 million. Molina described the road project as a modern version of the cart road in the 1859 convention and emphasized that President Laugerud believed it necessary in order to sell a settlement to the Guatemalan public.⁴ Molina also stressed the importance of the “mediator” whose role would be to assist the negotiators, not mediate the dispute. The Secretary said once the British and Guatemalans had reached an agreement he would suggest names for a mediator and if help is needed with Price we would do what we could.

6. The fact of these negotiations not to mention their contents should be handled with the utmost confidentiality, because any leak would run the danger of compromising the Guatemalan position to a degree that could end any possibility of a settlement.

⁴ The 1859 Anglo-Guatemalan convention that set boundaries for British Honduras and led to the 1862 establishment of the crown colony included a provision for British assistance in building a road from Guatemala City to the Caribbean coast. Guatemala declared that the convention was nullified because the road was not built and subsequently refused to recognize British claims to Belizean territory.

7. A summary of British Foreign Secretary Owen's follow-on talk in London with Price follows septel.⁵

Vance

⁵ Not found.

17. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, November 21, 1977, 2201Z

278704. Subject: Belize Negotiations. Please pass the following information to Foreign Minister Molina.

1. After the British informed him of the agreement on territorial cession, Price met with Ambassador Andrew Young and Secretary Vance.² In both conversations he opposed cession of territory and said he had four alternatives:

A. Panama's Torrijos would help him win Latin support for independence without territorial cession. Torrijos advised Price he would get a better settlement from the next Guatemalan administration.

B. Mexican Foreign Minister would help find a solution but cautioned against cession to Guatemala since Mexico would revive its claim.

C. Price asked the U.S. to press Guatemala to give up its claim.

D. If none of the above worked, Price said he preferred the status quo to territorial cession. Ambassador Young and Secretary Vance told him that we believe now is the best time for a negotiated settlement

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077-2402. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Sent for information to London, Belize City, Mexico City, and Panama City. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared by Shelton and in S/S-O; approved by Habib. Telegram sent unchanged to the White House on November 22 with the same telegram number. (Ibid.)

² Telegram 4720 from USUN, November 16, reported on Price's November 10 meeting with Young. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067-1497, N770007-0671) No memorandum of conversation was found for Vance's conversation with Price.

and urged him to give the Anglo-Guatemala agreement serious consideration.

2. In an effort to help persuade Price to go along with the proposed settlement, we gave Torrijos our assessment of the situation and asked his help in convincing Price to accept a settlement. Torrijos said he would help in any way he could and will probably be speaking to Price in the very near future.³

3. We instructed our Ambassador in Mexico to seek assurances that Mexico would not pursue its claim to Belize.⁴ The Secretary plans to see Foreign Minister Roel on November 25 to discuss Belize.⁵ Although we do not know the final Mexican position, we believe Mexico will not revive its claim if Price agrees to go along with a settlement.

4. In view of the importance Price attaches to Latin support, we have instructed our Ambassadors in Caracas and Bogota to request their host countries' support in the effort to convince Price.⁶ We have also asked the same of the Canadians and Jamaicans.⁷ In no instance have we provided details of the proposed settlement.

Habib

³ In telegram 269577 to Panama City, November 10, Habib instructed Jorden to inform Torrijos that the chances of reaching a negotiated settlement regarding Belize "are best now" and that "we hope you will use your considerable influence to persuade Price to accept a negotiated settlement now." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–0816, P800020–1927) In telegram 272047 to multiple posts, November 12, the Department repeated the text of telegram 8104 from Panama City, November 12, in which Jorden reported to Vance and Habib that he had met with Torrijos to discuss Belize and that Torrijos had promised to "cooperate in finding a solution." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N770007–0510)

⁴ Telegram 270626 to Mexico City, November 11, Habib instructed Lucey to inform Roel that the "the chances of arriving at a settlement which would give Belize self-determination are greater now than they will be for a number of years" and that it would be "particularly helpful" if Mexico would "not pursue its claims to territory in the north of Belize." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840001–2269)

⁵ Telegram 283180 to London, November 26, reported that Vance spoke with Roel about Belize by phone on November 25. Roel announced that, rather than meeting with Vance, he would seek "fresh instructions" from Portillo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840081–2044)

⁶ In telegram 277168 to Caracas, November 18, Habib instructed Vaky to ask Consalvi to support a negotiated settlement regarding Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840086–1019) In telegram 277166 to Bogotá, November 18, Habib instructed the Chargé to ask Lievano-Aguirre to support a negotiated settlement regarding Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–2194)

⁷ In telegram 277167 to Ottawa, November 18, Habib instructed Enders to ask Jamieson to "convey to Price that a settlement now, involving minor territorial cession, is the best opportunity likely for a number a years for Belize to achieve self-determination, and that Canada supports a negotiated settlement." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–1906) In telegram 278703 to Kingston, November 21, Habib instructed Irving to ask Manley to support a negotiated settlement regarding Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840081–1856)

18. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 11, 1978, 1:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Belize

PARTICIPANTS

UK

Edward Rowlands, Minister of State
 Hugh Cortazzi, Deputy Minister
 John Martin, Private Secretary to Rowlands
 Joe Millington, First Secretary, British Embassy
 William Squire, First Secretary, British Embassy

United States

The Secretary
 Under Secretary Habib
 Assistant Secretary Todman
 Robert Pastor, NSC
 Donald C. Johnson, ARA/CEN (notetaker)

SUMMARY

Minister Rowlands reviewed the current state of Belize negotiations, and requested the Secretary's support for a modified form of mediation. The Secretary agreed to support the modified mediation form, to contact Sol Linowitz regarding his availability to act as mediator, and seek to convince the Mexicans to accept an American mediator. The Secretary instructed Ambassador Todman to raise the mediation issue with the Mexicans during the week of January 16 when he accompanies Vice President Mondale to Mexico. He is also to discuss this with Guatemalan Foreign Minister Molina when he visits Guatemala during the week of January 23. The Secretary agreed he would see Rowlands and Molina when they meet in Washington on January 26 and instructed that information on sensitive aspects of the negotiations be held to the absolute minimum of persons. End of summary.

At the Secretary's request, Minister Rowlands gave an analysis of the situation. British officials have had three conversations with Premier Price over the last 12 days, and he shows a great deal of flexibility. Rowlands gave the Secretary a memorandum reporting on these conversations, with the request that it be held very tightly.²

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Nodis 1978 Memorandum of Conversation for Secretary Vance. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Johnson on January 12; cleared in P; approved by Anderson (S/S) on January 26. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

² Not found.

Price was under extreme pressure at home, partly because of press stories which were leaking out on the status of the negotiations. Such leaks were most unhelpful, noted Rowlands, and he pointed to the most recent news story which had appeared January 11. Secretary Vance asked Ambassador Todman about that press report. Ambassador Todman summarized it for him, and the Secretary instructed Ambassador Todman that he wanted information about current discussions to be limited to those present plus one other person.

Rowlands said Latin American countries were flexible and Torrijos of Panama and Perez of Venezuela were willing to be helpful. The Mexicans are “awkward.”

The Caribbeans have been tough in their opposition. Rowlands plans to visit the area during the week of January 16 to discuss Belize with Manley and the Barbadians. He hopes to neutralize their opposition to settlement by having them agree to mediation. He has also asked Price to come to Kingston for discussions.

Rowlands pointed out that there were three “fuzzy” areas at the present time. They are:

a. *Mediation*—Rowlands made clear that there was no way he could get Price to agree to a mediation in which the results were pre-determined, and repeated this point at several other occasions throughout the conversation. Price can be convinced to agree to a mediation formula in which the result is not pre-determined, and Rowlands indicated he could “guarantee” that Price would accept such a formula at his meeting with Rowlands in Kingston.

b. *Financial Issue*—Rowlands made clear that any development project which would be funded by the British as part of the settlement would have to benefit both Guatemala *and* Belize, and not be simply for Guatemala. It would be impossible to sell Parliament on a cession accompanied by payment to Guatemala. Rowlands suggested that the financial issue was one which could be put to mediation or which could be taken out of the present negotiations entirely and dealt with separately.

c. *Draft Treaty Provisions*—Rowlands stated that it was unclear whether the draft treaty which had been under discussion was required by the Guatemalans to supplement the outcome on territorial cession. Price has problems with a number of the draft treaty’s provisions, particularly those dealing with defense and security, on the grounds that these provisions would further infringe on Belize’s sovereignty. Rowlands warned that many of the draft treaty provisions might have to be shed.

Rowlands concluded his summation of the situation by saying that, given time constraints, in view of the Guatemalan elections, if there

was no agreement on mediation by the end of January, the whole process could fall apart.

Secretary Vance asked whether a single mediator or several mediators were contemplated. Rowlands replied that only one person was required. Under Secretary Habib said Rowlands had previously mentioned Sol Linowitz to him. The Secretary asked whether Mr. Linowitz would be acceptable. Rowlands replied he thought Price would support Linowitz and that he did not see any problem from the Guatemalan side. The only objection might be Mexico's.

The Secretary replied that if Rowlands wanted him to contact Linowitz and speak to the Mexicans about accepting an American mediator, he would do so. Rowlands accepted readily.

The Secretary then asked about the financial issue. Rowlands replied that Foreign Minister Molina of Guatemala might have some problem accepting a development project for both Guatemala and Belize.

Under Secretary Habib asked whether the cays would still go to Guatemala. Rowlands replied that from the British point of view the issue of territory would not be reopened, but repeated that Price views defense provisions of the draft treaty as infringement of Belizean sovereignty. Price would be unable to agree to a cession of territory in addition to the treaty provisions.

Rowlands then returned to the issue of mediation, stating it was his objective to get a mediation agreement before the end of January. The Secretary indicated his agreement with this objective. Rowlands repeated his promise to get Price's concurrence on the modified concept of mediation.

Rowlands informed the Secretary that he and Molina would be meeting again in Washington on January 26. Ambassador Todman indicated that he would be seeing Molina on January 23 in Guatemala City, and the Secretary asked Ambassador Todman to raise the mediation issue with Molina at that time.³ In addition, the Secretary indicated he would be willing to meet with Molina again during Molina's stay in Washington. Rowlands replied that he would "try to neutralize the Caribbeans," during the intervening two weeks.

The Secretary reviewed for Rowlands his impressions of the December meeting in Washington with Prime Minister Manley of Jamaica.⁴ Manley and Jamaican Foreign Minister Patterson had come on very hard against territorial cession. After lunch, however, they

³ See Document 21.

⁴ See *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean, Document 184.

appeared to have modified their position so as not to rule out the possibility of some variation.

In closing this portion of the discussion, Rowlands returned to discuss the political position of Premier Price, saying that he had to “take the pressure off Price.” Price cannot appear to be jumping to accept a solution until he can demonstrate clearly that the consequence will be a secure independence for Belize. Price could not be appearing to let down his supporters in the Caribbean.

The Secretary noted his agreement, and said we would go ahead with those aspects that relate to us, and would see him again on the 26th.⁵ Rowlands replied that the British were not losing their nerve, and that there was no reason to give up on prospects for a solution.

⁵ Vance’s next meeting with Rowlands occurred on February 1; see Document 24.

19. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 12, 1978

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance’s Meeting with Rowlands on Belize²

I sat in on the meeting yesterday between British Minister of State, Ted Rowlands, and Secretary Vance to discuss the status of negotiations on Belize. Rowlands insisted that we agree to mediation by an American as soon as possible. He said that we should try to convince the Guatemalans and the Mexicans of the need for mediation and he would convince Price of Belize. He is also meeting with various Caribbean leaders to try to persuade them to support a settlement.

There are two items, in particular, which I want to bring to your attention. First, Rowlands suggested Sol Linowitz as a mediator, and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 2, Belize: 2/77–10/80. Secret. Inderfurth also initialed this copy of the memorandum.

² See Document 18.

he insisted that the mediator should be an American. I think the idea is an excellent one, but the timing is all wrong.³ First of all, Linowitz is going to be very much involved in the ratification process even though he no longer has an official position.⁴ The Belizean negotiations will not only take a great deal of time during the next three or four months, but they are also likely to require his urgent attention at different critical times. I could easily see the possibility of his having to be in Guatemala and in the Senate at the same time. Besides the question of timing, there is the problem of having Linowitz, the architect of a Canal Treaty which is hardly the focus of universal agreement, get stuck in the middle of another dispute. It will neither help Linowitz's reputation at the critical moment when he needs the most credibility, but it could rebound to affect the ratification process. At the minimum, it could divert attention to an issue which is even more difficult to understand than the Canal Treaties.

I saw that the President scribbled on Vance's Evening Report that the choice of Linowitz was okay with him.⁵ I spoke with Phil Habib about this issue after Vance's meeting, but I don't know whether Phil had an opportunity to raise it with Vance or if Vance had an opportunity to transmit it to Christopher or call Linowitz. I'm just flagging this issue because I believe it may have very significant implications for the Canal Treaties. You may want to call Vance to get up to date on this issue.

Incidentally, the problem of timing is inevitable since the present reasoning is that a settlement must be reached in Belize before the inauguration of a new President in Guatemala in July. Therefore, the next few months for the Belize issue, as well as for the Canal Treaties, are critical.

The second issue which I want to bring to your attention is the question of providing financial incentives for settlement to both Guatemala and Belize. Vance and Rowlands spoke about this, and the consequences seemed to be that some form of assistance would be necessary.

³ Brzezinski placed a vertical line and a question mark next to this passage and wrote at the top of the page: "RP Should we be *mediating at all*? ZB."

⁴ "Ratification process" refers to the submission to the Senate of the Panama Canal Treaties for ratification.

⁵ The Department's evening report to Carter described Vance's meeting with Rowlands, noting: "Rowlands suggested Sol Linowitz as a possible mediator, and Cy agreed to contact him to see if he would be willing, and to consider other possible candidates if Sol is not available." Carter wrote in the margin: "Linowitz: ok—Our administration no." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 2, Belize: 2/77-10/80)

Given the President's frugality, and our predisposition not to use US money to achieve a settlement which is in the interest of the parties anyway, we may want to raise this issue with the President before going much further.

20. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Ankara and the Embassies in Guatemala and Mexico¹

Washington, January 21, 1978, 0056Z

Tosec 10126/17102. Guatemala for Ambassador, Mexico for Ambassador & Todman. Subject: Set-Back in the Belize Negotiations.

1. As reviewed in President's evening reading file,² Price has greatly hardened his position and prospects for early settlement have receded. Opposition criticism in Belize apparently led Price to harden his position after the British thought they had his acquiescence to the modified plan of mediation.³ Todman met with Price in Miami yesterday; conversation confirmed negative British report.⁴ Price did say at end conversation that something might be worked out if either cession or difficult provisions of treaty dropped. Todman will pursue issue with Mexicans

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148–1564. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Bushnell; cleared in S/S–O; approved by Bushnell. Sent for information Immediate to the White House.

² Not found.

³ In telegram 477 from Kingston, January 20, the Embassy reported on Rowlands's meetings with Price January 18–19. Rowlands was "bitterly disappointed" by Price's announcement that "under no circumstances could Belize agree to 'mediation involving territorial cession.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780031–0710)

⁴ In telegram 1188 from Mexico City, January 21, the Embassy reported on Todman's January 19 meeting with Price at the Miami airport. During the meeting, Price commented on his January 18–19 meetings with Rowlands in Kingston: "Rowlands asked Price to agree to accept mediation without any prearranged solution, but Rowlands then stated under questioning that once Price agreed to such mediation he would be morally bound to accept mediation proposal which would certainly be territorial cession plus treaty arrangement tying Belize to Guatemala." Price declined to agree to these terms and said "he would prefer see his country continue as a colony rather than agree to such terms." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780031–0918)

and Guatemalans next few days but without inserting us between any directly involved parties.⁵

2. However, we feel British may in desperation make effort move us into mediation with larger number issues open than can realistically be resolved in brief period before change of government in Guatemala. Thus we recommend you send following message to Rowlands:

Begin text. I am as disappointed as I know you must be with the latest developments on Belize. Terry Todman saw Price yesterday and got the same treatment although Price seemed to think some cession, but less than Guatemala expects, might be possible if difficult treaty provisions dropped. I wish you the very best luck in putting things back together again. But I think I should also say that, while we were quite prepared to play a key role in unwrapping a hard boiled egg, our many touchy relations in the Hemisphere force us to be quite sure it is not a soft boiled egg before we take on that role. I will be looking forward to your further reports and I fully understand that you may want to slip the previously discussed meeting schedule. End text.

Christopher

⁵ Telegram 1209 from Mexico City, January 21, reported on Todman's January 20 discussion with Lopez Portillo about Belize during which Todman suggested that Mexico could act as a "third party" to help the United Kingdom and Guatemala reach a "negotiated settlement." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780032-1226) Telegram 466 from Guatemala City, January 24, reported that during Todman's January 23 meeting with Molina "Todman expressed serious doubt to Molina that Price will accept both a territorial cession and the contemplated treaty articles spelling out a close post-independence relationship between Guatemala and Belize." (See Document 21)

21. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, January 24, 1978, 0213Z

466. For Bushnell From Todman. Subj: Belize: Todman Conversations in Guatemala January 23.

1. Accompanied by Ambassador and ARA/CEN Director Matthews, Todman was received January 23 by Foreign Minister Molina who also participated in longer subsequent conversation with President Laugerud.²

2. On the basis of his recent contacts with Price, Todman expressed serious doubt to Molina that Price will accept both a territorial cession and the contemplated treaty articles spelling out a close post-independence relationship between Guatemala and Belize. He said it may be that Price can be persuaded to accept some kind of cession, however unpalatable, but he will not accept anything he sees as “tying” Belize to Guatemala.

3. Molina seemed sincerely taken aback. He said Price himself had been party to the earlier UK-Guatemalan negotiations which had led to agreement in principle on all parts of the treaty except the territorial adjustment and two other minor articles. Guatemala had taken it for granted that all of the parties accepted the previously agreed parts of the proposed settlement. Molina stated that Belize’s “natural relations” are with Guatemala. The GOG was particularly interested in that part

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780034–0889. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to London, Mexico City, and Belize City.

² In telegram 488 from Guatemala City, January 24, Todman covered a number of topics discussed with Laugerud. Todman reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to human rights. Laugerud “lamented the inefficiency of the existing legal apparatus in dealing with terrorists and criminals” and linked “the remaining vigor of the terrorist left in Guatemala” to Cuba and Fidel Castro’s “unreasoning hatred” of Guatemala due to Guatemala’s role as a training and staging area for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Todman expressed the hope that the upcoming human rights report on Guatemala would “cause no problems.” Laugerud responded that “no one has a monopoly on the truth” and that the report would be incomplete without Guatemala’s version of events. Finally, they discussed Guatemala’s September 1977 request to buy F–5 airplanes from the United States. Todman noted the Presidential policy against the sale of supersonic jets in the Central American region and said he was “not optimistic” that Carter would make an exception for Guatemala. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780039–0375, D780035–1088) In an April 7 action memorandum from Todman and Gelb to Acting Secretary Christopher, sent through Benson and Newsom, Christopher decided to refuse the sale of F–5Es to Guatemala. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780066–2149) Telegram 2381 from Guatemala City, April 20, confirmed that Boster informed Laugerud that the United States had turned down his request for F–5Es. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780170–0024)

of the draft treaty which called for formalized security consultations. Guatemala is fearful of the vacuum which would occur when Britain withdraws and which could be filled by Cuba.

4. Todman also expressed uncertainty that a pre-arranged mediation would work. It may be necessary to give the mediator more scope than was earlier contemplated. Molina did not reject out of hand the notion of a more open-ended mediation process but stated that Guatemala would have to know the terms of reference before it could render a considered opinion.

5. Todman stressed that the realities of the situation were such that the attitude of Mexico will somehow have to be taken account of in a settlement process. Molina resisted this idea, noting that Mexico had given up its rights in Belize pursuant to its 1893 treaty with the UK. Todman said that Mexico was willing to forego its latent claims in the interest of self-determination but that any negotiation, in Mexico's view, should be based on that principle. Mexico, moreover, preferred negotiation within an international body.

6. Molina responded that GOG would never accept Mexican "interference" and expressed puzzlement about Mexico's wishing to insert itself. Todman hoped Molina would think about some formula allowing Mexico to at least be seen as an interested party. (Later Molina and President appeared not to object to idea, broached by Todman, of mediator "consulting" Mexico as well as other interested parties like Honduras.)

7. In any event, Todman stressed, if there is no further flexibility in the GOG position on these matters, it is better for the USG to know it lest we involve ourselves in an effort doomed from the start.

8. Todman covered much the same ground with the President, stressing Rowland's current pessimism and noting Torrijos's efforts to be helpful in Kingston.

9. President Laugerud commented that the more time that passes the harder the problem will be to resolve. Tradition to the contrary, he hoped he would not have to bequeath this problem to his successor—it shouldn't be allowed to go on indefinitely. Nevertheless, it must be understood that Guatemala, in preparing to renounce its claim to the vast bulk of Belizean territory, is making the concession. He reaffirmed, also, that if a unilateral grant of independence should ensue, Guatemala would have no choice but "to react." The GOG was not close-minded and could look again at the treaty provisions, but Price must understand that he, Laugerud, must face the Guatemalan people. The moment would come when Guatemala would have to say this far and no further. Molina described the situation as a backward step, a "reshuffling of the deck." Price was abusing the good faith both of Guatemala and

the UK. He also raised the question of the “substantial development contribution” which Britain had earlier proposed.

10. Todman asked that, between now and the next conversations with the UK (Molina indicated they were likely to take place the week of January 30), Guatemala review the draft treaty provisions and see if there is any room from the Guatemalan perspective for flexibility. For our part, we would urge that Price define with precision where his objections to the draft treaty lie. We noted that Price is scheduled to meet with Owens on January 24.

11. In response to a question on whether he could get an agreement ratified, President Laugerud drew an analogy between the difficulty he expects in seeking eventual approval of a settlement with President Carter’s legislative problems over the canal treaties. Laugerud concluded, however, that he felt confident of his ability to obtain approval for a reasonable settlement.

12. For London: Please inform Rowlands and Price of the contents of this message.

13. For Mexico: Please share substance of this message with Roel.

Boster

22. Action Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Bushnell) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, January 27, 1978

SUBJECT

Belize—Whither Now

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Shall we informally provide the British with our assessment of the feasibility of an early settlement?

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P860124–0962. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Tice and cleared by Pfeifle. There is no indication that Vance saw this memorandum. Tabs 1 and 2 are attached but not printed.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Over the past few days consultations involving, in various combinations, Todman, Price, Laugerud and Molina, Lopez-Portillo and Roel, and Owen and Rowlands, indicate that prospects for an early Belize settlement are less than we, the British and others had earlier thought. An analysis of what has transpired is at Tab 1.

In brief, we have known all along that the British would have to deliver Price. It is now clear that they can't on the terms which had been tentatively worked out.

Price won't buy a pre-cooked deal with territorial cessions, and the British have gone along with him. They jointly announced in London that any agreement would be subject to a referendum in Belize. The British have agreed to go back to the Guatemalans to try to diminish the territorial concession, both land and maritime, and to obtain changes in the proposed treaty provisions. Laugerud told Todman they might be modestly flexible on the latter, but they will be adamant on the issue of territory.

Price also rejected use of the term "mediator," and the British agreed to the use of the title "special negotiator." They tell us names mentioned include Andrew Young and Arthur Goldberg.

The British and Guatemalans will talk again here in Washington next week, and of course will want to consult with you. In addition, they have asked us for our analysis of the recent turn of events.

What we must consider now is what outcome and timing we should seek to foster, and what our role should be in the process. If we and the British work for a short-term solution, two things are clear:

—Timing will make it very difficult. An agreement would have to be reached through a real negotiation process, and then it would both have to be blessed by a Belize referendum and accepted through Guatemalan constitutional change—all before July 1 when Laugerud leaves office.

—Such a resolution would not be possible without a major U.S. role of a nature which would assign us a responsibility in the whole matter in excess of what we have found prudent to date.

If the chances of success were high, this could be worthwhile. Since they are not, we do not believe this would be a prudent course.

We believe a more likely course, and one which the British will buy after they have sounded us out on an all-out short-term effort, will be one in which we cooperate in fostering continuation of negotiations which would extend on into the next Guatemalan administration. At Tab 2 is an analysis of the options we would have regarding the U.S. role in such a scenario. This certainly will be a key element in any discussions with both the British and the Guatemalans next week.

Assuming your agreement, I would propose to respond to the British request for our analysis by conveying our view of the situation informally to the British Embassy here on Monday. I would express our skepticism that there remains time to accomplish a solution before July 1, and suggest that our thinking now be directed toward how negotiations can be kept going with a view to engaging the next Guatemalan administration. This will clearly signal to the British our disinclination to engage in the kind of high-profile involvement which would be necessary in further pursuit of a short-term solution.

If you decide we should await your conversations with the British before indicating to them our concern with the feasibility of getting a short-term solution, I believe it would be useful to alert the British that there is one major issue which the British must work out with the Guatemalans bilaterally. This is the amount and nature of the British economic package for Guatemala, the one issue which would put a U.S. negotiator between the Guatemalans and the British acting in their own interest (on other issues the primary British interest is a settlement acceptable in Belize).

This issue has been discussed with Phil Habib, who makes two points:

—without pre-agreed terms for a negotiation or mediation situation, we must be extremely wary of our role lest we end up stuck with an entanglement and responsibility contrary to our interests; and

—absent a quick agreement our best interests are served by continuation of the *status quo* in Belize, with some form of negotiation continuing if possible.

THE OPTIONS

1. Indicate concern with the feasibility of an early settlement but necessity to continue negotiations. (ARA recommends)

2. Indicate we await conversations with Rowlands to assess the situation but we believe economic issue must be resolved bilaterally.²

² In his January 31 memorandum to S/S, Bushnell noted that Vance responded to Bushnell's January 27 memorandum to Vance with the following guidance: "The U.S. will not appoint a U.S. Government mediator. U.S. Government involvement would be limited to his good offices in approaching a private American to undertake this role for the involved parties. Pending discussions with Rowlands, we would not give up trying to get a settlement which can be adopted before President Laugerud leaves office but we should keep open the possibility of a second track involving a longer time frame." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P860124-0961) Todman relayed Vance's guidance in telegram 26290 to multiple posts, February 1. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-1765, N780002-0262)

23. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 28, 1978

SUBJECT

Belize

Negotiations on Belize has apparently ground to a halt at the very moment when the newspapers have begun exploiting wild rumors of a settlement. In Belize this past week, demonstrators marched before our Consul General's office protesting US intervention in this issue and our desire to impose a settlement contrary to the will of the people of Belize. And as the cable at Tab A indicates, there are groups in Belize prepared to rivet U.S. attention—perhaps by violent acts—to what they interpret as a malevolent policy of the USG.²

State-of-Play

The British desperately want to get out of Belize in a way which will permit Belize to live peacefully with Guatemala. Foreign Minister Owen is driven by a desire to rid himself of this issue and has persuaded Secretary Vance to help. The British had reached a tentative agreement with the Guatemalans to cede a portion of southern Belize in exchange for Guatemala's recognition of Belizean independence. The Belize government, however, refuses to consider any cession of its territory, and the British attempt to reach a settlement has come to a halt.

I sense that the British are subtly shifting their strategy with the goal of trying to back away from the issue and put us in the front. Under normal circumstances, I think the U.S. should help the British to the maximum extent possible. However, these are not normal circumstances. If we are perceived as intervening in the internal affairs of a small country in Central America, or perceived as getting bogged down in a complicated and confused political situation there, this could not help but work to our disadvantage in the Senate's deliberations over the Panama Canal treaty. The linkage is not obvious, but our opponents

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 5, Belize. Secret. Sent for action. Inderfurth's and Armacost's initials appear in the top right-hand corner of the memorandum. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "lunch."

² Not attached. Telegram 6088 from Belize City, January 26, reported a possible plot to burn the Consulate General to protest "the evils of the U.S. Government's policy toward Belize." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 45, Latin America: 12/77-7/78)

are searching for such linkages to make us look silly. I don't think that now is the time to provide them with such an opportunity.

I recommend that you call Secretary Vance and suggest to him that we slow down in our efforts to reach a settlement until the Canal treaty is ratified. This will probably mean that we will not be able to reach a settlement before July 1st—the date of the inauguration of a new Guatemalan president. But it is not clear that Laugerud, the current Guatemalan President, can really deliver anyway.

This is one issue on which I agree with ARA, although for different reasons. They have continually resisted Secretary Vance's efforts to try to help the British, largely, I believe, for reasons having to do with the Bureau's historical passivity on issues of territorial disputes, such as Belize. I have always fought ARA on this point and supported Secretary Vance's efforts, but I now believe that the timing for greater U.S. involvement is not right.

RECOMMENDATION

That you call Secretary Vance and relate these points.³

³ Brzezinski did not indicate his preference with respect to this recommendation.

24. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 1, 1978, 5:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Belize

PARTICIPANTS

UK

Edward Rowlands, Minister of State
George. E. Hall, Assistant Under Secretary of State
John Martin, Private Secretary to Rowlands
William Squire, Counselor, British Embassy
Joe Millington, First Secretary, British Embassy

US

The Secretary
Assistant Secretary Todman
Lee Marks, Deputy Legal Advisor
Linda Pfeifle, ARA/CEN (Notetaker)

Rowlands said he had had a rough couple of weeks, he was bruised but not bowed. The Kingston meeting was a failure.² Price lost his nerve because of the domestic situation in Belize, was egged on by the Caribbeans and received comfort from the Mexicans. He took Price to London in order to pick up the pieces. Rowlands acknowledged that he had a rough time at home, the leaks of the previous week hurt. The London meetings, however, just about pulled the negotiations out of a nose dive because they got an agreement on a referendum and they allowed Price to beat the British over the head which he needed to establish himself back home. What emerged were three basic Belizean concerns:

1. Cession of the black Carib village of Barranco south of the Moho.
2. Cession of both cays.
3. The offensive features of the draft treaty.

The British agreed to explore these points with the Guatemalans to see if there were any give. If they get a revised package from the Guatemalans, Rowlands then will ask Price if he would accept the settlement or not, if he would put the issue to the Belizean people. He will try to get Price to say not an inch, but - - - -.

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Nodis 1978 Memorandum of Conversation for Secretary Vance. Secret; Nodis. Drafted on February 2 by Pfeifle; cleared by Todman; approved by Anderson on March 3. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

² See footnote 3, Document 20.

In the worst case, if Price says no, the British will seek a way to wind down the negotiations without provoking a crisis. If they do not find a solution, others will try but will not be successful. The British will attempt to keep the dispute under control, but others will try to exacerbate the situation.

The way forward is through a revision of the package. Rowlands would open the question with the Guatemalans the following day. He would not try to get an agreement then but explore ideas. The Belizeans want the line moved south to the Temash River, but Rowlands would only try for Barranco, which would reduce the cession only 25 square miles. If he gets Barranco, he will not push the Guatemalans on the cays.

Rowlands requested the Secretary to follow up with Molina. The Secretary agreed and asked what Rowlands wanted him to say. Rowlands suggested the Secretary tell Molina that: (1) The facts of life are that what is planned is the worst thing, transferring people. The cession of Barranco is the type of issue which evokes a strong reaction in the international community. (2) A sounding from Price indicates Barranco is a people problem. (3) Possibly mention the cays (not as a serious problem). (4) There are serious problems with the treaty. (5) Urge maximum flexibility.

The Secretary said he would urge the Guatemalans to reflect seriously and communicate with President Laugerud. He would tell them not to let the chance for a settlement slip away.

Rowlands said if there is no settlement, the situation would become worse. Worse for Guatemala also.

Rowlands opined the Guatemalans had played their part well. Skinner-Klee is ahead of the pack and what he says may not reflect the government's position. General Mendoza is the closest to Laugerud.

The Secretary asked Rowlands if he had received the message that we could not consider appointing a U.S. official as negotiator. Sol Linowitz said he was unable to serve. Rowlands said he understood and that names mentioned were only illustrative. William Fulbright was an exciting name. The original idea was to pour ideas into the mediator and he would emerge with the same package. Now that so much is out in the open, if there is an agreement including a time frame for a settlement, there is a case for dropping the idea of a negotiator. This would be advantageous since a negotiator causes some problems in Belize because it evokes the unsuccessful Webster mediation.³ If the Guatemalans want a mediator, however, the British will go along.

³ See footnote 2, Document 2.

If there is no agreement, a special negotiator could look at the areas of disagreement. It would be one more stage that Price would have to explain. The British can play it either way, but do not want to appear to be going back on something else discussed with the Guatemalans. The press play in Guatemala indicates that the Guatemalans are steeling themselves for a settlement.

Rowlands apologized because he was unable to get Price's agreement as he told the Secretary previously. Rowlands reported they have a problem with Guyana and the Caribbean. He would tell Price he could beat the British on the head for domestic reasons, but should not cause problems internationally.

The British know money is being passed in Belize. If two or three people defect, Price can lose in Parliament. Price fired one man and this action prompted some defections. The British do not know what outside influences are at work and what their aims are. The Secretary promised to check into this and inform the British.

Rowlands concluded Price is the best of all the Belizeans. Rowlands has been asking Price to let him speak with the opposition, but Price has always said no. When he gets Price's go ahead, it would be helpful if the message were seconded.

25. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 3, 1978, 10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Belize

PARTICIPANTS

GUATEMALA

Dr. Adolfo *Molina* Orantes, Foreign Minister

Brig. General Luis Rene *Mendoza* Palomo

Dr. Jorge *Skinner-Klee*

Ambassador Jorge *Lamport*

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Nodis 1978 Memorandum of Conversation for Secretary Vance. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared by Bushnell; approved by Anderson on February 21. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

U.S.

The Secretary

John Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Lee Marks, Deputy Legal Advisor

Linda Pfeifle, ARA/CEN (notetaker)

Foreign Minister Molina said he was rather discouraged and very disappointed. The negotiations were going backwards. Rowlands had explained that Price was adamant on territory. Now the British were talking of another river, the Temash. The Temash River was out of the question; even the former proposal would be difficult to sell in Guatemala. The British also wanted to exclude the Ranguana cays. They thought they had an agreement. The draft treaty was mostly agreed on and now was reopened.

Mr. Bushnell inquired if Rowlands emphasized one village (Barranco) and the Secretary asked if the Guatemalans could take care of that problem. Molina responded that they did not think the village was a big problem. Mr. Skinner-Klee said that the inhabitants of Barranco were black Caribs descended from slaves who speak Arawak. They are different from Belizean urban blacks, but similar to other Arawak-speaking Caribs found on the Central American coast. The Secretary asked if Barranco could be carved out of the territorial package? Molina stated he did not like enclaves; this type of problem always appears when territorial arrangements are discussed.

The Secretary noted that territorial questions were always the most difficult. Molina agreed and said the inhabitants could be given a choice similar to the formula used when there was a boundary adjustment with Mexico. The villages were given one year to choose between Guatemalan and Mexican citizenship and all property rights were respected.

The Secretary asked what the problem was with the treaty. Molina explained he was disturbed that discussion of the treaty was reopened. After two years of lengthy discussions they had reached an agreement on most of the treaty which deals with security, foreign policy and economic integration. The Guatemalans were very concerned about the security of the area since Belize is their boundary with the Caribbean. Once the British leave, there will be a vacuum and they fear that others might move in, maybe Cubans. Molina said Rowlands asked them to ponder the problem of Belizean objection to the security provision. The Guatemalans asked him for suggestions of alternative ways of dealing with the problem. They can not dispense with the provision on defense unless there is an acceptable alternative. The Secretary suggested that there were alternative solutions.

Molina said the Belizeans did not like the term economic integration which to them means absorption into Guatemala. What the Guatema-

lans meant by economic integration was the type of arrangements they now have with the rest of Central America. They are convinced Belize is part of Central America, and could be incorporated into Central American organizations and still maintain its ties with the Caribbean. Regardless, Belize should have close ties with Guatemala. Mr. Bushnell suggested the Guatemalans explore the economic provisions which were troublesome to Belize which perceives itself as Caribbean. Molina replied that they do not care if Belize joins the Central American Common Market. Skinner-Klee added that economic integration was not a problem. Guatemala was still flexible on that issue.

Molina mentioned that there was an active publicity campaign, particularly in the London press. Bushnell explained it had been sparked by an unfortunate leak in the Manchester Guardian planted by a group in New York. Molina said this was giving the Foreign Office political problems. Callaghan and Owen had made fair statements in Parliament. Price had said there was oil in the area under discussion. But the Guatemalans believe if there were, the British would not leave.

Molina concluded that the important factor in his talks with Rowlands was that no one slammed the door.

The Secretary told Molina that he saw his point on the Temash, but suggested he think of how to deal with the village of Barranco and look for alternative security arrangements.

Molina said time was running out for the Guatemalan administration (term ends June 30). They want a solution before they leave office, if an honorable solution were possible. But a narrow strip is unacceptable. Mr. Skinner-Klee said new talks would be held three to five days after Rowlands sends his new suggestions through the British Consul in Guatemala. He added there was the feeling the British were trying to walk away, the atmosphere was negative. The Secretary noted the British had run into unforeseen obstacles. He encouraged Molina to think about the problem of Barranco and to consider alternative security arrangements. It would be a shame to let the possibility of solution slip away. Molina agreed.

The Secretary asked if they had worked out the economic package. Molina responded that for the first time Rowlands mentioned a specific figure of \$15 to \$20 million. That was not enough. It would cost a minimum of \$50 million to pave the road which was necessary for the economic integration of Guatemala and Belize.

Molina said Rowlands had suggested that a mediator might not be needed, but Guatemala insisted on it. The Secretary noted that it would be difficult to get anyone to take on the job unless there were already substantial agreement. No U.S. Government official could be appointed—only a private American. Molina understood and said it

was necessary in Guatemala to have an American mediator with the prestige and backing of the U.S. Government to sell the solution.

The Secretary asked Molina to think about the problem raised by Rowlands and said he would talk to the British.

Molina thanked the Secretary for all he had done and extended President Laugerud's invitation to him to visit Guatemala. The Secretary thanked Molina and noted his schedule was very full.

General Mendoza asked the Secretary about the commercial sale of some spare parts for military vehicles which had been requested in August.² The Secretary asked Mr. Bushnell for a report on the case.³

² Not found.

³ Not found.

26. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 24, 1978, 5 p.m.

SUBJECT

Belize

PARTICIPANTS

BELIZE

George Price, Premier

U.S.

The Secretary

Terence Todman, Assistant Secretary

Linda Pfeifle, ARA/CEN (notetaker)

Price recalled that in his November conversation with the Secretary they had discussed cession of territory including the sea bed and sea shelf. The land involved contains nine communities with 2,000 people. This is the area where the oil companies are drilling and the cays included some of Belize's best cays. Both Belizean political parties have agreed not to cede territory and Britain's Labor Party also opposes

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 2, Belize: 2/77–10/80. Confidential; Exdis. Drafted by Pfeifle; cleared by Todman; approved by Anderson (S/S) on April 14. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

land cession. Belize is prepared to offer a sea package which would permit Guatemala free access to the Bay of Amatique. In the future when Belize and Honduras extend their territorial sea to 12 miles, Guatemala's access to the Caribbean would be cut off, but the Belize offer would give Guatemala access and 300 square miles of sea bed. This does not conflict with the Belizean policy of not ceding one square inch of land.

Belize faces a dilemma. The British proposal is to cede land, but Belize cannot accept this. The status quo is difficult—it would give Guatemala the opportunity to subvert Belize over time. Thus the Commonwealth Caribbean, meeting recently in Belize, decided on a multi-lateral security guarantee.

Price had discussed the idea of a multilateral security guarantee with the British who did not object to his pursuing it. He alleged that the U.K. had said it would agree to take part in the guarantee if a Spanish speaking country were included. Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Panama offered to share in the guarantee but he has not made Panama's participation public. Price thus is counting on the British taking part in the security guarantee.

Price related that he had spoken twice in the previous ten days with Venezuela's President Perez. In the first conversation Perez had tried to convince him on the necessity for land cession. Price explained to Perez the Belizean offer to Guatemala of a sea passage. Two years ago Price discussed the sea passage concept with Guatemalan Vice President-elect Villagran Kramer. When Price told Perez he planned to visit Canada to ask for its participation Perez said if Canada agreed it would be interesting. On that basis Price was hopeful if he got Canada's cooperation Venezuela would also participate. Price told Perez that what happened to Belize and Guatemala would affect Venezuela and Guyana. The Secretary noted that Perez said he is ready to make a settlement with Guyana based on land cession. Price replied he had been surprised to hear of Venezuela's position and had suggested to the Venezuelan Foreign Minister that he consider working on a solution similar to that Belize was proposing.

Price recounted he had visited Trinidad and Tobago but was not received by Dr. Williams. Trinidad and Tobago did not agree to participate in the security guarantee. Price related that he discussed with Guyana's Burnham the possibility of using the U.N. umbrella as a way to include non-Caribbean commonwealth of countries, such as Panama, in the guarantee. Price also said he had written to India about the guarantee.

Price had not yet worked out the details of the guarantee, but he envisioned about the same number troops as Britain now has in Belize to be supplied by Britain, Jamaica, Panama, maybe Venezuela and

Canada. He expected Britain to be prepared to send in more troops if necessary. This arrangement would be encompassed in a separate treaty, which Guatemala would not like. With the treaty Belize could proceed to unilateral independence.

Ambassador Todman pointed out that Guatemala was very firm that in case of unilateral independence it would take military action. Any solution without the participation of Guatemala would be precarious. The Secretary said a negotiated settlement is certainly preferable. Price replied that they had been trying to reach a negotiated settlement since 1962 without success.

Ambassador Todman described the political situation in Guatemala as more difficult for negotiations. President-elect Lucas is more inflexible than President Laugerud and the right made a strong showing in the election.² However, Vice President-elect, Villagran Kramer, is more liberal and is in search of a solution to the Belize dispute. He has said the new administration would be willing to accept a solution which includes a slice of territory.

Price responded that there would still be an impasse and that is why the Caribbean Commonwealth wanted a multinational security guarantee. Price asked for U.S. support for the multilateral security guarantee.

The Secretary made no comment with reference to the guarantee and said he would be discussing Belize with the Venezuelans and British.

Price asked if he could come back and talk to the Secretary. The Secretary replied he could come any time.

² Guatemala held Presidential elections on March 5, 1978. In telegram 1559 from Guatemala City, March 14, the Embassy reported that the Guatemalan Congress had confirmed Lucas as the next President following review of the disputed election tallies. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780114–0108) In telegram 1913 from Guatemala City, March 31, the Embassy concluded that “substantial fraud marred” Lucas’s election “but probably less than was the case in President Laugerud’s 1974 victory.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780142–0024) Lucas’s inauguration took place on July 1, as reported in telegram 3877 from Guatemala City, July 3. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780274–0791)

27. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, May 16, 1978, 1751Z

2861. Subj: President-Elect Lucas Will be Tougher on Belize.

1. Belize was one of the subjects addressed by General Romeo Lucas during his May 12 conversation with Ambassador and political section chief. (Septel deals with other aspects.)²

2. In response to the Ambassador's inquiry regarding foreign policy views of the incoming government, Belize among them, Lucas began by saying that the Constitution required the Army to defend Guatemala's territorial integrity. Thus, if independence were granted without Guatemalan consent, the Army would have to move. Otherwise the Guatemalan people would ask why have an army. While he was not opposed to a compromise solution based on territorial transaction, the Moho line was out of the question. It would represent a transfer of nothing but swampland in his view. Betraying a certain unfamiliarity with Belizean hydrography, Lucas noted that at flood stage the Sarstoon and Moho Rivers are one.

3. General Lucas said Guatemala did not aspire to all of Belize, "only Toledo district." Guatemala had ethnic affinities with the latter and needed it to provide ocean access for Peten production via Poptun. Asked whether he really meant all of Toledo district, Lucas retreated somewhat and said perhaps not even everything south of the Monkey River would be necessary, conceding at one point that the GOG had no particular interest in the (Maya) mountains.

4. Lucas maintained that the Cubans were trying to take advantage of the situation, and alluded to contacts between them and Belizean Attorney General Assad Shoman. He described the dispute as a "running sore," and expressed the fervent hope that it would be settled soon so that the two peoples could live in peace.

5. Comment: These comments support expectations that the Lucas government will prove considerably less flexible than the current

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780207-0523. Confidential; Limdis. Sent for information to London and Belize City.

² Reference is to telegram 2897 from Guatemala City, May 17, which described Boster's initial meeting with President-elect Lucas. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780210-0029)

administration about what might constitute a satisfactory settlement.³ They also suggest again that he and Vice President-elect Villagran Kramer (see Guatemala 2248)⁴ Do not see eye to eye on this issue.

Boster

³ In telegram 90007 to London, April 7, the Department requested that the Embassy pass a message from Todman to Rowlands informing Rowlands that the United States shared the belief that it “is important to keep negotiations going even though it seems unlikely that an agreement could be reached in the near future” due to a lessening of flexibility in Guatemala following the strong showing of the right and Lucas’s victory in the March Presidential election, the failure of the last round of negotiations over territorial issues, and the strength of the Belizean opposition and its call for a 10-year moratorium on independence. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840150–1794)

⁴ In telegram 2248 from Guatemala City, April 14, the Embassy indicated that Villagran seemed capable of innovation regarding the Belize negotiations but was not yet fully informed on the subject by the Foreign Ministry. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780161–0757)

28. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (Cohen) to the Acting Secretary of State Christopher¹

Washington, August 19, 1978

SUBJECT

Tear Gas for Guatemala

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Should we sell tear gas to Guatemala?

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The President, Vice President, and Foreign Minister of Guatemala have separately requested that the USG approve the sale of 5,000 rounds

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780140–2254. Confidential. Sent through Newsom. Drafted on August 18 by Pfeifle and Cohen.

of tear gas to Guatemala on an urgent basis.² This new administration (inaugurated July 1) has been issuing permits to demonstrate to any group which applies for one, but has announced it will break up all unauthorized demonstrations. On August 4 the police, armed only with tear gas and night sticks (no guns), dispersed a demonstration of 12,000, whose organizers deliberately refused to request a permit. Since then the Government has issued two permits for demonstrations to protest the break-up of the earlier demonstration. The Guatemalan Government believes the organizers of the August 4 demonstration plan other demonstrations in the near future for which they will not request a permit. The Government has only about 250 cannisters of tear gas left.

The Guatemalan Vice President emphasized that if Guatemala runs out of tear gas the police may resort to guns in dealing with illegal demonstrations with the real risk of injuries and death.

An intelligence report confirms our Ambassador's judgment that the U.S. response to the Guatemalan request for tear gas is seen by the new Guatemalan administration as an important test case of U.S. attitude towards it.³

It has been our policy since March to allow the export of equipment including bullets to the military, but to deny the export of all equipment including tear gas, for police use.⁴

² In telegram 4723 from Guatemala City, August 11, the Embassy reported that Villagran Kramer had stated: "In the name of human rights," he said, "we appeal to you to try to help us get some tear gas," arguing that, from the human rights point of view, tear gas was better than bullets for crowd control. Boster endorsed the request. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780329-0376) In telegram 4766 from Guatemala City, August 15, the Embassy reported that Lucas had renewed the request for tear gas saying that "he supposed he would become a target of human rights criticism when police find it necessary to resort to clubs and ultimately firearms to disband unauthorized demonstrations and strikes because tear gas had run out." Boster commented that the request had assumed some symbolic importance to Guatemala and should be approved. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780333-0947) The Embassy reported Castillo Valdez's reiteration of the Guatemala's request for tear gas in telegram 4822 from Guatemala City, August 17. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780358-0252, D780337-0266)

³ See footnote 2 above for Boster's views. The intelligence report was not further identified.

⁴ Mendoza asked Vance about the commercial sale of spare parts for military vehicles on February 3; see Document 25. The following week Bushnell, after consulting HA, informed Guatemalan Ambassador Lamport of the approval of export licenses for truck and armored car spare parts. By April 6, all pending export license applications had been resolved. In general, export licenses for items destined for the Guatemalan Army were approved and those for items destined for the police force were denied. (Briefing Memorandum from Todman to Vance, April 24; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780072-1482)

ARA POSITION

ARA recommends you approve the sale of tear gas to Guatemala because:

—A major issue here is what kind of relationship we will establish with the new Guatemalan Government; this request has been made a major political test of that relationship by the GOG, and our refusal of it exposes us to a “mini-Argentine” potential of misperception of our position and an assumption by the GOG of US hostility and rejection.

—Refusing the request will damage our access to and leverage with the GOG and hence our capacity to influence them precisely in advancing our human rights goals, as well as in such important matters as the Belize dispute.

—A refusal will prejudice the GOG guilty of human rights violation, when its record is thus far good; to charge it with the record of the past ten years or tax it with no progress after two months in office is too harsh.

—The GOG is not denying the right of assembly. It has committed itself to grant permits when asked (and has done so) but has said it will not permit demonstrations which do not have permits (a practice the US, Venezuela and Colombia all follow); the refusal to seek a permit is obviously intended by the opposition precisely to provoke a clash.

—To deny the request would be to deprive the GOG of accepted crowd control methods, and risks the danger that the authorities may resort to guns if they have our tear gas; we would be exposed to criticism in that case, for having sold Guatemala ammunition but not tear gas.

HA POSITION

HA recommends disapproval because:

—The human rights record of Guatemala is poor. The security forces have a record of arbitrary arrest, killing, and torture that goes back over 10 years. Last May, government forces killed over 30 Indian peasants in Panzos.⁵ Wealth is highly concentrated, with 10 percent of the population owning over 70 percent of the land.

⁵ On May 29, a clash between peasants and the Guatemalan military resulted in the death of thirty-four peasants, according to initial reports described in telegram 3145 from Guatemala City, May 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780226–0858) Subsequent reports disputed the Guatemalan military’s account of an attack by the peasants and described the killing of unarmed peasants, including women and children, who had gathered to air land rights grievances. (Telegram 150258 to Guatemala City, June 13; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780247–0795 and telegram 3612 from Guatemala City, June 19; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780255–0960)

—Although a new government is now in power, its election was marked by fraud and recent reports indicate that, if anything, it plans to take a tougher line on internal dissent than its predecessor. It has characterized itself as a “law and order administration” and has intensified its policy of arbitrary arrest.

—Despite Guatemala’s claim of emergency need, there is no evidence of any attempt to obtain tear gas from other sources, and it could probably be obtained elsewhere. But the Guatemalan Government does appear anxious for U.S. tear gas, as a demonstration of U.S. support.

—Such association with internal security forces in a country with a serious record of human rights violations could be contrary to Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act and paragraph six of PD-30,⁶ absent exceptional circumstances.

—The critical public issue at this time in Guatemala is the right of the opposition to demonstrate. Last week, tear gas was used by the police to break up an opposition demonstration. Thus, the supply of U.S. tear gas at this juncture would be perceived as U.S. acquiescence in the GOG’s position on denial of the right to assembly.

—Given Guatemala’s bad record on human rights, our past policy of refusing police exports, and the lack of real progress from the new government, HA believes that the desire for political influence does not justify approval.

—We also believe that the proper way to avoid loss of life is for the government to ease its repressive practices and not to interfere with peaceful demonstrations.

Recommendation

ARA recommends that you authorize the sale of tear gas to Guatemala.⁷

HA recommends that you not authorize the sale of tear gas to Guatemala.

⁶ For information about Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act and PD-30, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. II, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Documents 17 and 119.

⁷ Christopher indicated his approval of ARA’s recommendation on August 21. In telegram 212560 to Guatemala City, August 22, the Department transmitted approval of the export of up to 5,000 canisters of tear gas, “because of the emergency situation the GOG faces,” and instructed Chargé d’Affaires Shuler to inform the Guatemalan Government. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77–12/78) Shuler indicated his compliance in telegram 4906 from Guatemala City, August 22. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780343–0504)

29. **Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher¹**

Washington, October 19, 1978

SUBJECT

IMET for Guatemala

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Whether to delete \$250,000 of IMET funds for Guatemala from the FY 1980 budget submission.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

ARA supports a \$250,000 level of IMET for Guatemala for FY 1980 on the following grounds:

—The Guatemalan military and central Guatemalan Government are not involved in most human rights violations, although there have been two or three incidents during the past year. The high levels of domestic violence are the direct result of endemic political warfare between extremist elements on both the left and the right and the traditional rural violence. The military, including the internal leadership which is from the military, has the key role in gradually controlling such violence and bringing to justice perpetrators from all sides. They are gradually doing so. IMET would serve to strengthen the professionalism of the Guatemalan military and to promote our objective of encouraging the military to move faster in controlling the endemic violence.

—The GOG has exercised considerable restraint in dealing with the current wave of protests and strikes. The Government has not employed military forces in dealing with the disturbances and has not imposed a state of siege despite the fact that this is the most serious challenge to the Government in several years.

—Denial of military items in the past has been construed by the Guatemalans as an attempt to pressure them on the Belize dispute despite our assertions that our concern was human rights-related. Denial now, when negotiations are again underway with the British

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780166–2122. Confidential. Drafted on October 12 by Davis. Cleared by Schneider (HA) and Walker (S/P). Davis initialed for both Schneider and Walker. Tabs 1 and 2 are not attached. See footnote 6, below. Christopher was acting for Vance while Vance was in Geneva October 19–21.

and when the British have just presented them with an unacceptable proposal, would be similarly misinterpreted by the GOG.²

—Guatemala is lending full cooperation and support to the mediation effort in Nicaragua.³ This negative action now could inhibit Guatemalan cooperation in this vital matter.

—The FY 80 proposal already is reduced by half from the \$500,000 FY 77 figure, our last IMET program before the previous Guatemalan regime rejected military assistance because of offended pride over the requirement of a human rights report.⁴

HA recommends that you not approve IMET funds for Guatemala. Its position on the Guatemalan human rights situation is as follows:

ARA's characterization of the Guatemalan military as "uninvolved" in human rights violations directly contradicts our own human rights reports submitted to the Congress last year, a study by Amnesty International, and the reports of last year's massacre at Panzos.⁵

From at least 1966 to 1976, the uniformed military, with the knowledge and cooperation of other government officials, was involved in death squad operations in both rural and urban areas of Guatemala. As many as 20,000 persons are believed to have been detained and killed in these operations.

Over the past two years, there has been a considerable decrease in death squad operations in urban areas. However, both our own report and that of Amnesty note that, in rural areas, disappearances in which military and other government officials are involved continue and may have actually increased.

² In telegram Secto 3831 from New York, September 27, Vance reported that Rowlands had informed Newsom on September 26 about the recent Anglo-Guatemalan discussions on Belize in New York during which Owen "proposed a three-part package" to Valdez: a security agreement permitting only U.K. and Commonwealth forces to serve in Belize, adjustment of the seaward boundaries to provide Guatemalan Caribbean ports with access to the high seas, and a British offer to pave the road from Flores to Belmopan. Territorial cession was not included in the offer. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840153-1589, N780008-0045) In telegram 5778 from Guatemala City, October 2, the Embassy remarked: "We believe the British are deluding themselves if they are banking on the GOG accepting a formula, even one sweetened with assistance projects, which does not give Guatemala land territory, however token it may be." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840166-1808)

³ See Chapter 2 for coverage of the mediation effort for Nicaragua.

⁴ See Document 1.

⁵ The report for Guatemala is in *Human Rights Practices in Countries Receiving U.S. Security Assistance*, pp. 165-168. Oxman sent Christopher a February 14 report from Amnesty International on Guatemala detailing 113 death squad killings and disappearances from September to December of 1977. In his covering note, Oxman wrote: "A shocking AI report *re* Guatemala." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 16, Human Rights—Guatemala) For information on Panzos, see footnote 5, Document 28.

During the past several months, we have continued to receive reports of such disappearances. The most dramatic incident occurred last May in Panzos, when government troops reportedly killed at least 38 Indians.

The Minister of Government, Donaldo Alvarez, who commands the police, has publicly stated that death squads serve to clean the society. While there is also considerable left-wing terrorism in Guatemala, this does not and cannot justify identical, and often worse, excesses on the part of Government and military officials.

ARA characterized recent government handling of protests and strikes opposing the bus fare increase as “restrained”. Even if this characterization is correct, we do not believe it is relevant to the critical issue of continuing detentions and executions on the part of the military. In addition, we note that this “restrained” handling did result in an official death toll of 7 and unofficial toll of 12 or more.

Attached at Tab 1 is a report on the human rights situation from a member of the S/P staff, Richard Feinberg, who visited Guatemala about two months ago.⁶

Given the involvement of the military and government of Guatemala in violations of the integrity of the person, HA believes that an IMET program is not justified unless there are other compelling US interests at stake. What might those interests be?

ARA argues that not to approve the IMET program would “inhibit” Guatemalan cooperation in the Nicaraguan mediation effort. However, there already exist other instruments for inducing Guatemala’s continued participation. Guatemala looks to the US for several million dollars in FMS and munitions list purchases each year, including critical aircraft spare parts not readily available from other sources. The US was forthcoming earlier this year in responding rapidly to Guatemala’s urgent request for US tear gas.⁷ We also exercise leverage through our ability to veto Guatemalan applications for loans from the IDA soft-loan window.

It is difficult to see what significant addition the IMET proposal would make, especially since the mediation effort is likely to be concluded long before the FY ‘80 IMET program can begin. Congress will not even act on the FY ‘80 security assistance appropriation until about one year from now, and the administration’s FY ‘80 security assistance

⁶ Not attached. Feinberg’s September 1 memorandum to Walker stated: “In our deliberations on Guatemala, we should be careful before taking actions that would appear to signal USG approval of the direction of human rights practices there.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77–12/78)

⁷ See Document 28.

budget will not be submitted to the Congress for at least five or six months.

ARA also states that “denial of military items to Guatemala in the past has been construed as an attempt to pressure them on Belize.” However the attempted analogy is less than exact. The past denials involved requests to purchase items which could be used in border operations and thus were directly relevant to the Belize border dispute. The IMET proposal involves grant aid and, in any case, lacks a direct connection with the Belize issue. Therefore, Guatemala is highly unlikely to read a decision not to propose IMET as an attempt to pressure them on Belize.

Against ARA’s affirmative arguments for how the IMET program would serve US interests must be balanced one other consideration. There was no IMET program for Guatemalan in FY ’79. A proposal to re-institute it for FY ’80 would identify the US with the Guatemalan military at a time of mounting and widespread opposition to the central government, evidenced by recent popular protests against the bus fare increase.⁸

S/P believes that the influence we are likely to exert via IMET programs will in practice be small while the existence of such programs identifies us with the subsequent actions of a particular military force. Moreover to begin a program or revive one which had lapsed, will be seen as an indication of support for a particular government.

Recommendations:

ARA recommends that you approve retention of IMET funding for Guatemala.⁹

HA and S/P recommend that you not approve IMET funding for Guatemala.

⁸ Public demonstrations in Guatemala City against an increase to the longstanding 5 cent bus fare lasted from October 2 to 3 and “produced extensive damage and personal injuries,” according to the Embassy’s report in telegram 5848 from Guatemala City, October 4. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780406-0167)

⁹ Christopher indicated his approval of ARA’s recommendation on October 20.

30. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, February 15, 1979, 2126Z

1084. Subj: (S) Whiter Guatemala—The GOG Fiddles While Troubles Multiply.

1. (S-Entire text).

2. Seven months into the Lucas regime, the experience of Nicaragua and the growing level of violence, along with the underlying economic, social and political trends, suggest a number of conclusions about how Guatemala is likely to fare over the foreseeable future. The most significant is that this government seems unable to recognize the basic problems facing the country and is therefore unlikely to take appropriate steps. Moreover, there is now no present prospect that a successor regime, probably military, will be any better.

3. The GOG mindset: Few Guatemalans see the situation as we do, and none of those who do seem to have any influence. One observer described the dominant view as the heritage of the captaincy-general of Spanish days. It may be characterized as superior, independent, self-sufficient, conservative, and often curiously at odds with the facts. Guatemala's isolation and its strong Indian tradition may also account for or reinforce these tendencies. Finally, recent history, in particular the Arbenz period, has contributed by making the establishment fearful that any basic change would only benefit the Communists.

4. One example of Guatemalan thinking is the dominant GOG view of Nicaragua. It has jelled now to the conclusion that Somoza has both military and popular support. It sees his opposition as composed entirely of extreme leftists or their dupes, among whom no useful distinctions can be made. The GOG has undoubtedly given thought to military intervention to help Somoza, although we question whether its forces have the morale or the weapons to provide more than token support. Its membership in the mediation group, initially grudging, has been terminated and the GOG is seeking to end any further outside intervention which would weaken Somoza.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 16, Human Rights—Guatemala. Secret; Exdis. Oxman forwarded the telegram to Christopher under cover of an undated note which reads: "I recommend this cable, especially the circled paragraphs. He's taking about Guatemala, but his comments actually have a much broader applicability." Christopher wrote on Oxman's note: "Dark clouds." (Ibid.)

² An unknown hand circled this paragraph. See Chapter 2 for coverage of the mediation effort for Nicaragua.

5. The economy: Guatemala has an archtypical dual economy. A rich capital city and the highly capitalized and productive commercial agriculture on the Pacific coastal plain contrasts with the overpopulated and impoverished Altiplano and Oriente. The balance of the country could offer help but no solution to the large and growing problems of land and employment. Thus, the two most powerful components of a solution lie in land redistribution and labor intensive industry sufficient to provide a rapidly growing number of jobs. Yet, land reform is unmentionable to Guatemala's establishment. Its laissez-faire economics so far also seems not to have grasped the idea that money can be made producing for export in labor intensive fields or that the rate of growth could be even higher than it is, with a larger pie to share.

6. Population pressures: Dominant elements in the establishment have also managed to prevent the GOG from mounting a significant family planning effort. Even if one existed, however, it will be time-consuming and difficult to change Indian cultural attitudes on family size when perhaps half the children born do not survive to the age of five and virtually all are malnourished. Hence, there is no prospect that the annual demand for new jobs will drop in less than a generation or two.

7. Indian population pressure has been partly relieved by seasonal employment on the Pacific coastal coffee and cotton farms, but additional jobs there are not likely and the conditions of such work are frequently so bad as to be deeply resented. Most roads into Indian areas have been built in the last 20 to 30 years. Conventional wisdom that Indian culture is self-contained and self-perpetuating ignores these facts, and concludes that while the GOG cannot crack their isolation, neither can the left, so at least there is nothing to worry about. Reports of Indian participation in the recent EGP raid on Nebaj and such evidence of mobilization and unrest as the Panzos affair should be cause for concern.³ A growing population drift out of Indian areas, under population pressure, will create new, much more severe urban problems than have already occurred after the 1976 earthquake.⁴

8. The plan: The GOG has been working on a four-year plan for more than a year. Scheduled for publication at the beginning of this year, it remains under wraps, as it generated significant opposition

³ Central Intelligence Agency information cable [cable number not declassified], January 30, reported that a source of undetermined reliability indicated that the EGP had raided the town of Nebaj to influence the local populace and impress a visiting Cuban advisor. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, Feb. 1–Mar. 16, 1979)

⁴ For coverage of the earthquake, see *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–11, Part 1, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973–1976, Document 221.

and had to be redone. Curiously, a second document of economic analysis was finished, but also remains locked up, possibly because it paints such a bleak picture of Guatemala's poor as to be embarrassing. In any case, the GOG does not seem to be responding to the economic challenge and, indeed, seems not to have recognized it.

9. GOG administration: Like its predecessor, the Lucas government might hopefully have been expected to show a modest improvement in administrative effectiveness. The reverse has been the case. Decisions are only reached with great difficulty after long delay and implementation is weak at its best. Moreover, some signs suggest the level of corruption in the present government is at least an order of magnitude greater than in the past, further diluting the delivery of government services to a public which increasingly demands them.⁵

10. GOG leadership: Public discontent might be reduced or diverted by political leadership that could articulate a captivating vision of the future. Guatemala's political process, however, has generated few with such abilities. The opposition has splintered and splintered again. In contrast, the military, with their chain of command, close personal ties, and system of rewards, have been and remain the most cohesive political party, regularly handing on power to a military successor. More and more, detached but still active members of the military are found throughout the GOG. The wealthy have so far managed to work with such an arrangement, growing rapidly wealthier as the GOG helped protect their monopolies and privileges and fostered the development of new opportunities. The growing middle class, which has benefited from disproportionately urban growth, sees its interests promoted by the same system. Professional politicians here, as in so many other places, seem caught in a personalism that really avoids issues but at the same time makes it very difficult for several politicians to work together. Thus, to most, Guatemala seems ill-served by democratic practices, which, lacking substance, have legitimated cynicism, corruption and violence.

11. Violence: Although fewer in per capita terms than Detroit, violent deaths are common and even celebrated in Guatemala. The difference lies in the use of murder by both the left and the right to remove and intimidate political opponents. The GOG seems rarely to be involved as an institution but individuals in authority are, and such behavior is at least tolerated, and at times encouraged. Politically motivated violence is frequently almost impossible to distinguish from the more casual variety with certainty, but those in public life seem to have little difficulty in reaching the conclusion that the level is currently

⁵ An unknown hand circled this paragraph.

rising. Union leaders, newspapermen and the politically liberal presently feel threatened and are modifying their behavior accordingly. Businessmen and government leaders remain generally fearful of leftist violence; although little has occurred in the capital in recent months, growing guerrilla activity could occur at any time in both the countryside and the city and will provoke right-wing retaliation.

12. US influence: The ability of the US to influence the Guatemalan establishment has progressively declined in recent years. We are perceived as wrong, and inconstant, at best. Our human rights reports are seen as not only incorrect, harmful and hypocritical, but also as inspiring the left while hurting America's traditional friends here. Our refusal to supply arms or the long delay in responding to requests has raised suspicions about our motives, while Nicaragua has underscored the possible consequences of relying on one source. The cases of Iran and China (i.e. that we have curried Chinese favor to offset growing Russian strength) have shaken faith in US power, even in areas vital to US. US economic aid has declined but matters little. GOG attitudes on borrowing are conservative, and the balance of payments is strong, so that if our aid disappeared tomorrow, reserves would simply not increase so rapidly and programs of help to relatively small groups of the poor might be allowed to expire. It was perhaps an illusion that we did or could continue to control the direction of events here (although some Guatemalans retain a curious ambivalence on this score, and at time want us to intervene, if it is on their side of the question, in the belief that we can determine the outcome). Nevertheless, the dominant Guatemalan world view, always somewhat independent, has shifted as they conclude we are unable to control ourselves and are acting against our own interests and theirs.⁶

13. Conclusions: Although seemingly confident of today, Guatemalans are worried about the future. Few seem to understand the processes at work, yet have little faith in their leaders or in any proposed solutions they have heard. The US, they see as unable or unwilling to help them in an increasingly threatening world. The long-term underlying forces have clearly begun to eat at the structure of Guatemalan stability, although it would be ridiculous to predict its fall any time soon. For example, the October rioting, which began over a bus fare hike, reflected the deterioration.⁷ GOG intimidation, as well as lowering the bus fare, worked and, without a more effective opposition, probably will continue to contain protest against such popular issues as inflation. However, as the undermining continues, behavior that is already occa-

⁶ An unknown hand circled this paragraph.

⁷ See footnote 8, Document 29.

sionally bizarre seems likely to become both inappropriate and anti-social. The major manifestation we expect to be a slowly growing level of violence, some obviously politically motivated, but much only vaguely so, or entirely mindless. When the establishment, particularly the military, sees itself as more clearly threatened, we are likely to see more unequivocal evidence of GOG involvement. The left will respond in kind. Americans will certainly continue to be a favored target for the left and may become one for the right.⁸

14. The growth of violence seems likely to be accompanied by a deterioration in democratic practices, already often more form than substance, because of manipulation by interested parties. Thus, the effort to broaden particularly among the Indians, have begun to emerge from their isolation and will be seeking a share of power.

15. If, as we expect, Guatemala becomes more violent, the impact on the economy could become quite significant even over the next few years. Foreign businessmen have taken a growing interest in investing and, for example, tourism is likely to become a major employer. More violence, more widely advertised, will certainly frighten the foreigner and slow, if not halt, this source of economic growth. US investors are likely to be hurt in the process.

16. US influence, already at low ebb, probably will decline further. US views on violence and democratic rights here now seem likely to be articulated more and more strongly in public. With a hardening perception among the Guatemalan establishment, the frictions in this field bode well to become the leitmotif in our relationship.⁹

Bennett

⁸ An unknown hand circled the last four sentences in this paragraph.

⁹ An unknown hand circled this paragraph. Oxman underlined "US influence," drew a line from it to the margin, and wrote: "With whom: the 'establishment' or the 'people'?"

31. Action Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, March 15, 1979

SUBJECT

Meeting With Guatemalan Foreign Minister (U)

The Guatemalan Foreign Minister is still upset that we (the USG) are blocking his effort to meet with President Carter in order to convey Guatemalan President Lucas' view of the Nicaraguan problem and the implications for Central America.² You may recall that you asked me about this issue about a month ago when we had an intelligence report suggesting that Foreign Minister Castillo Valdez was complaining that the "human rights-types" in the State Department were blocking his attempt for an appointment with President Carter.³ Since that intelligence report, which was probably quite accurate, relations between our countries have cooled considerably, and Guatemala has adopted a strategy of trying to cement a negative alliance of all of the military leaders in the region, including Somoza. At the same time, he has renewed his request to meet with the President. (C)

State and I continue to believe⁴ that it would be a mistake for the President to meet with Castillo. However, Vance has agreed to meet with him and State recommends, and I strongly concur, that it would be important if you could also have a few minutes with him. We believe that you could be especially persuasive in helping him to understand *our* policy to Nicaragua, and to see our approach to Central America in a broader geopolitical context. I think it would be very important for you to meet with him in order to try to keep open our channels of communication with the Guatemalans. The Guatemalans are the strongest and largest of the five Central American countries, and if we

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77-1/81. Confidential. Sent for action. Inderfurth initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum.

² Castillo called Boster on December 22, 1978, and requested a meeting with Carter to deliver a special message. Boster was instructed to ask Castillo for information about the message. According to Pastor, Castillo thus "concluded that he was being 'stone-walled.'" (Memorandum from Pastor to Brzezinski, January 15; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77-1/81)

³ A memorandum hand-dated January 15 noted: "Lucas and Castillo are convinced, according to a clandestine source, that Lucas' request was blocked by 'the human rights lobby' in the State Department." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 16, Guatemala)

⁴ Inderfurth wrote: "As do I," above the word "believe."

can turn them around to a more positive approach to the region, our Central American policy would stand a better chance of success. (C)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you clear the cable at Tab A and agree to meet with the Guatemalan Foreign Minister.⁵ (I will prepare talking points for your use.)⁶ (C)

⁵ Tab A was not attached.

⁶ Brzezinski disapproved the recommendation. An unknown hand wrote: “later reversed it—in oral reclama a couple of days later.” Also see Pastor’s April 21 memorandum to Brzezinski in which Brzezinski agreed to meet with Vance and Castillo on May 11. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81) For the May 11 meeting, see Document 33.

32. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, May 10, 1979

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Guatemalan Foreign Minister Castillo Valdez—Friday, May 11, at 11:30 a.m.

Your meeting with Castillo Valdez comes at an extremely important moment in our relations with Guatemala and with all of Central America. Castillo and his government claim they are confused about U.S. objectives to Guatemala and to the region. They view themselves as fighting the good fight against the Communists (which they define much more broadly than we do—including most of the opposition), as Somoza did, and cannot understand why the U.S. seems to be withdrawing support from them at this time.² You need to explain to him our view of events in the region in a way which helps him to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81. Secret. A stamped notation on the top right-hand corner of the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it.

² In his May 9 meeting with Vance, Castillo characterized the U.S. human rights policy as “incomprehensible.” (Telegram 127830 to Guatemala City, May 19; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790228–0361)

understand that we share objectives but perhaps disagree on tactics. We both want to avoid Communist take-overs in the region, but we disagree on how to do this. His government thinks military repression is necessary whereas we believe the governments must risk fundamental reforms. (S)

You will need to speak clearly and simply to Castillo, who speaks English well, but is not very intelligent. He can talk incessantly on trivia unless you interrupt him; he wasted over an hour of Vance's time without letting Vance get a word in. I suggest that you start the conversation by saying that Secretary Vance had told you (and the President) about the meeting, and I reported to you in detail.³ There is therefore no need for him to repeat his remarks, but you and the President very much would like him to convey the following message to President Lucas. Then, I suggest you make the following points: (S)

—The U.S. is extremely concerned about recent developments in Central America, and we intend to focus a good deal of attention in the next few months on ways that we can improve our relationship with the people and the governments in the region and deal more effectively with the region's problems. (S)

—We are worried about the increasing political polarization in the region. Military governments are becoming more repressive, and left-wing terrorists have escalated their violence. The assassination of 20–30 people a month—including two leading political figures recently⁴—is deplorable. (We have a reliable report indicating military complicity in the recent assassinations.)⁵ We are concerned that the entire region may be engulfed in a downward cycle of terrorism and violence. (S)

—We view the fundamental cause of the instability and polarization in the region as the inability or unwillingness of the governments to address fundamental socio-economic problems and to find ways to widen the base of political participation. As the middle finds itself excluded from the political process the guerrillas attract their support. We recognize the difficulty and significant risk involved in making fundamental socio-economic and political reforms when terrorism is rampant. (S)

³ No record of Vance's reports to Carter and Brzezinski was found.

⁴ Alberto Fuentes Mohr, leader of the Guatemalan Social Democratic Party, was assassinated January 25, 1979, and Manuel Colom Argueta, leader of the Guatemalan FUR party, was assassinated March 22, 1979. (Telegram 560 from Guatemala City, January 25; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790038–0163; Telegram 1843 from Guatemala City, March 22; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790133–0057)

⁵ Not further identified.

—We are aware that you believe that the United States has been abandoning the Central American governments at this critical moment. But Congressional actions (over our objections) to cut aid and IMET to Guatemala do reflect a growing concern in the U.S. about Guatemala's human rights performance.⁶ (S)

—We would like to work with you to turn events around. We do not want to interfere in your internal affairs, but we would be prepared to consider, if requested, working with you to develop the kinds of policies that will permit genuine and fundamental socio-economic reform and widen the base of political participation in your country. We would like to reverse our current drift toward a lower profile in the region. We want to increase our support to help you to defeat the Communists at their own game by changing society and promoting development. But we have difficulty doing that unless we can show the American people that you are committed to these fundamental changes. (S)

—We sincerely regret the recent actions of the Congress to cut economic assistance and military training to your country, and I can well understand your anguish over these cuts. We intend to try to get these cuts restored in Congress. But it is difficult to persuade the Congress of the need for this assistance, and the desire of our government to work with your government, if in the face of such serious human rights problems. We need to show our people a clear path out of this problem. (S)

—Therefore, I hope you will take my words seriously. We really do want to work closely with you and with the other governments in Central America to make the kind of economic and social progress that all your peoples deserve, but we believe that this can only be done if your country is willing to address the fundamental problems before it. (S)

—(If Castillo should raise the question of the Milgroup's future in Guatemala, you should respond: We do not have, at present, any intention of removing the Milgroup from Guatemala.) (S)

⁶ For fiscal year 1978, see footnote 2, Document 1. Congress approved the Foreign Military Aid Authorization bill (H.R. 3173; P.L. 96-92) on October 16. The bill reflected the House Foreign Affairs Committee vote to eliminate aid for Guatemala on human rights grounds. (*Congress and the Nation*, vol. V, 1977-1980, p. 71) In telegram 71549 to Guatemala City, March 22, the Department noted that day's House Foreign Affairs Committee vote to eliminate the \$250,000 requested for IMET for Guatemala and cited "Panzos, human rights and the lack of GOG investigation of the Fuentes Mohr assassination" as explanations. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77-12/78) For information on Panzos, see footnote 5, Document 28.

Summary of Vance's Meeting: Castillo gave Vance a letter for the President from President Lucas indicating his desire for good relations and saying that the purpose of Castillo's trip is to explore ways to improve our relations.⁷ Castillo gave Vance two other documents: (1) an aide-memoire indicating his government's displeasure with Congressional cuts in aid, its desire for aid in the future, but its willingness to look elsewhere if the U.S. chooses to cut aid; and (2) a list of ideas on how to handle Belize (Vance pledged our continued neutrality, but willingness to be helpful).⁸ In summary, the meeting was more positive than intelligence reports had led us to believe, though Castillo did repeatedly demonstrate his lack of understanding of what the Carter Administration wants to do in Central America.⁹ Your meeting will hopefully "illuminate" him. (S)

Cuba's Bid for the Security Council. One additional point you need to make concerns Cuba's bid for the U.N. Security Council seat. We don't see why Cuba should be dignified by a seat at the Security Council (S.C.), but we believe that is a decision to be made by the Latin American group. Historically, Latin America has allocated its two seats on the S.C. to one from South America and one from the Caribbean and Central America. Since Jamaica is on the S.C., we are therefore pleased that Colombia has announced its candidacy. Guatemala is also a candidate and wants our support so you will have to try to persuade Castillo Valdez that *our common interests in denying a seat to the Cubans* would be better served by Guatemala withdrawing its candidacy and supporting Colombia. The fact is that it will be very difficult to beat the Cubans (because of Communist and NAM support); to do so, Latin America unity is essential. Colombia—from South America, a democracy, with good Third World credentials—stands the best chance of beating Cuba, and we hope Guatemala will be big enough to withdraw its own candidacy and support Colombia. (S)

⁷ Lucas's letter to Carter was dated May 3. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 7, Guatemala, President Fernando Romero—Lucas Garcia, 11/78-3/80)

⁸ Aide-mémoire and list not found. Castillo's May 9 memorandum to Vance noted Guatemala's willingness to continue negotiations over Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P790071-1639)

⁹ In a May 8 memorandum to Brzezinski and Vance, Turner noted that Lucas "was outraged by what he perceived as continuing destructive and unwarranted criticism of the GOG in the United States," and had ordered Castillo to review "all facets of official U.S. aid to Guatemala with a view to terminating all such aid." Turner predicted that Castillo, in his meetings with Brzezinski and Vance, would "attempt to impress upon U.S. officials that strains developing within the already limited sphere of understanding and cooperation between the United States and Guatemala really represent in microcosm the larger problem of U.S. relations with all of Latin America." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 24, Guatemala: 1/79-12/79)

33. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 11, 1979, 11:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Guatemala

Rafael Castillo Valdez, Foreign Minister
Felipe Doroteo Monterroso, Ambassador to the United States
Cesar A. Orantes, Economic Counsellor, Guatemalan Embassy

United States

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Viron P. Vaky, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Robert A. Pastor, Staff Member, National Security Council

SUBJECT

U.S.-Guatemalan Relations (C)

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by expressing the Administration's great concern about the current trends in Central America. He said that the problems would become even more acute unless the leaders in the region addressed them in a timely and effective fashion. (C)

The Foreign Minister recounted the origins of the meeting, by saying that a meeting had been requested with President Carter last December.² On January 6, a member of the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala asked him what topics would be discussed, and he responded that the purpose of the meeting was to send greetings from President Lucas and to exchange ideas of the problems in Central America. The FM was told that the White House had decided that a meeting with the President would be difficult. He said that he doesn't know how acquainted Dr. Brzezinski is with Latin America and with the sensitivities of Latins and Indians. Indians are even more sensitive than Latins. Finally, he received a definitive answer that President Carter was too busy to receive him, but it would be all right for him to speak with Secretary Vance and Dr. Brzezinski. (C)

The FM said that when he requested the meeting in December, Central America was in a state of war. Since then, the crisis in Nicaragua has improved. They have been able to keep their constitution, and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 33, Memcons: Brzezinski: 3–6/79. Confidential. The meeting took place in Brzezinski's office. No drafting information appears on the memorandum.

² In telegram 7517 from Guatemala City, December 22, the Embassy reported that Castillo telephoned the Embassy and said that President Lucas wanted him to "deliver personal message to President Carter sometime during the month of January." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780530–0443)

there is much less violence. So he views the mediation effort as having been successful. He now believes that the OAS should stay away from the Nicaraguan problem, and because of that, he cancelled the appointment of the Guatemalan member to the mediation effort. Central America just wants to live in peace. President Carazo's recent visit through Central America was essentially to search for peace in the region. The economic situation in Nicaragua, and also in Costa Rica for that matter, is not good.³ (C)

The FM expressed his concern about the cuts in aid.⁴ He said that he had done a very detailed analysis of the aid and found that of the \$9.4M in U.S. assistance, \$6M were loans at 3% over 30 years, and \$3.4M were for population programs which were primarily designed to hold the population of the Indians down. This plus the \$250,000 in military training are really very small amounts. If giving this aid to Guatemala causes problems for the Executive Branch in the U.S., then Guatemala will seek a way to minimize this irritant. The aid is so modest that it can be replaced. Guatemala's main purpose is to try to find a way to increase our understanding with the U.S. Government. He said the problem of economic development in Guatemala is very great—50% of the population is backwards—but it can look elsewhere for aid. He said that some person had made a proposal to him to hire a lobbyist in Washington to get Guatemala's message across, but he would prefer to use that money to build a new school. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski responded to the three points:

—No insult was intended on the U.S. part because of the inability of the President to meet with the Foreign Minister. Under our system of government, the Secretary of State is the principal conductor of U.S. foreign policy. The President lays down general lines, and occasionally gets deeply involved in specific areas of foreign policy, but it is more appropriate for the Secretary of State to handle the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. He was also aware that the Secretary of State had a good discussion with the Foreign Minister.⁵ (C)

—With regard to the aid and the training of officers, Dr. Brzezinski explained that the U.S. has a very highly decentralized system of government, and the Congress doesn't always do what we request it to do. There is a tendency in Congress to be skeptical of certain relation-

³ For coverage of Nicaragua and the mediation effort, see Chapter 2.

⁴ For the cuts to military aid to Guatemala, see footnote 6, Document 32. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended ending development aid to Guatemala in May over concerns about human rights. (Telegram 2920 from Guatemala City, May 8; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790169-1678)

⁵ Vance met with Castillo on May 9. See footnote 7, below; see also footnote 2, Document 32.

ships; but we will ask them to take another look at this aid. He could not make any firm commitments that the aid would be restored, but Ambassador Vaky said he thought there would be a good chance of doing that. (C)

—The assistance issue is related to a much broader question of developments in the region. There is no doubt that the region is entering an important period of tremendous internal and external transformation. The pressures for change due to increased literacy, population, and development will be great. How these pressures are channeled will depend to a great extent on the flexibility and imagination of leaders like Foreign Minister Castillo in Guatemala and elsewhere. Whether there will be violence or peaceful transition to a more modern system will depend on the decisions which are made by the leaders in the region. The process, for example, of trying to integrate the Indian population in Guatemala will create very real problems in that country. The United States is interested in a stable and evolutionary process. If it is not, it will be exploited by extremist factions in the region and by countries like Cuba outside the region. (C)

For a long time, the United States has had a predominant influence in Central America. That is changing as we now seek increased equality and more mature relationships with the governments of Central America. In some ways, this transition in our role in the region is as difficult for us as it is for you. The debate over the Panama Canal Treaties is an illustration of this difficulty in the United States.⁶ But we now believe that it is no longer proper for us to exercise the degree of influence through an unequal relationship as we have done in the past. (C)

We became interested in Nicaragua and are interested in all of Central America because we know that the internal revolutionary tensions, if not properly managed, can lead to external revolutionary involvement by Castro, for example, and also through the Cubans by the Soviets. We hope that the problem of Nicaragua does not spread elsewhere. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he hopes that this message will be conveyed directly to President Lucas—that we are giving attention to the problems in the region, and that we believe that closing one's eyes to the internal revolutionary changes that are occurring will not work. The status quo in the region clearly cannot be sustained. Imaginative changes are required. To do this, we should work together not only as

⁶ The Panama Canal Treaties were signed in 1977, paving the way for Panamanian ownership and operation of the canal by 1999. Congress ratified the treaties in 1978 after an acrimonious debate about the loss of U.S. control of the canal. See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIX, Panama.

we have done before in Nicaragua, but in general. Cuba's involvement should give us all grounds for concern. Because of that, we should work together to see, for example, that Cuba does not get the Security Council seat in the United Nations. We would hope that you will take a long-sighted approach to this problem so as to fulfill our common goal. Please convey this message directly to your President. (C)

The Foreign Minister said that Dr. Brzezinski mentioned the need for imagination, and he acknowledged that this was needed in the region. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we want to help, though we do not want to intervene. However, it is also difficult to do so and to maintain our involvement and our assistance in the region because of the increasing fatigue which all Americans feel toward foreign policy in general. (C)

The Foreign Minister said that Guatemala needs the U.S. understanding. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski reiterated that increased understanding can occur only in the course of needed changes. It must be adaptation in the region. We are not suggesting that Guatemala take as its model the United States. But the political and educational system must be expanded in Guatemala—for example, 15% to 18% of the population could be reaching for education at a higher level, instead of the 3% which the Foreign Minister eluded to. Dr. Brzezinski said that we would look into the Congressional issue, and that Secretary Vance had already talked to Senator Church about it.⁷ (C)

The Foreign Minister said that Guatemala is not interested so much in the \$9M, but in the good relations with the United States. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said, in jest, if we can have a good relationship with Guatemala without spending the \$9M, we wouldn't object to that. Dr. Brzezinski apologized for the short meeting but he had to go to a meeting with the President. (C)

The Foreign Minister concluded the meeting by inviting Dr. Brzezinski to Guatemala for 2 to 3 days. Dr. Brzezinski said that he would love to visit; he acknowledged that he didn't have as good a knowledge

⁷ During his May 9 meeting with Castillo, Vance said that he had spoken with the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Frank Church (D-ID), earlier that day and that the committee's action was not binding on the administration. (Telegram 127830 to Guatemala City, May 19; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790228-0361) A PRC meeting on Central America, June 11, recommended the approval of a \$6 million rural enterprise basic human needs loan and a helicopter for the Guatemalan President "as a way to encourage positive directions in human rights and democratization in Guatemala," along with a *démarche* "stating our deep concern about officially-sanctioned assassinations." See Documents 469 and 470.

of the area as he would like, and that he had some friends from college days whom he might want to visit. (U)

34. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State¹

London, July 6, 1979, 1616Z

13184. Subject: HMG Expresses Concern About Future of Belize.

1. (C-Entire text) Following conclusion of tripartite consultations on the Caribbean, Ambassador Habib was called aside by Nicholas Ridley, FCO Minister of State and UK Chief of the Delegation.² Ridley expressed HMG's growing concern regarding the evolution of events in Belize. Evidence of Cuban involvement with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the prospect of violence spreading from Nicaragua to other parts of Central America were especially alarming. Added to this, the prospect Price might be defeated in upcoming elections in Belize increased HMG's concern.³ Ridley was concerned over the implications of these events for HMG's plans for early independence for Belize. He noted that HMG's underlying concern remained as it had been: the problem of resolving the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala. This was essential if stability in the area was to be maintained following the UK withdrawal. Ridley emphasized that HMG was determined to get out of Belize, and might consider granting independence without waiting for resolution of the dispute, leaving behind for the time being whatever forces were necessary to assure security. In any event, HMG would not act until at least after upcoming elections in Belize. He said he knew that US was also concerned about the future of the area and wondered if the USG could use its "special influence"

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790308–1140. Confidential; Exdis.

² Tripartite consultations among U.S., UK, and Canadian delegations on the Eastern Caribbean were held in London July 5–6. (Telegram 13237 from London, July 6; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790308–0295)

³ Belize held Parliamentary elections on November 20. Price's People's United Party won a two-thirds majority. ("Earthquake Hits Colombia," *Washington Post*, November 24, 1979, p. B9) In telegram 1238 from Belize City, November 23, the Consulate reported the official results and commented "one must bow to George Price as a skilled, effective and clever political man." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790544–0728)

with Guatemalan President Lucas to improve prospects for a settlement between Belize and Guatemala.

2. Ambassador Habib responded that the USG shared HMG's concern for an orderly transition in the area. Ambassador Habib noted, however, that past USG efforts at mediation in the dispute had been unsuccessful. Whatever was acceptable to one side was almost by definition unacceptable to the other. Yet some form of settlement was essential prior to the granting of independence to Belize and withdrawal of UK forces. Otherwise the withdrawal of a UK presence would almost inevitably lead to violence.

3. Ridley agreed with this assessment but reiterated the HMG was determined to get out of Belize. He stressed, however, that HMG would not act precipitously. He requested that USG take another look at the dispute with a view towards offering suggestions which might move the problem off dead center. Ridley added that HMG would very much appreciate the USG's current assessment of the situation and any suggestions it might be prepared to offer confidentially. He concluded by stressing that he would keep Ambassador Habib advised of HMG's plans.⁴

Brewster

⁴ In telegram 186779 to London, July 19, the Department addressed Ridley's request for the current USG view on the Belize negotiations. According to the telegram, Habib considered it "unlikely that the Guatemalans would seriously negotiate on Belize until after the Belizean general elections." Furthermore, the territorial question remained "crucial" and senior Guatemalan Army officers would "react militarily if the UK were to grant Belize independence without a settlement with Guatemala." Finally, the United States had "little real leverage with the current Guatemalan Government" and "little 'special influence' to use." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790329-0815)

35. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, October 3, 1979, 2132Z

6616. Subj: (U) US Position on Inter-American Bank Loan. Ref: State 256788.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Summary. On October 2, President Lucas and I met alone for an hour and a half discussion mostly centered on our human rights concerns. The President considers Guatemala is the target of an unjust orchestrated campaign of defamation. The object of this campaign, he says, is to destabilize Guatemala and halt its progress. He is, however, confident that the truth will prevail. I counseled that Guatemala take the necessary steps to improve its image and assure that objective facts are publicized. End summary.

3. I read the talking points contained in reftel to the President. He listened very carefully. However, he took no notes as I had suggested. Speaking personally I advised him that it was probable that despite our efforts or wishes there would be publicity and consequent speculation in the media over the significance of the U.S. position in the IDB. He said such publicity would have unsettling consequences in Guatemala.

4. The President did not comment directly on our position in the IDB. Instead, he referred again, as he has in the past, to what he terms an orchestrated international campaign of defamation against Guatemala. Much of the impetus for this campaign, he says, comes from the University of San Carlos here in Guatemala. He said for years the university, which is autonomous and which under the Constitution

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number] Confidential; Immediate; Limdis.

² In telegram 256788 to Guatemala City, September 29, the Department discussed the U.S. intention to abstain on Guatemala's \$15 million IDB loan request in the October 4 IDB board meeting and instructed Ortiz to inform Lucas and Bucaro that the United States "had no choice but to take this position given our policies and legislation relating to human rights" and that Guatemala should "make public its commitment to respect human rights and to correct abuses, wherever they occur, through followup investigations and judicial action." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790446–0520) Vance's evening report to Carter on September 29 reported that the United States had decided to abstain on the "\$15 million industry and tourism loan to Guatemala from the IDB on human rights grounds," which was the "first non-basic human needs loan to come to a vote since 1976." The report also noted that "since this vote might cause a seriously adverse reaction in Guatemala, we are instructing our Ambassador to inform President Lucas, in advance, of our decision." Carter wrote in the margin: "Why do it? (discussed with Cy)." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 1/7–12/79)

receives a fixed percentage of the national budget, has been under the control of Marxists and frustrated intellectuals who consistently adopt hostile and negative anti-government positions. He says these embittered and often subversive elements are in constant contact with like-minded groups abroad. Between them they organize campaigns of defamation against Guatemala because they want to stop Guatemala's progress and destabilize the country preparatory to political and subversive actions in accord with their plans for the country. He lamented that foreign groups seldom seem even to attempt to verify objective facts.

5. The President said this situation greatly worries the constructive and patriotic sectors of Guatemala. They advise him that his government must hire a good public relations firm to counter the bad image Guatemala is unjustly being given. They have gone so far, the President said, as to have high-powered public relations firms make bids to handle Guatemala's account. The cost, he said, would be about a million and a half dollars. He rejected this advice. He will not spend money for such purposes. Rather, he will continue to invest in schools, dispensaries, and in other public works. He is confident that responsible and fair-minded people will perceive the truth about Guatemala. There is a free press and anyone can come and go as they wish. He knows the business community, however, is determined to carry out a publicity campaign to counter the untruths. He will not try to stop them, but believes it will be wasted effort and money.

6. The President says he also has his problems with the media in Guatemala. He initially sharply reduced and will soon cut off entirely the quote subsidies end quote that the Presidency has long paid to a large number of Guatemalan newsmen. They retaliate by printing or otherwise publicizing stories intended to embarrass his administration. The unknowing accept media accounts at face value. This contributes to the image problem his administration has.

7. I raised the Colom Argueta and Fuentes Mohr murders and the lack of any credible efforts to resolve those crimes, all of which shocks public opinion greatly.³ In addition to these murders, the continuing killings of common criminals allegedly by a death squad, and the incident at Panzos⁴ all caused problems even for Guatemala's best friends that Marxist professors and disgruntled journalists can take advantage of.

8. The President said he wanted to tell me about Colom Argueta. He was a close personal friend of the President's. He helped the President

³ See footnote 4, Document 32.

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 28.

greatly in the campaign. The President believes it is time for Guatemala to consider a civilian President next term. The army as an institution must not risk loss of popular support. He believed Colom had a good possibility to be elected as the next President. President Lucas implied he would have supported Colom for the Presidency. He said he saw to it that Colom's party was officially registered so it could participate in the elections. However, the President said this plan ran across the quote political ambitions of another end quote. The result was that his friend Colom was murdered. There is no proof as to who was responsible. Colom's rival had also been assassinated. The President said that as is always the case, the government was blamed for both murders. Twelve years ago it had even been blamed for the assassination of the US Ambassador.⁵

9. The President seemed to speak with feeling. Much was implied rather than clearly stated. He appeared to be telling me that the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Cancinos, was somehow involved in the Colom assassination. Gen. Cancinos in turn was murdered, we believe by the clandestine Marxist EGP.⁶ The President added that an attempt was made on Colom even before Lucas was in office, but he was only wounded.

10. The Fuentes Mohr case, the President said, was one he did not know much about. At this point he spoke of his Vice President, Villagran Kramer. He described him as an incorrigible intriguer and posturer. He called Villagran quote that scorpion I carry in my shirt end quote. He went on to speak of his resentment over the slight of the Panamanians (who invited Villagran but not Lucas to the ceremonies of October 1).⁷ When I asked if an investigation had been made of the Fuentes Mohr murder, he replied there were no significant leads and spoke also of the unsolved murder of prominent businessman Luis Canella. I do not believe he meant to connect the two.

11. The President took great pains to describe the clash at Panzos between Indian peasants and the army. He said it occurred before his term of office and essentially originated when nervous troops not speaking the local Indian dialect panicked and fired upon an angry

⁵ See footnote 6, Document 1.

⁶ In telegram 3666 from Guatemala City, June 11, the Embassy reported that unidentified gunmen had assassinated Army Chief of Staff Major General David Cancinos Barrios and noted that Cancinos was "widely considered to have been intellectual author of Colom Argueta's murder—supposedly to remove him as rival for Presidency in 1982." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790264-0463)

⁷ Ceremonies held in Panama City on October 1 marked the implementation of the Panama Canal Treaties. Mondale and numerous Latin American leaders attended. (John M. Goshko, "Panamanians Take Possession of Zone," *Washington Post*, October 2, 1979, p. A1) See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, volume XXIX, Panama.

group of peasants. The peasants had been incited by political agitators. Able military leadership on the spot would have avoided the clash. Nevertheless, Marxist intellectuals greatly magnified the incident alleging that 200 peasants had been killed when only a small fraction of that number died. The President said foreign sectors, as usual, believed the maliciously exaggerated version even though an impartial investigation was made. I suggested a blue ribbon commission which published the results of its investigations had a better chance of being believed than one formed at a lower level.

12. The President asked me to report to my government that his administration was trying to improve its image, but will do so through deeds not publicity campaigns. I replied Guatemala had many friends who would welcome an improvement no matter how it came.

13. As I was leaving, Gen. Lucas said quote I stay calm and I study the situation carefully and then I decide what to do and I stick by the decision end quote.

14. Comment. This discussion of the Colom, Fuentes Mohr and Panzos cases was one I planned to have with the President since my arrival here. I had delayed until I felt a better personal rapport was established. The President was unusually frank in his comments to me. He appeared to be speaking with sincerity and did not show resentment or anger at my observations or towards the U.S. at any point. I had the impression of a somewhat lonely man surrounded by people he does not entirely trust and anxious for understanding and sympathy.

Ortiz

36. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, November 8, 1979, 2242Z

7465. Subj: US Vote On Belize in the United Nations. Ref: State 290413.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. President Lucas received me afternoon November 7. He listened attentively as I read the talking points contained reftel. He agreed Guatemala's isolation was never more evident. Nevertheless the President then said he believed the current impasse with the United Kingdom re Belize could be salutary. Elections in Belize are due soon. He believes the opposition will win. The opposition knows that independence is not a viable alternative for Belize unless the UK or some other country will subsidize the country permanently. As it is now the UK subsidizes the heavy unemployment in Belize through unemployment payments. An independent Belize could not do so. The President said the Communists in Guatemala and abroad do not conceal that they are very much in favor of independence for Belize. An independent Belize will fall easy prey to the Cubans. That is what worries Guatemala.

3. Nevertheless despite the provision in Guatemala's Constitution which makes Belize an integral part of the national territory, Guatemala for many years seeks a mutually satisfactory agreement. He said during his recent meeting with President Lopez Portillo, Mexico urged an urgent solution to the matter. President Lucas replied that he believed a "decorous" way out of the problem could be found. Guatemala would

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 1–12/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to London, Belize City, and USUN. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 290413 to Guatemala City and USUN, November 7, the Department noted that the United States had abstained from the vote on Belize in the UN General Assembly, a decision that took into account the U.K. request to support a resolution on Belizean independence; the growing international popularity regarding independence for Belize; the turbulent situation in Central America; and U.S. hopes to influence Guatemala. The Department instructed Ortiz to inform Guatemala of the abstention and to explain that it was a difficult choice because "some of our closest allies explicitly asked us to cast a positive vote" and "the majority of the countries in the hemisphere, as well as elsewhere, support the resolution." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790512–0995) Bushnell's October 22 briefing memorandum to Newsom reported that the United Kingdom had requested that the United States "support its UNGA resolution on Belize," and noted that it was "the first time HMG has requested us to do so." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850183–2440) Carrick's letter to Grove, November 1, noted that the United Kingdom was "extremely disappointed that the Guatemalan Government will again be able to shelter behind an American abstention." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850183–2443)

be ready to recognize Belize's independence provided there were satisfactory assurances that Belize would not go Communist. He said Guatemala would accept a strip of territory south of Toledo. This would assure that Guatemala and Belize could remain close friends. He said the Guatemalan Government is already extending credits to the farmers in the Toledo area who are largely of Guatemalan origin. The President said Guatemala could get along with a Lindo government.

4. The President said he realized it was difficult for the US to abstain on the Belize resolution, however, our abstention contributed to the stability of the region in troubled times.

5. The President said the reports concerning human rights in Guatemala which are accepted abroad were most often exaggerated or untrue. He referred to the case of a young female student arrested for the illegal occupation of a church. There were reports spread of police brutality which were verified untrue. He said he hopes for more objectivity and efforts to understand the situation here. I again mentioned the Fuentes Mohr and Colom Argueta assassinations.³ He replied that I already had his explanation of those events (Guatemala 6616) which took place many months ago and which had not been repeated.⁴

6. Comment: The President's restatement of the Guatemalan proposal accepting a comparatively small strip of territory in the southern tip of Belize seems significant to us. The President also made it a point to say that Belize was a double-edged problem for Guatemala. He pointed out the military institution has no alternative but to press for some recognition of what he terms Guatemala's legitimate claim.

Ortiz

³ See footnote 4, Document 32.

⁴ See Document 35.

37. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom¹

Washington, January 16, 1980, 1813Z

12204. For the Ambassador. Subject: Belize/Guatemala Negotiations. Refs: A. 79 State 328115; B. Belize 036.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. According to Ref B FCO Minister Ridley is expected to meet with Premier Price in London prior to Minister Ridley's visit to Washington on/about January 18. Please pass the following message from the Secretary to Lord Carrington in partial response to the questions that he raised in Ref A.

Begin text. Dear Peter:

As we agreed last December, I have consulted with my experts on the question of independence for Belize.

Our conclusion is that Guatemalan acquiescence is critical to prospects for a reasonably lasting solution.

Two judgments are critical to this assessment:

—First, that under present circumstances, Belizean independence in the face of Guatemalan opposition would unleash significant destabilizing forces—in Belize itself, in Guatemala, in Central America, and in the Caribbean. It would invite increased Cuban involvement, and be detrimental to U.S. and, we believe, Western interests generally.

—Second, that any process that excludes Guatemala from some role in the negotiations leading to Belizean independence would rapidly prove unworkable—regardless of what pressures the United States might unilaterally bring to bear on Guatemala.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800027–0740. Confidential; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Belize City, Guatemala City, and USUN. Drafted by Hemenway; cleared by Bowdler, Habib, Newlin, and in S/S–O; approved by Vance.

² In telegram 328115 to multiple posts, December 20, 1979, the Department described a December 17 bilateral meeting in which Vance and Carrington discussed Belize and Central America. Carrington asked Vance if the United States would change its policy of neutrality in the British-Guatemalan dispute over Belize. Vance indicated that, before he could respond to the question, he needed answers to two additional questions: "Would US support for Belizean independence drive the Guatemalans off the deep end into an ill-advised military action against Belize; and/or would such a move by the US cause the Guatemalan authorities to employ strong arm tactics which would plunge the country into an internal dispute leading to a Nicaraguan scenario." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790586–0732) In telegram 36 from Belize City, January 9, the Consulate reported on Nalle's discussions with McEntee. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800016–0182)

This assessment does not imply, however, that Guatemalan acquiescence, on basis that might prove acceptable to both Belize and the United Kingdom is necessarily impossible to obtain.

Guatemalan preoccupation with potential expansion of Cuba's role in Central America through Belize has been heightened by events and trends of the past year. I share some of these concerns. Cuba has become more active in the Caribbean and in Central America. The changes in governments in Grenada and Nicaragua have given the Cubans footholds.³ We are trying to counter these Cuban advances but conservative governments such as Guatemala realize that they are more exposed. In short I do not believe that the Central American and Caribbean areas, already in turmoil with major Western interests threatened, can afford another destabilizing event that creates a potential opportunity, direct or indirect, for Cuba. Thus a negotiated solution is imperative. The very series of events that increases the need for a negotiated solution makes one more possible. I recall that U.S. and UK experts worked together two years ago on the concept of a treaty between Belize and its neighbors that would include both assurances of its security and Belizean assurances that it would not admit foreign, non-Commonwealth, forces of any kind.

We believe our own position as a neutral party could prove an important stabilizing factor. Should you consider it useful, I would be prepared to ask Phil Habib to assess the current positions of the various parties to the dispute by visiting Guatemala and Belize as well as other potentially interested states. I cannot help but feel that developments in Central America over the past year have affected the perceptions of leaders in both countries. It is my hope the changes will facilitate a new attempt at a negotiated settlement in which we would be prepared to participate if you thought it would be helpful.

I understand Minister Nicholas Ridley will soon be coming to Washington. I have asked Bill Bowdler, the new Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, to meet with him and explore these ideas further.⁴

With best wishes, Cy. End text.

Vance

³ In March 1979 the New Jewel Movement ousted Eric Gairy, Prime Minister of Grenada, and established a People's Revolutionary Government headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. See *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean. In Nicaragua, a five-member junta government backed by the Sandinista National Liberation Front assumed power from President Anastasio Somoza Debayle in July 1979. See Chapter 2 of this volume.

⁴ See Document 38.

38. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Belize City and the Embassies in Guatemala and the United Kingdom¹

Washington, January 28, 1980, 1630Z

24113. Subject: FCO Minister Ridley's Meetings With Secretary Vance, Under Secretary Newsom and Assistant Secretary Bowdler on Belize.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary. FCO Minister Ridley held a series of meetings in Department January 18 to discuss plans and problems connected with Belizean independence.² In the first session, with Assistant Secretary Bowdler, Ridley discussed his recent meetings with Belizean Premier Price and the possible bases for further talks with Guatemala. With Under Secretary Newsom, Ridley emphasized the urgent need for the UK to grant independence and to be prepared, if necessary, to do so even in the absence of a settlement with Guatemala. Mr. Newsom made clear that we are on the side of independence; the issue is how to influence Guatemala and assure Belizean security. With the Assistant Secretary, Ridley sketched outline of plans for discussions with Guatemala, need for adequate security for border, and urgency of UK need to grant independence. Secretary Vance, noting the convergence of US and UK views, stated US willingness to help in finding a negotiated settlement so that independence could follow. In the UK timetable, discussions between the UK and Guatemala, with Price of course included, could begin in March. End summary.

3. Ambassador Bowdler opened the first meeting with an appreciation of the situation in Central America. He pointed out that Castro, after many years of extreme caution, last year abandoned this caution when he saw the opposition to Somoza gaining ground. Castro sees a new opportunity for effective revolution in El Salvador and is beginning to provide greater assistance to the extreme Left in that country. Wherever there is evidence of a real vacuum in the region, it appears that Castro will be increasingly willing to take advantage of such targets of opportunity. Minister Ridley agreed with this assessment.

4. Ridley then turned to Belize. He described Price as having grown up as a revolutionary who has sought Belize independence all his life.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800049–0417. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Drafted by Hemenway and Warne; cleared in S/S–O, S–PH, S/S, EUR/NE, in substance in P; approved by Bushnell.

² No other records of the conversation have been found.

If Price is frustrated in seeking independence, the hotheads in his party may become uncontrollable and seek help from Cuba. Of course, Price has resisted.

5. Ridley said that he believed that Price had hardened his position on concessions to Guatemala because of his landslide victory.³ He said that Price sees Guatemala as isolated by the UN vote and afraid of Communist activity and penetration, not just from Belize but from the south.⁴ The UK must go forward with independence but wishes to begin new negotiations with Guatemala. He said in confidence that Price had accepted the British insistence on such negotiations, that Price will offer maritime rights in the Caribbean, that Price will suggest that the UK build the road according to the 1859 treaty,⁵ and that Price is willing to "tidy up the boundary but without substantial territorial concessions." Belize will then guarantee no Cuban infiltration through its territory.

6. Ridley said that if Guatemala's chief interest is in security, the parties should be able to get together on this point. He indicated that the UK would not make an abrupt pullout of its troops prior to some sort of agreeable security arrangement. If, however, the main issue for Guatemala is the political problem of territory, there may not be much hope for an agreement now. Guatemala's threat of war has been an effective veto on independence in the past. But the UK and Belize must be willing to move ahead toward Belizean independence in the face of this threat if necessary.

7. Ambassador Bowdler said that any solution must contain both security and territorial elements. However, given events in Central America and Guatemala's growing isolation, the political (i.e., territorial) element in the package may have diminished in relation to Guatemala's perceived security requirements. Guatemala is concerned that a weak Belize would be an open invitation to Cuban activity. It was agreed that it is important for Belize to be brought into close ties with other countries of Central America through economic relations and

³ See footnote 3, Document 34.

⁴ In telegram 5483 from USUN, November 22, 1979, the Mission reported that the UN General Assembly held a plenary vote on a resolution regarding Belize November 21. The United States joined seven countries voting against the adoption of the resolution and 134 countries voted in favor. Guatemala did not participate. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790537-0059) The resolution endorsed an "early and secure independence" for Belize and called upon the "parties concerned to refrain from exerting any pressure or the use of threats or force against the Government and people of Belize to prevent the full exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination, independence, and territorial integrity." (Question of Belize, A/RES/34/38, adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 21, 1979)

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 16.

possibly by Belize joining existing military and economic arrangements in the region.

8. This element of the discussion and a possible role for the OAS was further discussed in a later meeting with Ambassador Bowdler.

9. In the meeting with Under Secretary Newsom, Ridley made clear the UK determination to get out of Belize so it can use its resources elsewhere. Belize, Ridley said, is less of a security threat to Guatemala than is sometimes thought. It looks to Central America, not the Caribbean. Mr. Newsom asked Ridley what timetable he was considering. Ridley said that talks with Guatemala, with Price present of course, might begin in March. This phase could last 3–6 months. If all went well, the subsequent legislative process in Parliament and the drafting of the Constitution could take 6 months also. This would be followed by time for physical preparations for the act of independence. Independence, therefore, is not likely to be closer than 18 months in the future.

10. Ridley said that Premier Price had been in touch with Torrijos and Mexico and with other countries in the Caribbean to seek some sort of security guarantee. According to Price, Torrijos had offered 1,000 von to defend Belize independence, and was urging him to declare it, even unilaterally. Other countries apparently have offered only psychological support.

11. Price asked somewhat rhetorically what role the US and Canada might play with respect to guaranteeing Belize security. He did not seek an answer then but suggested that an answer would be helpful as negotiations proceed. In response to a question by Mr. Newsom, Ridley said the UK would be willing to keep some troops in Belize for an unspecified but limited time after independence.

12. With respect to the role of the OAS, Ambassador Bowdler pointed out that if Belize were a member, it could be protected by the Rio Treaty and other OAS automatic guarantees.⁶ The problem is that the OAS charter does not permit the nomination of a new member where there is an outstanding territorial dispute with an extra continental power.

13. Mr. Newsom made it clear that the US was basically on the side of independence but did not want any additional problems in this disturbed region right now. We therefore welcome the UK offer to provide Belize with security even after independence. The issue for

⁶ The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, known as the Rio Pact, was signed in 1947 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and promulgated a collective security agreement among members in case of an armed attack by any state.

the US is to see how we can influence Guatemala and what kind of a security guarantee, if any, we are prepared to offer to Belize.

14. Mr. Newsom repeated the offer contained in Secretary Vance's letter to Lord Carrington that Phil Habib might go to Belize, Guatemala and elsewhere, to sound out the views of interested parties.⁷ Ridley agreed that Mr. Habib's help could well be useful.

15. In the last meeting of the day, Ridley told the Secretary that he was delighted with the consultations with Assistant Secretary Bowdler. The UK planned to grant Belize independence, Ridley said, reporting the timetable he had mentioned to Mr. Newsom. Thus, it would be at least a year to 18 months before Belize became independent. Ambassador Bowdler noted that it would be destabilizing if there was no solution to the border dispute before independence. The UK wanted to find formulas to resolve this dispute and various possibilities, such as using the OAS or CACM, needed closer examination. Ambassador Bowdler would sound out the Guatemalans shortly and a role by Mr. Habib would be welcomed but that role had yet to be developed.⁸

16. Ridley said that Premier Price was prepared to help in providing adequate security of the border but he would not "cede" territory to Guatemala. The main preoccupation of all parties was security. Guatemala, however, preferred to retain the status quo because British troops now help secure the border. The British, however, found the cost no longer tenable. Ridley added that the UK was prepared to work with the two parties to find a solution but negotiations could not be prolonged forever. It would be helpful for the US to encourage Guatemala to be reasonable. The Secretary responded that the US was prepared to help. Ridley added that should the negotiations fail, Price might turn to unfriendly means for help. Thus, a contingency plan for independence without Guatemalan agreement should be developed, but first soundings need to be taken to determine the chance of success of negotiation. The Secretary was pleased there was a congruence of views on how to proceed, noting that the US wants to resolve this dispute, and thus minimize the chance that Cuba becomes involved.

Vance

⁷ See Document 37.

⁸ In telegram 1344 from Guatemala City, February 27, Ortiz reported that, with the prior concurrence of Bowdler, he had raised the Belize question with Lucas on February 25. Lucas preferred to leave the issue "undisturbed," and said that "the real problem for him" was that the Guatemalan Constitution stipulated that Belize was Guatemalan territory. Lucas also noted his concern that Belize might become "a focal point for Communist penetration" and that Guatemala needed an outlet to the sea. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800107-1056)

39. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 5, 1980, 11:55 a.m.–12:05 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Dr. Brzezinski's Meeting with Rafael Castillo Valdez, Guatemalan Foreign Minister (C)

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert Pastor, NSC Staff

Brewster Hemenway, Director, Office of Central American Affairs, Department of State

H.E. Rafael Castillo Valdez, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guatemala

H.E. Dorotea Monterroso, Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States

Dr. Brzezinski welcomed the Foreign Minister, and after exchanging pleasantries, said that he looked forward to meeting with the Minister for two reasons: to listen to the Minister's views of recent developments in Central America and to offer his own perspective on those developments. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that Central America is of fundamental importance to the United States, and that we have been watching recent developments closely and with great concern. This is a time of profound change in the region. We support the need for change and are eager to play a positive role to help see that this change is constructive and democratic. (C)

Historically, the relationship between the US and Central American countries has been very close, but it has also been unequal. We realize that the time has come for readjusting that relationship so that it becomes more balanced; the Panama Canal Treaties are an example of our recognition of that goal. Moreover, we have sought to express our support for the very real aspirations in the region for independence, self-determination, and dignity. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81. Confidential. The meeting took place in Brzezinski's office. Sent to Brzezinski under a March 5 covering memorandum from Pastor requesting Brzezinski's approval of the memorandum of conversation and signature on a note to Castillo. Brzezinski indicated his approval and signed the note to Castillo, which was dated March 7 and served as a covering note to a copy of Brzezinski's remarks about Central America made during their March 5 conversation. Castillo had requested a copy of the remarks during the meeting. (Ibid.)

The adjustment of the region's external relationship with the United States coincides with an increase of internal pressures for social reform within each country. Our concern is that the combination of these two trends could produce an explosive situation in the region, which could be exploited by the Soviet Union and the Cubans, and badly managed by elite groups in the area. Both external and internal changes are necessary. We do not believe it is possible to maintain the *status quo* or to stop social reforms. The issue is how to channel this pressure for change constructively so as to assure greater justice and democracy in the region. We hope that Guatemala will be an important factor for social change in the region. (C)

Minister Castillo said that he believed that Dr. Brzezinski had so perfectly summarized the situation in Central America that he requested a copy of the minutes, and *Dr. Brzezinski* said that could be done. The *Foreign Minister* said that change is inevitable. The alternative is to go backwards. He said Dr. Brzezinski mentioned the importance of change in a democratic framework, and he agreed with that entirely. He said that there are fundamentally only two choices for the region: democratic capitalism or communism. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski underlined the importance of changing our external relationships as well, and agreed with the Foreign Minister that we want to avoid communism. (C)

Minister Castillo said that in order to be able to counterbalance this drift toward communism, we need to do great things. There is a tremendous challenge that we face. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that Guatemala could succeed in that challenge. There are other examples of traditional and antiquated structures which evolved toward democracy. Venezuela and Spain provide two such positive examples. Guatemala, with its wealth and talent and with the disturbing example of Nicaragua, could change in the same direction. Guatemala should work for more reforms internally and perhaps engage in a dialogue with Spain in order to profit from their example. Guatemala may also want to try to encourage the Mexicans to play a more constructive role, rather than the ambivalent game they are playing. (C)

Minister Castillo said that Mexico in fact likes to play three different games—one for international politics, one for internal political reasons, and a different one for bilateral relations. Minister Castillo asked Dr. Brzezinski to consider this conversation as a base upon which they can build in future conversations. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he would like to do that, and he concluded by saying that this is a real opportunity to do something constructive

in Guatemala and for Guatemala to play a constructive role in Central America.² (C)

² A typed note titled “DR ITEM Guatemala” on which an unknown hand wrote: “March 6, 1980—ZB to Pres,” reads: “I met with the Guatemalan Foreign Minister this morning and I impressed upon him the necessity for undertaking fundamental social reforms as the best way to assure the defeat of the extreme Left in Central America. I told him that we were trying to adjust our international relationships with the nations in the region in order to make them more balanced and equal, but this policy, combined with internal pressures within the region, could create an explosive situation. He understood and accepted my points, and agreed that change was necessary, and it should occur within a democratic framework.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 1–7/80)

40. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Belize City¹

Washington, May 8, 1980, 0004Z

121020. Brussels for USEC. Subject: US/UK Consultations on Guatemala/Belize.

1. S-Entire text

2. Summary: This cable reports on the Belize-Guatemala portion of the discussions April 30 between UK FCO Minister of State Ridley and FCO Latin American Director Harding with Asst. Secy. Bowdler and DAS Bushnell. Separate cables report their discussion on the Caribbean, and Argentina and the Falkland Islands.² Ridley and Harding were enroute to Belize to meet with Premier Price on May 1. Talks between the UK and Guatemala are scheduled for May 19–20 in Bermuda. Ridley said that the British Cabinet is in a “bullish” mood

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800227–0153. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to Guatemala City and London. Sent for information to Managua, Ottawa, Panama City, Paris, San José, San Salvador, Bridgetown, Port of Spain, Georgetown, Paramaribo, Willemstad (Curacao), Fort de France (Martinique), The Hague, Brussels, USNATO, and USUN. Drafted by Blacken; cleared by Bushnell, and in ARA/CAR, EUR/NE, and S/S–O; approved by Bowdler.

² In telegram 117143 to London and multiple posts, May 3, the Department outlined Bowdler and Bushnell’s April 30 discussions with Ridley and Harding regarding the Caribbean. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800220–0586) In telegram 120050 to Buenos Aires, May 7, the Department described Bowdler and Bushnell’s April 30 discussions with Ridley and Harding regarding Argentina and the Falkland Islands. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800225–0913)

about the Belize issue and wants it settled. In his talks with Price and subsequently with the Guatemalans, Ridley will probe to determine their flexibility on the territorial issue and to ascertain whether other factors such as maritime rights and security assurances for the Guatemalans and development assistance and security assurances for Belize might persuade the two sides to be flexible. However, for the British, the bottom line would be to grant Belize independence with or without Guatemalan acceptance. End summary.

3. Ridley opened discussions on Belize by confirming that UK-Guatemalan talks are scheduled for May 19–20 in Bermuda. He was considering whether to have Premier Price on location in Bermuda for simultaneous consultation and participation in some sessions. The Belize issue had been discussed in the British Cabinet which Ridley described as in a “bullish” mood about ridding the UK of the problem.

4. Ridley said that the issue in the negotiations may boil down to the Guatemalans demanding a few square miles of swamp and Price refusing to give them up. He said the British could give the Guatemalans maritime rights that they want and try to provide something to satisfy their security concerns. He wondered if the United States could help with infrastructure and road improvement in the southern part of Belize. Ridley said that the UK would put maximum pressure on the parties to settle. He said Price has been adamant on not giving up land but otherwise appears to be ready to make accommodations. In response to a question, Ridley expressed the view that Belize, except for the practical reason of reaching a lasting settlement, had no reason for giving up territory. (For such a small country, cession of territory was “inflicting damage unnecessarily.”) Ridley said that he would listen to Guatemalans’ territorial demands, but in the end if an agreement is not reached the UK would tell the GOG that it would go ahead with Belizean independence without satisfying Guatemala.

5. Ambassador Bowdler cautioned that the Guatemalans are developing a siege mentality. They are alarmed over the situation in Central America, U.S. human rights policy and the presence of guerrillas in their territory. They treat the U.S. with increasing reserve. Bowdler urged caution in dealing with the Guatemalans. Ridley said the UK’s intention was to see how the May 19–20 talks go. At the conclusion of the talks, the UK will insist upon another meeting with the Guatemalans soon. He said there was a possibility of the British keeping a “sovereign” military base in Belize. Price, he thought, would welcome it and it might be reassuring to the Guatemalans. Ridley asked if the U.S. could get involved in pressing for a solution and Bowdler responded affirmatively, saying that the U.S. is prepared to send an emissary to talk with the parties if that were necessary.

6. Bushnell commented that the U.S. has the feeling that most Guatemalans want a settlement, but that they need some face-saving

concession regarding territory. Ridley asked if there was any “carrot” we could offer them. He commented that obviously the Guatemalans want military equipment, development assistance and a “bit more loving attention.” Bowdler responded that the U.S. has problems in being responsive to the Guatemalans—there were killings, and repression of labor union leaders and university professors which made it difficult for the U.S. to be forthcoming on military matters. Bushnell pointed out that in some areas the Guatemalan Government was making reforms; they had passed out 13,000 land titles to peasants last year.

7. Bowdler commented that the U.S. would be approaching them soon with a new strategy intended to allay some of their fears. Bushnell remarked that a major problem was that the Guatemalans had no effective judicial system; when terrorists were caught they simply shot them.

8. Bushnell suggested that Guatemala’s isolation as evidenced in the United Nations might be important in persuading them to compromise. They cannot but be aware that they are totally isolated in the UN. Last year in abstaining on the UN vote on Belize, the U.S. put the Guatemalans on notice that the U.S. expected some movement toward a settlement.³ Ridley commented that the British probably would seek some publicity for the talks with the Guatemalans. In his talks with Price the following day he would probe to see how far he could be pushed. One problem was that Price had offers from other governments in the Caribbean area to provide assistance to keep the Guatemalans out. Ridley said it appears Torrijos may have offered 1,000 troops and has encouraged Price to unilaterally declare independence. Said UK not fully clear on what Torrijos doing in Belize.

9. Ridley recognized that the Guatemalans know that as the most wealthy and powerful country in Central America, they are a special target of the Cubans. Bowdler said it would be important to give the Guatemalans assurances that the Cubans could not act from an independent Belize to undermine Guatemala. Ridley agreed. However, he repeated that if the negotiations do not progress the British are prepared to play the card of letting the Guatemalans know they would have to fight the British if they invade Belize.⁴

Christopher

³ See footnote 2, Document 36.

⁴ In telegram 11287 from London, May 27, the Embassy reported that Ridley considered the UK-Guatemala talks in Bermuda “as being highly successful from the British standpoint.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800260–0444) In telegram 3593 from Guatemala City, June 4, the Embassy reported that members of the Guatemalan delegation to the Bermuda talks returned pessimistic about the prospects for an acceptable settlement. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800274–0232)

41. Memorandum From the Chief of the Latin American Division, Central Intelligence Agency ([name not declassified]) to the Acting Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, June 20, 1980

SUBJECT

Points for Discussion on Guatemala

Covert Action Proposal

1. As you recall, on 7 April 1980 the SCC reviewed a Covert Action Proposal for Honduras and Guatemala which we had prepared.² The SCC approved the Honduran portion and authorized \$500,000 for the program. The Guatemalan section was briefly discussed but it was decided at that time that it would be held in abeyance until the State Department approved a new strategy paper for Guatemala which would provide the policy basis for our covert action program.

2. Luigi R. Einaudi prepared a strategy paper for Guatemala on 20 May 1980.³ Ambassador Bowdler chaired an inter-agency meeting to discuss the paper on 22 May 1980.⁴ The one option which offers some hope for realistically dealing with Guatemala via a combination of "carrot and stick" initiatives, is being significantly resisted by some sectors of the State Department, particularly the Office of Human

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator for DCI (1977-81), Box 13, Folder 4: SCC(I) Meeting June 1980 CA. Secret. Sent through the Deputy Director for Operations, John McMahon, who signed his concurrence on June 23.

² See Documents 489 and 490.

³ Einaudi's May 20 draft paper, entitled "U.S. Strategy Toward Guatemala," posed the question: "Can we influence the current GOG to make the reforms necessary for Guatemala to evolve more democratically and play a constructive regional role? If so, how?" Einaudi proposed three options: 1) "*Current Policy. Measured Pressure.* Mixes human rights pressures, reassurances of anti-Communist resolve, and modest development assistance efforts, as dictated by the issue and circumstances of the moment;" 2) "*Distancing.* Make clear that no improvement in relations can be expected until the GOG moves decisively to end abuses and makes substantial progress on socio-economic reforms. No effort would be made to destabilize;" 3) "*Gradual inducement: A positive USG stance to encourage regional cooperation and markedly reduced levels of political violence as a prerequisite for a 1982 election with broad political participation and the emergence of a constitutional successor to Lucas with enhanced legitimacy.* We would undertake some modest initial good faith gestures to engage the power structure, particularly the military, in a broad-based dialogue. Our role on Belize would continue to be one of constructive neutrality." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator for DCI (1977-81), Box 13, Folder 4: SCC(I) Meeting June 1980 CA) For the final version, see Document 42.

⁴ No record of this May 22 meeting found.

Rights. It now appears that approval of a new strategy for Guatemala is questionable if not moribund. Without such a moderation in U.S. policy, a covert action program would be ineffective and in conflict with current policy toward Guatemala.

3. Steps to break this log jam or at least bring the matter to clear definition would be in all our interests. The level of Cuban assistance to insurgent movements in Guatemala and particularly El Salvador (witness recent intelligence reporting indicating Costa Rica will be used by the Cubans as a support base for activities against El Salvador) indicates that the clock may be ticking faster than policy-makers are aware of or wish to acknowledge at this time.⁵

[heading (one line) not declassified]

4. *[1 paragraph (8 lines) not declassified]*

5. *[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]*

Possible Increase in Civic Action Programs by Pentagon⁶

6. It is my firm belief that the appeal of insurgency to the rural poor in Central America could be significantly lessened by an expansion of civic action contacts between local armed forces and the populace, particularly in Guatemala but also throughout Central America. The number of Mobile Training Team (MTT) visits, to provide civic action instruction to Central American armies or establish programs for civic action, should be augmented. I have discussed this with Southern Command Chief, General Nutting, during his recent visit to Headquarters and he supports the approach. It is a matter which I believe we should continue to support and encourage at the highest level.

[name not declassified]

⁵ Intelligence reporting not further identified.

⁶ Civic Action Programs involved military forces undertaking civilian development projects.

42. Strategy Paper on Guatemala Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, July 14, 1980

U.S. STRATEGY TOWARD GUATEMALA

I. THE ISSUE

Can we influence the current GOG to play a constructive regional role and to make the reforms necessary to reduce internal violence and prevent the growth of the extreme left? If so, how?

II. BACKGROUND

Guatemala is a unique and important country in its own right. As the region's most substantial economic and military power, Guatemala is also critical to Central America's future. An evolutionary course in Guatemala would enhance prospects for democratic reform in the entire region. Conversely, revolution in Guatemala would seriously endanger prospects for stability of the rest of Central America, and could ultimately affect Mexico.

Two problems are currently of major importance to U.S. interests: regional security and human rights.

Security. Guatemala is a key target of Cuban efforts in Central America. Encouraged by events in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and with Cuban advice, Guatemalan revolutionary groups have recently improved their coordination and stepped up terrorist actions. Guerrilla strength has increased from 600–700 in 1977 to an armed cadre variously estimated today to be between 1200–1400 and 3,000. There are indications of increased Cuban support—both through regional networks that supply weapons, safehouses and training, and through support for an international propaganda campaign against Guatemalan institutions and the United States.

Guatemala's vulnerability to subversion is substantial, and due in large measure to a violent political tradition, gross socio-economic

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SSC-I Meetings, 1980. Confidential. According to a notation at the end of the paper, the paper was drafted by Einaudi who incorporated the substance of comments received from ARA-NSC/IG members. Tarnoff sent the paper with a covering memorandum dated July 24 to Brzezinski. In his covering memorandum, Tarnoff noted that he was forwarding the strategy paper to Brzezinski in response to a July 15 memorandum from Dodson concerning an SCC-I meeting scheduled for July 25. Tarnoff also noted that in a July 17 meeting the Inter-Agency Group for ARA, chaired by Bowdler, approved Option Four from the strategy paper, "beginning with step one as detailed in Annex Two." (Ibid.) Annexes One and Two are attached but not printed.

inequities, ideological polarization, and habitual repression (see next section on human rights). Reactions to these problems are sharply polarized between advocates of reform and of repression. Perceptions of an imminent communist threat are growing, both in Guatemala and to some extent in the United States.

In addition to Guatemala's own security, two other major U.S. regional security goals—the success of the Salvadoran Junta and a peaceful resolution of the Belize dispute—will require substantial Guatemalan cooperation if they are to be attained:

—*El Salvador*. The governing Junta has faced two right-wing coup attempts. Guatemalan rightists have been involved. Direct Guatemalan military involvement would seriously threaten the Junta's survival.

—*Belize*. The British are determined to grant independence to Belize within 12–18 months. Without a prior agreement that settles Guatemala-UK territorial differences, Guatemala might take military action against Belize, thus satisfying a point of national honor and providing an opportunity for harsh internal measures. Unless the British leave behind a garrison after independence, the Belizeans would seek security ties with other countries, probably including Cuba.

Human Rights. Guatemalan governments have traditionally relied heavily on intimidation and both official and private repression. Political pressures and violence from the extreme left have provoked increased violence by both the ultra-right and the security forces, who feel their survival requires an iron—and often indiscriminate—preventive fist.

The powerful Guatemalan ultra-right has a long tradition of employing force, including terrorism, against its opponents. Faced with what it sees as a war for survival, the ultra right—which includes substantial elements of the middle class as well as the wealthy, and has close ties to the military, police, and rural militias—has adopted a “survival” strategy based on annihilation of “the enemy” without regard for due process.

Guatemala's already poor human rights record is thus worsening, and fueling intensified domestic and international criticism. Human rights violations in Guatemala are currently the subject of intense international scrutiny by Amnesty International, the ICJ, the OAS, UNHRC, trade unions, numerous non-government U.S. human rights organizations, and various members of the U.S. Congress. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission is scheduled to visit Guatemala in September.

III. ANALYSIS

The perception of growing danger from the far left has drawn together the narrow military/economic elite which brought President

Lucas to power in 1978, giving him a good chance of completing his constitutional term in 1982. Although discontent is widespread, opposition groups are fragmented, and most of the power sectors—the military, the private sector, the church hierarchy—either actively support or tolerate the government.

The current conflict between “order” and “change” in Guatemala is thus not unlike the situations faced previously in the Southern Cone—with whose countries, particularly Argentina, Guatemala is developing close relations.

Two factors suggest that the forces of “order” could prevail as in the Southern Cone countries: the strength of established institutions, and the existence of some social policies.

—Though somewhat demoralized, the Guatemalan military remain powerful and united against the left. Guatemala’s developing middle class has a stake in stability. Though fragmented and weakened by the assassination of many key leaders, the nucleus of a modern party system still exists. Although voter turnout was low, seven of Guatemala’s eight legally registered political parties participated in municipal elections in April.

—Some of the socio-economic initiatives of the Lucas government are encouraging. Although promises have regularly outstripped implementation, the GOG National Planning Council has announced a 1980–82 Social Action Plan which contemplates expenditures of \$566.7 million over the next two years concentrated in health, education, housing and child nutrition. Over 13,000 titles were distributed to landless peasants during 1979.

Unlike the Southern Cone, however, Guatemala faces two important problems that will be a continuing source of unrest: deep social inequities, and growing economic uncertainty.

—Guatemala’s large Indian population is the poorest sector of the society, and subject to harsh exploitation. Indian Communities are now increasingly caught up in a murderous crossfire of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence. Though still marginal to national politics, some Indians are for the first time beginning to be radicalized to the left.

—In addition, although agricultural export prices are good, and oil production is promising, the basically strong Guatemalan economy is showing signs of weakness due to declining investor confidence. This magnifies other problems of inflation, unemployment, an accelerating credit squeeze, and a shrinking market for Guatemalan industrial production caused by instability elsewhere in Central America.

In sum, to maintain long-term stability, political violence must be reduced, outlets provided for socio-economic discontent, an armed

confrontation over Belize avoided, and honest presidential elections held in 1982.

Time to achieve these objectives is running out. To the extent that a viable “center” exists in Guatemala, and its strength is not great, this atmosphere contributes to a polarization which may lead to its complete disappearance—by imprisonment, by assassination from “left” or “right,” or by emigration.

IV. U.S. GUATEMALAN RELATIONS

Reluctant to acknowledge responsibility for their internal problems, most Guatemalan leaders blame foreign subversion, and appear to have concluded that U.S. policies will lead to the destabilization of the GOG and its replacement by a Sandinista-style regime. There is a growing climate of mistrust, resentment, and even paranoia toward the U.S.

The application of our human rights policies, particularly in the security area, has eroded U.S. influence with the Guatemalan armed forces, whose leaders remain key to the future of Guatemala. Exploiting fears of Nicaragua, misrepresenting our intentions in El Salvador, and employing a well financed, systematic campaign, the ultra-right has driven a wedge between us and the Guatemalan military that prevents an effective dialogue on behalf of our objectives.

There is a growing tendency, even among those officers who oppose repression, to write off the present U.S. Administration as hostile, or at best as an unreliable friend whose counsel is simply wrong.

These strains, and the resulting communications gap, are becoming increasingly serious. The GOG believes it is being damaged by what it considers our hostility and indifference. Specific areas of Guatemalan concern include our virtual embargo on military sales, critical comments on Guatemala by U.S. officials, and abstention on IFI loans for Guatemala—all of which have taken on a symbolic importance out of proportion to their intrinsic significance.

Despite these strains, the GOG may not respond to any U.S. overtures before November. Guatemalan perceptions of our internal political situation and foreign policy reverses, and their obsession with national security concerns bordering on a siege mentality, might lead the GOG to wait out the final months of the current U.S. Administration in the hope that it will be succeeded by one more sympathetic and less demanding of human rights improvements, and supportive of arguments that current Guatemalan policies are necessary to combat communism.

V. OPTIONS

OPTION I: *Current Policy*. To make clear our support for economic and political reforms, without which the society will remain vulnerable

to revolutionary movements. To oppose violations of human rights and repression of dissent by the GOG and rightist paramilitary groups. To convey our desire to return to traditional good relations, including substantial security cooperation, when conditions permit.

Because of the growing violence, the implementation of this policy has led in practice to a virtual embargo on security ties, and support only for those IFI loans which clearly meet BHN criteria.

Pros

—Maintains U.S. pressure on a repressive regime which thus far has refused to alter its policies.

—Avoids appearing to change policies in mid stream and reinforcing beliefs regarding inconsistency in U.S. foreign policy at a time when the GOG is least apt to respond favorably to any new USG initiative toward it.

—Leaves open option to review further initiatives in 1981 after the U.S. election.

—Could be linked with limited elements of Option IV.

Cons

—Has led to sullen stand-off with the government and military and provides little leverage against Guatemalan actions on El Salvador and Belize contrary to our interests;

—Conveys mixed and confusing signals, thus sacrificing opportunity to encourage the moderate center at a time when both left and right extremes are growing in strength;

—Does not effectively dampen repressive policies which ultimately strengthen the violent opposition and weaken the “center”;

—Impacts adversely on the Guatemalan domestic and international investment climate.

OPTION II: *Distancing*. Reduce contact and cooperation with the GOG to a bare minimum. Would require that we eliminate our AID mission, reduce our embassy staff, and withdraw from any attempts to influence the course of action pursued by the GOG. A variation might allow us to maintain contact with opposition groups and leaders in the hope of establishing a good relationship with a successor regime considerably to the left of the current regime. Would not involve our active encouragement of the overthrow of the current regime.

Pros

—Lessens demands on scarce assistance resources.

Cons

—Would exacerbate “siege mentality” in Guatemalan ruling class, probably provoking increased nothing-to-lose human rights violations and greater involvement against the El Salvador junta;

—Would have a destabilizing effect on Guatemala’s economy by adversely affecting investment flows;

—Would stimulate the violent left and probably increase Cuban support for attacks against a government perceived as isolated.

OPTION III: *Positive and Balanced Engagement*. Put together a package of measures, including military spares, as an initial good faith gesture to reengage the power structure, particularly the military and key sectoral ministers. Our aim would be to shore up Guatemala’s security and to encourage regional cooperation against the extreme left and right to reduce levels of political violence as a prerequisite for a 1982 election with broad political participation. A practical program for tangible U.S. actions against the extreme right and left groups is an absolute necessity in order to provide democratic and moderate groups with the opportunity to participate in government. (Annex One spells out Option III in greater detail.)

Pros

—Would strengthen our access to security forces, and thus our ability to urge human rights improvements and reforms;

—If successful, would encourage the GOG to move more effectively against both left and right extremists;

—Would strengthen our ability to influence Guatemalan policies on Belize and El Salvador;

Cons

—The GOG may interpret our moves as endorsing their policies and reflecting a decision to give security concerns priority over human rights;

—Positive GOG progress in responding to our overtures would be difficult to measure;

—U.S. human rights organizations would vehemently oppose, charging a betrayal of human rights concerns;

—Military sales under present human rights conditions in Guatemala would require a determination that Guatemala is not a gross and consistent human rights violator under the terms of Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.²

OPTION IV: *OPEN A FRESH DIALOGUE*. Continuing to make clear our support for human rights and other reforms, and that repressive policies risk creating the very revolutionary conditions they and we both wish to prevent, we would attempt, over the next few months, to persuade the GOG that we are not hostile and lay the groundwork for improved cooperation in 1981 by adopting a nuanced, low-key

² See footnote 6, Document 28.

political approach including selected military and civilian visits and exchanges. Concrete security and economic assistance measures are not part of this option, but could evolve once the GOG's response and performance is evaluated at a policy level at year's end. (Annex Two spells out Option IV in greater details).

Pros

- Balances security and human rights interests, and could therefore be presented publicly as a more active pursuit of current U.S. policy;

- Could be accomplished initially with a minimal expenditure of resources while we test the response to our initiatives;

- If successful, would give us an opening wedge toward having greater influence over Guatemalan security and human rights policies;

- Protects our short-term security interests while giving some prospect of avoiding the aggravated polarization and violence which could seriously injure our longer-term security interests in Guatemala and the region.

Cons

- Perceiving our initiatives to be minimal, the GOG may reject them or respond inadequately thereby embarrassing us somewhat;

- U.S. human rights organizations would protest any gesture to the GOG at this time;

- Diminishes U.S. ability to deal effectively with the Guatemalan opposition;

- May lead the GOG to conclude that the U.S. is preparing to accept the GOG on its own terms regardless of continued urging of reform, particularly if level of violence remains high.

43. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, July 28, 1980, 3:30–5:50 p.m.

SUBJECT

Intelligence Operations

PARTICIPANTS

State

Amb. David Newsom

Amb. David Mark

OSD

Adm. Daniel Murphy

Amb. Robert Komer

JCS

Gen. John Pustay

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski*

David Aaron**

NSC

Paul Henze (Notetaker)

Robert Pastor***

Justice

Atty. General Benjamin Civiletti

Kenneth Bass III

OMB

Edward Sanders

CIA

Adm. Stansfield Turner

Amb. Frank Carlucci

John McMahon

[name not declassified]

[name not declassified]

[name not declassified]

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala or Belize.]

Guatemala:

CIA's proposals for *developmental covert action* in Guatemala, originally presented on 7 April 1980, were reexamined along with a policy

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SCC–I on Covert Action, 6 August 1980. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Henze. Brzezinski was present only for, and chaired, the second part of the meeting. Aaron chaired the first part of the meeting. Pastor was present only during the Latin American discussion. [names not declassified] were present only during the Latin American and Near Eastern discussion, respectively. Dodson sent this copy of the summary, as well as the summary of conclusions from the August 6 SCC meeting (see Document 48) to Turner under a September 12 covering memorandum. McAfee provided additional information about the July 28 SCC–I meeting in his July 31 memorandum to Bowdler; see Document 44.

review paper prepared by State.² CIA representatives argued strongly that if the Agency were to be asked to play a covert action role in the worsening situation in Guatemala, it was imperative that it begin now to build capabilities. The group endorsed a proposal for directing the covert action infrastructure at Guatemala and a proposal, totalling [*dollar amount declassified*], for *encouraging moderate and reform-minded leaders and organizations*. There was no agreement, however, on CIA's proposal for providing modest training and advisory assistance to the Guatemalan *security service* to assist in combatting *terrorism and insurgency*, though the Agency insisted that without a program for the security service, support of moderates and reformists would be unlikely to be effective.³ The chairman directed CIA to submit for review at a subsequent meeting a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship of the security-service support program to the rest of the developmental covert action effort. The Chairman also asked State to assist the Agency in relating covert action planning to overt action plans and to work out a consensus on who the moderates and reformists are who will benefit from our support.⁴

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala or Belize.]

² For the Department of State paper, see Document 42. An undated memorandum prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency for members of the Special Coordination Committee posed the issue for decision: "whether the level of the threat to Guatemala posed by Cuban-supported subversion and insurgency is great enough to warrant a decision to take overt and covert measures to prevent a victory by the Left while attempting simultaneously to influence the Government of Guatemala to accept needed social and political reforms." The memorandum presented three covert action options for Guatemala: 1) "Use and develop further the covert action infrastructure (media, agent of influence and liaison operations) within the region and in appropriate third countries to encourage resistance to Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency in Guatemala;" 2) "Advise, support and encourage moderate and reform-minded leaders and organizations in Guatemala. Use them, as well as selected individuals, institutions and third countries to encourage significant political, social and economic reforms;" and 3) "Provide assistance to the liaison service of Guatemala to influence it to deal with Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 82B00035R: Committee Files, Box 2, Folder 15: Covert Action—Guatemala 25 July 80)

³ Pastor's June 23 memorandum to Henze, sent in advance of the July 28 SCC-I meeting, commented on the three covert action items proposed by the CIA: "The Guatemalan government is one of the most brutal regimes in the world. The CIA has provided us reliable reports that the President or officials close to him directly ordered the assassination of some moderate Christian Democratic politicians. Their policy is to eliminate all Communists, and their definition is so broad, it would probably include Zbig. Moreover, it is probably working to undermine the Salvadorean junta. In this light, *Option #1* (to encourage resistance to Cuban terrorism) is *ludicrous*, comparable to bringing coals to Newcastle; *Option #2* (to help moderate groups) is *essential*; and *Option #3* (assist liaison service) is premature at best, and at worst, criminal—it would give C.I.A. a bad name. We need to learn more about what the Guatemalan Security Service is doing to resist U.S. objectives in Guatemala and in El Salvador, but I wonder whether that's the objective of Option #3." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 2/77-12/78)

⁴ See Document 48.

44. Memorandum From William McAfee of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Bowdler)¹

Washington, July 31, 1980

SUBJECT

Proceedings of the Special Coordinating Committee (Intelligence), July 28, 1980

At its meeting on July 28, the SCC(I)² discussed the following topics of concern to your Bureau, with the decisions indicated:

1. *Influencing Guatemalan Government Policy.* CIA declared that there was an inconsistency between overt policy, as defined in the preferred 4th option of State's new policy paper on Guatemala, and the proposed covert actions, which could not be justified if the 4th option were chosen.³ CIA insisted that the 3rd option was the only proper framework for a covert program. Dr. Brzezinski indicated that he wanted to focus on the covert action plan, not on the overt policy, and that he did not favor proceeding to a PRC meeting on Guatemalan policy (though, of course, other agencies could press for it.) Regarding the three covert programs, he favored the first two, but not the third—in other words, he favored moves to build up a regional climate supporting opposition to Communism in Guatemala, as well as moves to strengthen moderate elements and institutions in Guatemala, but he opposed the third program of helping the security service to deal with Cuban backed terrorism and insurgency. State argued that moves to augment opposition to Communism were hardly needed in Guatemala, given the regime's strong opposition already, but it was necessary to arouse opposition to rightist extremist killings. As for support to moderates, that might be all right if State and CIA could agree on a definition of who was moderate. CIA pleaded that its third program was essential to make the second work. Any moderates whom we might build up were in danger of being assassinated by the government unless we had first brought the army and security service to understand why anti-Communist centrism would be good for Guatemala.

The SCC's decision was to adopt plan one, with the addition of a phrase to make clear that the program was to enhance opposition to right-wing extremism, as well as to Communism. Plan two was also

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Files, vol. 12, Intelligence Committee Report, TIN 980643000013. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by MacDonald.

² See Document 43.

³ For the Department of State policy paper on Guatemala, see Document 42.

accepted, though its implementation was to be subject to initial and, thereafter, periodic consultations between State and CIA to determine who fell into the moderate category. Plan three will be reformulated in greater detail by CIA and put on the agenda of the next SCC (I) meeting for consideration *de novo*.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala or Belize.]

45. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, July 31, 1980

SUBJECT

US Policy to Guatemala (C)

At the SCC(I) there were a number of allusions to an interagency review of US policy to Guatemala. That review has produced a long policy paper with four options, and a long cable with detailed guidance for two emissaries which State wants to send to Guatemala to open up a new dialogue with President Lucas. (The proposed guidance is at Tab A; the policy paper is at Tab B but you do not need to read it.)² (S)

The problem in Guatemala is that the current leadership is extraordinarily inept and reactionary; we have not been able to find a way of persuading President Lucas that an exclusively military strategy will not provide the solutions to his country's problems. His people are

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 79, Sensitive X: 6-7/80. Secret. Sent for action. Copies were sent to Henze and Odom. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen." Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "Good piece of work. ZB." An unknown hand wrote "8/1/80" next to Brzezinski's comment.

² An unknown hand underlined the word "not." Tabs A and B are attached but not printed. Tab A is a draft of telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6; see Document 49 and footnote 3 thereto. For Tab B, see Document 42. An unsigned NSC note, dated July 28, included Pastor's comments on the Department of State's strategy paper for Guatemala: "This paper represents the product of several months of interagency deliberations; it is not related to, nor does it discuss in any way the SCC(I) proposals. The bottom line recommendation of this inter-agency paper is to send a two-man team to Guatemala to try to urge the government to give agreement for George Landau. I assume State will proceed with that regardless of SCC(I) deliberations." (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SSC-I Meetings, 1980)

not only fighting the left, but they are also killing the leaders in the middle, confusing the criticism from the middle with Communism. We had a similar problem—i.e., a difference on the definition of the problem—with former President Romero of El Salvador. (S)

I believe that there are two events which will be decisive in determining whether we will be able to communicate effectively with the Guatemalan government: El Salvador and the Presidential election in the US. If our strategy in El Salvador of helping the middle succeeds, the Guatemalans are likely to be more responsive. If our strategy fails, and the right attempts a final solution, we can expect the Guatemalans to imitate that regardless of what we do, and probably to the same result as in El Salvador, i.e., a full-scale civil war between the extremes; the middle will flee to Miami; the guerrillas in Guatemala, which are now extremely divided, would be emboldened and become a real threat. More importantly, the Guatemalan government is banking on a Reagan victory, since they view the world in exactly the same terms as Reagan does. I doubt that they will communicate with us in anything but a superficial way until “their man” either wins or loses. Indeed, they may “sit” on agreement for George Landau until then.³ (S)

For that reason, I do not think that the options which were developed in State’s paper provide us much reason to expect a more effective strategy to Guatemala. The options are: (1) current policy; (2) distancing (reduce contacts and cooperation to the bare minimum); (3) positive and balanced engagement (a package of carrots in the hope that it will induce better performance in human rights); and (4) a fresh dialogue. Option 3 might work after November, but before, it could only be

³ The *New York Times* reported on June 15 that “Ortiz, whom even moderate opposition groups find too close to the Lucas regime, is shortly to be replaced.” (Alan Riding, “In Guatemala, The Middle is No Sanctuary,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1980, p. E3) The *New York Times* on June 28 quoted from telegram 3936 from Guatemala City, June 20, in which Ortiz wrote to Muskie describing Guatemala as “a blood-bath waiting to happen” and noting that “the extremists here, particularly those of the right, are probably as extreme as any that can be found.” (Graham Hovey, “Envoy Losing Post After Policy Clash,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1980, p. 1; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800300–0012) Telegram Tosec 40275/170852 to the Secretary’s delegation, June 28, reproduced the *New York Times* June 28 report in full. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800312–0092) The *Washington Post* reported on June 28 that Landau, who had “become known as a strong advocate for protection of human rights” while Ambassador to Chile, would “be designated to replace” Ortiz as Ambassador to Guatemala. (“U.S. Planning to Appoint New Envoy to Guatemala,” *Washington Post*, June 28, 1980, p. A6) The *Washington Post* reported on July 18 that the “Guatemalan government has hinted that it may oppose the planned appointment” of Landau. “Because Ortiz, at least within U.S. human rights circles, is considered soft on the military, the Guatemalans believe Landau is being sent here as a human rights activist, although he has never been particularly known as such and is considered to be a middle-of-the-road professional.” (Christopher Dickey, “Violence Grows Greater in Guatemala,” *Washington Post*, July 18, 1980, p. A16)

interpreted as a complete abandonment of our human rights policy, and frankly, that would be the way the Guatemalans would see it: that we have finally “seen the light,” that we finally understand that a military solution is the only way. (S)

If Guatemala were approaching a state of crisis, I would insist on a high-level review, but that is just not the case. The Guatemalan economy is by far the strongest in Central America, as is their military. The guerrillas are increasing in strength, but are still quite weak. Guatemala is going down the road to disaster, but it is not a short road—certainly not before the situation clarifies in El Salvador. (S)

Therefore, Option #4—a dialogue—is the only viable option at this time, and the cable at Tab A is the guidance which our emissaries would use to implement that option. I think the guidance is much more extensive than necessary, and I would prefer to give our emissaries only two paragraphs instead, but State is adamant that such guidance is essential, and I will concede that point. (S)

I would recommend clearing the guidance with two amendments: (1) no non-paper should be left behind; and (2) the bottom line of the guidance should be that in order for us to begin taking steps toward improving our relationship through a fresh dialogue, we will need our Ambassador in place. In short, the purpose of the mission is to try to secure agreement for Landau. Bill Bowdler has just informed me that he accepts these two points. (S)

As far as the SCC(I) recommendations go, your instincts were exactly right.⁴ The security services are the problem; they are not the solution. The idea that we will buy anything from a financial relationship with them at this time other than a black eye for associating ourselves with them or that CIA could succeed in getting the Guatemalan security services to focus on right-wing as well as left-wing terrorism is wrong. The Guatemalan security services are following instructions from their President, not from us, and we will not turn him around by improving our relationship with his security services. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the guidance at Tab A with the two amendments suggested.⁵ (U)

⁴ See Document 43.

⁵ Brzezinski indicated his approval. Aaron wrote below the recommendation: “I agree.”

**46. Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency
for the Special Coordination Committee¹**

Washington, August 4, 1980

SUBJECT

Guatemala—Additional Information Requested by the SCC

1. This memorandum contains additional material relating to the third option of the CIA Covert Action Proposal on Guatemala submitted to the Special Coordination Committee (SCC) on 28 July 1980.² The SCC requested that CIA provide additional information on Option 3, which recommends providing assistance to the civilian and Guatemalan military intelligence services as well as supporting moderate civilian leaders and organizations. This memorandum should be circulated to the SCC members.

2. Our proposed assistance to the intelligence services has several purposes. We would seek to make the military (G-2) and civilian intelligence services more professional and less dependent on the repressive measures presently used by the police to deal with subversion and terrorism. The Guatemalan Government would then have alternatives to the use of the notoriously brutal special unit of the police. These alternatives hopefully should reduce the Government's tendency to counter violence with violence and may serve to demonstrate that the careful collection and judicious use of intelligence is a better tactic against the extreme left than mindless violence. We plan no assistance to the police at this time due to their presently repressive practices.

3. Training would be provided to the G-2 and civilian intelligence service in non-lethal defensive techniques including VIP protection, incident management (including suggestions for the formation of a national policy to deal with terrorism), bomb disposal, airport controls, and processing and analysis of intelligence. Training and assistance would also be provided to enhance intelligence collection capabilities against terrorists. Every effort would be made to influence the G-2 and civilian intelligence service to avoid counterproductive tactics. Such enhanced capabilities should reduce the Government's tendency to view counterviolence as the sole means of dealing with terrorism.

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SSC-I Meetings, 6 August 1980. Secret; Sensitive.

² See Document 43.

4. As outlined in our proposal, we also intend to seek out and assist political moderates and to develop other means of moderating the policies of the current Government. We are attempting to deal with the issue as a whole: the need for rapid and significant change in Guatemala at a time when extremist forces are actively promoting insurgency with Cuban assistance. To implement the proposal, it is necessary to find ways to induce the Government, especially G-2 and the civilian intelligence service, to cooperate with us. The training and other assistance described [1 line not declassified] providing us the opportunity of influencing policies. [less than 1 line not declassified] should also provide an element of even-handedness so that our efforts to assist moderate elements are not viewed as an attack on the Government itself.

5. Lastly, CIA wishes to emphasize its view that:

—The CIA Covert Action proposal for Guatemala is not consistent with Option 4 of the State Department Strategy Paper and cannot be realistically implemented if State's Strategy Option 4 is approved.³ CIA's proposal is consistent with State's Strategy Option 3.

—It is doubtful that we could provide effective assistance to moderate elements with it not coming to the attention of the Guatemalan Government. If this happens, the Guatemalan Government will certainly interpret this action as detrimental to its position and generate a reaction which could negate our efforts and worsen relations between the U.S. and Guatemala. [1 line not declassified] we will be in a position to monitor this and possibly soften the reaction of the Guatemalan Government. In addition, [1 line not declassified] will provide us additional opportunities to identify possible moderates within the military and security apparatus.⁴

³ See Document 42.

⁴ See Document 48.

47. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 5, 1980

SUBJECT

SCC(I)—Guatemala (S)

The CIA has provided some more information to try to justify its Option 3, which recommends providing assistance to the Guatemalan Civilian and Military Intelligence Services.² The CIA paper also says that this option cannot be “realistically implemented if State’s strategy Option 4 is approved,” which is what happened. Guidance implementing Option 4—sending emissaries for a new dialogue with the Guatemalans—has been transmitted.³ Moreover, the CIA says that it cannot help moderates in Guatemala unless its Option 3 is approved. In short, the CIA is trying to set up the SCC(I) for a catch-22, but in fact, it has been caught.⁴ You may want to ask Turner whether they continue to support their Option 3 in light of the fact that you, State and Defense have approved State’s strategy for Option 4 and it’s being implemented. (S)

Assuming that they will still try to get their Option 3 accepted by the SCC(I), I think your initial reservations about allowing the US to be associated with the Guatemalan Security Service is correct. Indeed, I think the initial decisions by the SCC(I) were on the mark: to assist moderates, and State and CIA would first agree on who these moderates are; and to develop further the covert action infrastructure to encourage resistance to left wing and right wing terrorism. I believe

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SSC–I Meetings, 6 August 1980. Secret. Sent for information. A copy was sent to Henze. Attached as Tab D to an undated paper prepared in the National Security Council entitled “Guatemala: Chto Delat’? Ničeho Delat’?” For additional information about the substance of this paper, see footnote 5 below.

² See Document 46.

³ In telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6, the Department noted Muskie’s selection of two emissaries to begin a fresh dialogue with Guatemala: John Dreyfuss, as Special Emissary and team leader, and Lieutenant General Wallace Nutting, in a supporting role. The telegram also instructed Sinn and Landau to make arrangements for the emissaries to meet with Lucas and included talking points. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81) For more on the Dreyfuss-Nutting Mission, see Document 49.

⁴ See Document 48.

that the SCC(I) was correct in its reluctance to enter into a relationship with the Liaison Service in Guatemala. (S)

*I recommend that you oppose CIA's Option 3. To establish such a relationship as the CIA is recommending at this time would be to identify us with the repression without enhancing our ability to reduce it.*⁵ [3 lines not declassified] (S)

⁵ In an undated paper prepared in the National Security Council entitled "Guatemala: Chto Delat' Ničevu Delat'?" Henze recommended to Brzezinski, in advance of the August 6 SCC-I meeting, that "CIA should not be put in a straddling position—either it should be given a serious role in accordance with its proposals or left out of the picture. If State is assigned the action, it must be in the framework of arrangements that ensure that State perform—otherwise State will accept Option 4 but do little or nothing and will then come back in a few weeks arguing for CIA to go in and rescue the situation—when it may well be too late." (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I022, SSC-I Meetings, 6 August 1980)

48. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, August 6, 1980, 3–3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Intelligence Operations

PARTICIPANTS

<i>State</i>	<i>White House</i>
David Newsom, Undersecretary for Political Affairs	Zbigniew Brzezinski (Chairman)
David Mark, Dep Dir for Bureau of Intelligence & Research	NSC Paul Henze, notetaker ***Robert Pastor
<i>OSD</i>	<i>Justice</i>
Robert Komer, Undersecretary for Policy	Charles Renfrew, Deputy AG Ken Bass, Counsel for Intelligence Policy
ADM Daniel Murphy, DEPUNDERSEC for Policy Review	<i>JCS</i> General John Pustay, Asst to the Chairman
<i>OMB</i>	<i>DCI</i>
Bowman Cutter, Executive Associate Director for Budget	Frank Carlucci, DDCI
Edward Sanders, Asst Director for Nat'l Security & Int'l Affairs	[name not declassified] Chief NE Division [name not declassified] Dep Chief Africa Division [name not declassified] Chief, LA Division

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Guatemala or Belize.]

Guatemala

The discussion of Guatemala which had taken place at the SCC/I meeting of July 28, 1980 was resumed and considerations affecting possible covert action efforts in Guatemala were debated in detail between the State, CIA and DOD representatives.² The CIA representative repeatedly stressed the necessity of undertaking covert action only within the framework of a coherent overall policy; without a policy framework, he said, CIA did not believe it could productively engage in any covert action. CIA representatives also underscored the need to work with the civilian and military security services (not the police)

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SCC-I on Covert Action, 6 August 1980. Secret. Drafted by Henze. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. [name not declassified] did not attend the portion of the meeting on Latin America.

² See Document 43.

as an integral part of any covert action program. The Chairman accepted the case made in a CIA paper dated August 4 explaining the rationale of this approach.³ State stressed the necessity of avoiding association with Guatemalan government programs that relied on violence as a means of coping with terrorism and urged that further decisions be deferred until the results are in from the mission State will be sending in mid-August to discuss US-Guatemalan relations with the government there.⁴ The DOD representative urged strongly that we position ourselves for action in Guatemala before the situation deteriorates further. After further discussion the Chairman proposed that the three part CIA covert action program be endorsed, but that the Finding authorizing it be reviewed after the mission which will soon leave for Guatemala has reported back. The Finding will then be submitted to the President. The group agreed.⁵ (S)

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Guatemala or Belize.]

³ See Document 46.

⁴ See Document 49.

⁵ See Document 50.

49. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, August 18, 1980, 1930Z

5263. From Dreyfuss and General Nutting. Subject: (S) Emissaries to President Lucas. Ref: State 207808.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. We met at Presidential Finca with Lucas (who was accompanied only by Chief of Staff Mendoza) for over two hours of surprisingly, frank, animated, and non-acrimonious discussion. After usual pleasantries, reminiscences, etc., we opened with explanation that our mission was designed to open dialogue with him, attempt to clear up misunderstandings on either side and to provide a clear picture of policies and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870148-1884. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² See footnote 3, Document 47.

positions of USG, which we thought were misunderstood in Guatemala. We then made points outlined in para 8–B of reftel and gave him rundown of our view of the situation and problems in other Central American countries, and our efforts to favorably influence courses of events in them—efforts we thought would eventually be of benefit to US, Guatemala, and all of Central America.³ Lucas listened to these presentations in stony-faced silence.

3. However, when we asked him if he had any comments or questions at this point, he began a voluble discourse, saying that he was flabbergasted that we had come to talk to him as he had concluded that the USG had written him off. He said he believed that the US, particularly specific USG officials, had been trying to “strangle” Guatemala. He mentioned in this regard his belief that we were trying to block Guatemala’s export markets (he particularly noted DDT problems with meat, to which he ascribed political motives).⁴ He also stated his belief that USG officials had influenced private banks to deny Guatemala needed credits for development—which he wanted more than any government-to-government assistance. He also expressed great skepticism of possibilities of success of current US efforts to keep other Central American countries from falling into extreme leftist camp.

4. He went on to discuss his understanding of need for social and economic development as part of effort to reduce subversion and his efforts and plans to achieve such development, including an “agrarian reform” tailored for the Guatemalan situation that he felt would help meet social and economic needs of the campesinos without seriously harming the Guatemalan economy in general. In the course of this

³ Paragraph 8B of telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6, included talking points favoring human rights and due process of the law, democratic constitutional order based on free elections with broad participation, economic development, and a democratic Central America. Alternatively, the talking points opposed human rights violations, terrorism, anarchy, and communism. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81)

⁴ In telegram 66875 to Guatemala City, March 13, the Department indicated that a laboratory test had identified unacceptable amounts of DDT in Guatemalan meat exported to the United States and noted that future meat shipments from Guatemala would be tested at U.S. ports prior to entry. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800130–0569)

phase of the discussion, we made points detailed in para 8-D⁵ of reftel and launched into deeper and more specific discussion of how human rights situation in Guatemala affects Guatemala's image with significant sectors, both private and official, in the US, runs head-on into our ingrained and durable policies and legal requirements with regard to extra-legal violence, and how this seriously hampers our ability to be of assistance to Guatemala in economic and security fields. We then offered for his consideration phase I of 3-step program which we hoped would enable us to improve our cooperation⁶ (reftel).

5. He obviously did not feel the need to consult with other members of his government on this idea, as after a moment's thought he stated that he was sorry, but he could not do what we were asking him to do. He said to attempt to follow such a course would be suicidal—that he was engaged in a “war” with subversive leftist forces which would not follow the rules, and there was no possibility of defeating them in a “clean and legal manner.” He said he was feeling increasing pressure from various segments of Guatemalan society including the lower and middle classes to “do something” to put an end to leftist terrorism. He noted particularly his concern about the university which he believes to be a focal point of subversion dedicated to overthrowing the government and seizing the country, and said he would have to take “drastic action” to counter this threat. He said he understood what our position was on the human rights issue but strongly disagreed with our belief that he could successfully combat the extreme left with other than “radical” measures. During the course of this portion of the discussion which was in the form of animated give-and-take, we

⁵ Paragraph 8D of telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6, emphasized Guatemala's ability to “meet the challenges of change in an orderly manner” by ending illegal violence, expanding social and economic reform, and broadening political life in the country. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81) In telegram 5168 from Guatemala City, August 12, Sinn warned that the timing of the U.S. initiative to begin a “fresh dialogue” with the Guatemalan Government was poor due to the upcoming elections in both Guatemala and the United States. Sinn also warned that the term “human rights” was “simply a red flag, and often an unnecessary one which produces sub-rational and Pavlovian reactions” on the part of the Guatemalan Government. He suggested that “our emissaries should focus the dialogue on the killing, not emotionally charged abstractions.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870148–1898)

⁶ Paragraph 8E of telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6, described three phases through which U.S.-Guatemalan cooperation could be improved. The first phase would involve a private pledge from Guatemala to reduce violence, resulting in increased high-level interaction between the two governments. The second phase would follow a public commitment from Guatemala to reduce violence, resulting in increased U.S. economic assistance and military consultations. The third phase involved a resumption of U.S. military aid following a demonstrable improvement in Guatemalan human rights practices. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 27, Guatemala: 1/77–1/81)

mustered all arguments we could to convince him he was wrong and that his methods would serve only to worsen the situation. However, he adamantly cast aside all such argumentation, countering with ingrained and durable GOG beliefs, such as the belief that the judicial system could not be used to punish terrorists and thus bring an end to their activities because of leftist infiltration of the courts and threats to non-leftist judges. He said that he felt that any tactic other than violent reaction to the violence against his government would merely permit leftist guerrillas and terrorists to strengthen themselves and consolidate their position, as had occurred, he claimed, during Laugerud's four years of "soft hand" tactics following Arana's "success" in coping with the problem during the late 1960s. Lucas went on to say that the US seemed to be singling out Guatemala as a special target on the question of human rights and asked why we were not concerned about serious human rights violations in Mexico which were not given much publicity because of Mexico's greater control of the press. He also noted somewhat bitterly that we giving assistance to Nicaragua when he was sure that the Nicaraguan Government was clandestinely wiping out large numbers of its opponents. In sum, Lucas' position, from which he would not budge, was that while he needed and wanted official US economic and security assistance (particularly the latter) Guatemala could and would have to live without it if in order to obtain such assistance he had to follow a course that would deprive him of the ability to utilize measures that he believed were the only means to keep the extreme left from defeating him.

6. Despite the facts that he and we were in strong disagreement on this subject, Lucas said he felt the discussion had been useful, that he was disposed to continue such dialogue in the future, and suggested use of the Chief of Staff Mendoza as channel. In this regard we suggested that if we were to engage in effective continuing dialogue, it would be most helpful to have the proposed new US Ambassador in place in the near future. He did not react to this.

7. Request: Repeat to Panama for CINCSO.

Sinn

50. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, August 20, 1980

SUBJECT

US Policy to Guatemala—SCC (I) Recommendations and Next Steps (C)

We have just received a report of the Dreyfuss-Nutting mission to Guatemala (Tab A).² They explained fully our concerns and policies to Guatemalan President Lucas in order to try to generate a new dialogue in which we would be taking positive steps to Guatemala in response to a clear commitment by the Guatemalan government to end the repression. As I expected, the initiative was unsuccessful, although it was revealing in that Lucas was remarkably more candid than I had anticipated. He said, in effect, that we have different views of how to deal with the subversive problem in Guatemala, and that there was no way in his mind to bridge that difference. He said he is engaged in a "war" with subversive leftists who did not follow the rules, and "there was no possibility of defeating them in a clean and legal manner." Lucas has clearly opted for the "Argentine strategy," and the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Guatemala and Argentina this month is an indication of that. On the bottom-line point of encouraging Lucas to grant agreement for Landau, Lucas did not react. (S)

In my opinion, there is nothing more that we can do, or that we should do, until the election in November. A recent intelligence report (Tab B), provides additional detail on the repression he is planning. He believes that the assassination of "Marxist professors and students during the past several months has been effective in hampering the activities of the Guatemalan radical movement," and he intends to extend this range of assassinations. We have heard through other channels that Lucas expects a Reagan victory, and believes that Reagan is not only sympathetic to Lucas's strategy to stop subversion, but indeed

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1026, Guatemala, 7 April 1980–10 September 1980. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. A copy was sent to Henze. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "RP Is an SCC planned? We probably need one. ZB." Odom wrote along the left-hand margin of the memorandum: "Many Reagan supporters have told me they believe the State Dept activism is the sole cause of trouble in Guatemala. WO." Aaron drew an arrow pointing toward Odom's note and wrote in the margin of the memorandum: "That is undoubtedly their view but it is B.S. What by the way does W.O. tell these many Reagan supporters? DA."

² See Document 49.

would be supportive. It does not make any sense for him to modify that strategy as long as he thinks Reagan will be elected. Similarly, it makes less sense for us to abandon our human rights policy, because that is the way it would be interpreted, before the election when it is clear that there is no imminent Communist threat to the Lucas regime. The Army is still quite strong; the Communist groups very divided, despite Castro's efforts to reunite them. Events in El Salvador will have a greater bearing on what happens in Guatemala than anything that the Guatemalans will be able to do in the near future. After Carter is elected, our leverage will naturally increase, and I think that a meeting of the minds at that point is possible. Not now. (S)

I therefore recommend that we maintain a steady course between now and the election. Hopefully, they will give agreement to Landau. If they do not, then we certainly cannot take any initiative without looking unbelievably weak and irresolute. If they do, then Landau can re-explore the possibility of improving our relationship; the guidance at Tab C does provide some possibilities for the future, if not for the next couple of months.³ To veer away from this course at this time would only embarrass the President and make him look inconsistent, and his policies politically motivated. It would not be any more effective in the Guatemalan context than in the US context. (S)

The only follow-up on U.S. policy to Guatemala relates to the three proposals before the SCC(I): (1) to develop a covert infrastructure in both the left and the right; (2) to assist moderate groups; and (3) to develop a [*less than 1 line not declassified*] relationship between the Guatemalan Security Service and the CIA. I think it makes sense to go ahead with No. 1 and No. 2—No. 1 because we may need that in six months or so, and No. 2 because the moderates need help from us desperately. I think it would be a terrible mistake, particularly in the light of the TD at Tab B to have anything to do with the Security Service in Guatemala at this time. The CIA admits the Security Service is not a “rogue elephant,” that it is executing (in the fullest sense of the word) the instructions of the President. Therefore, we cannot influence the Security Service if Lucas remains determined; all we can do is let ourselves be associated with their crimes. This is not what Jimmy Carter is about. I therefore strongly recommend that you oppose that proposal.⁴ (S)

³ Reference is to telegram 207808 to Guatemala City, August 6. See footnote 3, Document 47 and footnotes 3, 5, and 6, Document 49.

⁴ Aaron, Odom, and one unidentified official initialed a concurrence.

Tab B**Central Intelligence Agency Information Report⁵**

TDFIR DB-315/14753-80

Washington, July 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Plans for Sharp Increase in Killings of Alleged Leftists by Guatemalan Government (DOI: late July 1980)

SOURCE

[3 lines not declassified]

1. Beginning in August 1980, the Guatemalan Government (GOG) will sanction a sharp increase in the killing of leftists by its various security services operating under the guise of its national right-wing movement, the anti-communist secret army (ESA). This decision is based on the belief that the elimination of Marxist professors and students during the past several months has been effective in hampering the activities of the Guatemalan radical movements by striking fear into them and that further killings will bring their activities to a halt. An additional influencing factor considered by the GOG is the opening of the state university school year. The security services want to serve early notice to university students and faculty members that the war against Communism will continue to strike the state university campuses.

2. During the period 31 July-4 August 1980, new lists containing the names of "Communist" university students and professional persons will be prepared by the office of Colonel Hector Montalvan Batres, a key advisor to President Romeo Lucas Garcia. There will probably be three lists and each will contain different names. A list will be given to the Army G-2 (intelligence), to the National Police for subsequent action by "comando seis", and to the National Intelligence Service. ([less than 1 line not declassified] comment: the National Intelligence Service has not been known to participate actively in the elimination of "Communists" in the past although information on targets has probably been extracted from their records.) It is widely believed among those involved that each list for August will include between eight and 15 professionals and as many as 50 students. (Source comment: While in round figures, the total number of persons targetted would be

⁵ Secret; [handling restriction not declassified]. Copies were sent to the Department of State, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the White House Situation Room, National Security Council Staff, CIA Office of Current Operations, and USCINSCO Quarry Heights.

between 24–45 professional persons and as many as 150 students, it is doubtful that security forces will be able to carry out so many killings for a variety of reasons.)

3. The office of Montalvan serves as a clearing house in the compilation of the names. Involved Guatemalan security services provide names of troublesome Communists based on personal knowledge, informant reports, interrogation reports, and file checks. Based on the input from these services, a coordinated effort is made to assign priority targets which appear on the lists which are then fed back to the various services for their action. From time to time, on an after-the-fact-basis, ESA distributes flyers to the media claiming credit for only some of the actions. This ploy is designed to create fear among leftists. (Source comment: On some of the more delicate cases, referral is made to President Lucas for a determination prior to the inclusion of the target on an action list.)

4. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*]) comment: The recent steady pace of killings of alleged leftist professors and students, mostly at the GOG-funded University of San Carlos, has created difficulties for the university, if no visible effect on the four major radical movements. Classes have been disrupted to varying degrees, and some of the faculty are less than enthusiastic about showing up for classes.)

5. ACQ: [*2 lines not declassified*]

6. Field dissem: [*2 lines not declassified*]

7. Washington dissem:

To State	Exclusive for the Director, INR
	Exclusive for the Office for Combatting Terrorism
To DIA	Exclusive for the Director, DIA

51. Telegram From the Consulate in Belize City to the Department of State¹

Belize City, August 21, 1980, 2045Z

975. Subject: Belize Dispute. Ref: (A) State 221147;² (B) Belize 955.³

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Belizeans do not see our policy of qte facilitative neutrality qte as being neutral at all. They regard it as supportive of the Guatemalan position. I have discussed this in the past with Premier Price, Harry Courtenay, and Assad Shoman. They appear to believe that at one time, this policy may have had some efficacy and merit but that now, due to Guatemalan intransigence, it has no value and in fact gives confidence to GOG. They say that supporting the status quo is not being neutral at all.

3. The degree of progress made by the British and Guatemalans is the big unknown in this equation. I cannot help but wonder if perhaps some progress was made in New York in July;⁴ if for no other reason than because of the secrecy which surrounds the discussions. The fact that UK Delegation at Bermuda were prepared to tell the GOG that a British military presence would remain here is, in my opinion, a very significant step, and it seems it was so regarded by the Guatemalan delegation.⁵

4. Price's search for support of a military nature following independence is, as Dept. aware, an old one; he has been casting about for help since early 1978. It is said that he has approached, during these years Canada, India, Nigeria—all of whom have said qte no qte in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800399–0680. Confidential; Priority. Sent for information Priority to Guatemala City, London, and USUN.

² In telegram 221147 to Guatemala City and Belize City, August 20, the Department noted that officials had begun a process to review the United States' position on "yet another resolution on Belize certain to be introduced in the UN Fourth Committee this fall." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800397–0077)

³ In telegram 955 from Belize City, August 20, the Consulate recommended that the United States vote in favor of the upcoming UNGA resolution on independence for Belize because both HMG and the GOB were pressing for independence. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800398–1127)

⁴ According to telegram 4167 from Guatemala City, July 2, and telegram 2749 from USUN, July 10, Guatemalan and British officials met in New York July 7–8 to review legal issues related to the 1859 treaty and to continue talks about Belize. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800322–1063; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800331–0244) For more information about the treaty, see footnote 4, Document 16.

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 40.

varying degrees of firmness, and Panama, Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, and Venezuela, all of whom have indicated, so I understand, some sort of willingness except perhaps Venezuela who fudged. No state in the affirmative line seems to be in a position to send more than the smallest of token forces. Panama might be an exception, but one wonders how Panamanian soldiers might get here, especially if in response to an overt Guatemalan military move. The idea is frightening to many Belizeans and, one must admit, unpleasant to consider from post point of view. Jamaican military have a bad reputation here, as do Jamaicans in general, based on local unhappy memories of Jamaican regiments here many years ago and Jamaican police in less distant past. The fighting capability of such a force we reckon to be close to nil, and the potential for incidents and unhappy relations with the locals very high indeed.

5. In principle, Belize would feel that a change in our vote would be a recognition of the legitimacy of their claim to independence, and that we had given up a position which they feel is not an expression of neutrality. I do not believe it would influence the Belizean position of no land cession; rather, I feel it would reinforce it. As for an exhortation to reach an agreement, that seems hardly necessary here; there is nothing most Belizeans would rather have than such an agreement.

6. As a post script, I might add that last night, I spoke at the monthly social meeting of the Belizian Lions Club where I gave what I call speech B, qte The U.S. Consulate: Who we are. What we do. qte the Q&A following was given over largely to a series of criticisms of our policy of abstention; the audience was largely younger civil servants and a few businessmen and the questions uniformly ran along the lines that we abstain because we do not wish to offend Guatemala, that our economic investments there are huge and we are afraid of losing them and that we support a conservative, military regime because of our fear of spreading Communism in Central America.

Nalle

52. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, September 11, 1980, 2249Z

5875. Subject: (U) Continuing the Dialogue: Meeting With President Lucas.

1. C-Entire text.

2. Following is the substance of an hour-long conversation I had late yesterday with President Lucas at his residence. The meeting was arranged through General Rene Mendoza but I met with the President alone.

3. I said that during my recent consultations in Washington, the US desire to continue a dialogue with Guatemala had been reconfirmed, that the Department was exploring various means to carry the discussions forward, and that we hoped to make some specific suggestions in the near future. The President agreed completely on the importance of continuing to talk. He was not certain what the content of the dialogue might be but he was convinced we should nevertheless continue to seek roads that might lead us toward better relations and closer cooperation.

4. I mentioned that I had repeated in Washington his concern that the US might be taking actions with a political motivation designed to weaken his government, specifically in the areas of meat exports, supplier credits, and coffee prices. I assured him such was not the case despite his renewed references to these matters in his speech to the anti-Communist rally on Sunday (Guatemala 5768).² The President declared he had made the statement that Guatemala did not need instructions on democracy because he was somewhat irked by hints by unnamed Americans that Guatemala needed to do much more in the economic and social areas. He thought his government's record on this score was good, citing the various measures his administration had adopted. I responded it seemed to me that this was not the question at issue. As far as I was aware, everyone was very favorably impressed by his government's economic and social programs. No doubt more could be done but by and large the record in economic and social

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800434-0092. Confidential; Immediate; Limdis.

² In telegram 5768 from Guatemala City, September 8, the Embassy reported on Lucas's September 7 speech to a pro-government rally, noting that Lucas attacked "President Carter, the Nicaraguan Government, Communist terrorists, and 'bad Guatemalans' who spread lies abroad." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800428-0241)

action was good. The basic problem lay elsewhere. The US is not satisfied with the state of our relations and would like to be able to work more closely with his government. I said this was not now possible, however, because of incidents like the kidnapping of the 17 labor leaders in Escuintla.³ Such events reflected very badly on Guatemala and made it impossible for us to provide greater support. The President nodded but made no comment.

5. Referring to the recent series of terrorist bombings and loss of life, the President said security forces just that afternoon had discovered and disarmed another powerful bomb on the road to Antigua.⁴ He was convinced Guatemalan terrorist groups were receiving assistance from Cuba through Nicaragua and Mexico. Lucas declared with some heat that Guatemala was in a state of war—that the radical left had no interest in dialogue, that it wanted only to seize power and that his government intended to win the battle. Guatemala, he said felt abandoned and isolated. It could not count on help from any other country in the Central American area; Nicaragua was dominated by the Sandinistas; El Salvador was in a state of near anarchy; and, Mexico was openly hostile. It was for this reason that Guatemalan authorities reflected such extreme sensitivity to any action or statement by the US.

6. The President was especially concerned about the economic situation. He thought the radical left had little chance of gaining power by force of arms and that its best prospects lay in producing economic chaos. This was the reason he had mentioned meat, credit, and coffee prices. I asked if the President was aware of all the facts on the meat case noting that in addition to the pesticide problem, meat from one of the embargoed plants had appeared in shipments of plants approved for export to the US. This raised questions of fraud. The President said he was aware of these factors and he realized the Guatemalan producers bore a heavy share of responsibility for the problem. He said he was “putting the squeeze” (*apretando*) on them.

7. On the question of supplier credits, I assured the President that Department officials were not advising bankers or businessmen against

³ In telegram 5980 from Guatemala City, September 18, the Embassy described the August 24 kidnapping of 17 labor union members and activists on the grounds of an estate “owned and run by the Catholic Diocese of Escuintla,” and commented that “experience in similar cases suggests that this one will remain similarly unresolved.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800449–1115)

⁴ In telegram 5729 from Guatemala City, September 5, the Embassy reported on numerous explosions in Guatemala City including “an extremely powerful device (or devices) which exploded in front of the National Palace” that day killing a “minimum four to five people.” The Embassy commented that “the rebel armed forces (FAR) appear to be behind the bombing.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800423–0731)

investments in Guatemala. I said, however, that the Department was often requested to supply briefings on the situation and we were, of course, obliged to describe the situation as accurately as possible. It was certainly obvious to everyone that there were problems in Guatemala as evidenced by the fact that the government had recently found it necessary to tighten exchange controls. The President recognized these considerations but said he had received reports that Department officials were specifically advising against providing credit to Guatemala.

8. Turning to coffee prices, I read him portions of Rio's unclassified telegram 3425 in which the President of the Brazilian Coffee Institute among other things attributed the decline in the coffee market, principally to heavy sales by Colombia and actions of the Central American countries, the lack of frost in the Brazilian producing areas and an unusually hot summer in the US.⁵ I said at least the Brazilians were not putting the blame on the "gringos." The President laughed and wondered whether at least the especially hot summer in the US might not have been arranged by the State Department.

9. The President concluded by stating he was now going to have to devote greater concern to his personal security. He said it had been his custom to drive or even walk about the city with only the lightest protection in an effort better to know the concerns of the ordinary Guatemalan citizen. He felt he would now have to abandon this practice.

10. Comment: The conversation was very cordial and friendly throughout. He is clearly interested in further dialogue and any suggestions we might make to advance the process.

Sinn

⁵ In telegram 3425 from Rio de Janeiro, September 10, the Consulate reported on a September 8 National Exporters meeting in Rio de Janeiro. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800431-0695)

53. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, October 4, 1980, 2119Z

265576. Subject: Einaudi Visit: Some Conclusions. Ref: Guatemala 6308.²

1. Confidential (Entire text)

2. This cable supplements excellent reftel by reporting Mendoza comments and summarizing Einaudi's major conclusions, and assessing implications for continued dialogue with Guatemala. Text of Einaudi's report follows.

3. Mendoza conversations. The unscheduled meeting with Ontalvan and Bucaro preempted what Mendoza had evidently expected to be the major opportunity for private conversation Monday morning.³ Major points made by Mendoza Sunday⁴ evening included the following:

A. Mendoza said the opening session of the dialogue six weeks before had been very brief and very formal. Had the session been longer and in a different overall context, the President might have responded differently.

As it was, Lucas gave the only answer he could: Guatemala had to defend itself. It nonetheless went without saying that Lucas would like to see the violence ended. Though somewhat defensive, Mendoza did not give a clear indication of his own views on violence, and I did not have a chance to develop the opportunity to press him.

B. Church-state relations are distressing. Priests should return to the Quiche—but to minister to pastoral needs, not to tell peasants

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800475–0005. Confidential; Exdis. Drafted by Einaudi; cleared in ARA/CEN, ARA, S/P, and S/S–O; approved by Bowdler. In a September 23 action memorandum to Christopher, Bushnell proposed that Einaudi visit Guatemala. Christopher approved the trip on September 25. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800130–1980)

² In telegram 6308 from Guatemala City, October 1, Sinn provided Bowdler with a general overview of Einaudi's visit. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800469–0538)

³ October 5.

⁴ October 6.

that all lands were rightfully theirs.⁵ Foreign priests, particularly the Spanish, were the crux of the problem because they look at Guatemala through European eyes. Mendoza said he had personally sought out Bishop Gerardi to propose a partnership but had been rebuffed. Mendoza added that he was sure Rome was fully informed, and that he himself agreed with the Pope's position as expressed in Puebla and again in Brazil.⁶ Restoring a Church presence along pastoral lines in the Quiche was essential. He implied this could be achieved with a change of personnel, adding that many of the priests withdrawn from the Quiche had gone to Nicaragua. He did not respond to my observation that the Church was playing a critical and positive role in Nicaragua.

C. Nicaragua as such was touched on only in passing. Mendoza commented that the Sandinista armed forces might be receiving as many as 200 new and 200 used tanks from the Soviet bloc—I believe he mentioned Bulgaria.

D. Literacy campaign. Mendoza asked if I had followed the literacy campaign in Nicaragua. I said I had not, but knew it had a strong political component. Mendoza said that the Guatemalan military had followed it very closely, and that preparations to launch a literacy drive of their own in Guatemala were quite advanced. Lucas had given it his support in his recent speech.⁷ The army had developed teaching

⁵ In telegram 4829 from Guatemala City, July 29, the Embassy quoted a Guatemalan Bishops' Conference statement expressing "deep concern about the persecution of the Church, especially in the Diocese of El Quiche, aggravated most recently by the killing of two priests, by the threats to the priests, religious, and other pastoral representatives, and by the climate of insecurity which renders impossible any evangelizing or pastoral effort." The Embassy also noted that Gerardi was travelling to Rome to explain the situation personally to the Pope. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800363-0704) In telegram 7548 from Guatemala City, November 21, the Embassy cited an "open letter from the Pope to the Guatemalan hierarchy" calling for an end to violence and reported that Guatemalan officials had denied Gerardi, "a Guatemalan, from entering Guatemala on his return from Rome, where he met with the Pope." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800558-0759)

⁶ The Pope travelled to Puebla, Mexico, to address the Latin American Bishops' Conference on January 28, 1979. In telegram 1659 from Mexico City, January 30, 1979, the Embassy reported that the Pope admonished "priests not to become politically motivated by denouncing the interpretation that Christ had fought against Roman domination or had been involved in class struggle," and "denied unequivocally the recourse to violence." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790047-0896) The Pope visited Brazil from June 30 to July 11. In telegram 5270 from Brasilia, July 15, the Embassy reported that the Pope had encouraged the Brazilian Catholic Church to "press for reform without violence and without the clergy's acting as politicians or labor leaders." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800340-0575)

⁷ In telegram 5768 from Guatemala City, September 8, the Embassy reported on Lucas's September 7 speech to a pro-government rally, noting that Lucas described the literacy campaign in Nicaragua as "a farce" and "a lie" in which "all they are showing them is to scrawl letters." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800428-0241) For more information about the speech, see footnote 2, Document 52.

materials modeled on those used in Nicaragua, but with a nationalist and Guatemalan content. Though these materials were essentially ready, the campaign would not be fully underway until January because of the need to plan carefully and to complete what he anticipated would be “difficult” negotiations with the teachers’ unions.

E. Belize. When we were interrupted by the request from Montalvan,⁸ Mendoza commented that we had not had a chance, as in the past, to go into detail on Belize. He said he hoped for a negotiated settlement—a new subversive front was the last thing Guatemala needed—but the Belizeans were hanging very tough. He could understand the British desire to get out—Belize was costing them a lot of money—but a continued British military presence was essential. On the Guatemalan side, the approaching Presidential elections meant that a settlement should be reached soon—the govt. could not afford to give the opposition additional arguments.⁹ However, since no one in Guatemala wanted to assume responsibility for a settlement, the only option was to have “the people” assume it by holding a plebiscite.

F. Plans. Mendoza said he would be in New York for the next round on Belize. He anticipated that the talks would be over in three days, October 13–15, and said he hoped to come to Washington October 16–17. I encouraged him to do so, but made no specific commitments on whom he might see. He knows I will not be in town, and we made no specific arrangements.

G. Comment. Though Mendoza obviously enjoys considerable authority, my impression is that it is the authority of intellect, contacts and position rather than personal domination over his fellow officers. My instinct is that he is potentially more an Eisenhower than a Torrijos. In the Guatemalan context, this suggests that he will do well only if backed by a consensus—and a reasonably open one, at that. He is not a man to force things on his own.

4. Conclusions: Without repeating specifics reftel, the following are my general impressions:

A. The level of concern—verging on paranoia—about U.S. activities and intentions was very high among all those I talked to. Though emotional, there was also an evident desire to reason.

B. The basic source of concern is the belief that Guatemala’s problems—seen fundamentally as caused by foreigners and Marxists (the

⁸ In telegram 6308 from Guatemala City (see footnote 2 above), Sinn reported to Bowdler that Montalvan and Búcaro had requested a meeting with Einaudi “at the last minute” and that the subsequent meeting was “perhaps more significant in the fact that it took place than in its content.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800469–0538)

⁹ Guatemala held Presidential elections on March 7, 1982.

business view) exploiting Guatemalan vulnerabilities (the military add-on)—cannot be resolved without constructive U.S. involvement, and that the U.S. has recently been indifferent when not actively hostile.

C. The businessmen struck me as both more rigid in their outlook and less disposed to seek accommodation through changes in their own behavior than the military officers.

D. Some tensions exist between business and military. The businessmen expressed fears of the military “radicalization”—which I took to mean fears that the military do not appreciate the contributions of the private sector and might move against established business interests if pressed sufficiently by either economic conditions or the dynamics of the anti-guerrilla war.

E. The prospects for human rights improvements are uncertain. There is little chance of major sudden changes. Indeed, I detected an almost puritanical streak among officers directed against the “corruption” of those who criticize current conditions—but have reached positions of responsibility as a result of their ability to manipulate the very system they criticize. This does not bode well for universities, labor unions, or opposition parties.

F. Even so, piece-meal progress can be made. Over time, it could add up to a great deal. My arguments that repression and reliance on military solutions recruits new internal opponents and ensures international isolation appeared to register—particularly with the military, which fears both even more than the businessmen. I believe new initiatives could be developed, particularly in military justice. One key might be U.S. recognition of the military’s efforts in socio-economic areas coupled with persistent development of the theme that this is not sufficient unless means are also found to increase political participation and personal security from official abuse.

G. Though material assistance would be greatly appreciated, I have the impression that many of those I talked to most want a sense of U.S. interest and engagement. They do not expect us to be uncritical, but they would like us to do two things in particular: take their views (and accomplishments) into account, and be more precise about what we want when we talk of the need for change in Guatemala. In this regard, consider the following question submitted in writing by Colonel Castellanos:

“I assume that what the U.S. seeks in Guatemala is to identify itself with “forces of change” capable of sustaining political and economic pluralism without creating authoritarian internal relationships and of assuring that Guatemala will not fall under influences hostile to the U.S.”

“If this assumption is correct, how does the U.S. expect to develop this identification? Who do you believe could constitute such forces of change within Guatemala?”

I did not have an opportunity to answer this question. However, exploring it may be a key to the future.

5. Next steps. We believe we should take every reasonable opportunity to continue the dialogue, both in Guatemala and in Washington. Major initiatives should await a full interagency review at year's end. In the meantime, visits by Mendoza, the Foreign Minister, or others should be exploited to stimulate the broadest possible consideration of points of both conflict and cooperation.

Muskie

54. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 7, 1980

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Guatemala (S)

State has sent a status report on our dialogue with Guatemala, following the Dreyfuss-Nutting mission to Guatemala (Tab A).² They identify a number of follow-up items to continue to keep the dialogue going for the next couple of months, but none of us believe that we are likely to see any progress until after the election. Indeed, I understand that Muskie will not be meeting with the Guatemalan Foreign Minister, and since you also will not be meeting with him, that will send an additional message to the Guatemalans. (S)

I have checked with State with regard to having an SCC (I) on CIA's three proposals, and Bowdler thinks we should wait until after

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 16, Guatemala. Secret. Sent for action.

² Not attached. In a September 25 memorandum to Brzezinski, Tarnoff provided a status report on the dialogue with Guatemala: "Interested agencies have evaluated the results of the John Dreyfuss/General Nutting mission to Guatemala, and have concluded that President Lucas' response on government-sponsored violence precludes increases in economic assistance or changes in US policy concerning security assistance at this time." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 24, Guatemala: 8–10/80) For more on the Dreyfuss-Nutting Mission, see Document 49.

the election before we consider that or any other element in our strategy (Tab B).³ I am inclined to agree with him, particularly since CIA has disowned its three proposals unless we adopt all three of them (I recommend only 1½) and a different overt strategy. (S)

Therefore, I do not recommend an SCC(I) at this time. Let's wait another month and see.⁴ (S)

³ Not attached.

⁴ An unknown hand wrote two options at the bottom of the memorandum: "Approve," and "Other." Brzezinski wrote "OK" next to "Approve." Aaron initialed next to "Approve."

55. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Belize City and Multiple Diplomatic Posts¹

Washington, October 22, 1980, 0251Z

281673. Subject: FCO Minister Ridley's Meetings With Deputy Secretary Christopher and ARA Officials on Belize.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary: FCO Minister of State Nicholas Ridley briefed Deputy Secretary Christopher and other Department officials October 15 on his October 13–14 negotiations with the Guatemalans on Belize, as well as future British moves on Belizean independence.² No settlement has been reached, but further talks will be held in January. Ridley said the Guatemalan representatives are searching for a face-saving formula for a negotiated settlement that would be acceptable domestically; the British would try to help them find it. The British, however, will move Belize to independence by late 1981 with or without an agreement with Guatemala. Ridley said the Guatemalans now accept this reality. Moreover, Foreign Minister Castillo seemed to understand and accept that there can be no cession of Belizean territory to Guatemala, although he must still find a face-saving formula to sell this domestically. Ridley

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800503–1017. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent Immediate to Guatemala City, USUN, London, Mexico City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights. Drafted by Mack; cleared in ARA/CEN, S/S-O, and D (by phone); approved by Bushnell.

² No other records of the conversation were found.

expects that even if a negotiated settlement on Belize is not possible, Belizean independence can occur with a minimum of tension. He was gratified that the Guatemalans had foresworn the use of force in the dispute.³ After the UNGA approves a resolution this fall calling for Belizean independence by the end of 1981,⁴ the UK will launch the independence process—meanwhile continuing to negotiate with the Guatemalans. Ridley urged the US to vote for the resolution as a means of nudging the Guatemalans to face the inevitable and accept a settlement. He suggested that we make some gesture to the Guatemalans to reduce their sense of isolation and perhaps increase their flexibility on Belize. Deputy Secretary Christopher said that we would be reconsidering our previous position of abstaining on this question. Ridley said that the British are prepared to retain a post-independence military presence in Belize sufficient to respond to the security concerns of the Guatemalans and Belizeans. End summary.

3. Minister Ridley, accompanied by James Hennessy, UK Governor of Belize, met with Deputy Secretary Christopher October 15. He also held discussions the same day with ARA officials including DAS Bushnell, DAS Cheek, ARA/CEN Director Blacken, Consul General-designate to Belize Barnebey and desk officer Mack.

4. British strategy with the Guatemalans: In his meeting with ARA, Ridley opened by observing that the October 13–14 talks in New York with the Guatemalans and Belizeans had been less decisive than he had hoped. Nonetheless, he was pleased with the results. The British strategy, prior to and during the latest round, was to convince the Guatemalans that they could no longer delay Belizean independence, and to disabuse them of any notion that the land question was negotiable, while assuring them that everything else was. This strategy seemed to be succeeding in making the Guatemalans more forthcoming. The UK had done nothing to discourage efforts by Belizean Premier George Price to create the impression in the Caribbean and elsewhere that momentum was building for independence which the British could not resist. Ridley had told the Guatemalans that his government would

³ In telegram 6908 from Guatemala City, October 27, the Embassy reported that UK Consul Michael Wilmshurst had shared fresh details about the October 13–14 Anglo-Guatemalan talks in New York, including the point that Castillo had assured the United Kingdom only that “Guatemala would not move against British (sic) forces and pointedly reserved the military option for the future by drawing a parallel with the Iraqi invasion of Iran.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800522–0784) Iraq invaded Iran on September 22.

⁴ The resolution on Belize was adopted by the UNGA Fourth Committee on November 6 by a vote of 123–1–7. (Telegram 4973 from USUN, November 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790512–0616)

abide by the expected UNGA resolution calling upon the UK to grant independence before the end of 1981.

5. In New York, Ridley informed the Guatemalans that the UK had decided to proceed on two "parallel paths" with respect to Belize. First, the UK would initiate in December a process that would lead to independence for the colony within 12 months, with or without a settlement. Secondly, the UK would continue negotiations with the Guatemalans in the hope that a settlement could be reached prior to independence. Ridley said he had feared the Guatemalans might respond to this approach by breaking off the talks and going home. But this had not happened. The Guatemalans had simply asked if the UK would consider delaying the start of the independence process until March 1981, and actual independence until March 1982.

6. Ridley said he had responded to the Guatemalans that he could not delay independence past 1981, but he would work with them to manage the process to minimize domestic problems for the Guatemalan Government.

7. In New York, the UK put forth a 16-point proposal to the Guatemalans which dealt *inter alia* with communications, maritime access, use of a free port, economic cooperation and security. Price had accepted all of them beforehand and even had suggested an arrangement by which an independent Belizean Government would grant to Guatemala long-term lease rights to some of the southern cays, a concession which to Ridley appeared to imply some Guatemalan rights to the seabed as well. Price even proposed the construction of an artificial Guatemalan cay in the shallow waters of the Gulf of Honduras that would give the Guatemalans a basis from which to claim a 200 mile territorial sea. But the Guatemalans had said they needed more and could not agree with the UK proposal as it stood. They claimed that to do so would cause the government to fall.

8. Upon that note, the parties agreed to suspend the New York talks and to meet again, possibly January 6. In the meantime, Ridley hoped to come up with a few more ideas to help the Guatemalans sell a settlement domestically.

9. Ridley's impressions of the Guatemalan attitude: Ridley said he had found the Guatemalans genuinely prepared to reach a settlement, but subject to political constraints on the home front. He characterized Foreign Minister Castillo as desperate to find a face-saving solution. There was no hint of Guatemalan saber rattling. Indeed, the Guatemalans assured the UK and the Belizeans that they did not intend to use force on this question. He felt the Guatemalan Government representatives were also prepared to abandon their land claim, but were inhibited from doing so by the presence of the four political party representatives in the GOG delegation. Ridley said the latter had continued to posture

about territory long after they fully realized a land cession was out of the question. Castillo had hinted he wanted to hold private talks with Ridley to come up with some “cosmetic” proposals to get over the land hurdle.

10. Ridley said that instead of looking at the Guatemalans as obstructionist and imperialistic, we must look at them as very realistic. They recognize the UK’s determination to press on with the independence process. The challenge now was to find a way to help the Guatemalans accept a settlement and to keep control of any hotheads in the army who might try to take the situation in their own hands and resort to force.

11. Ways the US could help: Ridley said that the US could help the UK and the negotiations process by voting for the UN resolution on Belize this fall. By doing so we would make clear to the Guatemalans that their isolation on Belize was complete. This might be what was needed to nudge the Guatemalans to accept a settlement. The British would attempt to insure that the resolution was not insulting to Guatemala. Although the Guatemalans would never ask the US to vote for the resolution, a favorable US vote would encourage the Guatemalan Government to resist those who opposed giving up the land claim. He suggested also that USG send someone known as sympathetic to Guatemala for a heart-to-heart chat with them on Belize. The Guatemalans would be tremendously appreciative. They had informed Ridley of their great satisfaction with the recent visit by Luigi Einaudi.

12. The schedule for independence: Ridley then speculated that the timing of the overall process would run along the following lines:

(A) Early November—a resolution on Belize would be proposed at the UN which calling upon the British to grant independence in 1981.

(B) November 10 (approximately)—UN approval of the Belize resolution.

(C) December—announcement by the British of a Constitutional Conference in February or March.

(D) Late December or early January—a new round of negotiations with the Guatemalans.

(E) February and March—the Constitutional Conference in London.

(F) May or June—Act of Parliament on Belize. This date could slip because Parliament would be voting on similar acts for Canada and Antigua.

(G) September 10 (or possibly October)—independence.

13. Ridley reiterated that the British would continue attempts to reach a negotiated settlement with the Guatemalans. However, even if a negotiated settlement proved impossible, the excellent relations the

UK had developed with the Guatemalans during the long negotiations process would permit a non-negotiated Belizean independence to occur with a minimum of tensions. The way would also be opened for future talks between the Guatemalans and an independent Belizean Government to deal with many of the issues contained in the 16-point proposal the British had presented in New York.

14. Security arrangements: Ridley said that the British forces would remain after independence and that the Guatemalans would accept no one else. Price had agreed to this. If there were a settlement, the British would leave a small force to train the small Belizean self-defense force and police, but also to exchange intelligence information with the Guatemalans to prevent leftist use of Belize as a base of subversion or supply against Guatemala. If there were no agreement, the British would retain a garrison of sufficient size to counter any belligerent act by Guatemala. However, the British had cautioned Premier Price they would only defend Belize against an unprovoked attack from Guatemala. The British would not defend Belize against Guatemalan military action launched in response to the presence of foreign troops in Belize, such as the Sandinistas. Ridley said that Price understood this condition, that it extended to verbal provocations as well, and was prepared to make a pledge not to interfere in the internal affairs of Guatemala. However, Price did have some reservations about turning away what he termed "political refugees" from Guatemala.

15. In a separate meeting with Deputy Secretary Christopher, Ridley touched on some of the same points. Ridley reiterated his request that the US support the Belize resolution in the UN this fall. The Deputy Secretary responded that we would be considering our position carefully.

Christopher

56. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, October 24, 1980, 1957Z

284221. Military Addees Handle as Specat Exclusive. Subject: Guatemalan Foreign Minister's Meeting With Deputy Secretary and Other Department Officials. Ref: State 281673.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary: In a meeting with the Deputy Secretary October 17, Guatemalan Foreign Minister Francisco Castillo had little to add to the information on the UK/GOG talks on Belize we had received two days earlier from British FCO Minister of State Ridley. Castillo confirmed that no settlement had been reached because of the differences on the land issue. However, he said the Guatemalans were determined to find a negotiated solution and that negotiations would continue. Castillo also met jointly with Assistant Secretary Derian (HA) and Deputy Assistant Secretary Bushnell (ARA), with human rights the principal topic of discussion.³ Despite the exhaustive treatment given this issue, there seemed to be no meeting of minds between Castillo and the Department officials. End summary.

3. Belize: The meeting with the Deputy Secretary focused primarily on Belize. The Deputy Secretary opened by noting that Minister Ridley had been very complimentary of the way Castillo had conducted the negotiations. Alluding to the difficult decision the GOG would be facing on Belize, the Deputy Secretary expressed hope that a solution to the dispute could be found. He said the US would be reassessing its own position on Belize for the upcoming vote on the UN resolution, but added that the US would not take a stand that would handicap a negotiated settlement. Comment: We find it remarkable that Castillo did not seize the opportunity at this point or later in the conversation to request that the US abstain again on the resolution this year. We do not know whether this was a simple oversight on his part, or indicates that the GOG has already written us off on this question or reflects a disinterest in our vote. End comment.

4. Castillo confirmed the report we had received earlier from the British that no settlement had been achieved in the October 13–14 New

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800508–0717. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Also sent Immediate to Belize City, USUN, London, and USDOCOSOUTH Quarry Heights. Drafted by Mack; cleared in ARA/CEN, HA, D, and S/S–O; approved by Bushnell.

² See Document 55.

³ No record of Castillo's meeting with Derian and Bushnell was found.

York talks. Territory remained the major sticking point. Without adding specifics, Castillo said his government was insisting that a negotiated settlement contain "an ingredient of territory." The British had deferred to the Belizeans on this key question. The Belizean position was that Guatemala could have some "territorial sea and perhaps some cays," but no other land. The GOG would study and expand upon the 16-point proposal presented by the British in New York. However, Castillo did not believe it would be possible to achieve a consensus resolution on Belize at the UN this year because a number of points remained to be resolved. (Comment: In his conversation with us October 15, FCO Minister of State Ridley gave no indication that the Belizeans were willing to cede sovereignty over any cays, although he said Premier Price had proposed leasing some cays to the GOG as part of a settlement. End comment.)

5. Castillo characterized the Belize dispute as a great waste of his government's time. He was of the opinion that the GOG must accept "an honorable solution" to this dispute. He added that the Belizeans also would eventually realize they would have to come to terms with their much larger neighbor (Guatemala). Castillo lavished praise on comportment of the UK negotiators. "We are turning a huge problem into a beautiful friendship," he said.

6. Human Rights: The lengthy meeting with Assistant Secretary Derian (HA) and DAS Bushnell (ARA) dwelled exclusively on the question of the human rights situation in Guatemala and its impact on US/GOG relations.

7. The discussion was suspended for the meeting with the Deputy Secretary. While walking in the hall, Derian suggested to Castillo that the matters they were dealing with were serious and important. Castillo agreed. She then suggested that they might reach better understanding if they did not consider it a negotiation which required points and scorekeeping. Castillo had been countering every issue to that point with a statement whether or not it had relevance to the point. After agreeing to suspend the fencing, he abandoned that tactic and addressed the topics more directly.

8. DAS Bushnell outlined the foreign policy dilemma Guatemala posed for the US. On the one hand the US wanted to cooperate more closely with the Lucas government to resist the Marxists. But on the other we were prevented from doing so by the high level of illegal political violence in Guatemala, some of which was attributable to the official security forces. In some detail Bushnell explained how US human rights legislation would continue to play a determining and restricting role in US/Guatemalan relations until the GOG began to take steps to deal with the problem of illegal political violence. He noted in passing that this same legislation recently had compelled the

US to refuse to allow a shipment of ammunition from South Korea to transit the US enroute to Guatemala.

9. Castillo after complaining that we did not understand the extent and validity of the GOG's fear, volunteered with a wry expression, "Look at our new friends, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay," then he shrugged. Derian said that it was obvious that those countries would like to have Guatemala follow their course to give it validity.

10. Bushnell pointed out that the US did not demand or expect perfection on the part of the GOG. But the GOG would have to demonstrate it was trying to address its human rights problems. Bushnell also observed that despite suspicions in some Guatemalan circles, the USG was not hostile to the GOG and had no intention of tampering with Guatemala's constitutional order.

11. Assistant Secretary Derian said that governments which resorted to illegal violence—even to deal with subversion—eventually lost their moral authority, strengthening those very groups which were attempting to subvert them. Derian noted that in discussions with a number of Guatemalans, there seemed to be the idea that the USG did not care what happened to the country or that we were trying to destabilize the government. On the contrary, we believed that suspension of citizen rights was destabilizing. She cautioned the GOG not to be fooled into thinking that Argentina offered a desirable model for dealing with subversion. Any government which clamped down in order to control would meet with great difficulty once it decided to loosen up.

12. Castillo said he was pleased to learn that the US had no hostile intentions toward Guatemala. Events in Nicaragua and El Salvador as well as statements by several ARA officials had given him and others in Guatemala doubts. DAS Bushnell responded that those statements had been distorted by persons who wished to misrepresent the US position.

13. Assistant Secretary Derian noted Castillo had not heard her position previously on Guatemala and that she would tell him what it was: Guatemala is a country with serious human rights problems, two in particular: torture and killings by death squads which seem to operate under some umbrella of government protection. Although, Castillo had earlier evaded the subject of torture, by giving a detailed explanation of the new "farm" prison system, he nodded, seeming to indicate he understood what she was referring to. All other human rights concerns were discussed or named in the subsequent discussion.

14. Castillo said the US had nothing to teach Guatemala about human rights. Guatemalans had been talking and writing about this subject for four centuries. The Lucas government also favored human rights. But unlike the Carter administration, GOG support for human

rights was based on principle, not political expediency. Castillo said he was saddened by current US policy toward Guatemala. The GOG was now being forced to identify with such “de facto” governments as Argentina and Chile. The US should understand that his country, Castro’s prime target in Central America, was now locked in a struggle against Cuban-supported subversive forces.

15. Later in the conversation Castillo volunteered that Guatemala’s judicial system left much to be desired. Judges were threatened and bribed to release criminals and subversives, forcing people to take matters into their own hands. The USG should understand that in this sense, Guatemala today is in many ways comparable to the American West a hundred years ago. It was unfair to hold his country to the standard of a European nation. Much of the violence stemmed from the low educational and cultural level of the people. The GOG was trying to redress this legacy of ignorance of many years standing, but the process would take time. The security forces merely reflected the existing cultural levels of the nation. In the meantime, they could not be expected to act as responsibly as their much better educated counterparts in the US and other developed countries.

16. Castillo said it had been a mistake for the US to terminate military training for the Guatemalan Army. A new generation of young Guatemalan officers was growing with hard line attitudes because of a lack of contact with US military counterparts. The US was losing an opportunity to impart human rights values.

17. Castillo stressed his government’s desire for good relations with the US as well as to receive US military training and other assistance. However, if the question of US assistance to Guatemala were a source of contention within the US, and as a consequence contributed to frictions between the two countries, he would prefer to dispense with any US assistance.

18. Bushnell informed Castillo that he would be travelling to Belize at the end of the month for talks on Belize and other Central American issues with Premier Price, and to review the operations of our Consulate General.

19. Comment: In terms of agreement on any future, improved human rights situation, the discussion was inconclusive. In terms of heightened understanding of the US position and concerns in human rights matters, Assistant Secretary Derian believes that it was useful and important. End comment.

Muskie

57. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Bowdler) and the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Affairs (McCall) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom)¹

Washington, October 28, 1980

SUBJECT

UN Vote on Belize

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Should the US abstain in the UNGA this fall as we have in the past, or vote for a British-supported resolution reaffirming the right of the people of Belize to self-determination, independence and territorial integrity and setting a late 1981 deadline for Belizean independence? If we do decide to vote in favor, should we seek modifications of the resolution to make it marginally more palatable to Guatemala, thereby attenuating the damage a switch in our position might cause to our already limited ability to influence the GOG in the negotiations and to improve human rights?

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Since 1975, the US has abstained on the annual UN resolutions on Belize. The British informed us last April that they had decided to energetically pursue negotiations this year to achieve a negotiated settlement, but that with or without Guatemala's agreement Belize would be granted independence in 12–18 months. Since then several rounds of negotiations have failed to produce agreement although progress has been made. The British have told the Guatemalans that all issues except cession of land and delay in Belizean independence beyond the end of 1981 are negotiable. The British have told us that the Guatemalans now accept those realities, although the Guatemalans for domestic political reasons cannot formally accept a Belizean independence agreement not involving a cession of territory. The British have informed the Guatemalans that the process of granting independence to Belize will begin in December and culminate prior to the end of 1981; meanwhile the two sides will continue negotiations. When you mentioned to Castillo that we would be reassessing our position on the Belize resolution this year, he made no effort to dissuade you. The British

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890015–0402. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Mack and Blacken on October 27; cleared in L/ARA, HA, EUR/NE, and IO/UNP. An unknown hand initialed the memorandum on McCall's behalf.

have reported that the Guatemalans have foresworn use of military force in the event of unilateral action by the British to grant Belizean independence.

The draft resolution (Tab 2)² circulating this year does not contain inflammatory rhetoric and is similar in substance to that adopted by the General Assembly in past years, but has a new provision which calls for Belizean independence with its territory intact before the conclusion of the 36th General Assembly (i.e., by late 1981). The Fourth Committee vote on the resolution could come as early as October 30. Last year's vote was 134 in favor, none opposed (Guatemala did not vote), and 8 abstentions (US, Chile, El Salvador, Israel, Morocco, Paraguay, Spain and Uruguay.)

The British privately played an important role in shaping this year's draft and will co-sponsor it along with a large number of Caribbean and other states. In the eyes of others our abstention is interpreted as a vote against Belizean self-determination and in favor of Guatemala.

THE OPTIONS

1. *Continue to Abstain*

The following arguments can be made in favor of an abstention:

—A vote for the resolution could be viewed by the Guatemalan Government as another hostile act. It would undermine our efforts to reduce Guatemalan paranoia about our intentions and to reestablish a dialogue, aimed at persuading the GOG to improve its human rights performance and carry through on political and socio-economic reforms.

—A yes vote coming on the heels of the GOG's grant of agreement for Ambassador Landau after several months delay might be considered by the Guatemalans to be an unfitting response to their action.

—An abstention might increase our ability to influence post-UNGA Guatemalan behavior toward Belize.

—Our preference on Belize should be a negotiated settlement. While the British argue that a US vote in favor of the UN resolution would help persuade the Guatemalans to accept a settlement, the effect on the paranoid Guatemalans could be exactly the opposite. A favorable US vote could also encourage Belizean intransigence, thereby undermining the possibility of a negotiated settlement.

² Tab 2, attached but not printed, is telegram 4386 from USUN, October 19, in which the delegation described a "working paper of a UNGA resolution on Belize" that resolved: "Belize should be independent 'before the conclusion of the 36th General Assembly.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890015-0410)

—A Belize which obtains independence without a prior settlement of Guatemalan claims could prove a source of continual friction in a region already beset by turmoil. Even though the Guatemalans have pledged privately to the British not to use force over Belize and the British have agreed to maintain a garrison in Belize after independence, their security guarantee cannot be open-ended. Moreover, we cannot rule out the possibility that sooner or later some hotheads in the Guatemalan Army might take action.

—For years the Guatemalan Army has cited as its major *raison d'être* its obligation to assert the Guatemalan sovereignty over Belize proclaimed in the Guatemalan constitution. The failure of the Guatemalan Government to respond militarily to unilateral Belizean independence could subject the Army to domestic ridicule and undermine its morale at a time when it must face a serious challenge from domestic Marxist guerrilla groups.

—The British have told us that the Guatemalans have made a good faith effort to negotiate a settlement during this year's round of talks, which is noteworthy given Guatemala's domestic political constraints on Belize. We should not "reward" Guatemalan flexibility at the negotiating table with what could be regarded by them as a slap in the face.

—International criticism for our failure to side with the principle of self-determination might be countered by the argument that our abstention is merely aimed at preserving our future ability to facilitate a negotiated settlement.

2. Vote in Favor

Shift our position to support this year's draft resolution on Belize which affirms the right of the people of Belize to self-determination, independence, and territorial integrity and declares that Belize should become an independent state by the conclusion of the 36th UNGA.

The following arguments support a "yes" vote:

—The resolution is moderate and responsible. The British have insured that it contains no language abusive to Guatemala.

—The British are determined to give Belize independence by late next year with or without a prior settlement with Guatemala.

—The Belizeans have interpreted our abstention on past UN resolutions on Belize as a vote for Guatemala and have told us that this year's UN vote will offer the last opportunity for the US to demonstrate where it stands on the question of Belizean independence. Our stand on this year's resolution could set the tone for our future relations with an independent Belize.

—The British have asked us to vote for the resolution and argue that our support might help nudge the Guatemalans into accepting a negotiated settlement.

—Fears that a vote for the resolution might damage our relations with Guatemala are overdrawn. Our current relations are already so poor that little more could be done to undercut them.

—The Guatemalans already may have resigned themselves to a US vote against them on Belize. Following last year's UNGA vote, we informed the Guatemalans that we had abstained only for the purpose of encouraging a negotiated settlement; but that our growing isolation on this issue, combined with our commitment to the concept of self-determination, made our abstention increasingly difficult to maintain.

—A major Guatemalan problem with the draft resolution appears to be its imposition of a late 1981 deadline for Belizean independence. For domestic political reasons connected with the 1982 Guatemalan presidential elections, they have requested the British to delay independence until March 1982. The British have urged us not to seek any changes in this date.

—A US decision to abstain would associate us in the eyes of the Caribbean, some Latin nations and in Europe with a Guatemalan military government that is perceived as repressive, non-reformist and anti-democratic. This could undermine our efforts to convince the world of the genuineness of our commitment to support peaceful change, reforms and democratic governments in the region.

—A US decision to abstain would be perceived in the international community as yet another US waffle on the basic issue of self-determination. We should finally join the world on this issue.

Recommended Position

ARA, IO, HA and EUR all recommend that we vote in favor of the resolution. USUN concurs.

The major drawback to a "yes" vote is the potential impact on Guatemala. To help limit any damage to our present and future bilateral relationship that our switch in vote might entail, we would plan to seek modifications in the resolution to make it more palatable to Guatemala. The desire of the Belizeans to obtain US support on the resolution may be sufficiently strong that they would be willing to ask their supporters to go along with some minor changes in the resolution, provided the provisions dealing with the independence deadline and rights of the Belizean people were not altered. Such changes might commend the good faith efforts of all the parties to the dispute to seek a negotiated solution—which would be an indirect praise of Guatemala. It might also call on Guatemala and Belize to work out arrangements for post-independence cooperation on items of mutual concern and call for member states to endorse and support whatever arrangements were agreed upon. This would be a tacit recognition of special Guatemalan interests in Belize. We would consult with the Guatemalans regard-

ing our effort to seek changes, as we take this up with the British. Whether or not our modifications were accepted, our attempts to have them incorporated would signal to the Guatemalans that our vote in favor of the resolution did not reflect a US decision to punish them, and would demonstrate our continued sensitivity to their concerns. We would also make a statement reflecting sensitivity to Guatemalan concerns.

Recommendations:

That we vote for the British supported resolution on Belize, and that the rationale for the vote be outlined publicly in a routine statement explaining our vote.³

Additionally, that we seek modifications in the resolution to make it more palatable to Guatemala, and send the cable at Tab 1⁴ providing instructions to USUN and Embassy Guatemala.⁵

Alternatively, we could abstain.⁶

³ On October 29, Newsom indicated his approval.

⁴ Tab 1, attached but not printed, is telegram 289390 to multiple posts, October 30, noting that after a "thorough review" of policy on the UN vote the Department "decided to vote in favor of the resolution on Belize in the UN this year." The Department instructed the Mission to inform the Guatemalan Mission of the decision. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890015-0409)

⁵ On October 29, Newsom indicated his approval.

⁶ On October 29, Newsom indicated his disapproval. An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the page: "Instruction cable sent out, per Mr. Newsom's instructions on 10/29. ARA informed." The United States voted in favor of the November 11 UNGA Resolution on the "Question of Belize." (Question of Belize, A/RES/35/20, adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 11, 1980)

58. Telegram From the Consulate in Belize City to the Department of State¹

Belize City, December 23, 1980, 2135Z

1434. USCINCSO for Polad. Subject: Anglo-Guatemalan Negotiations on Belize.

1. C-Entire text

2. British Governor General Hennessy has informed me that GOG has agreed to a resumption of UK-Guatemalan negotiations. He said GOG has responded in writing to a recent HMG invitation to meet, placing no conditions on their acceptance but suggesting a date later than HMG had in mind. Hennessy said HMG had hoped to begin this round of talks by late December but now expects them to start a few weeks later.

3. During December 23 call on Premier Price, I asked when the talks would resume and if he expects to participate. He said he expects the next talks will be held in late January or February, and he plans to take part in at least some of the negotiating sessions. He said he does not yet know the locale for the talks.

4. I pressed Premier Price on what GOB would be willing to accede to in order to facilitate an Anglo-Guatemalan agreement. He replied that while Belize cannot contemplate any territorial cession, GOB would go this far: (1) Guatemalan sovereign maritime access to Gulf of Honduras and Caribbean; (2) A pipeline from the Peten oil fields to a Belizean port; and (3) formalization of Guatemala's present trade access to Belizean ports, which could include a wharf and warehouse at Belize City for in-bond trade where a Guatemalan flag could be flown. As an amusing point in a recent negotiating round, Price said he even offered the Guatemalans a sovereign territorial cession: one acre in Belmopan for the site of a Guatemalan Embassy

5. I reported to Price, as I had earlier to Hennessy, our hope that HMG and GOB would continue to keep their talks going with Guatemala. Each said he and his government would seek to do so, but neither was optimistic significant progress would be made. Price agreed specifically to my suggestion that an independent Belize would continue willing to talk to the Guatemalans, since Belize in any event must try to accommodate the economic and other interests of its much larger neighbor.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800608-1104. Confidential; Priority. Sent for information to Guatemala City, Mexico City, London, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and USLO Caribbean.

6. I would welcome any corroboration or comments by Department or other addressees as to timing and substantive content of this next round of UK–GOG talks.²

Barnebey

² Telegram 316 from Guatemala City, January 16, 1981, reported that the UK–Guatemalan negotiations over Belizean independence would resume “some time in February.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810026–0508)

Nicaragua

59. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 25, 1977, 2246Z

377. For Secretary Vance From Ambassador Theberge. Subject: Ambassador Discusses Human Rights With President Somoza.

Summary: President Carter's special concern for the protection of human rights was explained to Somoza who agreed that emphasis on human rights was correct and proper. Somoza doubted that governments would bend to public criticism or when strong self-interest was at stake, and he criticized double standard on this issue. He noted that GON record during state of siege² compared favorably with other countries, that less than four hundred persons had been detained during past two years, that detainees were given fair hearings and all court martial proceedings against FSLN guerrillas have been open to public. He reaffirmed friendship for the United States and new administration. End Summary

1. During the course of a meeting with President Somoza afternoon January 24, 1977, I told him that it was my duty to interpret and execute the purposes of the new President of the United States and his foreign policy. Therefore, it was incumbent upon me to express President Carter's deep concern, a concern shared by the American people and by me personally, to protect and advance the cause of human rights and liberty in the world.

2. We explained to Somoza that President Carter had emphasized that the relations of the United States with other countries under the Carter administration will be conditioned and shaped by their conduct in the realm of human rights and liberty. We reminded him that while our concern for human rights must be balanced by other interests, these concepts represent powerful moral forces in the United States and the world at large. We cited Woodrow Wilson's maxim: "The greatest forces in the world and the only permanent forces are moral forces." It was important for him to understand that the United States

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770027-0836. Secret.

² Somoza declared a state of siege on December 28, 1974, following an FSLN hostage-taking at a former official's home. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969-1976, vol. E-11, Part 1, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973-1976, Documents 248 and 270.

was born a free republic based on the concept of human liberty and right. American history is a re-creation in each generation of the ideals that were conceived at the beginning. We did not wish, I said, for there to be any misunderstanding about our attachment to human rights and liberty.

3. President Somoza replied that he was in agreement with the prominence given to the human rights issue by President Carter. He believed that placing greater emphasis on human rights was correct and proper, since it was a universal problem and concern of all nations. Nevertheless, said Somoza, it was difficult for him to see what President Carter, or anyone else for that matter, could do to persuade governments to alter their domestic policies and practices, particularly if strong measures were felt to be necessary to their survival. He added that he was sympathetic to efforts to improve human rights practices, but that it was important to avoid the kind of double standard now practiced by the international community.

4. We again drew Somoza's attention to the legislative requirement governing FMS that the Department submit reports on the human rights situation of all countries receiving U.S. security assistance.³ It was my understanding, I said, that the Department's report on Nicaragua would soon be submitted to Congress. In response to questioning, the President made the following points: 1) during the last two years, since the state of siege, less than four hundred people had been detained for more than one day, as a result of GON operations against the FSLN guerrillas, 2) all detainees are given a hearing and allowed to have a lawyer represent them; the hearings are fair and follow U.S. military court practices, 3) all court martial proceedings against the FSLN have been open to the public and are observed by the news media, lawyers and families of the accused. Somoza asserted that Nicaragua's human rights performance compared favorably with most Latin countries.

5. In conclusion, Somoza reaffirmed Nicaragua's traditional friendly relations with the United States, and that President Carter should be assured that he was a firm and loyal friend. He requested that I convey his best regards and greetings to President Carter and Secretary of State Vance.

6. Comment: Somoza is well-informed about President Carter's views on human rights. As in the past, he defended his government's

³ The Department of State submitted reports on human rights practices in countries proposed for security assistance in accordance with the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (H.R. 13680; P.L. 94-329 90 Stat. 729). The Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs prepared the reports. (*Congress and the Nation*, vol. IV, 1973-1976, pp. 874-877) For the report on Nicaragua, see *Human Rights Practices in Countries Receiving U.S. Security Assistance*, pp. 128-129.

record and appeared resigned to foreign criticism, much of which he believes to be unjust, tendentious and politically motivated. He is convinced that public, punitive action on this issue will alienate dwindling number of hemispheric countries friendly to the United States.

Theberge

60. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, March 3, 1977, 1723Z

1032. Subject: Ambassador Discusses With President Somoza Catholic Church's Charges of Human Rights Violations. Ref: (A) Managua 1009 (Notal),² (B) Managua 0836 (Notal).³

Summary: Ambassador met with President Somoza on March 2nd to express deepening concern over new charges of American Capuchin priests of recent massacres of campesinos by National Guard north of Matagalpa. President Somoza categorically denied accusations and claimed that false information being given to Capuchins as part of FSLN-Communist effort to discredit GON. Somoza admitted that innocent by-standers, including women and children, sometimes had been

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770073-0919. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information to Buenos Aires, Guatemala City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² Telegram 1009 from Managua, March 2, reported that the Embassy "has been told by American Capuchin priests of alleged recent large scale massacres of campesinos by National Guard," and that the Government of Nicaragua "describes the information as a rumor, denies its veracity and attributes it to 'Communist propaganda.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770072-0250)

³ In telegram 836 from Managua, February 22, the Embassy reported on a February 18 meeting between Somoza and Theberge to discuss charges of human rights violations made in the pastoral letter of the Nicaraguan Catholic bishops. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770061-1106) Telegram 541 from Managua, February 3, reported the Embassy's receipt of a February 1 letter from Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, director of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, to Government of Nicaragua Press Secretary Roger Bermúdez, in which Chamorro commented that he "and many other Nicaraguans have been criticizing the state of Nicaraguan human rights freedoms for a long time." The Embassy noted that Chamorro's letter included portions of the Bishops' pastoral letter that described the "state of terror" forcing peasants to flee their land, "arbitrary detentions," and investigations marked by "humiliating and inhuman methods: from torture and violations to executions without previous judgment, neither civil nor military." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770039-0627)

killed in National Guard-FSLN guerrilla cross fire, especially early 1976. GON planned reply to New York Times article March 2nd on Catholic Church's allegations of human rights abuses.⁴ Somoza claimed that administration's public criticism and pressure regarding human rights performance of friendly countries will encourage terrorism, alienate friendly governments, and adversely affect broader U.S. interests, as demonstrated by Argentine Government response. End summary.

1. During meeting with President Somoza in his office afternoon March 2, 1977, Ambassador voiced his deepening concern about new charges by American Capuchin priests of alleged recent massacres of 86 campesinos by National Guard in two separate incidents in area northeast of Matagalpa (see reftel A). He pointed out that publication of Capuchin allegations and Catholic bishops' accusations of continuing human rights abuses on front page of March 2nd New York Times would likely create strong, unfavorable impression on American public opinion, particularly in news media, Church circles and U.S. Congress. Ambassador stated that Capuchin priests and Catholic bishops are usually reliable and credible source of information. Therefore, it would be a mistake to dismiss them lightly as innocent dupes of FSLN-Communist inspired maneuver against GON. President Somoza was told forcefully and at some length that these charges by the Catholic Church were of the utmost seriousness and threatened to place a heavy burden on our traditional friendly relations unless they could be satisfactorily answered by his government.

2. The President replied by categorically denying that the alleged massacres had taken place. He said that it was impossible to cover up such incidents and for the names of the persons allegedly killed not to be known. He added that he was waiting for the Capuchin priests to produce the names of those allegedly massacred, which they have not done so far. Somoza stated that he was very much aware of what was productive and counterproductive in counter-insurgency operations. He knew that nothing could be more self-defeating than for the GON to encourage or condone such acts against innocent campesinos. It is not, and never has been, GON policy to massacre campesinos. Somoza said that he believed that the Capuchins had been deliberately misinformed by FSLN collaborators as part of wider design to discredit and overthrow his government.

3. Under further questioning, Somoza admitted that some innocent women and children had been killed in the past in National Guard

⁴ Alan Riding, "Bishops in Nicaragua Say Troops Kill Civilians in Fighting Leftists," *New York Times*, March 2, 1977, p. 1.

cross fire with FSLN guerrillas in North. He said that FSLN guerrillas often take refuge in campesino huts with campesino families. Sometimes they are discovered by National Guard units and a firefight ensues. The National Guard has no way of knowing that women or children are present. Somoza said that the tragic deaths of innocent campesinos is one of the consequences of the guerrilla struggle which should be blamed on the FSLN and not the GON. According to Somoza, in early 1976 an estimated 450 FSLN guerrillas were active in the Rio Blanco area where they controlled an area with about 15,000 campesinos. It required enormous sacrifices on the part of the National Guard and the GON to pacify this area. Somoza added that many GON officials, civilian and military, lost their lives in this struggle, along with the FSLN guerrillas and campesinos caught in the cross fire.

4. Ambassador questioned the President concerning GON plans to deal with accusations of Catholic bishops and Capuchin priests and stressed the desirability of complete investigation, preferably an impartial one. Somoza replied that the GON was preparing an answer to New York Times article which he was sending to editor of the Times.⁵ He said he would give the Embassy a copy as soon as it was completed.

5. President ended conversation with comment that the administration's support for human rights was acceptable if not pushed with excessive zeal. He said that public criticism and pressure regarding human rights conduct of friendly governments would lead to their alienation, encourage international terrorism by raising hopes, and adversely affect U.S. commercial and strategic interests. Somoza pointed to understandably hostile Argentine response to cutback in FMS credit since no country, even one friendly to the United States, could passively accept public admonition and punitive acts.

6. Comment: President Somoza seemed disturbed by implications of administration's human rights policies and expects renewed efforts by FSLN, Communists and Cuba to mount an anti-Somoza campaign in the United States, tied to human rights theme. He is convinced that anti-Somoza opposition, in particular Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, is assisting this effort. He gave the impression that he is resigned to stepped up anti-Somoza campaign at home and abroad. Despite Ambassador's insistence on desirability of full GON investigation of

⁵ The *New York Times* published the GON's response on March 14. ("Nicaragua: 'We Respect Human Rights,'" *New York Times*, March 14, 1977, p. 28)

charges of bishops and Capuchins, the President showed little interest and GON apparently plans only reply to New York Times article.

Theberge

61. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Paris¹

Washington, April 2, 1977, 413Z

Tosec 30231/72549. White House for Brzezinski only. Following repeat Managua 1535 sent action SecState 01 Apr 77.

Quote Managua 1535. For Secretary Vance From Ambassador. Subject: President Somoza's Message to Secretary and President Regarding April 5 Congressional Hearing on Human Rights.

1. President Somoza called me to his office on the evening of March 31. He informed me that he was deeply disturbed over the forthcoming Special Hearing on Nicaragua scheduled by the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee for April 5. President declared that he feared that his government would not receive a fair and balanced hearing. He added that Congressman Koch was spreading false and defamatory statements about him and his government, including erroneous accusations about misuse of U.S. aid funds which the Department had refuted.

2. The President asked me specifically to convey to you in the strongest terms his desire that the Department present a full balanced picture of the human rights situation in Nicaragua. He said that he was dismayed at Undersecretary Benson's testimony on Nicaragua before the Long Subcommittee which had been forwarded to him from Washington.² Somoza hoped the Department would not accept at face

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 2-12/77. Secret; Priority; Nodis. Also sent Priority to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted and approved by Allan W. Otto (S/S-O). (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N770002-0388)

² The Department forwarded the transcript of Benson's testimony to the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee (known as the Long Subcommittee after Chairman Clarence Long) in telegram 69015 to Managua, March 29. In her testimony, Benson noted that the state of human rights in Nicaragua "is not good," and added that the U.S. decision to provide aid to Nicaragua was "based on our perception that it is in our national interest to maintain peace and friendly relations with the nations to the south of us." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770106-0671)

value the unproven allegations of Congressman Koch. He said that he admired President Carter's stand on human rights but expected understanding of the difficult terrorist problem facing his government.

3. The President said that he was the target of a vicious campaign to harm his government and weaken ties with the United States because he has been a loyal friend and ally. Not only had he suffered calumny in the past because of his friendship and support for the United States, but now he was being unjustly attacked by Congressman Koch in the U.S. Congress who wanted to cut off all military and economic assistance to Nicaragua.

4. Somoza ended by again urging the Department to present a well balanced picture of the pro-Castro insurgency faced by his government, the killing of government officials by terrorists, and the problems of re-establishing order in the rural areas. He said that the Department should not allow false or unproven allegations to stand as facts, explain the scrupulous care with which the GON has used U.S. funds entrusted to it under the aid program, and convey this to all the members of Foreign Operations Committee. He asserted that the consequences would be extremely serious if the Congressmen on the committee followed Congressman Koch's lead out of ignorance or misrepresentation of the facts.

5. He asked me to please convey this message to President Carter as well.

6. I believe it is a matter of sufficient importance and sensitivity to bring to the President's attention.

Theberge

Unquote

Christopher

62. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, September 28, 1977, 2200Z

233707. Subject: FY 77 FMS Security Assistance Agreement. Ref: Managua 4419,² Matthews/Solaun Telecon September 28.³

1. The Acting Secretary has decided to proceed with signing FY 77 FMS Security Assistance Agreement with Nicaragua. Nicaragua Ambassador Sevilla-Sacasa was orally informed 12:15 p.m. September 28 and presumably has notified GON. He anticipated acquiring necessary formal authorization and deposit to enable him to sign by September 30 deadline.⁴ Point D below was emphasized to Sevilla-Sacasa when he was informed of decision.

2. Ambassador is instructed to convey to GON ASAP fact that we are willing to sign along with following oral demarche. If Embassy feels demarche should be modified in content, please consult prior to delivery.

A. Decision to sign was made in view of diminution of charges of serious human rights abuses by the National Guard over the past months and particularly in view of termination of state of siege, with consequent restoration of the rights of habeas corpus and outdoor

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770354–0100. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, and San José.

² In telegram 4419 from Managua, September 22, the Embassy reported: "Opposition media (both print and electronic) are in the process of letting off steam and attempting to tell story of 33 months of censorship." The Embassy also commented: "In view of the significance of the lifting of the state of siege and censorship, Mission believes FY77 FMS funds should be released." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770345–1045)

³ A record of the September 28 telephone conversation between Matthews and Solaun has not been found.

⁴ Karen DeYoung reported in the *Washington Post* on October 5 that the Department had signed a \$2.5 million military assistance agreement with Nicaragua and "deferred indefinitely" a \$12-million economic aid package. DeYoung wrote: "In a confusing turn-around of its carrot-and-stick diplomacy in the area of human rights, the Carter administration has decided to withhold economic aid while approving military assistance—to a country accused of rights violations. ('Nicaragua Denied Economic Aid, Gets Military,' *Washington Post*, October 5, 1977, p. A10) In an October 5 press briefing Department Spokesman Hodding Carter stated that the "different treatment" of the economic and military aid agreements "reflects the different legislative statutes governing the programs," in that "an unsigned FMS agreement cannot be carried over from one year to the next" while economic aid packages "are so authored that the money can carry over from one fiscal year to the next." (Telegram 240169 to Managua, October 5; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770363–0926)

assembly, restoration of civil court authority and termination of censorship.

B. USG is pleased that GON has taken these actions. These are continuing concerns, however, and our relations will obviously benefit from further improvement, and from GON's ensuring that any remaining basis for charges of human rights violations such as mistreatment of prisoners and abuses by the National Guard is eliminated and/or does not recur.

C. The GON may also wish to consider the advisability of a specific early invitation to such internationally recognized bodies as the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to visit and investigate. Such invitations to the IAHRC have been extended by the U.S. and several other countries of the Hemisphere.

D. The GON should be aware that, as is the case with all countries with which the United States has a security assistance agreement, the implementation through purchase and delivery of specific items under the agreement is dependent upon the human rights conditions which prevail at the time. Any reversal of the conditions prevailing since the lifting of the state of siege will prevent the implementation of the agreement.⁵

Vance

⁵ In telegram 236266 to Managua, October 1, the Department issued press guidance regarding the approval of the fiscal year 1977 FMS security assistance agreement noting that "the implementation through purchase and delivery of specific items under the agreement is dependent upon the human rights conditions which prevail at the time individual transactions are considered." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770358-0596)

63. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Managua, October 28, 1977, 2202Z

5019. Subject: Nicaragua at the Crossroads: The National Dialogue. Refs: (A) Managua 4908;² (B) Managua A-109,³ (C) State 249215.⁴

Summary: The political debate in Nicaragua continues to revolve around the idea of a “national dialogue” to seek a solution to the problems that are leading to political violence. A five-member commission composed of the Archbishop of Managua, two other bishops, the President of INDE (an organization of businessmen promoting national development) and the legal advisor to the Catholic Church, has been set up to mediate. The dialogue has been strongly supported by opposition political parties and several private sector organizations, but the government response has been to throw up roadblocks. Continued FSLN attacks are possible with some corollary strikes or mass demonstrations also possible, especially if the dialogue concept fails.⁵ End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770398-0476. Confidential. Sent for information to Caracas, Guatemala, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² In telegram 4908 from Managua, October 25, the Embassy reported on Obando y Bravo's October 18 statement calling for a “constructive dialogue” to address the violent situation in Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770392-0523)

³ In airgram A-109 from Managua, September 2, the Embassy reported that *La Prensa* had published the UDEL program. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P770149-0652)

⁴ In telegram 249215 to Managua, October 17, the Department reported on a document given to Shelton by William Brown of the Washington Office on Latin America. The Department noted: “Twelve nationally prominent Nicaraguans declared jointly last night that there cannot be any permanent solution to the escalating armed conflict which now threatens to envelop all of Nicaragua without the participation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770381-0934) For more information about the Group of 12, see Document 85.

⁵ In telegram 4887 from Managua, October 21, the Embassy reported that “details of recent FSLN attacks are not entirely clear but it now appears that a series of probably partially coordinated attacks by revolutionaries on National Guard forces began on October 12 in the north shortly followed by an attack in the south and continued on the 17th at Masaya near Managua.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770388-0402) In telegram 4881 from Managua, October 21, the Embassy reported that “non-Communists are participating with FSLN elements in recent attacks on the National Guard (GN).” The Embassy also noted: “This new anti-Somoza violence and the 12's document (refel) calling for participation of the FSLN in a solution to Nicaragua's political problems has caused the various opposition political parties and factions to restudy their positions vis-à-vis the FSLN.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770388-0187; for the refel, see footnote 4 above)

1. The political debate in Nicaragua continues to revolve around the idea of a "national dialogue" involving the participation of the government, all political opposition elements, the Catholic Church, and the private sector, to seek solution to the problems that are causing political violence in Nicaragua. The idea of a "national dialogue" was originally proposed by the Archbishop of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo in his Oct 18 statement (ref A) and elicited strong support from opposition political parties and organizations, and several private sector organizations. During the last week, the Archbishop held consultations with many political and business leaders.

2. The opposition political parties and organizations have strongly supported the dialogue concept. Representatives of the different opposition groups have been meeting in order to hammer out common positions. The leadership of the Union of Democratic Liberation (UDEL) has stated that its objective is President Somoza's resignation and implementation of their five-point program (ref B). The officially-recognized Conservative Party (PCN) has also called for a dialogue, but has not agreed on an agenda. Some conservatives have stated that the PCN must demand Somoza's resignation, but PCN President Rene Sandino indicated to EmbOff Oct 22 that the party might be satisfied with "removal of corrupt officials."

3. In a statement issued Oct 23 the national directorate of the Liberal Party, rejected any "unconstitutional" solution and accused the Conservative Party of violating the political pacts (most recently the Somoza-Aguero pact of 1972 that gave the PCN an increased minority share in the government) and its responsibility to maintain peace in Nicaragua. In an interview published Oct 25 in Novedades, Edgard Solano Luna, President Somoza's private secretary, stated that there should be a dialogue between the two legally-recognized parties (liberal and conservative) but that there cannot be a dialogue with terrorists.

4. A key factor in the pressure being brought to bear on President Somoza is the private sector which in the past has generally either supported or acquiesced in the status quo. Private sector attitudes are important not only because their attitudes can significantly affect the economic climate but also because it is a testing ground of the Somoza regime's ability to use its economic might to influence or control this sector. On Oct 22 the Nicaraguan Development Institute (INDE), an association of 500 businessmen and enterprises, some of which are very large, joined the archbishop's call for a "national dialogue" to "re-establish the bases of democracy, peace, the full respect for human rights, and confidence in (the country's) institutions, without which there cannot be development or social justice." Similar pronouncements were issued by the Nicaraguan Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, and the Chamber of Construction during the last few days.

These positions were taken despite the fact Somoza family business interests are represented in these chambers.

5. On Oct 26 it was announced that a commission composed of Archbishop Obando y Bravo, Manuel Salazar, Bishop of Leon and President of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, Pablo Vega, Bishop of Juigalpa and Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference, Alfonso Robelo, President of INDE, and Felix Guandique, legal advisor to the Catholic Church, would coordinate the dialogue.

6. Comment: In spite of the unprecedented pressures being exerted by the Catholic Church, the political opposition and the private sector, the national dialogue faces formidable obstacles, such as the problem of the participation of the National Sandinist Liberation Front (FSLN), whose recent attacks provided the initial catalyst for the call to a dialogue. The liberals have explicitly rejected participation by the FSLN, while some oppositionists believe that no meaningful solution to the problem of political violence in Nicaragua can be found without FSLN participation. UDEL strategists believe that indirect FLSN participation can be arranged, possibly through quote the Twelve unquote (ref C), should the FSLN agree to participate. A more basic problem is that of Somoza's tenure. The more militant elements in the opposition insist that the national dialogue should be a vehicle for obtaining Somoza's resignation. Somoza, however, would be extremely unlikely to agree to his own political demise unless far greater pressure than now seems possible is brought to bear on him. The most likely outcomes of the present situation are then:

(A) A refusal by Somoza to participate in a dialogue with all sectors. Although this would involve heavy political costs, Somoza might find it a preferable alternative to appearing to negotiate under pressure.

(B) Participation in a dialogue with preparedness to make minor concessions (such as removal of some of the most unpopular officials) that might satisfy some critics. This would have the advantage of permitting Somoza to argue that he has satisfied demands for change while leaving his personal power intact. A variation of these two possible responses would be for Somoza to make a Cabinet shakeup while still refusing to dialogue.

7. These outcomes, however, would be unacceptable to the FSLN and the more militant elements in the political opposition. The probable result would be continued FSLN attacks to the extent that it maintains the capability to do so. Udelistas and conservative activists argue the possibility of mounting mass demonstrations and strikes. The critical factors are likely to be the ability of the FSLN to continue attacks against the GN and GON and private sector concern which could become translated into serious economic instability. Although it appears to be a remote possibility at present, escalated, sustained violence could

result in a return to the state of siege and/or the erosion of Somoza's traditional pillars of support.

Solaun

64. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 24, 1978, 2306Z

342. Subject: Analytical Update. Ref: Guatemala 0378.²

Summary: Nicaragua is approaching critical point in its political history. There is a concerted effort by political opposition and private sector with possible support of Catholic Church to bring pressure to bear on Somoza. Many of the oppositionists continue to hope the U.S. will take an active, even if behind the scenes, role in encouraging Somoza to step aside for a constitutional transfer of power. Somoza appears to understand the U.S. will not take any steps to reinforce his position. Somoza is likely to survive the crisis if his health holds up and he does not lose the loyalty of the National Guard, although he might have to reimpose martial law and/or repression to do so.

1. Somoza's traditional pillars of support have largely eroded, with only the National Guard remaining. Liberal Party Somocistas can also probably be rallied but there is significant discontent even among civilian liberals. GON has suffered in eyes of Nicaraguans of all stripes due to assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro³ and almost unbelievably incompetent, circus-like atmosphere of investigation of the murder. There is also general public disquiet caused by increasingly prominent role of young Major "Tachito" Somoza both related to his alleged involvement in questionable financial deals as well as his increasingly powerful position as director of the basic infantry school of the National Guard. (Thus following the pattern set by his own father.) However,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780036-0457. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Also sent Niact Immediate to Tegucigalpa. Sent for information to Guatemala, San José, San Salvador, and Mexico City.

² Not found.

³ In telegram 90 from Managua, January 10, the Embassy reported that "Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal, long-time anti-Somoza crusading editor of La Prensa, Nicaragua's leading newspaper, was assassinated this morning (January 10) by unknown assailants." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780014-1101)

the National Guard appears to continue to remain loyal to Somoza and is acting professionally.

2. The huge demonstrations pursuant to the Chamorro assassination have run their course. However, the follow-on national strike promoted by UDEL has the support of many businessmen and industrialists and by afternoon of January 24 has made a significant start.⁴ A key regime actor, Luis Pallais Debayle, states that the strike is 50 percent effective as of now.

3. Somoza invited the leaders of the Business and Commerce Chambers to meet with him but the Commerce Chamber publicly declined in light of current conditions. The Catholic Church has not taken any open role in the present situation, but in light of its involvement with the national dialogue movement, whose membership is close to the national strike committee, may be presumed to be tacitly supporting the anti-Somoza pressure.

4. Somoza with GN backing can probably survive this crisis if his health holds up but he may have to re-establish martial law to reassert his authority, or use a heavy hand in dealing with promoters and supporters of the work stoppage.

5. The long term consequences, if Somoza survives the current pressure, will likely be heightened polarization unless concessions are made by Somoza. Government inflexibility could result in a greater attrition among alienated youth to the FSLN guerrillas as the only route to change.

6. Somoza's control is shakier than we believed in that we did not expect the general strike to achieve such early momentum. Per private conversation we know that Somoza expected trouble but he too may be surprised by intensity and spread of anti-Somoza feeling among business sector.

7. Weighing against Assistant Secretary's visit⁵ at this crucial time are following points:

(A) By his presence here Assistant Secretary Todman would become the focal point for demonstration and increased unrest.

(B) Todman's presence at this point would make it impossible to maintain U.S. role as neutral, since all groups will attempt to use him

⁴ In telegram 371 from Managua, January 25, the Embassy reported that a "coalition of major private sector groups has called for a general strike of indefinite duration," and that "opposition elements are manifesting a not-heretofore-seen unity aimed at ultimately bringing Somoza down." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780038–0165)

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 65.

by placing on him demands to support them and reject their opponents. He could probably not satisfy high expectations of any group.

8. We are inclined to believe whatever happens as a result of the current crisis, one side or the other is likely to try to convert the visit of such an important official into an excuse for its failure. Our preference is that Nicaraguans confront the current situation with least possible U.S. involvement so that Nicaraguans are left to conclude their fate is in their own hands.

9. Net effect of cancellation is a demonstration that Somoza's position is weakened and affirmation that the U.S. is reluctant to be perceived as the key actor in current political crisis.

10. There remains, of course, the argument that a visit which could be seen as tipping the scales in favor of one element or another could be in U.S. interest in terms of influencing the possibility for democratic change and avoiding an escalating guerrilla insurgency which involves neighboring countries. However, Embassy believes such an involvement would require highest level detailed policy decision which cannot be accomplished under present conditions.

Solaun

65. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 27, 1978, 1809Z

408. Subject: Ambassador's Meeting With President Somoza: January 26, 1978.

1. Ambassador accepted President Somoza's invitation to lunch which had been planned for Asst. Sec. Todman and had two hour candid conversation.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780041-0500. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis.

² Todman cancelled a planned visit to Nicaragua following the Embassy's recommendation. Telegram 306 from Managua, January 24, reported that Somoza's "clear preference" was to postpone Todman's visit and that "key private sector representatives opposed to Somoza regime" thought that a visit by Todman would be "inappropriate at the present time in light of a planned general lockout and demonstrations." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780034-0769)

2. Somoza began by describing the national work stoppage as something which the private sector had been planning since the earthquake.³ Business leadership collapsed with the earthquake, he said, and the business people could not forgive how he with a few soldiers and sergeants had taken charge and restored order. He said he would have acted more harshly or rashly against the promoters of the strike if it had not been for the fact the USG was behind these people.

3. Amb. replied this was a serious statement and asked for specifics. Amb. said he could not permit such a statement to go unclarified. He indicated there are two principal problems in Nicaragua: that there is a high propensity for rumors, and that there is a pathological desire to involve the U.S. in local politics. Amb. referred to two recently replaced Cabinet officers having claimed they were replaced because of the U.S. He said the President knew better; that our only comments had been general in terms of the advantage to the country to have turnover; that this invigorated the system. Amb. stated that as a corollary a lot of political groups came to tell us what they were planning and would be upset if we didn't listen to them. He said the President knew that the instructions from Washington were for us to keep our doors open. He said that as an example the official conservatives usually came to see us, but surprisingly they didn't inform us of their last political act: the demand for the President's resignation.⁴ He further said that in no case had Amb. or his staff told the opposition that we supported them or were in favor of overthrowing the government. Rather we insisted on our neutrality.

4. President Somoza replied defensively that he was not complaining about the Embassy. (At no time did he provide specific backup to his assertion that USG behind opposition activities.) His problems, he said, were with the liberals in Washington—in the State Department—who allegedly have a direct contact with Somoza's opponents.

5. The Ambassador stated he had been informed by Luis Pallais Debayle (the President's cousin and political spokesman) and a Cabinet minister that the GON stated the Amb. and Embassy were responsible for the current problems. He said if the President believed this was not true he should clarify this to the people around him. It was clear these people were trying to make us a scapegoat; this is clearly what

³ A major earthquake struck Managua on December 23, 1972. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–11, Part 1, Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973–1976, Documents 237–238.

⁴ Telegram 392 from Managua, January 26, reported that the Union of Democratic Liberation, “the oppositionist coalition formerly headed by Pedro J. Chamorro,” and “other political parties have demanded Somoza's resignation.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780039–0650)

they are doing. The Amb. went on to remind President that he recently had met with young Somocistas and after the national work stoppage had begun had attended with Minister of Health at a government ceremony for a nurse's course and another meeting on health programs presided over by Mrs. Somoza and that all three events had press coverage.

6. Somoza replied that he had told his people that the Amb. is only following official policy and that there was nothing personal in his meeting with oppositionists.

7. The Amb. described the present situation as presenting two principal alternatives for U.S. policy other than the current "correct" relationship. There could be a diminution of the USG presence or our relations could become warmer. For the latter to occur, in his personal opinion, it would require the conviction in Washington that President Somoza and his son or family would relinquish control of the government and National Guard in 1981.⁵ He said there is distrust in Washington of Somoza's intentions. With regard to the first possibility, the U.S. would diminish its assistance programs to the point they were virtually nonexistent.

8. The President said he felt there was nothing he could do to convince people of his intentions to step down in 1981. The Amb. said he was sure that there were symbolic gestures which would contribute to such a belief.

9. The Amb. expressed concern regarding the possibility for escalating conflict in Nicaragua and said he felt there is a need to institutionalize mechanisms so that new political and business groups could contribute to the political life of the country by participating within legal boundaries. The President replied that everyone had a chance to be heard by his government.

10. The Amb. said he wanted to be very open, that he was not engaging in intrigue, that he wanted Somoza to know that there is a belief, not only in Nicaragua but in Washington, that Tachito (Major Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, the President's 26-year old son) is being trained to take over the National Guard (GN) in 1981 through retirement of more senior officers. Somoza said that is not accurate, that Tachito is very young and there is no way he could head the GN in the short term and that he would not be left in command in 1981. He implied, however, that Tachito would retain an active role in the GN. He added that he did not believe in exceptional promotions, that the GN wouldn't stand for it, that Nicaraguans were not like that.

⁵ Somoza's Presidential term ended in 1981.

11. Somoza said further he wanted the Ambassador to understand his position as a father. He had to help his son get established in a profession. He said Tachito was interested in the GN, not in business. He said his son had a lot of merit, despite his flat feet; he worked hard. The Amb. replied that our military personnel had been impressed with Major Somoza's bearing and potential but that there is a problem of form. Amb. referred to the Colombian example of President Lopez Michelsen, an ex-President's son becoming President but it was not a position handed down; it was not in a "forma burda" i.e., crass. The President said that he was precisely trying not to be crass and jokingly said, "well, maybe we'll have to send Tachito to Timbuktu to please you."

12. The Amb. expanded on his concern by stating that Nicaragua is not a monarchical system like Great Britain. If it were there would not be these problems: Tachito could be accepted at predetermined ages to carry out various military roles. But that is not the form of government here. Somoza agreed that the basic problem was to find an adaptation between Nicaragua's constitutionally mandated republican, democratic form of government and the reality in Nicaragua, which impeded the full implementation of the mandate.

13. The Amb. stated he would be seeing Asst. Sec. Todman tomorrow, January 27, and would be willing to explore with him the type of gestures which might contribute to more cooperative U.S.–GON relations. This elicited no active interest by President. Amb. also said that one of the apparent problems with the current human rights policy is that it does not establish precise parameters as to what we expected other governments to do. President agreed and returned to this point at close of conversation. Somoza expressed concern regarding U.S. voting against IFI loans for Nicaragua.⁶

14. The Ambassador said that the U.S. was not going to insist that the liberals yield power to the opposition if the opposition did not have majority support. Somoza replied that the opposition is a minority

⁶ In telegram 288402 to Managua, December 2, 1977, the Department stated that on November 14, 1977, the Interagency Group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance (known as the Christopher Committee for the Chairman Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher) met to consider pending International Financial Institution loans to Nicaragua. The group approved favorable votes "on basic human needs grounds" for water supply, rural sanitation, and public health services loans. The group also decided to ask Nicaragua to seek a 3–6 month postponement of the Inter-American Development Bank's consideration of loans for animal health, agricultural research, and road construction, "so that we may further observe and evaluate the human rights situation in the country." Finally, the group decided to ask Nicaragua to request a postponement of the Inter-American Development Bank consideration of a dam project grant "and abstain on that loan when and if the GON brings it forward for consideration." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770448–0514)

and that he never would give them power. He asked the Ambassador to tell the opposition he is in good health;⁷ that he is not going to let himself be screwed; that he plans to be around for another thirty years. He said he is now ready to start using the Liberal Party to show counterforce to the opposition and that he was going to get tough with opposition businessmen who were his political opponents. He said that when they had problems they came to the GON to help them and this is how they repay that help. He referred to INDE President Robelo as a smart kid, but misguided. He said Robelo wanted to be President but that not everyone can be President.

15. The Ambassador counseled taking it easy against the business groups on strike,⁸ that it was preferable to be democratic, that after all he was a West Point graduate. The President said that basically the strikers were Conservative Party businessmen who resented his progressive social policies and taxes. That he knew that the U.S. was reducing its foreign assistance to all countries because of its own balance of payments problems that consequently he had to increase taxes on business enterprises. He further indicated that he is going to strengthen his hand in the economy by expanding the public sector. He said that although his control of Nicaraguan Government entities plus the Somoza private interests gives him a comfortable margin for neutralizing the private section opposition, it deserves to be punished.

16. Somoza, in parting, asked the Ambassador to tell Asst. Sec. Todman, that the U.S. should let him know privately what our human rights concerns are, that although President Carter was not his friend, Somoza was a friend to the U.S. and that our current policies were only making enemies for the U.S.

17. Comment: President Somoza revealed that even though his present intention is to step down as President in 1981, he will not commit himself to surrendering family control of the GN. Moreover, he feels that the Somozas must continue to play the paramount political

⁷ Somoza suffered a heart attack on July 25, 1977, as the Embassy reported in telegram 3496 from Managua, July 26, 1977. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770265-1132) In telegram 4364 from Managua, September 20, the Embassy reported that "Somoza returned to Nicaragua on September 7 after spending about six weeks in the Miami Heart Institute." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770344-0312)

⁸ In telegram 441 from Managua, January 30, the Embassy reported that Nicaragua had reinstituted the state of emergency declared after the 1972 earthquake and commented that "the resurrection of the state of emergency is aimed at providing the GON with the appearance of legality for any steps it may decide to take against the firms and unions that are engaged in the national work stoppage," and that "the GON appears to be unwilling to declare martial law. The imposition of martial law might be perceived as an admission of weakness and cause negative international repercussions." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780044-0661)

role in Nicaragua. He continues confident of his power and in his view of the political process there are no basic legal constraints to Somoza rule. He continues to resent public criticism of his rule by USG (e.g. negative votes in IFI, leaks of demarches) believing that these encourage escalation of opposition activities, including illegal revolutionary activities. Despite our continued insistence that we are not attempting to destabilize GON, Somoza clearly believes that some of our actions in fact have that effect.

Solaun

66. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua and the Embassy in Venezuela¹

Washington, February 5, 1978, 0131Z

30739. Subject: Proposed Initiatives With Somoza and Opposition. CINCSO for Polad. Reference: Caracas 1026² (being repeated to Managua).

1. We are concerned that continued confrontation, particularly now that FSLN attacks have begun,³ seems likely, as you suggest, to turn heretofore moderate opposition and business groups toward support of violence unless there is movement by Somoza toward at least sharing power. Situation could deteriorate to point where a number of US interests, including our human rights concerns, are damaged, and could prove seriously destabilizing to other Central American countries. While we would like the Nicaraguans to resolve this problem them-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 1–4/78. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to San José, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, Guatemala City, and CINCSO. An unknown hand wrote at the top of the page: "Pastor, per your request." Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² Not found.

³ In telegram 4887 from Managua, October 21, 1977, the Embassy reported FSLN attacks on the Nicaraguan National Guard on October 12 near the northern border with Honduras, on the 13th near the southern border with Costa Rica, and on the 17th at Masaya near Managua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770388–0402) In telegram 535 from Managua, February 3, the Embassy reported that it had "confirmed reports that insurgents, probably FSLN," had attacked National Guard installations in Granada and Rivas. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780052–0458)

selves in non-violent way without US input, we see little indication that this is developing.

2. As Ambassador Solaun knows, while in Costa Rica January 28, Assistant Secretary Todman spoke with Nicaraguan Ambassador Lacayo and endorsed following points which Lacayo said he planned to make immediately to Somoza. He authorized Lacayo to note Todman's personal approval, though the points were to be those of Lacayo, not of the US:

A. Somoza should show maximum restraint in dealing with general strike/lockout and demonstrations.

B. He should continue to seek conversations with responsible opposition leaders.

C. He should inform those leaders that he is willing to push through significant changes in the electoral laws (and Constitution if necessary) to permit additional parties to obtain official status and express their views building up to fair and open elections in 1980. The exact changes can be established through dialogue.

D. He should identify some changes that can be made now, and should announce and implement them even in advance of a formal dialogue.

E. There will be no vengeance or reprisals against individuals or firms which have peacefully participated in the general strike/lockout provided they now join in common effort to solve nation's problems.

3. Above points were discussed by Todman with Ambassador Sevilla Sacasa in Washington on February 4. Additional point was made that, in order to defuse suspicions regarding Chamorro's death,⁴ it would seem advisable to appoint a broadly based national investigatory commission with full subpoena powers. Todman added part para 6 re invitation to IAHRC. Sevilla Sacasa said he would communicate these points to GON and would get back to us on Tuesday.⁵

4. We would appreciate Managua's urgent reaction by Niact Immediate cable, to arrive Department not later than 0900 hours Monday morning as to whether you should seek earliest possible meeting to make above points.

5. Through this scenario we will in effect signal Somoza that we give highest priority to orderly change and do not see the procedures we are suggesting as a vehicle for removing him from power. We are interested in defusing the present situation and avoiding widespread violence. To that end, if Somoza agrees to the general type of approach

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 64.

⁵ February 7.

noted above, the US is willing to encourage the opposition to engage in a meaningful dialogue. We would continue that we are willing to assure opposition groups that the overthrow of Somoza by extra-legal means does not have US support. If guerrilla groups violate Nicaragua's borders by invading from another country, we are willing to condemn that violation and call on that country to prevent a recurrence.

6. In order for our demarche with opposition leaders to have maximum chance of success, we believe we would have to assure them that Somoza would agree to a dialogue to include discussion of (1) constitutional changes to open up political participation in elections to all parties that renounce violence and (2) institutionalizing control of the National Guard. It would also be helpful if we could tell opposition Somoza was making an announcement that the Inter American Human Rights Commission was being invited by GON to Nicaragua to hear any complaints anyone might wish to make regarding human rights violations and to conduct appropriate investigations.

7. FYI: Per reftel, Nicaraguan Vice Foreign Minister Bodan-Shields told Venezuela President and/or FonMin that GON would invite IAHRC after February 5 municipal elections. If GON follows through on this, it would signal Somoza's intention to continue improving human rights situation already demonstrated by much better National Guard human rights behavior over past year and by his refusal to reimpose state of siege and silence press critics despite provocation of repeated spectacular guerrilla attacks and unabated press antagonism. End FYI.

8. By this scenario, if Somoza's response were reasonably conciliatory, Ambassador Solaun would then make appropriate contacts with opposition leaders.

9. FYI: We realize that opposition elements rejected dialogue in aftermath of Chamorro slaying. However, fact that Somoza has survived both lockout/general strike and renewed FSLN attacks and seems determined to retain power until 1981 might now cause them to reconsider in the light of probable retaliations from Somoza and violence from the left as the alternative to dialogue. We understand Somoza has remained willing to proceed with dialogue. Demonstration of extent of hostility to him by business community and government workers shown by the lockout/general strike must have shaken Somoza, and may have made him more willing to offer significant concessions. End FYI.

Vance

67. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, February 8, 1978, 0015Z

621. NSC for Robert Pastor—Dept please pass. Subject: Demarche to President Somoza. Ref: State 030739.²

Summary: Amb presented points reftel to Somoza during two-hour luncheon meeting. Somoza indicated only IAHRC visit issue gave him trouble. He said he had no intention of taking reprisals against opposition and he was considering the possibility of a commission to investigate the Chamorro assassination. Somoza said what we wanted was not new to him and gave the impression he might proceed on our agenda at his own pace. He could be stalling for time but the issue of reprisals should be an early test of his intentions. End summary

Somoza in his office, the "bunker," on Feb 7, the President indicated his pleasure that his government has emerged victorious from the FSLN attacks, the national work stoppage movement and the municipal elections.³ The Ambassador said perhaps he had emerged from these challenges but that the USG was very concerned with the current situation, as Somoza should already be aware. The President said he knew of our concern, but he thought that we were in basic agreement.

2. Amb stated that perhaps Somoza was not fully cognizant of our position and presented a written outline prepared from reftel. Somoza reviewed the points and said all of the issues were "in the mill" except for the issue of the IAHRC visit. He said he had a problem with that because of the pressure being mounted on him by Venezuela. He referred to Amb Machin's agitating. He said he was no fool, that he was not going to let himself be embarrassed or screwed.

3. Amb said there were two ways to take our points: either as an imposition; or a constructive suggestion for a program for democratization which could lead to his and Nicaragua's success. Somoza's reaction was that he understood our position and he would think about it but insisted that he feared that we might be taking away all his cards. Amb

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780057-1104. Secret; Eyes Only; Niac Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Caracas.

² See Document 66.

³ In telegram 577 from Managua, February 6, the Embassy reported: "The two-week general work stoppage and the attendant turmoil, the FSLN guerrilla attacks in Rivas and Granada of Feb 2/3, and the opposition conservative party's (PCN) call for the postponement of the municipal elections did not deter the government from holding the elections on Feb 5 as scheduled." The telegram also noted that Embassy officers reported that voter participation was "extremely light or non-existent." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780056-0558)

responded that we were not trying to do that; we were trying to help him as a friend, not trying to take advantage of him. Amb said that it was essential that the President decide what he wants to do: go out as a leader who has provided for democratic transfer of power or leave office as a dictator. The U.S. was willing to help if it was the former.

4. The Amb explained the basic problem was the increased potential for violence now. He observed that the Somozas, during periods of relaxed rule have taken advantage of the opposition's tendency to become radicalized by their having an excuse to repress them. What is needed in Nicaragua is true reform to allow for democratic participation and avoid escalating conflict. Somoza indicated that the opposition would never moderate itself; Ambassador responded that it was necessary to give it a chance. Somoza indicated that he might have problems with the official opposition Conservative Party because allowing more parties would hurt them and they know it. He later acknowledged that it could hurt the liberals also because they might split in such a situation. Amb indicated that there was a vicious circle of lack of trust, i.e., the opposition would not trust him because they had lost out in negotiating with him in the past.

5. Amb explained that if Somoza accepted our points we would be willing to contact the opposition and try to persuade them to respond constructively. The U.S. was also prepared to use its influence on neighboring countries to help control the problem. Somoza indicated that the guerrilla problem from Costa Rica was serious. Amb said we cannot move further to help on this without concessions from the GON. Somoza acknowledged the need for this.

6. Somoza referred to the new legitimization of the FSLN. Amb said previously it had been isolated but with the new militancy of the political opposition and the private sector the revolutionaries were gaining respectability. Somoza agreed, and said that there was a problem with growing respectability of the Communists.

7. On the recommendation for a commission for the Chamorro assassination investigation, Somoza said he was interested but that he was unsure of the legal authority for such a body. He indicated that he would like U.S. participation in nominating "third parties" to the investigation.

8. On other points Somoza indicated some of the changes would need constitutional change which would require time; it was not achievable immediately.

9. Amb ended meeting saying that our position should not be considered a threat but that Somoza should know that there would be some temptation within the US to support elements antagonistic to him if he does not act responsibly. Somoza repeated his desire for US

support and his belief that our withdrawal of support has led to the current crisis.

10. Comment: Somoza did appear to believe he has overcome the most serious hurdle he has ever faced and will be looking to the next couple of weeks to confirm that success. It is clear he also is concerned with the potential for further violence. At the same time Somoza continues to show dynastic tendencies and insists that the polarization in Nicaragua makes his situation difficult. He is not just concerned about losing control now but also the fact that he and his family could permanently lose out to anti-Somoza forces. In this situation he is apparently nervous that the U.S. could pull the rug out from under him. This would explain his accommodating attitude. He does not want to alienate the U.S. and appears to want to be able to use the U.S. with the opposition. It is important to remember that Somoza's response to the demarche probably seeks to keep the U.S. off his back at this delicate moment, not necessarily any fundamental acceptance of our position. Somoza may also believe that if the situation should deteriorate and the U.S. were to be confronted with a choice between him and the FSLN (or him and chaos), that we would choose ultimately to back him.⁴

Solaun

⁴ In telegram 739 from Managua, February 14, the Embassy reported that Somoza had assured Solaun on February 11 that "no Somoza would be President or head of the Guardia" after 1981. The telegram also noted that Somoza "clearly is unwilling to surrender unconditionally to pressures from the opposition or the U.S. and, if backed into a corner, will fight for his survival. The primary immediate problems are to obtain some movement now on specific changes and to establish effective regime-opposition communication. Somoza would like the U.S. to perform that role and then act as guarantor of his good faith by protecting him from excesses of the opposition. The Embassy will be careful not to go beyond encouraging developments as opposed to attempting to control Nicaraguan political processes." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua I)

68. Action Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (Bushnell) and the Acting Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kreisberg) to the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, February 14, 1978

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Should the U.S. continue to play an active role in attempting to encourage in Nicaragua a national dialogue between Somoza and his opponents or take a clear position of distance from the political maneuvering?

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Nicaragua currently faces a crisis of regime perhaps more severe than at any time during the past forty years. The trigger was the assassination of newspaper publisher Pedro J. Chamorro, but the cause is largely regime fatigue. Somoza is being challenged by a broad opposition spectrum including conservative businessmen, moderate political, labor and religious leaders and Marxist-Leninist guerrillas at the same time that his traditional support from the U.S. Government is perceived to have been withdrawn.

The Somoza regime has taken some steps toward improving its human rights performance over the past year, partly because of its understanding of the policy of this administration. Somoza last February effectively terminated most of the National Guard's serious abuses associated with its counter-insurgency campaign, in September restored the rights of press freedom, political assembly, habeas corpus and civilian trial, in November agreed to a national dialogue with non-violent opposition groups and in December publicly confirmed his intention to respect the Constitutional prohibition against any member of his family's retaining the Presidency after 1981. These shifts have contributed to the overt emergence of the intense political crisis in the country which threatens Somoza's power.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua I. Confidential. Drafted by Mathews and Kreisberg on February 13; cleared by Ollie Jones (HA/HR). Tabs 1–3 are not attached.

Nevertheless, there continue to be prisoners held for politically motivated crimes, accusations of brutal treatment in jails, abusive treatment of some persons involved in demonstrations, some invasions of the home, Constitutionally mandated discrimination against non-traditional political parties, censorship over radio and television, and Government corruption. In addition, although the Nicaraguan Government has indicated it is considering an invitation to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, no invitation has as yet been offered. Because of those remaining problems, the U.S. has curtailed arms shipments, eliminated Nicaragua from our FY 79 FMS request, held up new AID loans, and prevailed on the IDB to hold up most new loans for Nicaragua.

Venezuelan President Andres Perez has both expressed belief that serious violations continue and has asserted a presumption of Somoza government involvement in the Chamorro assassination. Embassy and intelligence reporting has not confirmed these charges.

Despite the mounting domestic political ferment, the disunity of the opposition and the lack of military strength of the guerrilla FSLN lead us to believe that the U.S.-trained National Guard will for the foreseeable future be the ultimate arbiter of power, with or without Somoza. The departure of Somoza could, however, initiate a period of new violence should new authoritarian figures attempt to reverse his recent liberalization.

The U.S. has been heavily involved in Nicaragua for a century and the Nicaraguan political perception of our dominant role continues even now, with the U.S. Embassy being seen by all as a power center second only to the Government. All opposition elements other than the Marxist-Leninist faction of the FSLN have been soliciting our active support. Our Ambassador, most recently on February 7, has encouraged Somoza to publicly commit himself to reforms to get the dialogue underway again and not to retaliate against non-violent participants in the recent general lockout/strike. Somoza's reaction has been favorable.²

In the short run, we may not win many friends regardless of how we behave toward Nicaragua. The alternative policies described below reflect distinct views of the role the U.S. should play in Nicaraguan politics at this time and will have an impact on how the U.S. is viewed by Nicaraguan Government leaders once the political ferment settles down.

² See Document 67.

Alternative draft Presidential replies to the letter to President Carter from President Perez flow from the alternate options presented below and these are attached at Tab 1.³

OPTIONS

1. Authorize our Ambassador to continue use of his contacts with the Government and opposition to encourage a national dialogue, while making it clear to both sides that the U.S. cannot guarantee performance or good faith. The U.S. would not participate in the dialogue once the two sides were talking, but we would continue to urge Somoza toward basic reforms broadening political participation, giving greater independence to the judiciary and professionalizing the National Guard, and we would counsel the opposition against violence. In the course of promoting dialogue, our Ambassador should try to avoid being seen as a supporter of Somoza or the opposition.

Pro

- May prevent hostile radicalization of the opposition.
- Involves the U.S. in an effort to prevent widespread bloodshed and loss of life.
- Active involvement may improve the chances of a democratic change, and would set a good precedent for other badly divided Central American countries.

Con

- One side or another may be intransigent.
- Somoza may try to use our involvement to buy time and co-opt the opposition.
- We may be blamed by one side or the other, either for stabilizing Somoza in power or for imposing a political solution.
- In the long-term, we are likely to be accused of continuing to attempt to control events in Nicaragua and of failing to fulfill the President's pledge of non-intervention.

2. Authorize our Ambassador to state our strong support for democracy but avoid involvement with Somoza or his opponents as an intermediary in proposing or transmitting political terms or solutions to one side or the other. We would respond to suggestions for more

³ In telegram 1053 from Caracas, January 31, the Embassy translated the text of Perez's January 31 letter to Carter, in which Perez described the Nicaraguan Government as a "corrupt dictatorship that has systemically violated human rights." Perez proposed "a joint action through the Organization of American States, which among other things could include requesting the permission of the Government of Nicaragua for an urgent visit to that country of the Human Rights Commission." On the copy of the telegram sent to the White House to Pastor's attention, Brzezinski wrote: "RP Comments? Response?" (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 1/78-4/78)

direct intervention by President Perez or others by emphasizing our position in support of democracy and non-intervention.

Pro

—By keeping our distance, neither Somoza nor the opposition will be able to claim our support.

—We would strengthen our commitment to non-intervention in Latin American politics consistent with the President's declared policy, and over the long-run, help contribute to the growth of political self-reliance and independence in Nicaragua.

Con

—May encourage Somoza to react by repression and defiance.

—If Somoza is overthrown, his probable replacement in the short term would be a National Guard dictatorship which might eventually lead to a radical regime which could include Sandinista guerrillas.

—If Somoza remains in power, the Liberal Party, Nicaragua's traditional majority political element, may be forced into supporting a hard line as confrontation intensified.

—If confrontation engendered civil war, we would be forced by public opinion or security considerations to consider involvement under much worse circumstances.

Recommendation:

That you approve option 1, and that you recommend that the President sign the letter to President Perez at Tab 1. (ARA favors)

ALTERNATIVELY, that you approve option 2, and that you recommend that the President sign the letter to President Perez at Tab 2.⁴ (S/P and HA/HR favor)

⁴ Christopher approved this recommendation. For the text of Carter's letter to Perez, see Document 71.

69. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 16, 1978

SUBJECT

Response to Venezuelan President Perez's Letter

President Perez has written you a rather dramatic letter urging you to join with him in the O.A.S. to help end what he calls "the ferocious repression" unleashed by General Somoza against his own people.² His Ambassador to the O.A.S. last week demanded that Nicaragua invite the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to investigate abuses in Nicaragua.³ The Nicaraguan Ambassador was vehement in denouncing the Venezuelan.

Perez's letter raised extremely difficult questions for the USG about the kind of role we should play in Nicaraguan and implicitly in all Central American politics. Historically, the U.S. has been deeply involved in the politics of the region for two reasons: We feared instability and political chaos might result from our not being involved; and secondly, all sides have sought our active support.

In the current political crisis in Nicaragua, both Somoza and most of the opposition groups have sought our active involvement and endorsement just as they have done in the past. The question which State and NSC wrestled with during the last week—and the reason a response was delayed—was whether the USG should play its historical role of organizing the internal politics of the country, or whether the pledge of non-intervention, which you made at the O.A.S. last April, meant that we should consider a more neutral role.⁴ After much debate within the Department, Cy and Warren Christopher concluded that your pledge of non-intervention meant that we should not be drawn

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 1–4/78. Confidential. Sent for action.

² See footnote 3, Document 68.

³ In telegram 1485 from Caracas, February 13, Vaky reported on a February 12 conversation with Perez during which Perez said that he "thought that the U.S. would take some initiative in implementation of President Carter's human rights policy" in Nicaragua. Vaky continued: "When nothing happened Perez said he took the initiative in writing the January 31 letter to President Carter which he intended as an urgent consultation." In the absence of a U.S. response, Perez "instructed Machin to place the matter of the IAHC on the OAS agenda." Brzezinski wrote to Pastor at the top of the page: "RP Where is the letter?" (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 1–4/78)

⁴ See footnote 6, Document 4.

into the internal debate or political maneuvering in Nicaragua; instead we should make strong and general statements of support for democratization in Nicaragua and all countries. I strongly concur in their recommendation, and the letter at Tab A reflects that view.⁵

Perez views Somoza like he viewed Rafael Trujillo or Perez Jimenez, the Venezuelan dictator of the 1950's who imprisoned and exiled Perez. He is passionately interested in political change in Nicaragua, and is reported to be funding the rebels. But I believe he will respond positively to your explanation of non-intervention as the reason for our more cautious approach simply because the principle of non-intervention is one the Latin Americans—especially Perez—have tried hard to teach the U.S.

The letter at Tab A takes the U.S. down the path of non-intervention which I believe will reap important benefits for the U.S. in the long-term.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you send the letter at Tab A.⁶

Chronology

Perez's letter of January 31 was received by cable the next day. When the Department had not produced a draft by February 6th, my staff did, but I asked him to get clearance from State, where the issues raised by Perez generated a difficult but long debate. We finally received a recommended draft in the afternoon of February 15th.⁷ A few additional changes by NSC were cleared by State and Fallows.

⁵ Attached but not printed. For the text of Carter's letter to Perez, see Document 71.

⁶ Carter approved the recommendation. Brzezinski added the following notation next to the recommendation: "You might add a hand-written P.S. on how much you value his counsel and that you look forward to the visit to Caracas."

⁷ Under a February 15 covering memorandum, Christopher sent the draft response to Brzezinski. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 9, Memoranda to the White House—1978)

70. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, February 16, 1978, 2323Z

41757. From the Deputy Secretary for the Ambassador. Subject: Role of U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua.

1. We have just completed review of our policy in Nicaragua. Following instructions are to guide role of Embassy until further notice.

2. Key U.S. objectives are:

A. To avoid direct involvement in internal political maneuvering.

B. To avoid being seen to be propping up Somoza government or supporting efforts by opposition to unseat Somoza.

C. To maintain our support publicly and privately for individual human rights and open political processes.

3. Embassy role should not go beyond counsel to both sides to avoid violence and reprisals and support negotiations. Regardless of whether or not Somoza's intentions are positive, we must not be in position of guaranteeing his performance in any way. Similarly we cannot vouch for any opposition group with Somoza. It is important that Embassy avoid sliding into a middleman role between opposition and Somoza and should not offer specific suggestions on how political forces should resolve their differences. There are many ways in which contending sides can communicate with one another in Nicaragua. You should encourage direct contact and should not repeat not carry messages, proposals or assurances of any kind.

4. We sense that some opposition groups are trying to convince Embassy that Somoza must go and U.S. should somehow manage departure. You should make clear to Nicaraguans that this issue is one of a purely Nicaraguan internal political character and one in which the U.S. will play no role.

5. In general, less contact with both opposition and government might be best course for immediate future except as needed to implement above.

6. Separate message deals with move of MilGroup to Embassy offices.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua II. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Guatemala City, San Salvador, and San José. Drafted by Bushnell; cleared by Todman, and in ARA, S/P, and S/S; approved by Christopher.

² In telegram 43217 to Managua, February 18, the Department cited the "delicate situation in Nicaragua" and instructed the Embassy to transfer the Military Group from Nicaraguan National Guard property to the chancery. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780075–0104)

7. Request Embassy provide general implementation plan for above to cover next two to three weeks. We look forward to detailed discussions with you during week February 26.

Vance

71. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Venezuela¹

Washington, February 18, 1978, 1250Z

43981. Exdis for Ambassador Vaky. Subject: Presidential Reply to Perez Letter on Nicaragua. Please deliver following letter to President Perez from President Carter dated February 17, 1978.

Begin text: Dear Mr. President:

I very much appreciated your thoughtful letter of January 31.² I want to affirm the importance I attach to our agreement to exchange views on all matters, but especially on the defense and enhancement of human rights. I have been giving careful thought to your letter.

I share your concern about the tumultuous situation which has developed in Nicaragua. There are two important issues at stake: the status of human rights in Nicaragua and the evolution of the Nicaraguan political system.

Your description of the human rights situation in Nicaragua was a moving one. We are in complete agreement on the need for an urgent visit by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. My Ambassador in Managua has informed President Somoza of our concern and has suggested that the Government of Nicaragua invite the commission for an urgent visit. After receiving your letter, I instructed my Ambassador to speak to President Somoza again and repeat our request. If we do not receive a positive response soon, our governments should consult on the most effective way to secure President Somoza's cooperation.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua II. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by text received from the White House; cleared in S/S-O; approved by McNeill (ARA).

² See footnote 3, Document 68.

On the broader issue of political change in Nicaragua, I would like to share my thoughts with you. I deeply respect your strong feelings about the need for fundamental and democratic political change in Nicaragua.

We can and will voice our preference for increased democratization in all countries, and have done so regarding Nicaragua. We can and will be prepared to support basic human rights and to shape our policies toward this end. But we will not intervene or impose specific political solutions for individual countries. I know that our two governments will act as one on these issues.

In this period of political crisis in Nicaragua, the U.S. Government has suspended new arms transfers and withheld some economic assistance to the Somoza regime, and he is clearly aware that he is on his own. Though our sympathies are clearly in favor of steady evolution toward greater democracy, I am convinced that the Nicaraguans can only build a viable and lasting democracy that responds to their own particular needs, if they undertake and complete the task themselves.

Because of your knowledge and long experience with Nicaraguan and Central American politics, I value your counsel as the situation develops. I agree that we cannot remain indifferent to human rights violations in Nicaragua and elsewhere, and I am proud that we speak together on this.

Sincerely,

Signed Jimmy Carter

His Excellency

Carlos Andres Perez

President of the Republic of Venezuela

Caracas

P.S. (Handwritten) Best wishes. I look forward to seeing you in Caracas. End text of letter.

When you deliver the letter to President Perez, the President would like you to deliver the following oral message: "We sincerely regret the delay. We fully understand the importance of the issue. Indeed the response was delayed precisely because your letter raised many very difficult questions, which led us to reexamine our longstanding policy to Nicaragua and to the entire question of the appropriate role for the United States Government in similar situations."

Vance

72. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, March 7, 1978, 2217Z

58395. For the Ambassador from the Deputy Secretary. Subject: U.S. Posture in Nicaragua Crisis.

1. As result of your consultations and the opportunity they afforded for a review of the Nicaraguan situation, we have come to the following conclusions.

2. Nicaragua may well present a crucial test for our Latin America policy, affecting not only Nicaragua but our interest in the promotion of human rights and political independence as well as the avoidance of instability in the Central American region. The current situation is serious, presenting considerable potential for increasing polarization and growing violence, and the possibility of civil war, or something close to it, that could lead either to the emergence of a retrogressive and repressive right-wing dictatorship (led by Somoza or a successor from the National Guard) or a breakdown reminiscent of pre-Castro Cuba, leading to a repressive regime of the extreme Left along the Cuban model. Either of these "worst case" scenarios would constitute a major setback to our policy in the hemisphere, our human rights policy and necessarily affect Nicaragua's neighbors.

3. We intend to maintain our policy of non-intervention and will not seek to impose a "made in U.S." solution. But it is clear that our human rights policy imposes an obligation to encourage by legitimate means the concerned parties to work out a made-in-Nicaragua solution that would minimize violence and put Nicaragua on the democratic road. This is particularly so because Nicaraguans look to us for support for democracy and human rights. Failure to stress those goals would enhance the possibility that the scenario of violence would play out at a probable cost of considerable human suffering.

4. Accordingly, you are instructed to take the following general approach, with the caveat that anything that poses questions about whether it will deviate from these instructions should be referred to Washington immediately.

—Maintain strict neutrality among political groupings and avoid identification with Somoza or with any political faction.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 1-4/78. Confidential; Eyes Only; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by Solaun, Shelton, Welter, and McNeil in ARA; cleared by Todman and in S/S-O; approved by Christopher.

—Maintain a reasonable level of contact with all legitimate forces in the society, but avoid being perceived as a hub of domestic political activity.

—In conversations with political elements of any persuasion, encourage avoidance of violence both by the National Guard and the political opposition, which could exacerbate the present crisis, and encourage all factions to communicate with each other and to seek a democratic and peaceful solution. This should not, however, include acting as a negotiator on behalf of any group nor serving as a guarantor for any agreements.

Vance

73. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, March 14, 1978, 1640Z

1217. Subject: Status Report on Somoza's Initiatives.

Summary: President Somoza has taken several initiatives toward pacifying the opposition which, since the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, has become highly polarized and dedicated to ousting Somoza now.² Some of the initiatives correspond to issues which had earlier been demanded by the opposition. Others were the ideas of Somoza and his advisors and designed to obtain support from certain sectors. To date the opposition, which comprises diverse political, labor and private sector elements and public organizations, has not accepted as constructive any of the initiatives. This reaction is primarily rooted in a deep-seated belief that Somoza cannot be trusted regardless of what he says or appears to be doing. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780113–0799. Confidential; Immediate.

² In telegram 1193 from Managua, March 13, the Embassy reported on Solaun's March 9 meeting with Somoza stating that Somoza was defensive and likely "genuinely frustrated by his apparent inability to get any accommodating response from his opponents now that he has launched what he believes are conciliatory initiatives." Somoza was also frustrated by "what he feels is a continuing coolness toward him on the part of the USG." The Embassy commented: "The opposition, of course, feels that it has been deceived so many times by the Somozas in the past that it is not about to grasp eagerly at the President's initiatives." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 18, Human Rights—PD-30)

1. On Feb 26, Somoza publicly announced for the first time his intention to return to private life at the end of his term.³ This statement which specifically included dropping his control of the National Guard (GN) addressed the concern of the opposition that Somoza might try to retain the Presidency through some constitutional trickery or perhaps even a coup as well as their belief that Somoza would continue to rule the country as Chief Director of the GN. Because the opposition does not trust Somoza, their reaction is that there still is no guarantee that he will comply with his declared intent. There is also the belief that the results of the next Presidential election would be far more favorable if it occurred when someone other than Somoza were in the Presidency. The opposition has suggested that as a demonstration of his intentions, Somoza should resign now his position as Chief Director of the GN. It is not likely Somoza would accept this demand during the current civil strife and active insurgency, but he has not commented on this issue. Such a step could have a significant impact on opposition thinking.

2. Somoza has announced a commitment to having justice realized in the Chamorro assassination case. This has been a key opposition demand. The GON invited an observer from the I-A Press Association which the IAPA rejected. It is doubtful that an observer mission would have had any significant impact on attitudes or on the investigation. On Feb 26 Somoza announced he would establish a national commission to review the Chamorro assassination investigation. On March 10 he stated he would ask Min. Gov. Mora to set up the commission. To date nothing concrete has happened in the investigation to uncover the author(s) of the crime which occurred two months ago. The problem in the assassination investigation may be that the only significant witness(es) may be in the U.S. and not extraditable. If this is the case, the assassination investigation may never be satisfactorily completed. The U.S. lawyer for Dr. Ramos, who has been indicted for the assassination, told EmbOff his client may be willing to make depositions from Miami but is unwilling to voluntarily return to Nicaragua.

3. On Feb 26 Somoza announced his intention to open up the political process by making it easier for other political parties to participate. The Liberal Party introduced in the Congress partial amendments to the Constitution to this effect. The changes would: a) end the Conservative Party's 40 percent automatic congressional representation and

³ In telegram 1002 from Managua, March 1, the Embassy analyzed Somoza's February 26 speech to a Liberal Party rally. The telegram noted that speech was "designed to demonstrate Liberal Party-GON strength" but "was far less successful than touted" and contained a "series of proposals rather than tangible actions." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780094-0651)

representation in governmental and autonomous entities; b) provide for other minority party representation in the congressional leadership and in the electoral tribunals; and c) remove the electoral law from the Constitution so it can be more easily amended to implement this initiative. The opposition has varying reactions to this initiative which they concede is the first tangible manifestation of Somoza's action on a long-standing grievance. The oppositionists are unanimous that the constitutional reform in itself is not enough because it allows for the majority party (which they see to be the Liberal in the next election) to control the election process, therefore, the liberals can perpetuate their political power through fraud. They also see a danger in removing the electoral law from the Constitution as this makes it easier and quicker to amend, which they view as an open door to subsequent manipulation by Somoza. Further they want to have an idea of the nature of Somoza's intentions in the electoral law reform before they accept the constitutional reform. Where the opposition has had differences is over whether they should make an effort to address these concerns in a counter-initiative or should simply wash their hands of the entire proposal leaving to Somoza the responsibility for unilateral action. The officially recognized conservatives are for a counter-proposal, but the UDEL coalition and other splinter parties were reluctant to agree (partly because they were uncomfortable with the conservatives defending their interests and partly because they see a counter-proposal as the equivalent of initiation of renewed dialogue which they feel is as yet not appropriate).

Emb understands that on Feb 13, agreement was reached to go ahead with the counter-proposal. Somoza said in his March 10 press conference that the details of the electoral reform initiative are negotiable.

4. Somoza announced on Feb 26 he would take an initiative to advance free trade unionism by removing the government from passing on the merits of each application for official recognition. The Social Christian and Socialist Labor Confederations labeled this move as trickier and rejected it. The political opposition has argued Somoza could show his intentions by approving currently pending petitions for recognition, and is likely to be suspicious of the new proposal until they see the proposed labor law revision. A potential problem with this initiative is that it apparently would remove some protection for officially recognized unions against rival management-organized and supported organizational efforts. In disputes, the Labor Ministry would, therefore, apparently gain flexibility in dealing with complaints from rival factions.

5. Somoza's announcement of social welfare initiatives in land sale guarantees, a code for renter-lessee relations, and a tax policy change

on idle land had been in the gestation stage for some time as a result of a study of changes which would permit improved conditions of land tenancy in which AID participated. In fact, two of the initiatives were based on prior agreement for continuation of US participation in the Invierno Program.⁴ The opposition reaction was two-fold: a) the idle land tax initiative was a reprisal against medium and small farmers—this reaction ignores the fact that there is an exemption for small land holders, and the wealthiest landowners are the ones who are most likely to under-utilize their land and be forced to think about selling the excess to others; and b) the initiatives are not true agrarian reform in that they didn't contemplate breaking up large land holdings and distributing parcels to poor farmers. The counter-argument is that the initiatives are exactly so designed in that the large landholders will be pressured to rent or sell unused land to poor farmers and, if they want to sell, the guarantee proposal will give the sellers confidence they will be paid.

6. The other social welfare proposals regarding extending social security coverage and making mandatory the 13th month bonus have been challenged only in that there are doubts that they can be achieved in that the government has strained resources for providing the benefits and that they are an economic reprisal in that the employer has to pay the benefit. There has been no popular reaction of support from the intended beneficiaries who by nature are skeptical until they have a bird in hand. Somoza, in answer, said in his March 10 press conference that funds were available through international lending and that the social security system would be extended to two departments this year and the rest of the country the following year. He had previously offered to extend social security to rural workers in his Labor Day speech last May first.

7. Other Somoza statements the equivalent of initiatives have included the fact he would accept in a dialogue positive suggestions for restructuring the National Guard, amnesty for political prisoners; that reform of the radio and TV code had already been accepted for study in the Congress, and that he would order a halt to the practice of busing people like cattle in pickup trucks to Managua's poor districts. The next day *La Prensa* said the degrading busing practice continues. On this and the other promises the opposition predictably and understandably will wait for concrete results.

8. In the area of atmospherics, Somoza has for the first time in recent memory publicly acknowledged excessive use of force by the

⁴ The Invierno Program was a program for rural development funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

GN, has acknowledged that the participants in the national work stoppage broke no laws, has repeatedly denied that he would take any reprisals against opposition private sector leaders, and has implicitly acknowledged publicly that Somoza-family control of the GN has impeded institutionalization of that organization as well as democratization of the country. The opposition would chalk these statements to pure atmospherics, conceded under pressure and designed purely to appease the U.S.

9. Somoza has continued to publicly state since his Feb 26 speech that he seeks dialogue with the opposition. His sincerity in accepting true change toward democratization is doubted by the opposition because Somoza in the past has always benefited from the deals he has struck with the opposition when the intent of the compromise has not been respected. They see this situation as equivalent to the fly accepting an invitation from the spider. This leads the opposition to find it easier to agree to a common position that Somoza must go now than it is for them to obtain common agreement on how to respond to the announced initiatives. At the same time, however, many political and private sector oppositionists are concerned about the growing sympathy for the FSLN guerrillas and outbreaks of violence. These people are willing to consider dialogue if they are not forced to run the risk of being seen as being drawn in by Somoza. Their wariness is only likely to be satisfied if they respond to the call to a dialogue by an outside agent (e.g., the Church) and when Somoza's initiatives are translated into a significant concrete demonstration of his willingness to surrender power. To date neither of these conditions exist in their opinion.

Solaun

74. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Washington, April 16, 1978, 0115Z

6328. Subject: IAHR Visit to Nicaragua. Ref: State 096306.²

1. Summary: Ambassador met with President Somoza April 15, and made approach as instructed reftel. The President responded that he is still considering invitation to commission, but he does not want to appear to have done so under external pressure. He does not believe that majority in OAS would vote against him on IAHR visit.

2. Ambassador met with President Somoza for two hours on April 15, and read to him the instructions that urged him to invite IAHR now for early visit to Nicaragua. Somoza said that he could not be placed in a position of appearing to have invited the commission under pressure from the international community. He has been in regular contact with the commission, and has responded to six petitions received from it. He is in fact contemplating an invitation, but the statements in Caracas by Presidents Carter and Perez had made it more difficult for him to act now.³

3. In response to the points contained reftel made by Ambassador, the President said that he continues to be a friend of the U.S., and that he believes that a visit by the commission could diminish the "international campaign" to discredit him. He said that the USG must understand, however, that to protect himself he has had to make "new friends among the Latin America dictators," and that "to invite the IAHR might anger them." "I may need them some day."

4. Ambassador reiterated to him the benefits that would result from an invitation to the commission. Somoza responded by asking:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua II. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis.

² In telegram 96306 to Managua, April 14, the Department instructed Solaun to meet with Somoza and urge that Somoza invite the Inter-American Human Rights Commission for "an early visit" to Nicaragua and "to make public this information." (Ibid.)

³ Carter visited Venezuela March 28–29. Carter and Perez met with reporters following their March 28 meeting in Caracas. The *New York Times* reported that the two "said they were in 'complete harmony' on the need for greater guarantees for human rights throughout the world, especially in Nicaragua." (Terence Smith, "Carter Cries 'Viva!' as Caracas Cheers," *New York Times*, March 29, 1978, p. 17) Carter also said "we are both concerned about the situation in Nicaragua, and we both feel that a delegation from the United Nations or the OAS should be welcomed into Nicaragua, and other countries where human rights are threatened, to provide the facts to the outside world." (*Public Papers, Carter, 1978, Book I, p. 617*)

“What guarantees are there that the U.S. will not continue to harass me even after the commission has come and gone? What will be the impact on the Christopher Committee⁴ of such a visit?”

5. Becoming increasingly agitated, the President said that during his recent meeting with the President of El Salvador, Romero had told him that the only positive result of the IAHRC visit there was to diminish the heat he was getting from the U.S. Embassy. It had had no positive impact on internal political dynamics.

6. Somoza complained that he had tried to follow the suggestions from USG, but this had not been followed by significant support from it. By pursuing its human rights policy the US had encouraged insurrection in Nicaragua, but had not accepted responsibility for any solution. He stressed that he is a man of principle and conviction. When Allen Dulles had asked him what he wanted in payment for the use of Nicaragua to launch the Bay of Pigs action, he said he wanted nothing. But now wished to know “what is in it for me if the Commission comes?”

7. Somoza said that he wished the USG would “stop picking on me and this small country.” “I am trying not to be a rebel for the sake of being one.” “I have accepted your suggestions to move toward a democratic evolution because I am convinced that it is the best way for Nicaragua.” “But the movement has been toward more insurrection, not democratization.”

8. The President said that he did not believe that there would be a majority against him in the OAS. “Brazil and the block of the dictators will not vote for a Commission visit. You should tell Washington that it should not try to force the issue because it will lose.” “The USG has tried everything to pressure me, and the only thing left is to attempt to overthrow me.” “Since you didn’t want to do that, you want the Commission to come to save face after President Carter’s visit to Venezuela.

9. Ambassador demurred and, referring to previous conversations, stressed that we had acknowledged the progress that had been made and were encouraged by his invitation to the International Red Cross. He asked the President about the Conservative Party’s response to his electoral reform proposals, and expressed hope that he could respond positively to formalize at least some of their counterproposals. This might encourage conversations leading toward a peaceful democratic solution to the present deadlock. The President said he might try to make some counterproposals soon. He stressed that he already had said publicly that he would accept some of the counterproposals.

⁴ See footnote 6, Document 65.

He is considering a response on TV, which might be made soon, and he is going to have lunch with the Archbishop next week to talk about the political situation.

10. The President stressed that he had been careful to avoid repression generally, and particularly in the matter of the current strikes at the secondary schools. While the strike leaders had hoped that he would force them out, he is simply pressuring the schools involved with closing them. Somoza said that he could do as Papa Doc did in Haiti. "I could arm the poor people, but I won't." "I will not run from Nicaragua either."

11. At close of conversation President reiterated that he is studying the question of an IAHRC invitation; but that he did not want to be pushed to make an immediate decision.

12. Conclusion: President Somoza clearly is feeling the pressure on him from internal agitation (that he would have been less prone to tolerate before) and is frustrated with us for not giving him adequate credit for actions he has taken thus far. He seems to believe that he is doing his best to please USG, but that this has not led to a positive result, partly because of our prejudices and opposition inflexibility. It is also clear that he is bothered by what he considers a "deal" between USG and Perez against him.

13. Somoza wished to give every indication that he is not prepared to step down now, but rather that he would resort to repression as a last resort. We believe that Somoza might eventually extend invitation to IAHRC, but that he will try to orchestrate the timing himself—possibly after the visit by the International Red Cross or after a decrease in opposition unrest.

Solaun

75. Report Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

Report No. 1003

Washington, June 21, 1978

NICARAGUA: THE "SLOW MOTION REVOLUTION"*Summary*

For more than 40 years, the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, built firmly on the National Guard, the Liberal Party, economic domination, and public perception of US support, seemed virtually indestructible. During the past year, however, public pressures from the Catholic Church and the US on human rights issues, Somoza's heart attack, and the assassination of a leading opposition figure have brought unprecedented unity among the private sector, the political opposition, and other groups in calling for Somoza's ouster. In one form or another (guerrilla attacks, arson, demonstrations, and a national work stoppage), violence and disorders have continued almost daily since January. Somoza's National Guard, however, has been equal to the challenge and remains loyal.

In the current situation, the opposition cannot force Somoza out of power. Neither can Somoza completely silence the opposition; he can only contain it. As a result, Nicaragua's "slow motion revolution" seems likely to simmer along in coming months as it has in the past.

While US interests in Nicaragua are less than vital, in the larger context of regional stability there is room for concern that continued conflict over a period of time could embroil Nicaragua's neighbors and invite the involvement of other states in the area.

The Somoza dynasty, built firmly on the pillars of a loyal National Guard, an extensive Liberal Party machine, domination of the economic sector, and public perception of US support, seemed virtually indestructible for four decades. With little resistance from a weak and factionalized opposition party, the Somozas easily used their sources of support to co-opt, corrupt, or—if necessary—intimidate most dissenters. One exception, the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN), grew out of a number of scattered revolutionary groups that existed in Nicaragua in the late 1950s. The common intention of these groups was the overthrow of the Somoza government. Since the early 1960s, the FSLN, though never a serious threat to the government, has been a symbol of

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Intelligence Research Reports, Lot 6D379, Reports No. 997–1005, 1978. Secret; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon. Prepared by Morris; approved by Estep.

resistance to the Somoza regime, particularly among young, educated Nicaraguans.

[Omitted here is the body of the report.]

76. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 11, 1978, 2240Z

3125. Subject: Meeting With Somoza: June 11. Ref. A) State 172394,² B) Solaun-Matthews Telcon of 7/11/78.³

Summary. The Ambassador met with Somoza today at the Ambassador's request. Topics discussed included President Carter's message to President Somoza, recent events at Jinotepe and Marxist infiltration of "The Twelve."⁴ Somoza again asked for a public statement of USG support of the GON. Other topics included the question of amnesty for political prisoners, electoral reform, and the Chamorro assassination. End summary.

1. Pursuant to reftel, the Ambassador requested a meeting with Somoza and spoke with him for one-half hour. The Ambassador told

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 5-7/78. Confidential; Immediate; Limdis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 172394 to Managua, July 8, the Department instructed Solaun to convey to Somoza the text of a letter from Carter to Somoza. Carter's letter noted his "great interest and appreciation" of Somoza's June 19 press conference in which Somoza announced: his willingness to cooperate with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, his decision to allow the Group of 12 members to return to "peaceful lives in Nicaragua," a possible amnesty for political prisoners, and reform of the electoral system. Carter's message also encouraged Somoza to sign and ratify the American Convention of Human Rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2568) Brzezinski's June 26 memorandum to Carter noted that Carter had asked for a letter to be drafted for his signature to Somoza encouraging Somoza to take the "human rights steps" announced in his June 19 press conference. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 14, Nicaragua, President Anastasio Somoza Debayle, 8/77-8/78)

³ No record of the telephone conversation between Solaun and Matthews has been found.

⁴ In telegram 3108 from Managua, July 10, the Embassy reported that the GN had killed six or seven youths during anti-Somoza demonstrations in Jinotepe on July 9. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 17, Human Rights—Nicaragua II)

Somoza that he had asked for this appointment on instructions from President Carter (reftel) to convey the President's satisfaction regarding Somoza's statements and some steps recently taken. In accordance with ref telcon, the Ambassador verbally described the points in President Carter's message (IAHRC visit, the Twelve, amnesty, and electoral reform) and mentioned President Carter's interest in Nicaragua's signing and ratification of the American Convention of Human Rights. The Ambassador emphasized that President Carter had personally sent the message, was closely following events in Nicaragua and wished to be kept informed regarding action taken to implement the various proposals which had been made.

2. Somoza appeared visibly pleased by the knowledge that the President was the source of this message. He said that he was encouraged to see that President Carter was able to see through anti-GON propaganda. Somoza said that he wanted to end his term of office with free elections in order to consolidate the achievements of the Somozas. The problem, however, is that while his philosophy is the same as President Carter's Nicaraguans are not Americans and it is difficult to rule Nicaragua because of the tumultuous nature of some political elements here. Somoza then said that he has already signed the American Convention of Human Rights and that ratification by the Nicaraguan Congress is pending. He wanted the Amb to know that he was in favor of all human rights organizations because, at some point in the future when he is out of power he himself would need international protection for his rights.

3. The Amb raised the recent events in Jinotepe and expressed his deep concern that the insurrectionist line continued strong with the opposition. Furthermore, the Amb noted that upon the arrival of "The Twelve", he had not seen any signs carrying slogans supporting the various traditional oppositions nor UDEL, but rather only signs carrying FSLN slogans. Somoza agreed and added that this showed that the Communists were "after his head." Somoza said that he was happy that he had "allowed" the Twelve to enter Nicaragua without reprisals. At first, he said, he had misgivings because he felt that the arrival of the Twelve could encourage more people toward insurrection, but upon reflection, decided that the best way was to permit the Twelve to return to Nicaragua and publicly express their views—thereby permitting everyone to see the extent of the Communist infiltration of the group. This infiltration, he said, has already scared the Conservative Party (PCN) and the members of the private sector and, therefore, in his opinion has worked to GON advantage. However, Somoza added, the problem was that he could not control Guardia when they became scared from shooting at demonstrators even though this was against his orders. What was needed to calm the situation, he said, was a sign

or a statement from the USG, perhaps not necessarily backing him personally, but publicly discouraging insurrection. He observed that some people still believe the USG will intervene to destabilize the GON and this is keeping them going.

4. The Amb raised the issue of amnesty and questioned whether it might be linked to electoral reform, thereby defusing an explosive situation. Somoza expressed his willingness to use the OAS to monitor elections here and repeated his desire to end his term of office with free elections. Of course, he said, he wanted the Liberal Party to win and would work toward that end, but he was willing to accept, within reasonable numerical limits, OAS supervision of elections. He insisted that he remains convinced that the Liberal Party is the majority.

5. The Amb raised the Chamorro assassination investigation, suggesting that the involvement of some international expert might help clear the air and dispel mistrust. The Amb told Somoza that he had talked to Xavier Chamorro (Director of La Prensa and brother of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro) who had shown interest in the idea. The Amb had encouraged Chamorro to press publicly for this, but no results were as yet visible. Somoza said that the opposition was not being constructive, only blaming him, and expressed interest in the idea saying that perhaps the Minister of Government could propose such international participation in the investigation. Somoza said he knew who had killed Chamorro, but that he understood the problem with the Chamorro family. When his father had been assassinated, the President said, he also had misgivings for a number of years afterwards. Somoza said that he was hopeful that the conservatives would move forward the discuss [*discussion of?*] an electoral plan. He said that he understood there was no need for a political pact, simply an agreement on a mechanism acceptable to all to avoid continuing confrontation and bloodshed and achieve an electoral solution.

6. Comment: In conveying Pres. Carter's message, Amb did not state that a signed letter was being sent and did not refer to confidentiality of the message. Somoza did not ask for the message in writing or inquire whether there was a written message to follow the Amb's presentation. Emb view on the issue of handling the President's letter follows septel.⁵

Solaun

⁵ In telegram 3201 from Managua, July 14, the Embassy wrote: "Because of the recent upsurge in violence, the potential problems, if the Presidential message is delivered as instructed, and because the objective of the message has already been accomplished, Emb. requests authorization to return the message." The Embassy also suggested the "release of a public, not private, expression of concern and call for democratic action." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2570)

77. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, July 17, 1978

SUBJECT

Letter to Nicaraguan President Somoza

Last week, our Ambassador orally conveyed the President's letter to General Somoza of Nicaragua.² Since then, there has been considerable violence in Nicaragua, amounting to at least seven deaths. On July 19, a broad front is planning a general strike, and there appears to be increasing polarization in the country.

Our Ambassador fears that if he delivers the letter, that Somoza may use it to strengthen his position. He has therefore recommended that he not deliver the letter when it arrives by pouch.³ Vaky strongly supports the recommendation of the Ambassador; he believes that there is a qualitative difference between an oral message and the letter, and the latter is certainly easier to use for Somoza's purposes. Christopher is less certain whether this justifies the President's attention.

I think there are three options:

1. Not deliver the letter (Ambassador and Vaky recommendation).⁴
2. Deliver the letter, but⁵ stress the President's concern with recent developments in Nicaragua since the letter was originally sent.⁶
3. Deliver the letter.

RECOMMENDATION

I would favor Option 1 or 2.

Shall I draft a memo from you to the President?⁷

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 5-7/78. Confidential.

² See Document 76.

³ See footnote 5, Document 76.

⁴ In the left-hand margin next to the recommendation, Aaron wrote: "My recommendation P[resident] will look foolish. DA."

⁵ Inderfurth crossed out the word "but" and wrote the word "and." He also wrote in the left-hand margin next to the recommendation: "My suggestion. RL."

⁶ Brzezinski checked the approval option.

⁷ Brzezinski did not indicate his approval or disapproval of the recommendation.

78. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 21, 1978, 2202Z

3330. Subject: Meeting with Somoza—July 21. Ref: A) State 183451² B) Managua 3311³ C) Managua 3125.⁴

Summary. Pursuant to Department's instructions, Ambassador met with Somoza and delivered President Carter's letter to him. The Ambassador stressed the confidential nature of the letter and Somoza said he understood that the letter was "personal" in nature. He expressed continued interest in a public statement from the USG. Somoza's answer will be passed to the President through the Embassy when ready. Somoza then discussed the previous day's incident at the Intercontinental Hotel citing it as proof of the "international" nature of the conspiracy against him. Somoza also told the Ambassador that upon consultation with his Cabinet, he had decided that ratification of the American Conference [*Convention*] on Human Rights should be postponed until after the visit of the IAHRC to Nicaragua. Somoza said that he had decided there was no need to reimpose a state of siege.⁵ End summary.

1. On the same day that instructions (ref A) were received, the Ambassador made an appointment for 6:00 p.m. with President Somoza. This meeting had to be postponed because of the rocket attack on the headquarters of the National Guard (ref B). At 8:30 a.m. on July 21, the Ambassador met for 20 minutes with the President. The Ambassador delivered President Carter's letter to Somoza and read to him the following statement:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 5-7/78. Confidential; Immediate. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 183451 to Managua, July 20, the Department noted Solaun's concerns about delivering Carter's letter to Somoza and instructed Solaun to proceed with the delivery and inform Somoza of Carter's "deep concern" about the recent violence in Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2569)

³ In telegram 3311 from Managua, July 21, the Embassy reported that unidentified persons had launched rockets from a room in the Intercontinental Hotel toward the National Guard headquarters. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780300-0687)

⁴ See Document 76.

⁵ In telegram 3229 from Managua, July 18, the Embassy reported Solaun's July 15 meeting with Somoza during which Somoza "raised his concern about the state of public order in Nicaragua and indicated that he is under some pressure to re-impose a state of siege." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780295-0415)

2. Begin quote. I am under strict instructions to observe that the letter is a confidential communication between President Carter and you, and neither the text or the existence of the correspondence should be disclosed. If you have any response which you would like to transmit to President Carter in a confidential channel, I am at your disposal. Since he signed the letter, President Carter has become aware of recent incidents and violence and has instructed me to express his deep concern over these incidents and his continued strong hope that there will be no reversal of the positive direction which you indicated you would take. End quote.

3. Somoza read the letter and observed that it was basically the statement communicated earlier by the Ambassador (ref C). Somoza asked if the idea of not having the letter published came from Embassy staff and whether the USG would make a statement along the lines that Somoza had suggested (ref C). Somoza said there was a need to calm the opposition and that the opposition was using the wave of human rights push “to the hilt.” The Ambassador replied that the instructions to treat the letter as confidential came from Washington. Somoza said that he understood that this was a personal letter and that he will answer it and would inform the Ambassador when the reply was ready.⁶

4. Somoza then said that the previous day’s attack on the headquarters of the National Guard indicated the “international” nature of the insurrection. The rockets used were only solo in arsenals and this meant they were of foreign origin. He expressed his belief that similar rockets were also used in the February 1978 attack on Rivas.⁷ The violence would end, he said, only when the Communists decided to stop using it. Somoza mentioned that he had had conversation with Alan Riding of the New York Times and was very concerned because even Riding recognized that the traditional opposition has no control over events. Somoza stated that he would “have to find out who is the ghost behind all of this”.

5. Somoza reported that he had signed the American Convention on Human Rights and that ratification was pending by the Nicaraguan Congress. However, he had decided that this ratification should be postponed until after the proposed visit of the IAHR to Nicaragua. The Cabinet, he said, had advised him against ratification now because the convention also included the formation of a court and due to the

⁶ Somoza’s letter replying to Carter was dated July 25. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President’s Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 14, Nicaragua, President Anastasio Somoza Debayle, 8/77–8/78)

⁷ Alan Riding, “Push Against Somoza Joined By Guerrillas,” *New York Times*, February 4, 1978, p. 2.

current situation, Nicaragua would probably be attacked before the court if it submitted to its jurisdiction. The court could be controlled by a political clique, he added. Somoza said that the Cabinet had also discussed the reimposition of the state of siege [garble] all members of the Cabinet and he had agreed that the problem of violence was limited to three cities—Jinotepe, Esteli and Leon—where there had been infiltration of outsiders and systematic agitation. He did not see the [garble] to siege condition on the entire country when the problems were confined to such a few locations.

6. Somoza asked the Ambassador of his views of the situation in the context of the one-day national work stoppage. Ambassador responded that his impression was that among businessmen the notion of the need for a compromise between the extremes was gaining strength, and that some businessmen seemed concerned by the open emergence and strength of Sandinista groups. The Ambassador felt that this conciliatory movement among businessmen had not yet acquired sufficient support. Perhaps, he suggested, in Somoza's contacts with business groups in the near future, he might wish to take the initiative and inform them of his desire to compromise and find a peaceful solution to Nicaragua's problem.

7. The Ambassador raised the Chamorro assassination noting that clearly this brutal and senseless act had been the significant event in unleashing the current wave of violence. The Ambassador suggested that a more rapid treatment of the case might calm passions and serve as an indication of the GON's credibility. Somoza told the Ambassador about the formation of a new commission which could even draw on foreign experts in the course of its investigation (septel) to clarify events.⁸ As far as he was concerned, Somoza stated, he had come to his conclusions on the case already. The Ambassador replied that apparently the material actors have been apprehended but the question of the intellectual authors remained open. Somoza replied that Pena could, of course, implicate anyone but that he believed enough evidence already existed implicating Pedro Ramos (U.S. citizen) as the intellectual author. He added that Chamorro had attacked Ramos not only for his blood plasma business, but had also been preparing to attack Ramos' import plasma business as well. Ramos, Somoza said the assassination had occurred and Somoza agreed.

⁸ In telegram 3333 from Managua, July 21, the Embassy recounted news reports that Somoza had "named a special commission of 'jurists of recognized merit' to analyze the state of the investigation into the assassination" of Chamorro and noted that there was "no indication as to whether the members named to the commission were consulted in advance regarding their willingness to serve on such a commission." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780301-0137)

79. Editorial Note

In an August 8, 1978, memorandum to Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Council Staff member Robert Pastor noted: "There is no doubt in my mind that the situation is sufficiently delicate and volatile as to justify the attention of a PRC. Furthermore, I think one hour by you, Vance, and the others *now* will save you a lot of time trying to limit the damage later." Brzezinski decided that, if the interagency meeting proved useful, Pastor and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky would draft a Presidential Review Memorandum on Nicaragua for an upcoming Policy Review Committee (PRC) meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 14, Nicaragua, President Anastasio Somoza Debayle, 8/77–8/78) In an August 14 action memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor requested that Brzezinski forward a memorandum to President Jimmy Carter about the situation in Nicaragua and noted that Vaky felt that an interagency meeting would be more useful than a full PRC meeting. Brzezinski instructed Pastor to include a statement on Nicaragua in Brzezinski's weekly National Security Council report to Carter. National Security Staff member Rick Inderfurth added: "I feel quite certain that Nicaragua will explode during the President's first term. He should have a feel for the country prior to that time." (Ibid.) Inderfurth wrote to Pastor, on August 18, reporting that Brzezinski had decided not to include coverage of Nicaragua in the weekly report to Carter. Instead Brzezinski asked for a brief report to Carter at the conclusion of the policy study on Nicaragua. "Do not despair;" Inderfurth concluded, "we will get something to the President on Nicaragua soon." (Ibid.)

80. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, August 21, 1978, 1420Z

3862. Subject: FAO Minimum Plan. Ref: A) Managua 3816,² B) Managua 3599.³

Summary: As noted reftel A, Emb has obtained copy of Broad Opposition Front (FAO) minimum plan. Contrary to information previously reported, text has not yet been publicly released⁴ perhaps indicating lack of unanimous support by component groups of FAO. Text follows. End summary.

1. Begin quote. The Broad Opposition Front (FAO) explains to the Nicaraguan people the bases upon which the transitional national government demanded by all sectors of the country must be based in the total confrontation of our people with the Somocist dictatorship. A national government constituted to create a "new sociopolitical order making possible humane conditions for the majority of our people in the areas of nutrition, health, education, housing, employment, land salaries, human rights," as was expressed in the pastoral letter of Nicaragua's bishops (reftel B).

2. The Broad Opposition Front (FAO) declares in the first place that the information of this national government implies the eradication of the Somocist dictatorship to permit the national government to serve the true interests of the Nicaraguan people and, therefore, it cannot emerge as the result of dialogs with Somocism, pacts and political compromises of military coups behind the back of the people.

3. The Broad Opposition Front (FAO) considers that, for the dismantling of the Somocist power structure and to initiate the democratization of Nicaragua, the national government must, upon its constitu-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780341-0421. Limited Official Use; Immediate. Sent for information to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, and San José.

² In telegram 3816 from Managua, August 17, the Embassy reported that the FAO was going to release a "minimum plan." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780336-0791)

³ In telegram 3599 from Managua, August 4, the Embassy reported that *La Prensa* had published excerpts of a pastoral letter calling for the "reorganization of the armed forces" and "a new socio-political order." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780321-1226)

⁴ In telegram 3892 from Managua, August 22, the Embassy reported that the FAO's sixteen point "minimum plan" had been published in *La Prensa* on August 21. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780344-0055)

tion, immediately implement a minimum plan which includes the following points.

4. A) Organization of the national army as an entity serving the liberties and interests of the people. Substitution of military regulations inherited from the North American intervention with an organic law for the army which guarantees a just social and economic regime for all classes and soldiers and a national system of promotion and remuneration of officers. Prohibition against the trial of civilians by military. Creation of a police corps strictly separated from the army.

5. B) Eradication of the corruption which has characterized the Somocist dictatorship: fraudulent appropriation of goods; contraband, illicit exemptions and forgiving of taxes; fraud in bids; manipulative advantages in land deals; misuse of state funds; illicit adjudication of loans; unjust actions in government loans and other dirty business, etc.

6. C) Repeal of all laws of political repression and establishment of absolute respect for human rights, especially the dignity and integrity of the person, ending the (word unclear), the disappearances, tortures, illegal captures and the levelling of homes. Repressive organs, such as the office of security and the armed bands disguised as civilians, will be abolished.

7. D) Immediate liberty for all political prisoners and return to the country of all exiles.

8. E) Repeal of all laws repressing free expression and dissemination of thought and freedom of information, beginning with the abolition of the "black code." (Note: This refers to the radio and television code. End note.)

9. F) Immediate guarantees for free and full labor organization, union and popular, in the city as well as in the countryside; likewise, the right to work; indemnization for years of service; likewise, participation in the profits of the enterprise.

10. G) Initiation of a true, complete agrarian reform serving to establish new and just forms of agrarian production and campesino property.

11. H) Adoption of urgent measures to solve the problems of health and welfare in the cities and countryside, in everything relevant to social security, medial and hospital assistance and protection of children and mothers.

12. I) Immediate attention to the grave problem of collective transportation, organizing it in a humane and efficient form.

13. J) Effective control of prices of basic necessities, including medicines, to avoid shortages and speculation.

14. [K]) Initiation of an effective literacy plan, within an educational system which is truly democratically oriented.

15. L) Reforms of the fiscal system in a manner assuring equality of tax liability and ending arbitrariness and evasion in the collection of taxes.

16. M) Restructuring of the judicial power to eradicate corruption in the administration of justice and the veniality and submission of judges.

17. N) Full political, economic and administrative autonomy of the municipalities; and restoration of the municipality of Managua, with authorities freely elected by the people.

18. O) Installation of a new political order guaranteeing an electoral process truly free both at the national and municipal levels, without ideological discrimination of any type. End quote.

Comment: The FAO plan is the latest in a series of programs released by "The Twelve", the ANC-PCN (autentico) combination, UDEL and the MDN. Emb will be reporting impressions and comparisons of programs in separate airgram.⁵

Solaun

⁵ Not found.

81. Editorial Note

In telegram 3913 from Managua, August 22, 1978, the Embassy reported that an armed group of Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) members had "taken over the National Palace" while Congress was in session and had taken hostages including Luis Pallais Debayle, Liberal Party Spokesman and Somoza's cousin. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo acted as a negotiator for the group which demanded ten million dollars, the release of all political prisoners, and a plane to take them and the released political prisoners to Cuba. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Cables: 8/78) The *Washington Post* reported on August 24 that the Government of Nicaragua had broadcast "a statement by the Marxist group" on the radio, as they had demanded, and estimated that "more than 500 legislators, government officials and civil servants" were hostages. ("Managua Acts to Meet Demands of Guerrillas," *Washington Post*, August 24, 1978, p. A1) The *Washington Post* reported the next day that two planes had flown "25 guerrillas,

59 freed political prisoners, three Roman Catholic prelates who had negotiated the release and the Panamanian and Costa Rican ambassadors to Nicaragua," who had volunteered to be taken as security for the guerrillas. The FSLN "said they received \$500,000" of the ten million they had demanded, while a government official said "they were given \$71,000." ("Rebels are Flown from Nicaragua; Hostages Released," *Washington Post*, August 25, 1978, p. A1) Telegram 3924 from Managua, August 23, reported that Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza "had been contemplating military action, but had decided to negotiate because 'lives cannot be regained, but money is ultimately negotiable.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780358–0233)

82. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

RPM 78–10326

Washington, August 25, 1978

Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front

Summary

[1 line not declassified] the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) currently has about 1,200 guerrilla activists. Roughly half of these are in Nicaragua at any one time, while most of the others are concentrated in Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, and Venezuela. The number of active supporters and sympathizers is much larger and probably growing, but impossible to determine exactly.

The FSLN—Marxist, revolutionary, and pro-Castro—is now split into three primary factions, the strongest of which is increasingly willing to cooperate with non-communist groups in the struggle against Somoza.²

The FSLN's Cuban connection dates back to its founding in the early 1960s. Confirmed Cuban support is presently more modest than in the past, but the Castro regime is continuing to provide training,

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 80T00634A: Production Case Files (1978), Box 3, Folder 79: Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front. Secret; [handling restriction not declassified]. Prepared by the Latin America Division of the Office of Regional and Political Analysis at the request of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

² The three FSLN factions were: the *Terciario*, the Popular Prolonged War, and the Proletarian Tendency.

sanctuary, documentation, and communications and propaganda support.

[Omitted here is the body of the report.]

83. Memorandum From the Director of the Central America Office, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (Matthews) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky)¹

Washington, August 26, 1978

SUBJECT

Our Meeting on Nicaragua Tuesday, August 29

In considering the options, I believe there are several points we should keep in mind:

1. *Our Objective*—It should be to prevent damage to U.S. political (including security) and economic interests in *Central America*. It should *not* be to get rid of Somoza or to keep him in power, nor should it be to install democracy in Nicaragua, to promote social change, to disassociate, or to ingratiate ourselves with Perez, Torrijos, Paz, Kennedy or Charlie Wilson. Nicaragua *per se* is not very important to us. Central America is much more important.

2. *Nicaragua is a Political Problem, Not a Human Rights Problem*—Despite unprecedented guerrilla attacks, Somoza allows opponents who openly call for his violent overthrow and support of the Sandinistas to go about their business generally unmolested. He has not yet re-imposed a state of siege as he did after the 1974 incident² and the press remains free and vitriolic. The National Guard, despite undoubted instances of brutality, is behaving remarkably well for a Latin American military force suffering frequent casualties.

3. The basic cause of Somoza's difficulties is *regime fatigue*, just as it is with the Shah of Iran, just as it is incipently with Trujillo. It's not

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 8/78. Secret. Copies were sent to Einaudi, Welter, Graham, Winstanley, Shaw Smith, and Kreisberg. Matthews did not initial the memorandum. Vaky initialed the first page of the memorandum on August 28. For additional information about the meeting, see Document 85.

² See footnote 2, Document 59.

primarily his corruption, his human rights record, or anything else he has done. Nicaraguans are just sick and tired of the dynasty. This means the only real solution to his internal political problem is his (and his son's) departure from power, but it also means that the people's grievance is not so burning that they will go to any extreme to push him out. If he reimposes repression, it will work, though only over the short to medium term.

4. Somoza's tactic is to allow anarchy to grow until the business community and middle class beg him to restore order or at least until they accept his proffered dialogue to that end. If things get out of hand, he always has the option of repression by the National Guard. He would use that option only if the situation were extreme since he realizes that could break the remnant of his relationship with us. If we break it anyway, our hostile action would seem to remove a major reason against a harsh crackdown.

5. *There is a very real danger of a second Cuba here with all of its political implications.* Probably not through a Sandinista takeover *a la Havana* in the face of a crumbling National Guard, but through the better organized Marxist-Leninist elements among the Sandinistas quickly dominating an opposition-controlled successor government in which they formed a part through superior firepower. The best way to prevent this would be to ensure that the National Guard, as an institution (purged, perhaps of its most corrupt elements), continues as Nicaragua's military force after Somoza's departure from power.

6. *The FSLN may be more Marxist-Leninist and more Cuban-linked than we now think.* Two factions are exclusively Marxist-Leninist, while the Tercerista faction, which pulled off the National Palace caper, has both Marxist-Leninist and non-Marxist elements. But who's in charge? I'm disturbed by the oral report we got from the Agency last Friday that Pastora, the leader of the caper and of the FSLN in Costa Rica, who publicly proclaims himself a Christian and who demanded to be flown to Panama, not Cuba, travels on a Cuban passport (as do 47 other Sandinistas) and was last in Cuba in April.

84. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, August 27, 1978, 2315Z

3998. Subject: Ambassador Talks with Somoza: Aug 26.

Summary: The Amb met with Somoza for 45 minutes on 26 August. During the conversation, topics of discussion were the recent FSLN attack, the political situation in Nicaragua and the general strike.² Somoza outlined to the Amb the measures he was considering to cope with the situation. End summary

1. Pursuant to Department's instructions to maintain frequent contact with Somoza in order to learn as much as possible about his intended course of action, Amb requested and was granted a meeting with Somoza on the morning of 26 August. Beginning what became a 45-minute discussion, Amb told Somoza that the Department was interested in learning his views on the situation and the policies of the GON in coping with it in the aftermath of the FSLN attack and the proposed general strike. Somoza said that he would break the strike. He could not give up power under pressure, he said, because the GON would collapse and anarchy would follow. Under these conditions, he said he was not prepared to remove anyone from the National Guard (GN). "When people are trying to destroy you, the ruling group must be cohesive and defend itself." He said he would not resign because such action would break the liberal-conservative pact of 1972 and because the opposition was totally divided and was a minority which did not control the activists. Anarchy would result if he left. "I will not give power to a group which will not be able to control the situation here."

2. Somoza said he would not impose a new state of siege despite GN pressure, but would instead use the radio and television code to control "Communist propanganda and agitation" contributing to the strike effort by suspending some programs. However, he was planning to update the code to make it a more modern tool so that the GON would not be both prosecutor and judge. The proceedings would be integrated into the judicial system. Somoza said that he had waited

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780350-0910. Secret; Niact Immediate.

² The *Washington Post* reported on August 26 that "a general strike sought by government foes to break President Anastasio Somoza's iron grip over this Central American nation drew little popular support yesterday." ("Strike to Topple Somoza Receives Little Support," *Washington Post*, August 26, 1978, p. A14)

for the conservatives to suggest such reforms, but that now he will have to take the initiative.

3. Somoza went on to say that he will jail any leaders promoting general strike. Amb asked if any arrest orders against political leaders were outstanding (e.g., against Robelo). Somoza said that Robelo's order had been lifted and that no other orders had yet been issued. Somoza said he would also use the Central Bank and other institutions to bring pressure on businesses which closed in support of the strike. The Amb asked if Somoza thought such repressive measures would be effective. Somoza replied affirmatively but added that the measures would not be repressive. His plan was that if businesses which owed money to the GON or any financial institution over which he had influence were to close in support of the strike, the loan would be immediately called. Somoza added that he did not want the Amb to think that he was cornered or afraid—in fact, as of that morning, he said only Jinotega and Esteli were 75 percent and 95 percent closed due to the strike and seemed to pose problems. In all other cities, at least 75 percent of business were open.

4. Somoza told the Amb that, unlike the past, he would begin to “prune” opposition (Note: Amb understands this to be a term which Somoza employs to indicate a weeding out of opposition with a view to rendering it impotent. Such opposition could be attacked by him through political, financial or other means. End note). Then he said he would defeat the strike, that “these people are a bunch of imbeciles,” and that they (the opposition) didn't control the agitators. “They are paper tigers. What I should be doing is negotiating directly with the Marxists and the radicals instead of these people.” The Amb asked Somoza why he didn't follow such an approach. Somoza said that he must await further crystalization to “prune” the Marxists. “Isn't that what politics is all about, Ambassador?”, Somoza asked. The Ambassador replied, “that is one type of politics, sir.”

5. Amb raised the question of “mediation” by the Venezuelan President as had been suggested by La Prensa the previous day. Somoza replied that no need existed for mediation by Venezuela. All that was required was for the opposition to unite and get itself organized and negotiate. The Amb noted the increasing polarization and escalation of conflict. Daily deaths and mutual distrust were resulting in no progress toward negotiations. The Amb reminded Somoza that the USG had been and continues to encourage the opposition to make a series of demands which could be negotiated and lead to a compromise.

6. Somoza replied that what was needed was a harder line from the USG with the opposition. He had noticed that the FSLN had said in Panama that the USG was supporting Somoza. Clearly, he continued, they are not friends of the USG and didn't appreciate our efforts. Many

businessmen, he said, were now saying “better Tacho (i.e., Somoza) than the FSLN”. Basically, the opposition was very weak—surely a minority encouraged from abroad. He noted that Venezuela’s Congress had condemned the GON, and that in Bogota, an international coffee meeting did not want GON participation even as an observer. Somoza wanted the Amb to tell Washington that he had boycotted many conferences in the past for their anti-American sentiments and he hoped that past friendship would be reciprocated and that we would not be persuaded to move against the GON and produce chaos here.

7. Somoza continued, “just because a mystic is President of the United States now, you cannot fall into the trap of introducing chaos in Central America”. The Amb noted that the U.S. objective is to encourage democratic evolution and peaceful settlement here and that we try to be a moderating influence. Somoza replied, “Look, Mr. Ambassador, the U.S. in this country has always been a mediator. I have told you that I am willing to negotiate all of the demands of the opposition. The problem is not that I don’t want to establish the basis for the future Nicaragua, but it is the opposition that does not pay attention to U.S. policy objectives.” He added that he couldn’t accept “wild demands” of the opposition for his resignation and for his son’s leaving the GN. “What is this nonsense of antagonism toward a 26-year old boy?” The Amb asked, how old were you when you became chief director of the GN?” “31,” replied Somoza. “Well,” said the Amb, “that is precisely what the opposition fears—that your son will become chief director and you will be able to exercise power through him.”

8. Somoza said the Amb didn’t understand, that conditions are completely different now. Then, he had been the only university-trained professional. Now, the GN was more trained. (Note: EMB data indicate that university-GN officers (e.g., West Point) rapidly depart to careers in Somoza-owned businesses rather than rise through the ranks to senior leadership positions. End note). Somoza said that, when his father was assassinated, he went to the officer corps and told them that his position had depended upon their loyalty to his father, that they didn’t owe him their loyalty and that they must decide who should be their leader. Everyone, including older men decided he should be the leader due to his superior training and past record. The current situation is completely different he repeated. Somoza said he was willing to make changes institution by institution, establishing a time frame for change, but he could not precipitate changes under current conditions. What Nicaragua needed was two separate leaders—a civilian and a military—to replace him, if civilian control of the military was to continue.

9. Somoza said that U.S. commercial banks were putting the squeeze on Nicaragua’s economy and did not want to lend to the GON

or private business. Somoza hoped the USG would help as Nicaragua owned large short-term debt. Should the banks cease providing credit, a devaluation must result. Not for Somoza, but for Nicaragua, the USG should aid the GON. Somoza emphasized that if it were not for the 1972 earthquake, another leader would be running the country. He termed his first presidency very successful and noted that he had not had to impose a state of siege then. Because of the earthquake, he had had to again take over. Now he was facing foreign-induced problems from a minority. "Mr. Ambassador, don't you think that as a man, I would be much happier in Switzerland, the U.S. or Spain enjoying life? The problem is that I cannot leave power and leave a vacuum here. This is why I have been trying to negotiate with the opposition the future physiognomy of Nicaragua."

10. Comment: Emb sees problem as the opposition being too weak now to topple GON and Somoza knows this. At the same time, the opposition refuses to negotiate with Somoza. In the face of an intransigent opposition still too weak to overthrow him, Somoza is unwilling to go beyond offers to negotiate—without making these offers credible by demonstrating that he is willing to relinquish power. The only force Somoza respects and fears is the U.S., and he is aware of the "blandness" of USG policy. This results in a stalemate, further exacerbating tension and violence and making increasingly unlikely a peaceful, democratic transition. In the absence of a more active U.S. policy sponsoring some form of mediation by a third party, chronic violence is likely to continue, with anti-American sentiment probably increasing on all parts.

11. The GN is increasingly becoming disaffected with the US—feeling we are engaging in a plan of destabilization. The opposition is disaffected with us also because of our "bland", "ineffective" policy vs. Somoza. In the coming week, two controversial aid loans are being presented in Congress. This will feed on the frustration of the opposition should (as Emb expects) the general strike fail to topple GON. (Certainly, after the February strike there was increased anti-US feelings). The GON is also disaffected by the lack of solid USG support to which it feels entitled.

12. Our current policy is party to this dilemma. The GON takes no initiatives waiting for the opposition to propose them. The opposition will not negotiate unless they feel that the USG is prepared to assist in providing some type of international guarantees. US policy is to not offer any such guarantees. So, the opposition pursues its own plan—intransigence, demands for Somoza's immediate resignation, general strike, etc. when the course of action fails to produce the overthrow of the GON, a backlash against the USG develops in which we are accused of supporting the GON through such things as aid loans, etc.

13. Emb is finding increasingly less evidence that Somoza will indeed relinquish control as promised in the absence of active, continued, and effective USG policy designed to pressure him to make reforms necessary to permit effective elections in 1981 or earlier. Department might wish to consider a new course of action as current instructions make Emb role a self-limiting one. Possible courses of action include: (a) sponsor or support international mediation efforts (e.g., Colombia, Holland, etc.) which could give impetus to a negotiated settlement of current impasse; (b) confronting Somoza privately with demands for changes which, if not rapidly forthcoming, would lead to U.S. boycott; (c) assistance to the moderate opposition in making itself a unified viable alternative both to the current GON and to the FSLN and more radical opposition; (d) active and complete support for the GON due to the FSLN threat and the lack of an effective, viable opposition alternative; (e) continuation of current USG policy; (f) withdrawal. Emb believes the first two alternatives offer the greatest possibilities—especially if pursued in some combination.

Solaun

85. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Managua, August 29, 1978

PARTICIPANTS

"Group of Twelve"

Sergio Ramirez (intellectual)

Miguel D'Escoto (priest)

Emilio Baltadano (businessman)

Richard Feinberg, Member, Policy Planning Staff

SUBJECT

Objectives of the Sandinistas

Sergio Ramirez and Miguel D'Escoto said that a truly radical solution could very well leave Nicaragua worse off. The Sandinistas were not anti U.S. Indeed, in the document released during the seizure of the National Palace, which Ramirez described as moderate if poorly

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 8/78. Confidential.

written by the combatants themselves, the U.S. was barely mentioned; moreover, one of the references to the U.S. was favorable.

D'Escoto described the objective of the Group of Twelve as being to unite the various opposition forces, a task that had been accomplished in forming the FAO ("Frente Amplio"). The FAO has called for the renunciation of Somoza and the formation of a national unity government, as has Archbishop Ovando y Bravo. However, when pressed, they did not have a clear idea as to how this new government would be formed, saying that would have to be decided as the process developed. In the seizure of the Palace, the Sandinistas had not demanded Somoza's resignation because it was impractical, not because they did not seek that goal.

Ramirez said that there were only three forces in Nicaragua—the National Guard (GN), the private sector, and the Sandinistas—and all had to be included in any solution. The traditional parties were largely vestigial. The GN certainly had some relatively honest officers who could participate in a civico-military government, although they did not know who they were (D'Escoto mentioned privately that while most Sandinistas would be happy with this solution, the Proletarian Tendency fraction could be a problem).

They warned that the FSLN would rapidly radicalize if bloodshed continued. Obviously an FSLN that came to power after militarily defeating the GN would be radical.

As for U.S. policy, they agreed with the concept of non-intervention, asking only that policy be clarified and made consistent with Carter's stance on human rights. D'Escoto recognized that President Carter's recent letter to Somoza² was being distorted by Somoza and the media. Ramirez added that Somoza was very responsive to U.S. opinion, and that the U.S. could remove him if it wanted.

Feinberg suggested that they maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy to keep it informed of their positions. They responded that it was not convenient for them to be seen associating with the Embassy. They asked that this meeting be kept secret, and said they would deny it had occurred if asked.

² See Document 76.

86. **Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)**¹

Washington, August 29, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

Yesterday, I met with Bob Riefe of the DDO/CIA to talk about Cuban influence with the three Sandinista factions who are fighting in Nicaragua. The CIA has information that several of those who participated in the raid on the National Palace had been given alias passports from Cuba, but the conclusion of my conversation is that the extent of contact with the Cubans does not appear too great. There are three factions of the Sandinistas, of which the Tercerarios are the major and most cohesive group. There are anywhere from 200 to 500 members. The CIA believes that they are more sophisticated than the Tupamaros were in Uruguay in the early 1970's; they have plenty of money; and they have increased their capability and their discipline markedly over the last year. This faction has representatives in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles who are helping to obtain money. Riefe suggested that we task other [1 line not declassified] for more information on the international contacts of the Sandinistas.

Today, I attended a two-hour meeting on U.S. policy to Nicaragua, which was chaired by Vaky and included Tony Lake and other officials from State as well as from the CIA. The paper which served as a basis of discussion was prepared by Richard Feinberg of Policy Planning. Feinberg, by coincidence, is currently in Nicaragua but has been asked to return immediately to brief us on his discussions there.

Feinberg's paper is quite good, and I attach it for your information.² He analyzes the current political situation (increasingly polarized), U.S. interests in human rights, economic, and in Central American autonomy. Then he lays out several options:

—the restrained interlocutor: which is the present policy of encouraging respect for human rights and a “national dialogue”.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 8/78. Secret. Sent for action.

² Not attached. A draft of Feinberg's paper, dated August 15 and entitled “Review of U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua,” is in the Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, August–September.

—an active mediator role: acting as a go-between in negotiations leading to a transfer of power from Somoza to someone else.

—arbitrator: U.S. would draw up a detailed set of proposals and try to convince all parties to agree to them and hold genuine elections.

—multilateral approach: U.S. would involve as many nations as possible in whatever strategy we pursue.

—detached goal-setter: U.S. would focus on the period between now and elections in 1981 and encourage the development of institutions and a process which would permit genuinely free elections in 1981.

The group analyzed the present situation and discussed these options. Vaky drew four conclusions from the meeting: (1) that if the Nicaraguans are left to their own devices, the political situation will deteriorate; (2) the situation will increasingly polarize and no peaceful moderate solution will emerge; (3) that an external catalyst is necessary for a peaceful solution to be found; and (4) that only the United States has sufficient clout to force Somoza to transfer power. Tony Lake and I have real problems with those conclusions, particularly the last. I agree that the situation is deteriorating and becoming polarized; I am less certain that the Nicaraguans, if left to themselves, will not find a middle solution. I am also less certain that we are the critical element in the equation.

I am more certain that U.S. intervention in Nicaragua to encourage the departure of Somoza may gain us some points among certain countries and groups in the hemisphere and in the United States in the short term, but in the long term, I believe it will compromise the President's moral stature, and arouse conservative forces in the United States who already believe we are deserting our close friends. I find myself moving closer to the "detached goal-setter option", because I believe it is publicly defensible and moral, and that it may achieve the same results as a more interventionist policy.

I have suggested to Pete that we try to prepare a short paper for a PRC or an SCC discussion. He has asked for a delay until after we have had an opportunity to speak to Feinberg, and I am inclined to agree with that. But I do think that the issue deserves PRC or SCC attention, perhaps next week or after the Camp David Summit.³ You may want to raise it directly with Secretary Vance. I would very much appreciate your preliminary views on this matter.⁴

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the holding of a PRC meeting chaired by the Secretary of State on U.S. policy to Nicaragua after the Camp David Summit.⁵

³ The Camp David Summit took place September 5–17.

⁴ Brzezinski underlined this sentence.

⁵ Inderfurth drew an arrow to this option and wrote: "My suggestion (although if events require it, an SCC may be necessary). RI." Brzezinski approved this option.

Or, alternatively, that it be an SCC meeting.⁶

I also attach at Tab B⁷ a short memorandum prepared by the CIA on the limited prospects for a moderate solution in Nicaragua.

⁶ Brzezinski underlined "SCC" and added in the margin: "if it becomes a crisis."

⁷ Not attached. The undated CIA report is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 8/78.

87. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Washington, August 31, 1978, 1434Z

4085. Subject: Opposition Does Not Want USG Mediation in Current Crisis.²

1. Managing Director of opposition daily La Prensa Xavier Chamorro called on Ambassador early this morning (Aug 31). He brought with him an AP press report by Robert B. Cullen³ which stated that USG is studying the possibility of offering its services as a mediator in the current crisis, according to functionaries of the Department of State. The article states that sources say that this possible mediating role is only one of various ideas that are being studied in Washington.

2. Chamorro, who said he was speaking on behalf of the opposition, said that they did not want the USG to engage in mediation if it meant that Somoza would remain in power until 1981. The opposition believes that Somoza must go now. Chamorro expressed great fear that civil

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Cables: 8/78. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Guatemala City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 218953 to Managua, August 29, the Department instructed the Embassy to deliver a "human rights demarche" to Somoza including the message that "repression by the GON will only serve to exacerbate further the already polarized political situation" and that he should "implement his announced intentions to effect a genuine reform of the political system." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780352-0681) The Embassy responded in telegram 4099 from Managua, August 31, noting that Solaun had delivered the demarche to Somoza, who "confirmed his intention to remain in power until 1981." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Cables: 8/78)

³ Not found.

war would develop in Nicaragua. Chamorro said he had no recent reports on the Matagalpa situation but a La Prensa reporter on the scene yesterday had reported many killings and exchanges of gunfire.⁴

3. Amb promised Chamorro that he would report conversation immediately to Washington.

Solaun

⁴ Street fighting between the National Guard and insurgent groups in the city of Matagalpa and the Air Force's use of rockets in the surrounding area caused numerous casualties. (Telegram 4057 from Managua, August 30; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780354-0461; Karen DeYoung, "Fighting Intensifies in Nicaraguan City Following Air Attacks," *Washington Post*, August 31, 1978, p. A18)

88. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 4, 1978, 11:10–11:45 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Mr. David Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Amb. Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Mr. Anthony Lake, Director of Policy Planning Department of State
Mr. James Siena, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA (attended very brief part at the beginning of the meeting)
Mr. Michael Armacost, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA
Mr. Robert Pastor, National Security Council

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 81, Sensitive XX: 9/1–19/78. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. According to Pastor's September 5 covering memorandum to Aaron, under which Pastor sent the memorandum of conversation, Pastor drafted the memorandum. Inderfurth added the following handwritten notation on the covering memorandum: "If the memcon were leaked, it could undermine—perhaps permanently—our ability to work for a positive outcome in Nicaragua. I suggest, therefore, that you *not* send a copy to State and that it be held very closely within the NSC." (Ibid.)

David Aaron began the meeting by saying that the President was deeply interested and concerned over recent developments in Nicaragua. Aaron understood that State had been preparing a paper on the subject, and asked Newsom to comment.

Newsom said that the conclusion of State's internal discussions was that ultimately Somoza would have to go. However, our ability to deal with the evolving situation in Nicaragua will be extremely difficult if that objective becomes clear at the beginning of this exercise. Newsom said that State believes we should stimulate the Central Americans to promote mediation between Somoza and the moderate opposition as a first step in the political process.

Vaky then said that Carazo of Costa Rica had responded to the President's request for an assessment of the situation by suggesting that Costa Rica take the lead in a mediation effort which involves the other Central Americans, and perhaps the OAS. Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Mexico and the United States could support these mediation efforts.²

Newsom said that we should redirect the requests from various individuals in Nicaragua and from people outside Nicaragua that the U.S. mediate by recommending that the Central Americans take the lead. It is our hope that Somoza will step aside along the lines of the Venezuelans' formula. The transitional government which was set up after the overthrow of President Perez Jimenez in Venezuela, then set the stage for a genuinely democratic election.

Vaky said that he did not believe that a moderate solution will emerge on its own. He described the present political situation in Nicaragua. Somoza has apparently dug in his heels. The Sandinistas are extremists with Cuban connections, and we should avoid their gaining the upper hand. Everyone in Nicaragua is ready for a change. He argued that the best apparent solution was a transition formula in which Somoza might step aside and a person or a junta enjoying wide support could be formed and arrange for free elections later. He

² In telegram 222951 to multiple posts, September 1, the Department instructed the Ambassadors or Chargés in Venezuela, Mexico, and Costa Rica to deliver immediately a message from Carter to Perez, Lopez Portillo, and Carazo which read: "I have been watching developments in Nicaragua very closely and am very concerned, as I'm sure you are. I would very much appreciate your personal assessment of this situation." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/1-9/10/78) In telegram 3750 from San José, September 1, the Embassy reported Carazo's response. He felt that "the time may have passed for any Somoza-self-initiated transition of power," and that he was considering the possibility of offering to mediate a solution in Nicaragua and enlisting the chiefs of state of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to join in the "broad effort to get Somoza to recognize that he should leave in favor of a transitional government." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840139-2539)

suggested that people of the stature of Galo Plaza or Lleras Camargo might help facilitate this transition process. Vaky concluded by saying that ultimately it would be our decision which would count.

Tony Lake said that he and Pastor had talked before of their common anxiety of going to a Chief of State and asking him to step down. He said that this would be tricky not only because of the international principle of non-intervention, but also because of reasons internal to the U.S. political process since Somoza has a number of very powerful political allies.

Pastor interjected that the influence of Rep. Charlie Wilson was brought home last week when in the middle of the Nicaraguan crisis, we were impelled to sign two AID loans to Nicaragua. Wilson's importance stems from his position in the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. His vote on foreign aid is pivotal.

Lake said that he pretty much agrees with Vaky's diagnosis. Ultimately, we will have to tell Somoza where we come out on the question of his political future. However, we should not do that at the beginning. For now, we should only talk about a mediation effort and we could do so publicly. It is best to wait before we draw the ultimate conclusion, both for tactical purposes and also to give us time to test our analysis of the situation.

Vaky then said that it's possible that Somoza might accept a mediation effort; we just don't know. But he believed that we need to face the issue of the future of Somoza squarely. Vaky doesn't see that there is anything that we can do other than that. Vaky also informed us that our Charge had been called in to see President Perez the day before, and he expects that Perez may be giving him a letter for President Carter.³

Lake and Vaky then talked about whether or not it should be the United States which ultimately goes to Somoza.

Aaron then asked about the nature of the opposition groups in Nicaragua and whether they will be able to organize themselves to formulate an alternative to Somoza.

Vaky said that the business groups had been trying to organize themselves for that purpose, but they are fragmented and it is unclear whether they will succeed.

³ In telegram 8293 from Caracas, September 2, the Embassy reported that Crowley had met with Perez who asked rhetorically "if we are all going to sit around while genocide is committed in Nicaragua?" Perez endorsed "Somozaism without Somoza" in which "Somoza would be given guarantees for his safety and property in return for stepping down voluntarily." A "governing authority would then be vested in a body composed of members of the Group of 12 and of senior National Guard officers." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850101-1904)

Pastor said that it looks as if Somoza has decided to take steps to break the general strike and the moderate opposition at the same time. If these steps are strong, the moderate opposition may drift back into an apolitical role once again.

Vaky said that the leaders of INDE, a prominent business group, recently saw our Ambassador and requested that the United States mediate.⁴

Aaron then shifted the conversation to the specific steps we should be taking.

Newsom said that we should start with Costa Rica. Carazo is the one leader in Central America that Somoza listens to the most, but Costa Rica also carries the most credibility. Vaky said that the Central Americans are the most legitimate ones for dealing with this problem.

Pastor said that an additional advantage of having the Central Americans take the lead is that they can define the issue as one related to their security concerns, rather than as a political succession issue. As a security issue, they are much better positioned to play the role of mediators and to raise the issue to the OAS. As a political succession issue, the military governments of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala would be very vulnerable to mediating in the Nicaraguan political crisis. The security angle also permits the OAS to address the issue in a relatively legitimate way; whereas the political succession issue is probably not a legitimate issue for the OAS to consider, particularly when about half of its membership are, in a sense, less legitimate than the Nicaraguan government.

Vaky then quoted from the cable we had received from our Ambassador in San Jose. Carazo had told our Ambassador that "Somoza has to be convinced." Costa Rica would be willing to mediate within a joint approach taken by other Central Americans. All agreed that the USG should go to Carazo and inform him that we think his mediation effort is a good idea and that we support it.

Aaron then asked what our public posture should be during this period.

Vaky suggested that we should say that we have been informed that there is a mediation initiative underway, and we support it.

Pastor suggested that we shouldn't say anything about the mediation effort until the Central Americans are unified on the effort and announce their initiative. This was agreed.

⁴ Telegram 4139 from Managua, September 3. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780360-0682)

Armacost asked what we should do when individuals in Nicaragua come to us and ask for our help or support. Whom shall they see? Vaky suggested they be referred to his office in State.

Aaron said that it was inevitable that we would be drawn into the political turmoil, and indeed we already have. Aaron said that if the mediation effort is launched successfully, we will have to go to Somoza to tell him that we support it. Aaron suggested that State and NSC draft a memo for the President which makes this point and lays out our recommendation for him to consider. The memo should also talk about the increasing polarization in Nicaragua, and that Somoza is taking steps to destroy the moderate opposition.

Vaky said that Somoza is trying to create a situation where we will have to choose between Somoza and chaos.

Lake said that one of the advantages of the mediation option is that it doesn't require us to go to Somoza at the beginning to tell him that he has to leave.

Vaky informed the group that the Venezuelans had initially brought up the issue of Nicaragua before the UN Security Council this past weekend, but when it was learned that the OAS may take up the issue, we successfully deferred action by the UN Security Council while the OAS discussed it. However, the Soviets inserted in the language that the UN Security Council would not consider it "for the time being", leaving the option to review the issue if the OAS doesn't.

Newsom then said that the fact that the Central Americans are concerned with this issue adds to it a certain degree of legitimacy. Pastor asked whether or not we would be taking it to the OAS.

Lake said that the Central Americans apparently preferred not to work through the OAS, and that we should support this informal group of Central American presidents in their mediation effort outside the OAS. Vaky said that we could turn to the OAS for support of the Central American initiative after the Central Americans have launched it.

Newsom asked which Congressmen should be informed and what should we tell them. Tony Lake suggested that Newsom tell Charlie Wilson. Vaky and Newsom then agreed that Vaky should talk to Sarbanes and Yatron and provide them a diagnosis of the political situation, leaving them with the impression that the U.S. Government was on top of the issue. We should, however, not give them a sense of which option we have chosen. Newsom also suggested that we tell Sarbanes and Yatron that we have been in touch with key Latin American leaders as well as with President Somoza.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that State and NSC would prepare a decision memo for the President and an attached

cable to be sent from the Secretary to our Ambassador in San Jose, instructing him to tell Carazo that we support Carazo's plan for a Central American mediation initiative.⁵ Vaky said that the second step should be to ask Venezuela, Mexico, and Colombia to support the initiative. All agreed on the need for extreme confidentiality on this issue, and that it should proceed by NODIS Cherokee channel.

⁵ See Document 90.

89. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 4, 1978

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

After our discussion on Nicaragua this morning, David Aaron held a meeting with Newsom, Pete Vaky, Tony Lake and Bob Pastor to discuss developments in Nicaragua and options for U.S. policy.² They worked off of a paper that had been prepared over the weekend by State and NSC.³ We all believe that the situation in Nicaragua is deteriorating rapidly and that Somoza has decided to take steps to suppress the moderate opposition, thus trying to force us to choose between him and the Sandinistas.

In response to your message last week,⁴ Costa Rican President Carazo suggested the idea of a joint Central American approach to mediate the transfer of power in Nicaragua. We believe this path offers the most promise, and Cy recommends (Tab A), and I concur, that you authorize the dispatch of the cable at Tab B to our Ambassador in

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 1/77-11/78. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action.

² Brzezinski met with Carter on September 4 from 8:30 to 8:48 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the meeting has been found. For the memorandum of Aaron's meeting, see Document 88.

³ Not further identified.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 88.

Costa Rica instructing him to express U.S. Government support for the proposal.⁵

As the cable indicates, we believe it is more appropriate for the Central Americans to take the initiative on an issue of special concern to their security, and for us to support them, rather than the other way around. I should point out that the policy which we suggest represents a departure from our current policy of strict and passive non-intervention. But we believe that a multilateral effort at mediation, which is initiated by the Central Americans themselves, and the deteriorating situation in Nicaragua require us to adopt this new approach.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the dispatch of the cable at Tab B.⁶

Tab A

Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter⁷

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

THE ISSUE

How should we respond to the deteriorating situation in Nicaragua?

DIAGNOSIS

The underlying problem is: when and under what circumstances will Somoza leave power?

The longer this question remains unresolved, the greater the probability of a violent outcome with repercussions comparable to those of past succession crisis in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Chile.

⁵ Ibid. Tab B is not attached.

⁶ Following the recommendation, Brzezinski added: "subject to one minor change that I made on Vance's draft; his memo to you represents a joint position. A page or two on the internal political alternatives will be ready in a day. ZB." Carter approved the recommendation and wrote "see note" beneath it. Pastor sent an undated memorandum entitled "Politics in Nicaragua: Opposition to Somoza," under a September 5 memorandum to Brzezinski. According to a handwritten notation, Brzezinski opted to "hold till after SCC or PRC meeting on this." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 2/77–9/78)

⁷ Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed the top of the first page of the memorandum.

Nicaragua's neighbors in Central America are increasingly concerned that their security will be endangered. Nicaragua's location, and the unique history of our association with the Somozas, put US prestige on the line.

The prospects for an internally-generated orderly solution are declining. Somoza is determined to stay in power, and is out to destroy his legitimate opponents so as to fulfill his prophecy that he is the only alternative to chaos and communism. Despite his great personal skills, I believe Somoza can no longer rally fresh political support to his essentially spent regime or restore business confidence.

The Sandinistas (FSLN) are not strong enough now to seize power, but Somoza can neither eliminate them nor control Nicaragua's borders. The longer Somoza remains in power, the greater their claim to a share of power in any successor regime. Were Somoza replaced in the near future by an independent government—even a conservative one—the Sandinistas would probably lose their basic appeal and become a marginal splinter group.

The core of the opposition is made up of pragmatic moderates, mainly businessmen fed up with 40 years of corruption and fearful that Somoza's continuance in power will ultimately destroy them as well. Opposition has multiplied as the Somoza system's effectiveness has gradually declined. Some members of Somoza's cabinet, of the governing Liberal Party, and even of the National Guard have begun to consider abandoning him.

Orderly succession by means of the elections scheduled for 1981 would require a prior political opening and electoral reform, neither of which is likely without outside pressure. A transitional succession could take place before 1981 through the election by the existing congress of an interim president, or the formation of a transitional National Unity government.

The civic strife now underway will increasingly undermine the unity of the National Guard and the viability of the private sector, making an orderly solution more difficult with every passing day.

In response to your request for an assessment of the situation, Presidents Perez, Lopez Portillo and Carazo have made clear that they and others are prepared to work for an orderly solution.⁸ It is also clear, however, that prospects for a moderate outcome hinge on the United States acting in concert with others to bring about such an outcome.

⁸ See footnote 2, Document 88.

THE OPTIONS

In light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Nicaragua, my conclusions are that:

- support for the status quo through Somoza will simply not serve our interests, or those of our allies.

- detached neutrality or disassociation can probably not bring enough pressure to bear to rapidly resolve the crisis;

- The OAS may be helpful over time but cannot act with the speed and effectiveness now required.

The best means to bring about a compromise between Somoza and his legitimate opposition that would ensure an early and orderly transfer of power—and thus end the crisis—appears to be mediation by Nicaragua's neighbors in Central America.

Therefore, I recommend that you authorize us to tell President Carazo that:

- we support his previously expressed idea that he should consult with other Central American governments to enlist their support for such a mediation effort, and that

- if they accept, we would tell Somoza that we believe he should accept as well.

We have received a further report that Carazo may be showing some growing reluctance about the mediation process, but we believe this is out of frustration, and that he will adopt this approach if we show support.

If this approach is adopted, we will have to be prepared to give the mediators our full support. We do not now contemplate asking Somoza to step down. But the time might come when we would have to urge him to do so as part of a mediated solution.

I believe mediation is in fact in Somoza's best interests as well as ours, and that Somoza himself may ultimately agree. But until that becomes clear, we are likely to be criticized by some who will argue that we are abandoning a friend in time of need.⁹

Recommendation

That you authorize the dispatch of the attached cable.¹⁰

⁹ In a September 3 draft memorandum to Vance, Vaky and Lake presented five options regarding Somoza: 1) detached neutrality; 2) disassociation; 3) support; 4) mediation; or 5) arbitration. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/1–12/78)

¹⁰ Not attached. Carter approved this recommendation and added the following notation: "Para 5. Add requirement of early move to democracy. J." See Document 90.

90. Editorial Note

In telegram 224586 to San José, September 5, 1978, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance informed U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Marvin Weissman that "we support Carazo's idea for a mediation process between Somoza and the legitimate opposition to reach agreement on a formula for transferring power." Vance instructed Weissman to tell Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo that the United States would "support such a step and, if the mediation effort achieves support among the Central American Presidents, would recommend that Somoza accept it." Vance also cautioned Weissman that "this clearly cannot be a U.S. orchestrated step" and that, therefore, he would have to "walk a fine line" in his discussion with Carazo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137-1824)

In telegram 3765 from San José, September 6, the Embassy reported that Carazo had agreed with the substance of the *démarche* and would proceed with discussions about a mediation with Honduran President Policarpo Paz Garcia, Salvadoran President Carlos Humberto Romero, and Guatemalan President Romeo Lucas Garcia. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840139-2549) In telegram 226426 to Managua, September 7, the Department instructed U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Mauricio Solaun to inform Somoza that "Carazo informed us of his efforts to develop a mediation role for his Central American colleagues in regard to the Nicaragua situation on the basis of their concern over the security of the region," and that the United States welcomed such an initiative. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/1-10/78) Solaun reported in telegram 4197 from Managua, September 7, that he had informed Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza that morning that the United States "welcomed Carazo's initiative" and that "an outsider to this local conflict could assist polarized parties to seek a peaceful, democratic solution." Somoza responded that it was "impossible that a man like Carazo, who is not my friend," could mediate and that Carazo should simply "kick out" the Sandinista National Liberation Front from Costa Rica. Somoza also asked Solaun to "tell Washington" that: "1) he wanted a definition, specifically for the opposition, of what is meant by 'peaceful democratic change,'" and that "when it became clear that this did not mean his overthrow, 'the opposition will change its tune;' 2) that the situation is under control here; 3) that he hoped that the US would abstain in the OAS as a trade-off for Nicaragua's earlier vote on the Dominican Republic," which referred to the 1965 intervention. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780365-0237) For more information about the pending Organization of American States action regarding

Nicaragua, see Document 98. Pastor discussed Carazo's mediation effort in Document 93.

91. Telegram From the the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, September 6, 1978, 2045Z

4176. Subject: Conversation With Somoza: 5th September. Ref: State 224978.²

Summary. Concerned over the upcoming OAS meeting convoked at Venezuelan request, Somoza requested a meeting with Ambassador. In discussing the OAS meeting and the situation in Nicaragua, Somoza stated unequivocally that the GON would neither request nor tolerate OAS intervention. Predicting a bloodbath and breakdown of the OAS should such an intervention be attempted, Somoza again asked for complete USG support of his government. End summary.

1. At Somoza's request, Ambassador met with him for slightly over one hour on 5 September evening. Somoza asked Ambassador to clarify USG position (earlier presented to Deputy ForMin Bodan) with respect to the GOV initiative.³ Ambassador told Somoza that a cable had just arrived from Washington and explained contents of reftel—noting that USG did not interpret OAS convocation as one involving Rio Treaty's "Threat to Peace" provisions, but, rather, Article 59 of OAS Charter, and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780363–0654. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Caracas, Guatemala City, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² In telegram 224978 to Managua, September 5, the Department instructed the Embassy to inform the Nicaraguan Government that Venezuela's call for a meeting of Foreign Ministers at the OAS was "not under Rio Treaty's threat to hemispheric peace provisions (Article 6 of Rio Treaty and Article 28 of OAS Charter)," which would have raised the possibility of sanctions, "but rather under Article 59 of the Charter which specifies considering qte problems of an urgent nature and of common interest to the American States. Unqte." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780361–1083)

³ Machín wrote a letter to McGee on September 2 to request a meeting of the Permanent Council of the OAS "for the purpose of calling a Meeting of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider, in accordance with the provisions of article 59 of the Charter of the Organization, problems of an urgent nature and of common interest to the American States, and which are related to the current situation in Nicaragua." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, August–September 1978)

that USG believes Article 59 applicable because Nicaraguan situation is a "matter of common concern." The USG, he continued, does not wish to prejudge the outcome of debate, but feels the OAS should focus attention on the matter.

2. Somoza said that Ambassador's presentation appeared reasonable, but the USG was being "duped" by Venezuela. He went on to say that the problem was that the USG was backing not a council meeting but one of the consulting body (Organo de Consulta) and that the consulting body is all powerful. Somoza said he would not be concerned if it were to be only a council meeting, but that by taking this "extraordinary step," we were opening the door to intervention which could break up the OAS because the GON will permit no intervention here. Furthermore, Somoza wanted the Ambassador to understand that OAS intervention had always been in the minds of the opposition. Aguero (note: Fernando Aguero is leader of a faction of the conservative party and, at the time cited, was the popular leader of a more unified PCN party.) Created a major disturbance in 1967—when the Dominican intervention was still recent—hoping for similar OAS intervention. While the OAS discusses, Somoza continued, the opposition will be incited to violence with the hope that "in the face of violence and, even, ironically so, a Communist threat, the OAS will intervene and oust me." Thus, Venezuela and the U.S. will be responsible for bloodshed here.

3. Clearly, said Somoza, the President of the OAS Council (Ambassador McGee) would be voting in favor of intervention and, in the light of this, he (Somoza) will have to "reconsider the relationship with the USG. You must understand, Mr. Ambassador, that this meeting is, simply, as if a group of your enemies were to be sitting around waiting for a riot to occur in New York. Clearly, you wouldn't like that. And the fact that the potential rioters knew that they had all that international support would further incite them. Ambassador, I want you to know that, during the process of consultation, there is going to be a bloodbath here. Already, the U.S. has encouraged violence here. Because of your human rights policy, a bunch of imbeciles have thought that you are going to overthrow me. Do not contribute more to the tragedy of this country."

4. Somoza went on to ask how, with the international publicity campaign against him, could he maintain law and order? "Clearly, I could stage an auto-coup and leave the country, but I cannot leave the country in chaos." After the National Palace incident, he continued, it became apparent to the National Guard (GN) that the Communists were the only well-organized opposition force. "I have just met with the GN and it will not permit itself to be defeated by the Communists as its survival depends on this," Somoza said.

5. Ambassador replied that Somoza was interpreting events pessimistically. To begin with, Somoza would probably have some support in OAS. Next, the OAS meeting would be an opportunity to discuss these problems which, as Somoza was aware, involved movement of people across international borders and the threat of a Communist takeover—both matters which should be discussed. “Nicaragua could, in fact,” said Ambassador, “participate in this debate, help clarify issues and problems, and proposes solutions.”

6. Somoza said that such a view would have been acceptable “If the US would have privately told us that you wanted these problems, which indeed exist, discussed, we would agree and open discussion of these matters. But, Carlos Andres never told me that he wanted to discuss objectively and broadly the Nicaraguan problem, nor did Consalvi (Venezuelan ForMin) tell Quintana in Rome that we should seek an OAS meeting to resolve these problems.

7. Ambassador expressed his view that there existed four hypothetical options for USG policy. First, shore up the Somoza regime. This approach, however, was improper because no foreign government should be responsible for a local political situation. Further, existing distrust of Somoza’s intent to leave power inhibited this type political action. Somoza protested, noting that the pact leading to the present constitution was negotiated by Ambassador Shelton and he (Somoza) had made many concessions to conservatives to please Shelton. He had honored those concessions and was a man of his word. Continuing with the second option, the Ambassador noted that the USG could withdraw, implying total termination of programs and minimum profile. This approach was unpopular among activists of different persuasion who do not wish to wash their hands of Nicaragua. Third, Somoza could be overthrown. However, there were serious moral and political reservations to this course of action. Fourth, mediation. Why, Ambassador queried, would Somoza oppose an OAS mediation not physically occupying the country, but, for instance, it consisted of sending people to guarantee elections? Both sides would compromise, Ambassador said. Somoza dismissed this as impossible, saying, “Latins don’t know how to compromise and don’t understand free elections.”

8. Somoza then told Ambassador that the UPI story⁴ about Raymond Molina was “abusive.” (Note: UPI reported that Molina, a Cuban-American closely associated with Somoza, had represented himself as a GON spokesman and labeled Patricia Derian, Robert Pastor, and Mark Schneider as Marxists. End note). Somoza denied he was a spokesman. He wanted Ambassador to formally clarify this with Washington.

⁴ Not found.

One thing is Somoza's private, diplomatic criticism, but Molina's remarks were "ridiculous." Ambassador said he would so report to Washington.

9. Somoza then showed Ambassador a "secret" document reporting on contacts between prominent FSLN members, such as "zero," and the Costa Rican Consul in Venezuela and the training of FSLN Cadres in Chiriqui, Panama by Cubans. Somoza reiterated that the USG would gain nothing but violence here and that he was a very patient man (sereno), but that he was mobilizing his troops tomorrow and anyone who started shooting was going to be shot by the GN in self-defense.⁵ He wanted Ambassador to know that he was "current" (al dia) with the OAS, having invited the IAHRC to visit, but he will not accept a unilateral OAS intervention. The GON will not ask the OAS to come here and, with such opposition, the OAS could breakdown. Somoza opined that the next few days here would be crucial and Amb must be very careful as his life might be in danger. The FSLN might return anytime and all they wanted was to "screw" the US.

10. Somoza then read, from a book, incidents occurring in Venezuela during the early 1960's concerning the marxist rebellion vs. Betancourt: state of siege, GOV occupation of the University; the slogan "Kill a Policeman a Day", plots to assassinate Betancourt; lifting of parliamentary immunity in some cases; Marxist boycott of the 1963 elections . . . "all this is happening here, Mr. Ambassador. You didn't call Betancourt a dictator. The USG helped Venezuela. The USG must now back Somoza. To the hilt," Somoza said.

11. Somoza reiterated the friendship between Nicaragua and the US. He had tried, he said, by all means to make peace with Venezuela, but that "old hatred between Betancourt and my father" blocked any understanding. Closing the discussion, Somoza made the following points. Venezuela should not act as USG proxy. OAS action will encourage bloodshed here with revolutionaries hoping for intervention. The precedent of OAS intervention is dangerous. Since Aguero in 1967, the opposition has been trying to use the OAS. Mangua is on the verge of major bloodshed. The GON will never ask the OAS to intervene. One thing is to discuss Nicaragua in council, the consulting body was quite different. The USG must help him to defuse the time bomb that Nicaragua is today.

⁵ An Intelligence Information Cable, September 8, noted that, in a series of meetings in late August and early September, Somoza and his military advisors had been discussing plans for the National Guard to conduct raids in Costa Rica to eliminate FSLN guerrillas. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/1/78-9/12/80)

12. Comment: Somoza continues to vocalize opposition to third party mediation. He appears to be prepared to resort to force to neutralize the opposition. He remains unwilling to initiate dramatic reforms that might strengthen the center of the political spectrum.

Solaun

92. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 7, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: Your Questions About Political Futures

At your request, I tasked the CIA to do a study of political alternatives to Somoza,² though I used another phrase.

The Agency's analysts have not strayed from their hard-sell approach to encouraging us to play an active mediating role, along the lines Pete Vaky advocates. As the first paragraph indicates, they believe that the U.S. is "the key to a viable solution", and that "an internally generated compromise" is not likely. With regard to the specific question of who is likely to be in a transitional or a future government, the Agency's analysts were incredibly reluctant to answer that question. I brought them together with a couple of officials from State today to address the question again, but their reluctance did not diminish.

The paper, however, like my previous memorandum,³ lists many of the people and groups who are most likely to play important roles in future governments. It is, of course, impossible to do anything more than speculate, but we all agree that the opposition, which would want to participate in a mediation effort, a transitional government, and a future government would include Alfonso Robelo (MDN), Rene San-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 81, Sensitive XX: 9/1–19/78. Secret.

² Attached but not printed is the September 7 CIA study entitled, "Nicaragua—Factors and Figures in the Process Leading to a Transition Government."

³ See footnote 6, Document 89.

dino (Conservative Party), Ramiro Sacasa (Liberal Party faction), Cordova Rivas (UDEL), Xavier Chamorro (newspaper editor), and Manuel Jose Torres (INDE). The paper lists other possibilities.

In our conversation, an idea emerged that perhaps the best transitional government, and also the most widely acceptable, would be one which preserved current institutions, but displaced Somoza and some of his closest lieutenants. Most of the moderate opposition to Somoza is critical of Somoza, and not of the institutions. Their programs are generally quite moderate and reformist, calling for honest government, better programs, more efficient civil service. There is almost no call for structural change. Almost all of their concern is focused on Somoza.

Therefore, the best transitional government would probably be one which was led by someone like Somoza's current foreign minister, Quintanilla. It would include a Cabinet which brought people from a wide range of opposition and government leaders. And most importantly, the National Guard would be practically untouched, except for displacing the Somozas and a number of their closest allies. It would probably be best to have the Chief of Staff of the Army, Armando Fernandez, remain as the spokesman for the Guard. By keeping the Guard largely untouched, that would permit sufficient capability to continue the fight against the Sandinistas.

[1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

93. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 8, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua and Puerto Rico: Weekly Update

Nicaragua. The crisis is worsening. The Costa Ricans announced their mediation initiative, and their Foreign Minister traveled to El

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/1-12/78. Secret.

Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.² It is unclear what the outcome will be, but there are grounds for pessimism. The other Central American presidents are showing some reluctance to get involved in a mediation effort. This was best illustrated at the OAS meeting on Thursday³ where Venezuela did not receive that much support from the other countries. Mexico appears disinterested, in spite of what Roel told us. And the Costa Ricans never even bothered to explain their initiative. The Nicaraguans sensed that sentiment was either with them (i.e., opposed to interfering in their internal affairs) or apathetic, and they pushed for an early vote. We succeeded in getting the vote postponed until next Tuesday,⁴ but before then we may face some hard decisions.

Somoza is pulling out all the stops. Representative John Murphy, Somoza's old West Point classmate, called me several times yesterday to try to get us to oppose Venezuela's request for a meeting of foreign ministers. He said that there will be blood in the streets of Managua if we support Venezuela. He also said that he is trying to reschedule a luncheon with the President, and Frank Moore may get in touch with you on that. I strongly recommend that we continue postponing a decision on the luncheon until the situation cools.

Vaky and I held meetings on Thursday and Friday to discuss ways to improve the prospects of the Central American initiative and to discuss what we should do if that initiative fails, as Vaky thinks will happen. State and the CIA are preparing papers on these subjects, and I think we should seriously consider calling a meeting at your level next Monday to decide the next steps we should take. Vaky is pressing hard for us to take an aggressive, out-front role as the mediator in Nicaragua, but I have strong reservations about that. A high-level decision will be needed.

In the meantime, Vaky has agreed to inform Perez and Torrijos of the seriousness with which we view the Central American initiative. We have also sent a cable to all ARA posts⁵ to get a head-count on a

² In telegram 3832 from San José, September 8, the Embassy reported on Calderon's meetings in Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, and Guatemala City noting that "Romero and Lucas and less clearly, Paz, Calderon reports, are seized with the need to collaborate to hasten some viable solution, but insist on a non-interventionist approach, a need to avoid casting the initiative as a 'dump Somoza' one, and a common lack of desire to meet as chiefs of state before a workable solution has been agreed to with Somoza." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780367-0076)

³ September 7.

⁴ September 12.

⁵ Telegram 227414 to Guatemala City, September 8; (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780365-0447) telegram 227730 to multiple posts, September 8; (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780366-0672) telegram 227780 to Bogotá, September 8; (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780366-0711) and telegram 228502 to all American Republic posts, September 8. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780367-0167)

possible vote on Tuesday, and also to sound out countries on the possibility of obtaining a further postponement. We believe a postponement will be possible.

Vaky met today with the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister and persuaded him to accept some form of mediation. We expect he will be carrying this message back to Somoza. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Nicaragua.]

94. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua: At the Crossroads

A Fact-Finding Mission

I would ask you to reassess the idea of sending a high-level "fact-finding" mission to Nicaragua and Central America. I believe that the time and circumstances are wrong for such a journey, and it is fraught with far greater risks than potential rewards.

First of all, it is naive to think that we could send a Bill Rogers or a Bill Bowdler to Central America at this time just to "collect facts." Everyone in Central America knows we have just sent an expert on Latin America, Feinberg of Policy Planning, who knows much more about the current situation there than Bowdler or Rogers. There is no question that a visit by Rogers or Bowdler will be viewed as an American effort to set up an alternative government, and as such, we will be universally condemned as interventionist at worst, paternalistic at best.

Jimmy Carter has been able to secure Latin American cooperation and support on a wider range of issues and to a greater degree than any previous U.S. President precisely because he has credibly projected a commitment to non-intervention and a desire to end U.S. paternalism. He has reiterated these commitments at almost every opportunity he

¹ Source: Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, David Aaron, Box 224, (Aaron, David), Nicaragua, (9/8-19/1978). Secret.

has had to speak to a Latin American audience. He will be ridiculed, and his policies on everything—human rights, non-proliferation, Cuban intervention in Africa, etc.—will be seriously undermined if he is perceived as trying to organize a new Nicaraguan government. Such a perception will unavoidably accompany a visit by Rogers and even one by Bowdler. We should not fool ourselves. Everyone will know that this mission signifies a shift in our strategy to one of active mediation.

A visit by Rogers would raise unrealistic expectations among a few in Nicaragua; to most Latin Americans it will offer the opportunity to unite—as they haven’t done since Carter was elected—and condemn U.S. interference in the internal affairs of a small country. I think you will be surprised at how widespread the condemnation will be; even enemies of Somoza like Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Peru, could conceivably be a party to it. I wouldn’t be surprised if Costa Rica and Venezuela joined them.

And even if *we* thought that Rogers would only go to collect facts, he would soon find himself mediating. What will he do in Nicaragua? Vaky thinks he should “talk turkey” with Somoza, tell him to step aside in favor of a transitional government and in exchange for guarantees for his safety, his family, and his wealth. What happens when Somoza checks to see if the Emperor has clothes, and he calls our bluff? What happens if Somoza tells Rogers to go to hell; then he calls Charlie Wilson and his other friends in the U.S. and tells them that Carter has just sent Rogers down to overthrow him. The next day Somoza tells the same story to the press. Carter will be crucified by Latin America for doing exactly what he had promised in Panama in June that he would never do: intervene in the internal affairs of a small country. He will be criticized by the right in the U.S. for trying to give Nicaragua away to the Communists or to chaos; by the left for being unprincipled, and by the middle, for being inept and impotent (“can’t even get rid of a tin-horned dictator anymore”).

Meantime, the moderate opposition in Nicaragua will be demoralized; the Sandinistas will condemn American imperialism; and Somoza will probably declare Rogers and our Ambassador “persona non grata”, receiving the first applause from Nicaraguans in years. He will have successfully kicked Uncle Sam in the ass, and no Latin American could resist congratulating him for it. (No one should underestimate the extent to which Latin Americans of all political persuasions get agitated over U.S. attempts to interfere in their internal affairs. Tab A)²

² Tab A, attached but not printed, is a CIA Intelligence Information Cable, September 8, regarding the alleged plans of Nicaraguan college students to initiate a campaign against the Ambassador.

In short, I disagree profoundly with Vaky who believes that only we can get Somoza to exit. *We cannot give the word to Somoza.* The risks are too great. Someone else must do that. We can only suggest indirectly our support for he who carries the message.

Is There Any Urgency for a Visit?

I initially agreed with Vaky and Newsom that the situation was grave and required our urgent attention for two reasons—neither of which hold any more. First, I believed that the Central American initiative was weak and needed our help. The cable from Guatemala tonight heralds the virtual demise of the initiative.³ It's too late to save it. Secondly, the O.A.S. meeting on Tuesday required our urgent attention to try to create the conditions in Nicaragua and in Central America for a credible and persuasive debate.⁴ Now the O.A.S. debate has been postponed.

Vaky's argument that the Sandinistas are about to over-run the National Guard (GN) strikes me as totally wrong. We do not have one piece of intelligence to indicate that the unity of the National Guard is breaking. The GN is strong, still loyal to Somoza, and recruiting new soldiers. Furthermore, the Sandinista attack over the weekend seemed more like hit-and-run than a show of strength. (Tab B)⁵

I frankly don't think the Sandinistas will ever over-run Somoza or the GN regardless of what we do. If we do absolutely nothing—which I don't propose—the GN will have a long hard fight on their hands with a lot of violence and death over the next few years, but the Guatemalans put down a more determined and better organized revolutionary movement in the late 1960's with a lot less capability.

The real source of strength for those who want to replace Somoza is international public opinion and legitimacy. That is why Perez feinted toward the O.A.S., and why Somoza is so worried about the O.A.S. The real power is international legitimacy. If Somoza is stupid enough to send the GN into Costa Rica to search and destroy Sandinistas, as current intelligence suggests he might (Tab C),⁶ he will give the

³ In telegram 5354 from Guatemala City, September 11, the Embassy reported that Castillo had taken an "unambiguously negative view of Costa Rica initiative." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780370-0160)

⁴ See footnotes 2 and 3, Document 91.

⁵ Tab B, attached but not printed, is a CIA Intelligence Information Cable, September 10, describing the Nicaraguan Government's response to harassing attacks on police posts.

⁶ Tab C, attached but not printed, is a CIA Intelligence Information Cable, also dated September 8, describing Somoza's possible plans to conduct raids into Costa Rica to eliminate the FSLN guerrillas.

Venezuelans (and us) the issue we need: Nicaraguan intervention. Particularly if the Nicaraguans don't find Sandinistas, they will be extremely vulnerable, and then condemnation, followed by international mediation will be plausible.

Finally, before sending Rogers or Bowdler, we should recall that the Central American initiative collapsed precisely because the Guatemalans and the Salvadoreans viewed the issue as an internal matter, and because they don't see the Sandinistas as a credible threat yet.

In summary, I don't think we should send a fact-finding mission because it would be viewed as a U.S. mediation effort and thus interference; the opposition elements will expect us to be the unifying element instead of doing it themselves; we will find ourselves mediating and Somoza could call our bluff; it would receive only minimal—if any—international support; and finally, it may be important, but it is no longer urgent.

I believe that a mediation trip should be made, but not by us, and at a more auspicious time than now when there is more support for such an effort.

What to Do?

I agree that a hands-off policy is unrealistic. But I believe that our effectiveness will in part be a function of how we use our hands—directly or indirectly.

First, we must be clear on our goal: we want to see the moderate opposition form a government with as little violence as possible and before the Sandinistas get any stronger. We also want to preserve the integrity of the President's commitments to nonintervention and to letting small countries determine their own destinies without outside interference.

Specifically, this may mean having Somoza step aside in favor of a government which is governed by a coalition of conservatives, liberals, and others. In this transitional phase, the names would change only slightly, and the institutions would remain the same. We would also be prepared to show our support for this new government by going ahead with \$6 million of FY 1979 AID loans and \$5.3 million of FMS (FY 1976, '77, '78).

How to Do This?

Within Nicaragua

1) First, we must increase the distance between the USG and Somoza. We can do this by withdrawing the Milgroup and by making press statements calling for "a peaceful democratic solution."

2) Second, we should expand our range of contacts with the liberals, conservatives, and other groups, sharing our analysis of the situation.

3) Third, we should take steps to strengthen the hand of moderate business opposition groups (e.g., step up Export-Import Bank guarantees to the private sector, but not to the Government or to Somoza's businesses).

4) Fourth, we should regularize our communication (through civilian Embassy personnel) to potential leaders in the National Guard. We should share our analysis of the situation and seek theirs.

5) Fifth, we should begin communicating (directly or indirectly) with moderate elements in the Sandinistas or just with the Group of 12. (If there is one area in need of fact-finding, it is the Sandinistas.)

Within Central America and Internationally

1) We should send our Ambassadors in regularly to share our analysis of the situation with selected Presidents and seek theirs—always pointing toward a moderate solution and trying to get them to think beyond Somoza.

2) We should continually encourage the leaders (Perez, Torrijos, Carazo) to stay in front.

3) We should be alert to opportunities (such as a Nicaraguan border intrusion) to promote a Latin American mediation effort (using leaders like Galo Plaza, Lleras Camargo, General Lanusse of Argentina).

4) We should seek ways to legitimize the moderate opposition to Somoza and de-legitimize him. A visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights will help.

5) We should be alert to ways to discredit the Sandinistas and to make it an international issue if the Cuban link proves definitively stronger than their ties to Venezuelans or Panamanians.

With this strategy, we will not control events. But I believe it's absurd to think we can anyhow. All we can do is encourage Nicaraguans to make the hard decisions by creating a climate where they will be willing to take risks.

To the extent that we effectively convey our analysis of the situation to Nicaragua's neighbors, we will begin building a common view of the problem and a potential base of support for multilateral mediation. To the extent that analyses are shared, we will increase our ability to mobilize international opinion against Somoza, legitimize the opposition, and pre-empt the Sandinistas. We also need to structure incentives in such a way that opposition elements are more likely to coalesce.

Over time, I believe this is the only viable strategy. Let Somoza make the first mistake; we don't need to. Somoza is still playing with us because he thinks it's still possible to win us back. That offers us leverage which we shouldn't discard at such an early stage. We need to make our move only after we have international public opinion

solidly behind us and lined up against him. That's not the case now, but it will happen. Let's try to create the right conditions before we move.

The Sandinistas have shown Nicaraguans that Somoza is vulnerable; but Somoza will not step aside unless real international pressure is brought to bear on him, and he loses the support of the Central American Presidents. We should begin working toward that goal.

95. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, September 12, 1978, 2:35–3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary

Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs

Ambassador David Newsom, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Defense

Stanley Resor, Under Secretary for Policy

Mike Armacost, Deputy Assistant Secretary

JCS

Lt. General J.A. Wickham, Director, Joint Staff

Brigadier General James H. Johnson, Deputy Director, Current Operations

DIA

Rear Admiral W.D. Robertson, Vice Director for Operations

Edward Heaton, Analyst

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

[*name and title not declassified*] National Foreign Assessment Center

White House

David Aaron

NSC

Robert Pastor

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/1–12/78. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

MINUTES OF MEETING

David Aaron opened the meeting and explained its purpose: to examine the current situation in Nicaragua and assess options that may be available to minimize the damage to U.S. interests and indeed to advance our interests. He asked Christopher for an assessment, and Christopher turned to Pete Vaky.

Situation in Nicaragua

Vaky explained that the situation in Nicaragua is one in which there is fairly widespread opposition to Somoza's continuing in power involving many groups. This opposition does not have much organization or program; the principal point of unity among all the groups, which range from the Church to the Sandinistas, is opposition to Somoza's continued rule. Nonetheless, the opposition has been growing. Somoza says that he does not intend to leave, and that the alternative to his rule is chaos. Parts of the opposition include the Sandinistas, whose recent raids indicate a surprising capacity for independent action. Vaky believes that the purpose of the raid was to show moderates that peaceful opposition to Somoza won't work, and that the Sandinistas are increasingly a legitimate voice. As time passes, the opposition will increasingly turn to the Sandinistas as the only group who offers the possibility of overthrowing Somoza. Somoza can hang onto power for a long time, but only by using increasingly repressive measures. It is possible that within a couple of weeks the Sandinistas will be able to strike again. The longer violence continues, the fewer the options for finding a middle position. A solution apparently will not be generated internally.

Vaky said that the Central Americans' mediation effort, which we had placed so much hope in, is collapsing. Nor does he believe that the OAS will be able to move on the issue either, since a two-thirds vote is necessary.

The one power, in Vaky's mind, which everyone is looking to, is the United States. The only chance for negotiated agreement is if we stand behind it and push it. The question is should we do that, or should we let nature take its course?

Aaron asked Turner to comment on the current conflict and on the Sandinistas.

Turner said that with regard to the current military situation, the National Guard remains loyal and 6,000 strong. As for the Sandinistas, it is divided up into three groups, with approximately 1200 guerrillas. The Sandinistas have caused a great many problems for the Guard, and presently have four cities under siege. Esteli and Masay have been

placed under martial law for the next 30 days,² and the National Guard intends to clean these two up, but Turner does not believe that it will be able to completely assert its control in the four cities at this time without unnecessarily jeopardizing the security of Managua. Still, the National Guard remains unified. If, however, there are defections from the Guard, it will take a much longer time to regain control.

The Sandinistas and the Moderates

With regard to outside support for the Sandinistas, Turner said that they do not get that much outside support, except for some guidance and training from Cuba. As for the general strike, it appears to be much more effective today, and is supported by business and the moderate opposition, which he then described. There is some question about how the moderates will react to a U.S. mediation initiative, and it probably depends on what kind of guarantees the United States will be able to give. There are some who believe that an expression of concern by the United States would be sufficient, while others believe that only an absolute set of guarantees to Somoza will work. In short, there is a real danger that if the United States commits itself to active mediation, that we could split the moderates down the middle. For one thing, we don't know who will speak for the moderates.

Turner summarized by saying that if we intervene, the problem becomes how do we force the coalescence among the different moderate groups. The extent to which we will be able to do this will be contingent on how convincing we are that we intend to get Somoza to depart. On the other hand, to the extent that we convince the moderates that we are trying to get Somoza to leave, we are going to decrease the chances of obtaining Somoza's cooperation for a mediation effort. In answer to a question from David Aaron, Turner said that the moderates are divided, not with regard to the fact of our getting involved, but much more on the effectiveness of our getting involved, and what that will mean for the future political situation in Nicaragua. He also said that one shouldn't expect Latin American support for any effort on our part; even those who would support the United States would probably do so very quietly. Some might condemn the U.S.

Vaky said that the Foreign Minister of Mexico had called him to ask when we would be getting rid of Somoza. Christopher and Pastor interjected that the Mexicans would probably be the first ones to condemn us for intervening.

² Telegram 4263 from Managua, September 11, reported that violence was continuing in several Nicaraguan cities and that the Nicaraguan Government had declared martial law for thirty days in the departments of Esteli and Masaya. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780370-0264)

Vaky said that no one has yet talked to the opposition groups in the sense of trying to get them to coalesce. It is possible that merely talking to them will encourage a process whereby this would become possible.

Armacost asked why the Central American initiative has not yet gotten off the ground, and Vaky said that the Presidents themselves—Romero, Lucas, and Paz—are not very able, are friends of Somoza, and suspicious of Carazo. Furthermore, he believes that Somoza probably got to these Presidents first, and convinced them that he was the best guarantee against a Communist take-over.

General Wickham said that he was prepared to address the problem from a military standpoint, and would like to reinforce what Turner had already said. He spoke today to the Commander of SOUTHCOM on the secure line and he believes that Somoza will get through this crisis. The National Guard is fully able to dominate the situation; they may not even need any military equipment. Wickham said that there were 18 U.S. military in the country. Pan American Airlines is still flying in, although not at night. And our Ambassador hasn't even pulled the chain and asked U.S. citizens to leave. In short, Somoza has the situation under control.

In response to a question from Aaron about which part of the Sandinistas are in control, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Vaky said that the Tercerarios were seemingly in control right now, and that they were different from the other Sandinista groups in that they were willing to mix with non-Marxist groups. Many of those in the Tercerarios are sons of well-to-do families; and indeed some are children of the Group of Twelve. In response to a further question from Aaron, Vaky said that the Group of Twelve is down to ten; they are a mixed group, including businessmen, a priest, and lawyers.

The Options

Christopher then surveyed the options and also where we have come from. Up until a couple of weeks ago, we have pursued a policy of neutrality and non-intervention. We have tried to walk a fine line. Our Ambassador has had instructions to this effect, which he has followed, sometimes too rigorously. We can consider this policy of neutrality and non-intervention as the first option.

The second option is to dissociate ourselves from the Somoza regime. We could bring home our Military Group, eliminate economic aid, and perhaps pull our Ambassador out. Christopher said, however, that he believes that none of us think this option would be very effective.

A third option would be to offer more support to Somoza than we have in the past. We ought to think about this earlier rather than later. If we are faced, down the road, with a hard decision which is actually

between Somoza and the Sandinistas, we may have to support him. Still, over the long haul, we don't think this is a good option either for pragmatic or for idealistic reasons.

The fourth option is mediation and to try to see if the opposition forces can be encouraged to coalesce. There are two variations under this option: (a) Mediation by others with encouragement and support by the United States; or (b) Mediation by ourselves. We have veered toward 4(a) with our support of the Central American mediation effort. Clearly, 4(a) is preferable to 4(b), but ultimately, the issue we will have to face is which of the two is more effective. The problem with 4(b) is that it has us doing exactly what we have said we would never do: to tell the Nicaraguans how to organize their government. This is an unattractive option. Still, the reason it is plausible is because the United States has historically played such a large role in the region. Christopher said that he believes that we have not played out 4(a) sufficiently. Over time, we should play that out more, putting U.S. prestige firmly behind the idea of a mediation effort.

How should we do that? One way would be to send someone from here to talk to the Central Americans about the situation there and to collect some facts. If we send someone to Nicaragua, it would be much more than as a fact-finder. It will look as if we are doing the mediation ourselves, and we should avoid that at this point. Therefore, he recommended that we send someone to the Central American countries, but not to Nicaragua, and perhaps also to a few interested neighboring countries.

Aaron asked whether there was complete agreement around the table on the analytic point that there is increasing polarization in Nicaragua, that the situation is deteriorating, and that over time, we will have fewer options.

General Wickham said that from strictly a military standpoint, the National Guard is strong. If, however, we were to pull the rug out from under them, it would hurt the National Guard and seriously erode their stability. He suggested that we give some idea to helping Somoza and the National Guard, and then after the crisis is over, we could "knock his head" to get him into line. Wickham urged great care in dealing with the National Guard in the future.

Aaron asked whether the loyalty in the National Guard is transferable to someone other than Somoza.

Turner said that it was possible that it was transferable to Somoza's step-brother, Jose, or to his son.

Vaky said that if there were a constitutional succession, the National Guard would naturally participate. Furthermore, he believes that loyalty is indeed transferable. However, if there is a continuation

of violence and the National Guard is forced to shoot kids, this will definitely erode the institution's capability. They may then reach the point where they feel that the National Guard will suffer unless Somoza goes.

Newsom asked what would be the outcome if we chose 4(a) and sent someone to confer with all of Central America except Nicaragua. What kind of impact would that have on Somoza if we did such a conspicuous move toward the other Central American countries and excluded Nicaragua?

Vaky said that it was o.k. as long as we continued to communicate with Somoza.

Turner said that if we support Somoza it is a downward spiral, leading to more and more repression and stronger and stronger support for the Sandinistas. He said that it would be a while before Somoza was very weak, but it would eventually happen. Robertson agreed with that assessment. *[less than 1 line not declassified]* if mediation were to occur, we would have to be very clear about the signals we send.

Vaky said that Somoza has been lecturing us precisely because he has been trying to win us over.

Aaron summarized the discussion. He said Christopher had presented the options which we will have to face. There was an important choice between three broad courses of action: first, to not involve ourselves with regard to the outcome. This includes the first two options mentioned by Christopher. Secondly, we could support Somoza. Thirdly, we could recognize that Somoza's remaining in power will risk genuine radical change in the region, and we should take steps to avoid that. These are the three broad courses of action. For tactical reasons, it is conceivable that we may take one of these positions while still supporting the objective of another. In other words, we could support Somoza temporarily, even though we had in mind the third option.

With regard to the next steps, Aaron said that if we choose number three, there are two or three things we need to do. We need to get a more coherent picture from interested countries in the region. This is extremely important, also to insure that we obtain as much support as possible should we choose to shift from option 4(a) to 4(b). If we did, we would want to make sure, for example, that Panama and Venezuela were completely behind us.

Newsom asked just how interested Venezuela and Costa Rica were in a mediation effort, and Vaky responded that we were being pushed by Perez, but we were stimulating the Costa Ricans.

Newsom asked if the Central Americans' initiative doesn't get off the ground, and the OAS gets bottled up, will the states around Nicara-

gua be very concerned? (At this point David Aaron left, and Christopher chaired the meeting.)

Vaky said that if the situation deteriorates dramatically, the other Central Americans will get involved. Pastor said that there were already reports today that the Salvadoreans and the Hondurans had sent volunteers to fight with the Nicaraguans. These reports are not confirmed, but one cannot exclude the possibility that such volunteers would be sent if the National Guard were deeply in trouble.

Christopher said that if the situation deteriorated, we would be hearing a lot of noise from Venezuela and Panama as well. He said that we really can't afford to wait much longer without jeopardizing the moderate opposition in Nicaragua.

Turner said that it is at least conceivable that as the situation deteriorates, the moderates may get sufficiently afraid that they would have a greater incentive to organize themselves better. Vaky said that the different moderate groups would view the deteriorating situation differently and prescribe different solutions. And Newsom said the propensity for people to rationalize themselves out of a choice in a difficult situation is very great. This could continue to happen until there are no options left.

Christopher asked Resor what were his ideas, and Resor said that he didn't have any comment.

Christopher then summarized by saying that there appeared to be a consensus to recommend option 4(a), making it clear of our support for a mediation effort. We should send someone down to Central America to probe why the Central American initiative has not been more successful, and perhaps to try to get it moving as well. There are many questions for that person to answer. We should also consider the possibility of bringing our person to Costa Rica to discuss with the person who would be in charge of the mediation effort there what the next steps should be. Christopher recommended an additional instruction—to step up our contacts with moderate groups within Nicaragua.

Christopher said that option 4(b) would be played by our sending someone there to deliver a message to Somoza face-to-face. If we went this route, and we may have to recommend that at some point, we will have to be very certain about the conditions which would be outlined for Somoza. But we are not there yet. That option—4(b)—has so many unattractive qualities to it that we don't want to do it unless we really have to.

Heaton said that Somoza had already told our Ambassador that he would throw him out if he ever brought that message.

Vaky said that Somoza had to say that, and furthermore our Ambassador cannot be the one who does that. We will have to send

someone else. Vaky said that there was another wrinkle that we should look at. Somoza, of course, has had open-heart surgery. We ought to seriously consider what will happen if he has a heart attack, or if something happens to him. We ought to examine things on a contingency basis.

In answer to a question from Robertson, Christopher said that our goal is to try to get Somoza to understand the need to pave the way towards a moderate solution. Robertson asked whether Somoza had pledged that he would do that in 1981. Vaky said that the problem is that the opposition will not wait until 1981.

Aaron returned and said that if someone would be going to discuss these matters with leading Central Americans, he should also talk to Somoza. If we took option 4(b)—though we are not ready for that now—then we would have to talk to Somoza directly. But regardless, Aaron feels that we should see Somoza, or else it will look too much as if we are trying to mobilize international support against him by going to all of the capitals except Managua. He does not think it is advisable to talk with different groups when he is there in Nicaragua. For example, he wouldn't see the Group of Twelve. The only point would be for the person to touch base with Somoza before and after in order to make it appear as if it is a fact-finding trip throughout Central America.

New Developments

Aaron then described several new developments, including the alleged bombing by Nicaragua of the Costa Rican border and Somoza's press conference.³ He then asked how did these affect the next steps?

Vaky said that a similar situation arose in October, and the Permanent Council of the OAS sent down a fact-finding mission. The incident does open the way for active U.S. intervention through the OAS.

Christopher said that he believes there is much more advantage to us working through a multilateral institution towards a multilateral solution than if we do things on our own. In answer to a question from Aaron, Vaky said that it is possible to have an American participate in an OAS Peace-Keeping mission, although he didn't think it was likely that this mission would be able to be sent to Panama. Aaron said that he thought it would be important to touch base with Venezuela and Torrijos, and perhaps we should think about two missions: one for the OAS and one by us. Newsom pointed out that an OAS mission would be constrained from interfering in Nicaragua, or getting involved in any mediation effort.

³ See Document 98.

Vaky said that he interpreted this latest development as an attempt by Somoza to lash out at the Sandinistas, and he did not rule out the possibility that Somoza may want to bring the temple down with him. It increased the likelihood that Panama and Venezuela will urge an OAS mediation effort. As for us, he believes that we should call for an immediate cease-fire and a fact-finding mission.

Aaron concluded the meeting by stressing the extreme confidentiality of the exchange. Christopher said that on the record, the U.S. position is still one of encouraging the Central Americans' mediation initiative, and we can stick with that.

Armacost asked what the trip by the U.S. person would mean in terms of option 4(b). Aaron said that even if the President decided on option 4(b), still we would want to seek international support. Even if the Central Americans do not want to play the frontal role, we will need their support.

96. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, September 13, 1978, 1952Z

3898. Subj: Nicaragua MFM. Ref: State 231820.²

1. Summary: Carazo is pleased that we have acted quickly to seek a strong OAS response to the current situation and that we have outlined the steps we would like to see emerge from MFM. He still holds out hope for some kind of mediation, but no longer finds it either politically attractive domestically or most feasible that such a move proceed in a CA context. The GOCR is intent, however, on pressing other CA countries to get behind the OAS MFM call.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/11–16/78. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Also sent Immediate to Caracas, Santo Domingo, Lima, Mexico City, Bogotá, Quito, Bridgetown, Kingston, Paramaribo, Panama City, and Managua. At the top of the page Pastor wrote: "The death of CR Int.," a reference to Carazo's efforts at mediation in Nicaragua. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 231820 to multiple Latin American posts, September 13, the Department issued instructions to Embassies to "exert every effort" to ensure host nation support for the MFM convocation at the OAS. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780372–0758)

2. Carazo agrees completely on the need to have a strong show of support for convocation under Article 59 and was gratified that we are taking quick and forceful action to help obtain such support. He said that Costa Rican Ambassadors in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala have been instructed to press the governments in those countries to vote in favor of convocation, but Costa Rica does not now plan demarches in other LA capitals. Carazo also expressed agreement with the listing provided of USG views of what an MFM might achieve (Para 6, reftel).³ He endorsed specifically the contemplated OAS fact-finding commission to Nicaragua and Costa Rica; he did not react to the phrasing of an MFM "call for ending incursions from one territory into another".

3. With respect to a possible OAS call for support for some kind of mediation, Carazo said that the events of Sept. 12⁴ make it difficult politically or even useful for Costa Rica again to lead or even engage in a mediation effort. (On the previous day, after I had informed Carazo of Ambassador Solaun's report of a positive response among Nicaraguan business and industrial leaders to the CA initiative,⁵ Carazo said it would not surprise him to learn that Somoza had authorized the Sept. 12 attack in good part because of his displeasure over such support evoked by the GOCR mediation initiative.

4. Carazo concluded that other Central Americans, with the possible exception of Honduras, had shown themselves finally to be opposed to Central American mediation. He was aware from contacts in Guatemala that different officials there were expressing differing views on the initiative, but believed that the final outcome would be distinctly negative. In Honduras, he said, there was more flexibility, in part because Honduras shared the border problem with Nicaragua. In any event, Carazo said, Costa Rican leadership of a mediation effort following the Sept. 12, incident would now be unacceptable to the Costa Rican public. However, he still hoped that some kind of mediation effort might prosper and said that Costa Rica would support mediation

³ Paragraph 6 noted the U.S. view that the MFM should "express hemispheric concern; authorize the sending of a fact-finding mission, along the lines of the fact-finding mission the Permanent Council sent last October to Nicaragua and Costa Rica; call for ending incursions from one territory to another; and underline support for the mission of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and a call for a prompt report by it. (Ibid.)

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 331.

⁵ In telegram 4286 from Managua, September 12, the Embassy reported that Solaun had met with representatives of the National Development Institute, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industries, and the Association of Automobile Distributors and that "all groups were in favor of the Carazo mediation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780371-0193)

by any useful combination of countries were that possibility to arise through an OAS call for external mediation.⁶

Weissman

⁶ Pastor underlined the portion of the paragraph beginning with the word “would” and ending with the word “mediation.”

**97. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Aaron) to President Carter¹**

Washington, September 15, 1978

SUBJECT

The Jorden Mission to Central America

The situation in Nicaragua is deteriorating very rapidly.² As a result of conversations between our Ambassador and several opposition groups, these leaders recognize the urgency of a unifying effort on their part, and yesterday designated three people as the leaders of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 1/77–11/78. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent through Brzezinski, who did not initial the memorandum. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum. Carter's evening reading for September 13 contained an item prepared by ARA/CEN, noting that Vaky had briefed the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about Nicaragua and “found a general consensus that a mediation effort initiated or supported by the United States was urgent.” Carter wrote in the left-hand margin: “I agree that we should consider this quickly.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/13–30/78)

² In telegram 4342 from Managua, September 15, the Embassy reported that Nicaragua had been placed under martial law for thirty days as the Nicaraguan Government “combats the current wave of disturbances.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780375–0297) In telegram 4369 from Managua, September 15, the Embassy reported that Solaun had delivered a diplomatic note to Somoza “requesting that GON take measures to evacuate US citizens and their families from the cities and surrounding areas of Leon, Esteli, and Chinandega as well as any other areas in Nicaragua where the lives of U.S. citis [citizens] might be in danger.” Solaun also suggested that Somoza declare a ceasefire in these areas that had witnessed heavy fighting between the Sandinistas and the National Guard. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780376–1136) Also see Karen DeYoung, “Nicaraguan Troops Shell Rebel-Held City,” *Washington Post*, September 16, 1978, p. A1.

the opposition.³ They also urged an international mediation effort for humanitarian purposes,⁴ and the State Department has responded today by urging Somoza to “accept mediation and seek an enduring resolution of the crisis.”⁵

The opposition has made clear that they will not negotiate with Somoza, and indeed the first and most important step in negotiations should be the resignation of Somoza. To them, he is the problem; Somoza is the reason why the Sandinistas are as strong as they are today. We agree with that assessment; Somoza must step down soon, or else the Sandinistas stand a very good chance of discrediting moderate opposition and seizing power. If Somoza were to resign and be replaced by moderates, like these three leaders, with the institutions in place, we believe that the Sandinista support would decline, their hardcore forces contained and a moderate solution enhanced.

The critical ingredient at this time is the nature of the international mediation effort. To be effective, we believe that the USG needs to be involved but we should not be out in front. We are sending Ambassador Bill Jorden to visit the Central American Presidents (and ultimately perhaps others as well) to exchange analyses of the situation and seek their leadership and support for international mediation.⁶ Ambassador

³ In telegram 4341 from Managua, September 14, the Embassy reported that Alfonso Robelo had informed Solaun, on an “extremely confidential basis, that the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) had appointed him, Sergio Ramirez (Group of 12) and Rafael Cordova Rivas (Union of Democratic Liberation—UDEL) to represent FAO in any contact with Carazo.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780374–1263) See also Karen DeYoung, “Somoza’s Foes Claim Unity,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1978, p. A1.

⁴ Solaun notified Vaky in telegram 4345 from Managua, September 14, that Ramirez, Rivas, and Robelo, speaking for the “opposition,” had appealed for “immediate international assistance to end violence and help victims and will negotiate mediated political truce without preconditions.” Solaun noted the “key factor” behind the opposition’s appeal was the Nicaraguan Government’s “use of aircraft against dissidents in population centers, arrest of oppositionists or their family members, deaths of some well-connected youths in unclear circumstances, the GON’s imposition of martial law (which opposition believes will be used to hide barbarous acts) and lastly, the indication that insurgency in some cases appears to have gotten out of control of FSLN as well as GON.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780374–1124) The next day, in telegram 4373 from Managua, the Embassy reported that Solaun had received a written “appeal for mediation,” which represented the “united thinking of a number of majority groups.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Cables: 9/11/78–9/16/78)

⁵ Hodding Carter made the statement urging Somoza to “accept mediation” during the September 15 daily press briefing at the Department of State. (Telegram 234535 to Managua, September 15; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780376–0586)

⁶ In telegram 235983 to multiple Latin American posts, September 16, the Department informed Ambassadors that Jorden would be dispatched to the region “for the purpose of trying to stimulate and assist in the organization of an effective multilateral mediation effort in Nicaragua” and instructed them to seek host government participation. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Cables: 9/11/78–9/16/78)

Jorden will not have instructions to support the removal of Somoza. However, it is important to recognize that that is the direction that all these efforts are leading and, rather than slide into such a policy decision via cables, I believe it is important to have a clear-cut policy decision on this issue.

At an SCC Meeting earlier this week,⁷ Warren Christopher outlined three options:

- We remain passive and seek to position ourselves to earn the support of whoever survives the current struggle;

- We support Somoza in overcoming the current crisis with a view toward seeking a more orderly transition of power to more moderate elements sometime in the future; or

- We can support a mediation effort aimed at bringing the new coalition of moderate forces into power now in an effort to control the Sandinistas.

The discussion in the SCC and intervening developments have made clear that the first option will in all likelihood result in a radical regime and increased bloodshed. Similarly, the downward spiral of violence and polarization makes the second alternative impractical in the judgment of the SCC principals. It is therefore the SCC's recommendation that we pursue the latter course, making every effort to keeping the Latin American countries and, in particular, the Nicaraguans themselves, out in front. However, our support is crucial. For good or ill, our influence and importance are such that a transfer of power to moderate elements in Nicaragua in this time of crisis will not take place without American behind-the-scenes support.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the basic policy of seeking mediation with the view toward the transition to a more moderate government in Nicaragua.⁸

⁷ See Document 95.

⁸ Carter indicated his approval and initialed below the approval line.

98. **Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)**¹

Washington, September 18, 1978

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua—Next Steps

Update

The situation is getting worse. Perez and Torrijos have apparently decided to step up their support of the Sandinistas, and it is possible that they may be thinking about helping the Sandinistas to secure a relatively small area on the Nicaraguan side of the Costa Rican border and establish a provisional government, which they would then promptly recognize. The Nicaraguans have accused the Panamanians and the Venezuelans of supplying air cover for the Sandinista invasion, and while Torrijos and Perez have denied it, we have received intelligence which suggests otherwise.

The OAS will be meeting today to discuss and perhaps vote on a MFM (meeting of Foreign Ministers), and we expect it to pass. However, it is clear that the Nicaraguans will try to preempt the Venezuelans and turn the issue to their advantage by talking of Venezuelan aggression.

U.S. Policy Goals

Over the weekend, I spent a good deal of time thinking about Jorden's mission because I feared that our goals were not sufficiently clear to achieve success. I have arrived at a number of conclusions and policy suggestions, which I will describe below. I recommend that you call an SCC meeting to review them. I have mentioned virtually all of the points to Vaky, but he has not shown much enthusiasm for them, though he has not given me very good arguments for not taking them.

Our preferred outcome is to see a moderate transitional government succeed General Somoza. While the Sandinistas, through the Group of 12, will no doubt participate in some form in this transitional government, our goal should be to try to isolate them and to minimize and to gradually reduce their influence. (If their influence is reduced

¹ Source: Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, David Aaron, Box 224, (Aaron, David) Nicaragua, (9/8–19/1978). Secret; Sensitive. Pastor sent the memorandum under a September 18 note to Gates indicating his interest in discussing Pastor's memorandum with Aaron in preparation for that day's SCC meeting. For a synopsis of the SCC meeting, see Document 99.

gradually, that would permit the new government sufficient time to cohere, to gain the support of the Guardia, and to ultimately defeat the Sandinistas.) Our preferred means of reaching that outcome is to work with like-minded Latin American governments in a mediation effort.

The question is, how can we structure the Jorden mission so as to achieve these two goals as rapidly as possible.

Policy Recommendations

With Somoza:

We are being sharply criticized by moderate opposition leaders for continuing to support Somoza (the Nicaraguan National Conference of Clerics has just written the President asking him to cease supporting Somoza), while at the same time, Somoza continues to try to manipulate us into criticizing the Panamanians and the Venezuelans.² In order to gain credibility with the opposition and with Somoza, *we need to discreetly begin distancing ourselves from Somoza*. We need to do this anyway because of the wanton brutality exercised by the National Guard as it has regained control of Leon and other cities. By all accounts, the Guardia's actions were totally out of proportion to the threat. I have received calls urging the President to make some statement about the violence, and I think the time has come to do that. At the same time that the *Presidential statement* is issued, our Ambassador should be sent in to tell Somoza that because of the Guardia's brutality, we will be making an announcement the next day that we are *freezing all military aid to Nicaragua and that the Attorney General has taken steps to prevent the recruiting of any U.S. citizens as mercenaries for Somoza*. Our Ambassador should also inform Somoza that we are *beginning to review whether or not to withdraw our Military Group*. (This decision should be held until the hard negotiations begin.)

With the Opposition:

The opposition in Nicaragua believe that the U.S. wants Somoza to stay. The steps outlined above will begin to correct that impression. At the same time, it is imperative that we begin talking with opposition leaders with the *purpose of trying to elicit from them their vision of the mediation process, the transitional government, and the future government*. We should do this for three reasons: (1) to try to get to know the goals

² Telegram 4391 from Managua, September 16, reported the Embassy received a letter to Carter signed by representatives of the Sacerdotal Council of the Managua Archdiocese and the Board of Directors of the National Conference of Clerics of Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/11–16/78)

of each of the leaders better; (2) to try to get them to think beyond Somoza and start formulating some concrete proposals; and (3) to try—as indirectly and subtly as possible—to mesh the different views into a single coherent plan.

There is one additional reason. We need to know much more about how the various opposition groups view the Sandinistas. We need to know who are Sandinistas-in-disguise, like Ramirez for example. From conversations with Torrijos, Lewis, and Tad Szulc, I believe that the goal of the Sandinistas is not to seize the government soon, but rather to help to establish a provisional government with as many of their front-men in positions of influence as possible. These front-men will then permit the Sandinistas to penetrate different governmental sectors and gradually move to take over the government. They may see this process as taking as long as two years, and they will spend as much of their energies outside as inside Managua. We need to be able to alert our friends of the Sandinista strategy so as to help isolate them.

Which opposition leaders should we get in touch with? We should start with the three who have been designated leaders—Robelo, Rivas, Ramirez—but should include leaders from both the Conservative *and* the Liberal Party and discreetly begin talks with Army leaders.

With the Sandinistas:

Many of our Latin American friends believe that the Sandinistas will prevail. Obviously, Perez believes that, and he and Torrijos evidently also see them as non-Communists. Our intelligence suggests otherwise though, of course, we can't be certain. Up until now, despite many direct and indirect requests from them to establish contacts, we have avoided that. As a result, Tad Szulc, among others, now knows more about them than our intelligence community. I would recommend *establishing extremely secret contacts with the Sandinista leaders as well as with the Group of 12* to increase our knowledge of their organization, goals, and strategy, and for two additional reasons. If it is true that the Sandinistas are in reach of attaining power, and if it is true that there are moderate tendencies in the Sandinistas—as Perez and Torrijos evidently believe—then, we certainly don't want to overtly antagonize them at this point, and we may want to give them an impression that we are listening to them and that we take them seriously. At the same time that we try to give them a sense that we care, we will have the contradictory goal of trying to seek their isolation from the other groups. This is obviously very delicate, and it's possible that we may not be able to pull it off. To do so, we need to pursue this strategy in two steps: (1) establish contacts and begin talks aimed primarily at eliciting information from the leadership of the Sandinistas and the Group of 12; (2) identify moderate elements in both organizations and

pursue more active discussions with them. Our purpose *should be to obtain rather than to convey information. We should insist on absolute confidentiality.*

The International Mediation Effort

We are running out of time; and I fear that unless Jorden makes some specific requests in his conversations, his mission will produce little more than concern over recent developments. Let me suggest that Jorden *should ask each Head of State to designate one person to participate in a Nicaraguan Mediation Consultative Group. From this Consultative Group, we should then designate two people—one U.S. and one Latin American—to be the mediators* between Somoza and the opposition (the three R's—Ramirez, Robelo, and Rivas). The Latin American mediator should be selected on the basis of the person (international stature and credibility) and the degree to which his views of the process coincide with our own. That person should be chosen at the end of Jorden's consultation.

Then, the *two mediators should be sent immediately to Nicaragua. At the same time, the O.A.S. should be asked to endorse the mission, and we should try to elicit letters (preferably public cables) of support from leading Latin American Presidents (as many as possible).*

The task of the mediators is to attain Somoza's resignation in exchange for guarantees from the opposition for his safety and his property. In the bargaining, the best way to achieve these guarantees will probably be to make the minimal governmental changes. Somoza, his half-brother, his son, and perhaps a dozen others should go; the rest of the government should pretty much stay. Someone very conservative and establishment—like Mora, Minister of Government, or Rivas—should be designated provisional President, and he should install a new cabinet which is dominated by the conservative party and by moderate business opposition leaders (like Robelo) and one or two from the Group of 12. The National Guard should be consulted and, to the maximum extent possible, involved. The task of this transitional government would be to bring the Nicaraguan economy back to its pre-war level, to recover the people's support, and to plan for free elections in 18 months. We should be prepared to support them fully.

If Jorden is to succeed, it may be necessary for him to convey to various leaders, particularly in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, some ideas about the likely scenario, along the lines described above. We have received intelligence from El Salvador and elsewhere that the concern of these military leaders is that they fear that the alternative to Somoza is chaos. To the extent that they can see a more regional and moderate alternative, they will be better prepared to support the international mediation effort.

99. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC-4081-78

Washington, September 18, 1978

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 18 September 1978

PARTICIPANTS

David Aaron, Warren Christopher, Robert Bowie, Viron P. Vaky, Robert Pastor, six others unknown to me, Ed Heaton, [*name not declassified*]

1. Christopher indicated that the meeting had been called because the Nicaraguan crisis had worsened during the past week in two respects: the conflict was becoming internationalized with a clearer indication of planned Venezuelan and Panamanian support to the FSLN guerrillas; and the Guard's capability to control the country is proving to be less than we expected. He believes it is too late to work out a settlement without FSLN participation.

2. We qualified both points. Perez and Torrijos [*1 line not declassified*] want the US to move decisively. This does not, however, deny that they are fully capable of carrying through with more direct support for the guerrillas. The Guard is steadily restoring control of the cities where the FSLN had made headway, though over the longer term the guerrillas would be back in force again.

3. A number of other issues were discussed at length, including the role of the Guard in a mediation process, the possibility of international peacekeeping forces, and our limited knowledge on the character of the FSLN.

4. In a roundabout manner, a new policy approach emerged. Ambassador Jorden had been under instructions to urge the heads of other countries he is visiting—Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Venezuela—to put together a multilateral mediation initiative, which the US would fully support. Now his itinerary and instructions will be changed. He will ask the heads of state to *join the US* in a mediation initiative. He will imply that the mediation should take its own course, but the US will be prepared to budge Somoza if that is where it goes.

5. Jorden will go to Nicaragua before Venezuela, however, to offer Somoza an international mediation without preconditions. There will

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; CIA Internal Use Only. Drafted [*text not declassified*] on September 19.

be an effort to get some of Somoza's friends in the US to encourage him to go along.

6. It is not expected that the initiative will be put together in time for Thursday's OAS meeting.² Therefore, the US will seek a cease-fire resolution and advise that a mediation effort is in train.

7. Aaron felt that the President should not make any distancing statements at this time, but Christopher won approval for at least a statement of concern about the violence. It was also agreed to cut off lethal military equipment in the pipeline to Nicaragua.

[distribution list not declassified]

² See footnote 5, Document 100.

100. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 19, 1978

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

David Aaron chaired an SCC meeting today on Nicaragua to decide whether new instructions were necessary for Bill Jorden.² The consensus of the group is that the situation has worsened in two respects. First, it is becoming internationalized. Both Perez and Torrijos have informed us that they are prepared to give full support to Sandinistas in their struggle to overthrow Somoza. They believe that if Somoza stays in power, there will be more suffering, and the Sandinistas, who they believe they can control now, will inevitably turn to Cuba for support.

Secondly, the capacity of the National Guard to maintain control of the situation is less than we thought. There is a real possibility that

¹ Source: Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, David Aaron, Box 224, (Aaron, David) Nicaragua, (9/8–19/1978). Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the first page of the memorandum. Brzezinski indicated by hand that the memorandum should be sent to Aaron.

² See Document 99.

the Guard could disintegrate, leaving the Sandinistas the only viable military force in Nicaragua. Because of these two fundamental changes, the SCC recommends a modification in the mediation approach.

Ambassador Jordan has held talks today with Torrijos in Panama, and has flown to Costa Rica late this afternoon.³ He plans to return to Panama tomorrow, and we are instructing him to fly to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador after speaking with Torrijos. We believe that the need for mediation is greater now than ever before, but the only way to initiate such an effort is to play a leading role in putting it together. Only a central U.S. role will make it possible to contain Perez and Torrijos' support for the Sandinistas and be reassuring to the more conservative Latin American states.

Warren Christopher recommended the following new instructions to Ambassador Jordan: He should tell the heads of state in Central America that the U.S. intends to report⁴ positively to the call from the Nicaraguan opposition for international mediation, and we would like for other Latin American nations to participate in this effort and name mediators.

In line with our desire to keep the Latin Americans out in front as much as possible, we will take advantage of the OAS foreign ministers meeting scheduled for next Thursday⁵ to endorse mediation in Nicaragua. At that meeting we will try to check international intervention by calling for a cease fire and for an OAS presence on the Costa Rica-Nicaraguan border.

Jordan will also go to Nicaragua to seek Somoza's acceptance of mediation. At that point it may be necessary to spell out the possible consequences should Somoza reject mediation. As indicated in my last

³ Jorden reported on his talks with Torrijos in telegram 6765 from Panama City, September 18. Torrijos took the "position that it was too late in the game for traditional approaches." Jorden noted that Torrijos also "urged President Carter to consider immediate strong statement repudiating Somoza, deploring violations of human rights and large-scale violence, urging National Guard to use restraint with its own people." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103-1839) In telegram 6809 from Panama City, September 19, Jorden reported on his talks with Carazo, commenting that Carazo had asked "How can I help?" Carazo also said that Somoza had to go, "but we must not handle problem in a way that will open the door to Castro to get a foothold in Central America." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103-1845)

⁴ An unknown hand changed "report" to "respond."

⁵ The MFM of the OAS, called to discuss the situation in Nicaragua, took place September 21-23. In telegram 243423 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, September 25, the Department noted the U.S. Government had achieved "our primary objective" at the meeting because a resolution was affirmed that would "provide an OAS umbrella of efforts by member states (including the US) to offer their services to the Nicaraguan Government in seeking to mediate in the current crisis and to help find a peaceful, democratic solution to the current violence." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780392-0315)

memo to you, that means we may eventually have to ask Somoza to step aside.⁶

Warren Christopher has discussed this approach with Cy and he strongly recommends it, as do I.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve modifying Bill Jordan's instructions to ask Latin American countries to join us in the mediation in Nicaragua. We will provide some recommendations on a possible U.S. mediator.⁷

⁶ See Document 97.

⁷ Carter wrote "ok. J" at the bottom of the memorandum. Telegram 237296 to Lima, Santo Domingo, and Tegucigalpa, September 19, informed Jordan that that his instructions were amended to authorize him to "invite host governments with which you are consulting to join USG in a mediation effort." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/17–20/78) In a September 19 memorandum to Carter, Christopher noted that Honduras had agreed to join the mediation, that the Dominican Republic was favorable, and that other countries would "probably accept tomorrow." Christopher also proposed Rogers as a first choice for a mediator with Linowitz a second choice. Carter indicated his approval of this recommendation. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/13–30/78)

101. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, September 21, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua—Update

The National Guard seems to have regained control of the country for the moment, and the action has shifted to the international plane.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 9/13–30/78. Secret.

1. The mediation effort has been set back considerably. El Salvador seems to have backed out, and Somoza's footprints are evident.² Colombia is wishy-washy; they told Jorden that they would participate in the mediation effort only if all of Central America, as well as Somoza, would participate.³ Jorden is going to Guatemala today, and will return to Panama to await instructions from us on when to go to Nicaragua.⁴ In the meantime, Somoza's Minister of Government, Mora, has passed a very strong message [*less than 1 line not declassified*] that Somoza will not accept mediation. The message sounds as if Somoza is trying to get us to back down before Jorden asks him directly.

2. Our three "friends." Costa Rican Foreign Minister Calderon met with Christopher last evening and requested a meeting between President Carazo and President Carter and possibly including President Perez. Vaky and I believe that we should put off Carazo; one of the things we want to do right now is to establish some credibility with Somoza, and not to associate ourselves too closely with the "radical democrats".

Perez has written a stinging letter to the President after his conversation with Jorden.⁵ Perez urges the President to make a hard decision to preserve peace in the region. He said, "the problem of Nicaragua places your human rights policy in dramatic danger." Vaky met with Consalvi last night and told him that if Venezuela attacks Nicaragua, Venezuela will not find the U.S. on its side. We will have to condemn such intervention. Consalvi hinted very strongly that the help they will give to the Sandinistas will be covert, but they intended to see Somoza overthrown, and they do not view the Sandinistas as we do. I will probably speak to the Panamanian Foreign Minister, who is in town

² Jorden reported on his talks with Romero in telegram 6846 from Panama City, September 20. Romero "joined his Honduran colleague [Paz] in approving mediation commission for Nicaragua and agreeing to participate." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103-1855) Jorden had earlier reported Paz's acceptance in telegram 6845 from Panama City, September 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103-1850)

³ In telegram 6899 from Panama City, September 21, Jorden discussed his meeting with Turbay, commenting: "In sum, if Somoza will accept mediation, and if U.S. is involved, Colombia will join with us and Turbay will select a personal representative." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780385-0886)

⁴ Jorden reported on his talks with Lucas in telegram 6904 from Panama City, September 22. Lucas was "disposed to collaborate" with the mediation but felt that the "essential first step is to convince Costa Rica to eliminate Sandinista presence in that country and get Venezuela and Panama to end their backing for insurgents." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780386-0959)

⁵ Telegram 8921 from Caracas, September 20, included a translation of Perez's September 20 letter to Carter, in which Perez wrote of his talks with Jorden: "I obtained nothing out of that conversation which permits me to be optimistic concerning the attitude of the United States toward General Somoza's bloody regime." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780384-0704)

for the OAS meeting, this evening, and will make the same points as Vaky did.

3. *Outside Support.* We have intelligence reports that suggest leftist guerrillas in Guatemala and in El Salvador plan to coordinate attacks in their respective countries with the next wave of attacks by the Sandinistas. In addition, there are reports of extensive recruiting in Panama and several other countries of leftists to go to fight in Nicaragua against Somoza.

There is also a report that the Nicaraguans are getting more arms from the Israelis.

4. *OAS.* The OAS session opened this afternoon, and Christopher will be giving a very tough speech, deploring the violence and inhumanity and calling for a ceasefire, an international humanitarian effort, and an international mediation.⁶

5. *More bad news.* We have received an intelligence report that indicates the Sandinistas have postponed their assault on Managua until they receive more reinforcements. When they attack, they plan to cut water lines, electricity and telecommunications.

The intelligence report [*less than 1 line not declassified*] suggests that the Honduran military will intervene in Nicaragua if it appears that the Sandinistas will take over. The Honduran military have also been in touch with their Guatemalan counterparts. I attach a copy of Jorden's conversation with Perez.⁷ In this conversation, he argues strongly for a Presidential statement on the human rights violations in Nicaragua. "One firm categoric statement by President Carter denouncing what has happened in Nicaragua would shake Somoza's foundations." He says that he believes that Somoza will fall, and if this takes time and is not done correctly, that the Communists will come to power. He also said that he believes the mediation effort will fail, and that the only solution was heavy pressure on Somoza to leave office.

Congressman Murphy is supposed to be circulating a "Dear Colleagues" letter to try to gain support for Somoza, and already has 54 signatures.

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 100.

⁷ Not attached. Jorden reported on his talks with Perez in telegram 6900 from Panama City, September 21. Perez felt that it was too late for mediation and that Somoza's "removal" was the only option. Jorden noted that Perez said he has "no intention of using Venezuelan military force against Nicaragua unless Nicaragua launches an aggressive attack against Costa Rica." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780395–0013)

102. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the National Security Council¹

Managua, September 21, 1978, 2132Z

4537. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Ambassador Solaun. Subject: Conversation With Somoza: 21 September, 11:00 am. Refs: A) State 239658,² B) State 239655.³

Summary: Amb met with Somoza today, raising points reftels. Somoza continued to blame Nicaragua's situation on a combination of USG human rights policy and opposition incompetence but portrayed a slightly more flexible position toward USG-backed mediation effort. End summary

1. Somoza made no specific reference to points of ref A, but appeared pleased that Amb Jorden, or other official, would be visiting Nicaragua.

2. As to ref B, Somoza "was aware of and appreciated" USG concern regarding alleged abuses. Amb, he said, must tell Washington that a de facto situation existed here. Although he had ordered the GN to act with restraint, Amb must understand that, in battle, individual GN could "misinterpret the actions of a civilian and shoot him." Mostly, he added, alleged atrocities are not reported to the GON, but were made by journalists wishing to discredit the GON.

3. Amb suggested that, if Somoza established mechanisms to handle complaints, many could be received. Journalists could be encouraged to register complaints. Somoza said he would do what he could because it was best that the GN come out "clean" as an institution. He went on to say that it was a mistake for the USG to try to accelerate the IAHRC visit. This, he said, projected the image that the IAHRC

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780427-0021. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Caracas, Guatemala City, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² In telegram 239658 to Managua, September 21, the Department instructed Solaun that he could "tell Somoza that there was never any intention of slighting him, that it is our present plan to have Jorden or someone see him very soon." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780384-0799)

³ In telegram 239655 to Managua, September 21, the Department directed Solaun to inform Somoza that "we are greatly concerned over mounting reports of alleged atrocities by the National Guard against the civilian population in various urban areas where there has been fighting" and to urge Somoza to "impress upon the National Guard the need for restraint" and to "undertake a full-scale investigation of these allegations so as to bring to justice those who may have taken part in such serious violations as the alleged summary executions." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780384-0732)

worked for the USG and not for a neutral organization. Somoza expressed his concern that the USG was trying to further “kick” him.

4. Somoza said he had received a letter from the Archbishop (Managua 4522) and asked if Amb had had anything to do with it.⁴ Somoza expressed surprise that the Archbishop had written the letter as if nothing had happened between him and the GON. The Archbishop was not neutral as he had already asked for Somoza’s resignation. The Amb said he thought the letter balanced and sensible and its tone, one of neutrality. He asked what Somoza’s reply would be. Somoza said he would agree. (Note: At end of conversation, Amb asked if he could report an affirmative reply. Somoza replied he would prefer Amb did not report this officially until he was ready to respond, but that he was favorably disposed toward the letter. End note).

5. Somoza said he hoped the USG recognized its moral responsibility and was aware that its human rights policy had encouraged misperceptions by the opposition regarding his weakness. All along, he said, he “had hoped the human rights campaign would not end in this tragedy.” Clearly, there was a need for assistance to remedy the great destruction made by the rebels and substantial reconstruction was needed. During the MFM, unrest would continue, as the opposition hoped for intervention to oust him. He cannot permit the country to return to a state of license and anarchy (*libertinaje*). The problem with the opposition was that it didn’t realize he (Somoza) was acting in good faith and was willing to renegotiate all major institutions because he wants to leave the country in good shape when he leaves power. The opposition reads this as weakness, he said and this is not so. “These new leaders lack experience and read my willingness to negotiate as weakness. This is not so. I have already negotiated in the past with Chamorro and Aguero. Out of these negotiations we revamped the entire constitutional system. This is what we should do now. These fools doubt my resolve. I am willing to change the entire legal system, but I am not willing to break the constitution. I am willing to change those articles of the constitution that can be changed without breaking it. (Note: Somoza has told the Amb that shortening of his current term is unconstitutional. As far as Emb knows this is not correct. Art. 336 of 1974 constitution does limit “total amendment” of constitution as it “may take place only 10 years after it has been in force.” Art. 338 limits “partial” constitutional reform “when this includes the constitutional articles that prohibit the re-election of the person who is exercising the presidency of the republic and the election of his relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity;” these “amendments shall

⁴ Not found.

not go into effect in the period in which they are made, nor in the following period." The same provision applies to Article 338 itself. However, Amb believes that Somoza was making reference to his perceived impossibility of constitutionally changing his 1981 term. Emb is asking for local legal opinion on this matter. End note).

6. Amb then asked if Somoza had any message for Washington about his position on mediation. Sometimes, the Amb said, he thought Nicaraguans were like children. At first, the opposition wanted dialogue, the GON didn't. Then the term was changed to negotiation and the opposition was willing to negotiate. A similar problem of semantics was occurring with the term mediation. The opposition wants mediation, but the GON wants good offices. "I want to bring to your attention, Mr. President, that there is a difference between mediation, on one hand, and arbitration or adjudication, on the other. The latter two terms imply that any decision of the arbiter or adjudicator is binding regardless of the opinion of the parties in conflict. Technically, mediation does not imply this result." After consulting a dictionary, Somoza said that, despite his legal advisors' opinion, the term apparently was not necessarily what he had feared. Somoza then suggested that, of course, he was willing to discuss with an American emissary the terms of any mediation or good offices effort.

7. Comment: Somoza today portrayed a slightly more flexible position toward U.S.-backed mediation. Amb has noted that Somoza is a very proud man and, in his lengthy contact with him, has concluded that initiatives suggested by USG and subsequently adopted by Somoza have been portrayed later by him as GON initiatives. At an early stage of their relationship, Somoza emphasized his openness to any suggestion from Amb, but insisted upon taking credit for any policy decision, as he felt it unseemly to appear as if his actions were determined by the USG.

Solaun

103. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Panama¹

Washington, September 22, 1978, 1121Z

241477. Subject: Message for General Torrijos from President Carter.

1. Dear General Torrijos: We have had reports during the night that Panama is planning an attack on Nicaragua, perhaps with Venezuelan assistance.²

2. Such action would be a tragic mistake. Not only would it cause bloodshed and suffering but it would lead to destructive armed clashes between nations of this hemisphere and threaten international strife. Such action would have a devastatingly adverse effect on our bilateral relations and could undo all we have sought to achieve in the hemisphere.

3. The United States has asked other nations to join in a mediation effort in Nicaragua. We are urgently pressing this effort. Ambassador Jorden expects to see General Somoza within the next forty eight hours with respect to this effort. Attack by your forces would prevent the mediation effort from going forward and interfere with our determined efforts to find an enduring peaceful solution. It is essential that you abandon any plans you may have for military intervention and allow this mediation process to have a chance to succeed.

4. In the strongest terms I urge that no military action be taken against Nicaragua.

Sincerely.

Christopher

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/21–30/78. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² Telegram 6905 from Panama City, September 22, reported indications that Venezuelan aircraft located at Panama's David and Tocumen airports "will be ordered to strike three military airfields in Nicaragua." (Ibid.)

104. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 22, 1978

SUBJECT

Meeting in Your Office on Nicaraguan Crisis

Christopher, Vaky, Harold Brown, General Allen, and Admiral Turner met with you, Pastor and me this morning at 11:00 to discuss actions in response to apparent Panamanian plans to launch air attacks in Nicaragua.

After reviewing the state of activity in Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia, the following actions were decided upon:

1. Dr. Brzezinski will call the Foreign Minister of Panama to express the seriousness of American concern over the reported Panamanian and Venezuelan planned actions against Nicaragua and the new situation such internationalization of the Nicaraguan conflict would create.²

2. Warren Christopher will call the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica to express concern about actions against Nicaragua and inform him that we have reports of impending ground force movements from Panama through Costa Rica toward Nicaragua which we hope Costa Rica will prevent.³

3. Peter Vaky will call President Perez in Venezuela and encourage him to prevent actions by Panama and Venezuela against Nicaragua. He will make this call after President Carter has spoken by telephone to President Torrijos. The NSC will inform Vaky of the substance of President Carter's conversation with Torrijos if such a call takes place soon.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 2/77-9/78. Secret. Sent for information.

² Odom wrote: "done." According to a September 22 memorandum for the record, Brzezinski informed Gonzalez Revilla that "any unilateral military action which internationalizes the problem in Nicaragua would have a very serious impact on that situation and also on the United States. (Ibid.)

³ Odom wrote: "Done by Vaky."

⁴ Odom wrote: "done." For Carter's conversation with Torrijos, see Document 105.

4. The U.S. interceptor aircraft (F–4s) will not be moved to Panama until the situation has been further clarified.⁵

5. Harold Brown will provide press guidance through Defense on the presence of the U.S. cruiser now sailing in Nicaraguan waters. It will be described as having no amphibious capabilities, no Marine units aboard, and engaged in a routine exercise.⁶

6. [1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

7. Christopher will join Dr. Brzezinski in his office tomorrow to meet with Gabriel Lewis.⁷

8. Pastor will work with Vaky in lobbying support for the OAS resolution on the Nicaraguan situation.⁸

9. The next meeting of this group will be determined by Dr. Brzezinski this afternoon.⁹

⁵ Odom wrote: “Still on 7 hour stand-by.”

⁶ Odom wrote: “done, but *not effectively*. Press called the cruiser an ‘intelligence’ effort.”

⁷ Odom wrote: “*done*.”

⁸ Odom wrote: “*Tried hard*.”

⁹ Odom wrote: “OBE.”

105. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, September 22, 1978, 2:15–2:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Telephone Conversation on Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, Chief of Government, Panama
Robert Pastor, NSC
Stephanie Van Reigersberg, Interpreter

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 34, Nicaragua: 8/78–10/79. Confidential. Carter spoke to Torrijos from the Oval Office. Also printed in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIX, Panama, Document 196. Brackets are in the original.

Carter. Good afternoon, General Torrijos. It's a pleasure to talk to you again.

Torrijos. Good afternoon, Mr. President. I'm very happy to talk to you too.

Carter. We have many problems with Nicaragua, don't we? I hope that working together with you, Venezuela, Colombia and others that we can quickly bring a peaceful settlement to this serious problem and restore democracy and preserve human rights in Nicaragua. We are very eager that this problem be solved without any more blood of the Nicaraguan people being shed.

Torrijos. I agree with you.

Carter. To do this, we need close communication. As you know, we have sent William Rogers [Jorden] to represent us, and we believe that he and others can coordinate the careful efforts that will be necessary to reach agreement on a solution. Do you agree with that?

Torrijos. That is a very good idea. Now it is important for all countries to be discouraged from engaging in incursions with their military forces. The problem can be reduced to one simple definition: "An insane man with an armed gang of criminals engaged in a massacre of a defenseless population." We must try for an early solution because otherwise the massacre will go on. The borders, Costa Rica and Honduras, are already filling with refugees. There are already 8,000 on the border of Honduras and the President says he can't do anything for them. I am told that by Monday there will be 11,000 there.² We must get our Red Cross organizations working on the problem. We are continuing to analyze the situation, but it is an indigestible one. You, Mr. President, have great prestige, very, very great prestige, on this continent. There is nothing you can't do by means of dialogue.

We have been informed that Nicaragua is now inflaming the bellicose feelings between Honduras and El Salvador, promoting conflict there in order to solve its own problems. I have told the leaders of Honduras not to fall for that.

Carter. Let me respond briefly to the points you have made. I believe your assessment of what needs to be done is very accurate. First, the efforts of all peace-loving countries in the hemisphere must be coordinated, and we are very glad to participate in that effort. Secondly, mediation efforts must be used to the maximum degree, and here again we would be pleased to participate. Thirdly, the Red Cross must be involved in the relief effort and I will start taking steps in that direction immediately. I appreciate your leadership on that. Lastly, a

² September 25.

common declaration is necessary that this matter must be resolved without military attack from the outside, preserving the integrity of all countries, and that includes El Salvador and Honduras. I agree with all this. Please confirm that I have understood you fully.

Torrijos. Yes, Mr. President. First, as I said the problem comes down to one of an insane man in control of an armed gang engaged in a massacre. Secondly, the warning that nobody should interfere should be issued, but it should be valid for or applied to all. Thirdly, I think that all due precautions must be taken not to inflame the situation between El Salvador and Honduras, making the Nicaragua situation secondary in importance. Mr. President, you have enough prestige to get anything you want in a conversation with any President.

Carter. I appreciate your high opinion of me. I will certainly do my best. I greatly value your partnership and help and intend to pursue your ideas. I will keep you informed of any progress I may make. I would report to you on the attitude of Nicaraguan officials when I know. I think it is important for the two of us to share information with each other and likewise share the responsibility to restore peace. Therefore, I will follow up on these matters immediately and hope that we will keep each other thoroughly informed.

Torrijos. Very good. Mr. President, I should just like to congratulate you on what you have achieved in using your good offices to bring a solution to the situation in the Middle East.³

Carter. Thank you. Your friendship and help are very valuable to me. With your kind friendship, I am confident that, like the first step which was taken in the Middle East situation, we will be able to restore peace to this Central American region. Thank you very much, General Torrijos, and good-bye.

³ Reference is to the Camp David Accords. See *Foreign Relations*, 1977–1980, vol. IX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, August 1978–December 1980.

106. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, September 22, 1978

SUBJECT

Telephone Conversation—Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

Nicolas Gonzalez Revilla, Minister of Foreign Relations, Panama
Robert Pastor, NSC

The Foreign Minister called me three times after the President had called Torrijos,² and he himself spoke to Torrijos twice. Torrijos asked that Gonzalez Revilla convey the following information to President Carter:

1. General Torrijos has decided to follow our position on non-intervention. "Because of the respect and friendship which he has for President Carter, he accepts and obeys this policy."

2. A most important element in the situation is the support which Nicaragua has received from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. He said it was a shame that U.S. passivity had allowed these three countries to come to the aid of Nicaragua.

3. It is necessary for our mediation effort to produce early progress and results.

4. The problem of Nicaragua is not one for the OAS; it is a problem for a psychiatrist. Somoza has undertaken the strategy of attacking his own people and exterminating all leftists.

5. El Salvadorean President Romero had asked Torrijos to ask President Carter for international humanitarian assistance.

6. Torrijos asked that Jimmy Carter have as much faith in Torrijos' judgment as Torrijos has in Carter's.

7. Torrijos will make sure that Venezuelan planes, which are now stationed in Panama, will not take off for Nicaragua.

In answer to my question of why Torrijos had considered an air strike last night, the Foreign Minister said that Torrijos and Perez had received reports saying that the human rights situation in Nicaragua was getting extremely bad, and that something more dramatic was necessary.

I asked him why he thought Torrijos had called the attack off. He answered: "because of the President's personal intervention" and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 2/77-9/78. Confidential.

² See Document 105.

because of the persuasiveness of our arguments. He said that he conveyed the message from me and from Dr. Brzezinski much more strongly than we had. *He also said that one very important thing is for us to continue sending encouraging signs and words to both Torrijos and Perez.*

Torrijos called the Foreign Minister again at 4:30 p.m. and said that he wanted to work closely with the United States again. The General intends to call the Presidents of Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala and ask them to support the mediation effort and to suggest a ceasefire. *Torrijos asked that we instruct General McAuliffe to call the military leaders in these countries to make the same point.*

107. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State¹

Panama City, September 24, 1978, 0219Z

6968. For Asst. Sec. Vaky from Ambassador Jorden. Subj: Jorden Mission—Talk With Somoza.

1. This message follows on flash summary filed from Managua.² My two-hour talk with Somoza was notably frank and not without expressions of deepest bitterness on his part. Nevertheless the atmosphere was generally cordial and Somoza several times expressed gratitude for candor that prevailed in our exchange. Naturally he feels deeply wronged by chill he has experienced in relations with his oldest friend and mentor—the U.S. and he occasionally adopts a quote how have I gone wrong—how have I hurt you? unquote attitude. But, as he says, he is a practical politician and he recognizes quote realities unquote even if he disputes the so-called facts and analysis behind them.

2. I laid out our position and proposal pretty much in accord with talking points 1 through 14 plus 19—toning down or underlining as seemed appropriate (getting some guidance from remarkably expres-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua IV. Secret; Flash; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua.

² Reference is to telegram 4603 from Managua, September 23. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2513)

sive eyes, hands, and line of mouth).³ He tightened at every mention of Sandinistas. Twice he said quote what Sandinistas are we talking about? The real Sandinistas are dead or dispersed. These are Cuban Sandinistas. Unquote. He made clear they were illegal revolutionaries and that he would not deal with them.

3. First really negative reaction came when I named countries that were willing to cooperate with us in mediation and told him Bill Rogers was our mediator. Somoza said Rogers would not be acceptable to him because of anti-Somoza statements in the past. I described mediator as distinguished lawyer, former assistant secretary, a man who was knowledgeable and fair-minded. Somoza shook his head but made no additional comment.

4. When I had finished fairly extensive presentation—with emphasis on need for compromise and unacceptability of preconditions—Somoza launched extensive rebuttal. He began with stark statement: Quote I have to tell you that at this point I don't trust the United States unquote. He said there was no doubt that there was opposition to him in Nicaragua. But, he said: Quote in this situation, the main party responsible is the U.S. Government. Unquote. He then proceeded to list series of sins committed by US over past year and a half: the munitions board ruling against selling weapons to Nicaragua in early 1977, the alleged anti-Somoza activities of Mark Sneider in the human rights area, the suspension of FMS, refusal to sign new aid agreements, instructions to vote against Nicaragua. In IDB and World Bank, anti-Nicaragua actions at UN, etc., etc. The long catalog of grievances made it unmistakably clear we are dealing with an embattled and frustrated man, a man who feels persecuted, as President Lucas of Guatemala said quote a wounded bear unquote.

5. Somoza said that if we were viewing alternative leaders we should know that there was no one else who would hold the country together. He stressed the fact that he was President, head of National Guard and leader of Liberal Party. I allowed as how he was an able and varied man and perhaps his only replacement—in the short run—would have to be a junta of three or four. He backed off, stating there would be difficulty finding them. Once again, backed into corner, he lashed out—the U.S. Embassy was 100 percent anti-Somoza; there was opposition among the elite but quote the people unquote were with him; he had 14,000 employees in Somoza enterprises and none of them were unhappy, none of them went on strike, etc., etc.

6. After his long litany of our sins, or imagined sins, Somoza got closer to immediate situation and proposal I had made. At one point,

³ In telegram 240308 to Panama City, September 21, the Department provided Jorden with talking points. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140-2621)

talking about Chamorro, he said he had told the assassinated oppositionist that he was not going to shorten his term quote under pressure unquote. The implication was that he would only do that in his own way and self-chosen circumstances. At another point he said he would hand over his power to another quote if he is elected unquote. And he said that he would have a popular referendum on his rule—if there were constitutional provisions for a referendum, which there isn't. Greatest indication of regret came when Somoza said quietly: quote don't imagine that I am happy to have these thousands of dead under my name in history unquote:

7. I had hit hard the matter of having absolutely no preconditions from any of the parties in advance of mediation efforts—and I used the demands for his immediate surrender of power as an example. Somoza said he understood, but he added that we are all quote sensible politicians unquote. He said he had two things in mind: 1) the Sandinistas are an illegal revolutionary band of cutthroats and I cannot sit at the same table with them, and 2) you have got to help me get this country going again. On the latter point, he had previously noted the cutoff of FMS, the refusal to sign new aid agreements, our negative votes in the IBD and World Bank, etc. In effect, he was saying: if I go with you on this one, you have got to turn off the anti-Nicaragua line in the economic field.

8. He then reviewed the list of potential participants in the mediation effort: Colombia would not be friendly because of the territorial dispute between the two (the islands); the Dominicans would remember that he helped the U.S. overthrow the PRD in 1965; the Mexican Foreign Minister quote hates me unquote; the Hondurans are pro-Peru revolutionary and he wasn't sure he could trust them; Guatemala was ok. It was not clear whether he was saying he would balk at the suggested lineup or whether he was just going on record to make clear none of these folks were really pro-Somoza. I had told him frankly that if he felt that U.S. mediation alone would better meet his requirements, we would certainly respond sympathetically—though it could cause some problems with our friends and neighbors.

9. The bottom line came at the end when Somoza told me he wanted to consult with his Cabinet, the National Guard leadership and his political advisers. And he would get back to me promptly. He understood I was returning to Panama and said he would send me a message through Ambassador Solaun in the next day or two. His final substantive remark was: quote if the resolution in the OAS is passed,⁴ we have

⁴ In telegram 243433 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, September 25, the Department reported that that MFM of the OAS had approved by consensus on September 23 a resolution regarding Nicaragua noting, among other points, that "without prejudice to full observance of the principle of nonintervention, the Government of Nicaragua has stated that it is willing in principle to accept the friendly cooperation and conciliatory efforts that several member states of the organization may offer toward establishing the conditions necessary for peaceful settlement of the situation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780392-0326)

no problem unquote. I thanked him and left—noting that his Cabinet and Guardia officers were in the outer lobby waiting to see him.

Dikeos

108. Editorial Note

In telegram 4659 from Managua, September 26, 1978, William Jorden, the former Ambassador to Panama, reported to Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky that “Somoza has accepted our proposal in toto, that is mediation team composed of the U.S., Dominican Republic, Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780393–1111) In telegram 9330 from Bogotá, September 28, the Embassy reported that Colombian Foreign Minister Diego Uribe Vargas said that the Colombian Government respected “Carter’s leadership on human rights issue but would also like to blow their own horn in this field” by requesting a United Nations intervention in Nicaragua on the basis of human rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780396–0843) In telegram 9331 from Bogotá, the Embassy remarked that Colombia’s request in effect “removed them as a possible participant in the mediation effort.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780396–0841) Following instructions given by the Department in telegram 247880 to Panama City, September 29, Jorden proposed to Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza that the mediation team be reduced to three members: the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780397–0564; Telegram 7155 from Panama City, September 29; National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V) In telegram 248860 to the White House, September 29, the Department repeated the text of telegram 4756 from Managua, September 29, which reported that Somoza had accepted the three-party mediation. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 9/21–30/78)

109. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Guatemala and Nicaragua¹

Washington, October 4, 1978, 2033Z

252512. Guatemala for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation: Negotiating Instructions.

Following are negotiating instructions as approved by the White House:

Begin text. With the Nicaraguans becoming increasingly polarized and caught in a cycle of escalating violence and repression—that produces human suffering and could lead to a radical takeover—the basic objective of our mediation is to seek an enduring, peaceful, democratic solution.

Towards that end, the U.S. mediator should try to accomplish the following:

1. Facilitate the achievement of a national consensus on Nicaragua's future political evolution. To the greatest extent possible, allow the solution to emerge from the play of the positions taken by the two sides. While the U.S. role in the mediation will be important, perhaps central, it should be carefully calibrated to permit the parties to express their views fully and to reflect the international character of the mediation.

2. Help the opposition groups articulate their interests so that any agreement which might be reached is as broadly reflective of their views as possible—otherwise it will be an unstable settlement. As much as possible, the broad opposition front (FAO) should be treated as the principal representative of the opposition groups.

3. Work out between the government and the opposition groups (a) the nature of a transition that will take the country to free and open elections and (b) the mechanics for effectuating such a transition. Towards those ends, it will be important to encourage the formulation of a timetable for transition arrangements.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Santo Domingo. Drafted by Vaky; cleared by Oxman, Pastor, and in S/S–O; approved by Vaky. In a September 30 memorandum to Carter, Christopher recommended that he select INR Director Bowdler to serve as U.S. mediator. Brzezinski added in a handwritten notation: "I concur. He is solid. ZB." Carter approved the recommendation. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Box 9, Memos to Christopher from the White House.)

4. Seek to preserve the National Guard (GN) as an institution capable of maintaining law and order while insuring acceptable new leadership and the establishment of discipline and restraint.

5. Consider whether other institutions of government (e.g., the judiciary) need to be reformed to facilitate the transition to a peaceful and democratic solution.

6. If necessary to assure such a solution, persuade Somoza and his close relatives to step down in advance of 1981 and not run for office. Consult with Washington on what steps may be desirable and appropriate to achieve this result. Their departure from the country would be preferable but this decision should be a function of the negotiating process. (Should Somoza express a desire to come to the U.S., indicate that entry could be considered.)

7. During the course of the negotiations, indicate, as appropriate, that the USG is prepared (a) to provide humanitarian assistance to Nicaraguans affected by the civil strife inside the country or in Honduras and Costa Rica, and (b) once agreement is reached on a transition, to consider resumption of economic and military assistance. End text.

Christopher

110. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 5, 1978, 0015Z

4858. Guatemala for Ambassador Bowdler. For Asst Secy Vaky from Ambassador Solaun. Subject: Mediation: A Difficult Road.

Summary: Now that Somoza and the opposition have agreed in principal to accept mediation, it is important to bear in mind the difficulties ahead in achieving an enduring, peaceful, democratic solution. The obstacles to be encountered from both GON and opposition will require special resourcefulness on the part of the mediation team if there is to be any any hope for a mediated solution. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City. Oxman sent the telegram to Christopher under an October 5 note describing the telegram as “a thoughtful, helpful cable. Superb in parts. Worth review,” and added, “p.s. I would take a slightly less pessimistic view than Solaun, however.” (Ibid.)

1. The Somoza quandary

A. In their last meeting² Somoza told Amb Jorden that he views his early departure from power as unconstitutional. The Emb views this argument as nonsensical, but has not directly told him so. Emb believes that Somoza will continue to insist on a 1981 formula for resolving the political crisis. He may be expected to accept institutional reform provisions, but will adamantly insist on “sticking to the constitution” and accepting political change through free elections over which he presides. It will be hard for the US to resist constitutional/free election arguments. (The constitutional issue is dealt with in para 3).

B. As is typical of a centralized, paternalistic, authoritarian regime, Somoza has successfully suppressed military and political leaders who demonstrated any potential for creation of independent bases. Neither the GN nor the Liberal Party (PLN) has a strong institutional identity or capability of action independent from Somoza. It would be extremely difficult for them to exert pressure on Somoza to depart. Somoza, however, has the capacity to exercise a debilitating influence on these institutions, which could lead to instability. The fact that Major Somoza Portecarrero has control over the most important combat proven unit of the GN demonstrates the problem of Somoza domination of these institutions. The quandary is that, in order for these institutions to become revitalized, it is essential for Somoza to relinquish at least some of the total control he now exercises over them. However, Somoza justifies his continued domination on the grounds that no one but he is strong enough to hold these institutions together and in line. Here the Emb also does not accept Somoza’s argument.

2. The opposition dilemma

A. The opposition wants Somoza to leave immediately and excludes any solution allowing him to continue in the presidency and GN until 1981. But any intermediate solution (i.e., one not involving Somoza’s immediate departure) lends itself to instability because the longer Somoza is to remain in power, the lesser the probability the FAO would accept it, and it certainly is not likely to be acceptable to the more radical elements of that FAO which would rather support the use of continued violence. This is the key issue which could lead the FAO to split apart.

B. The FAO structure is inherently unstable—united principally by anti-Somoza sentiment—and includes a range of ideologies from very conservative to extremely radical. The popular support and legitimacy of moderate traditionalist groups (especially the four conservative party factions and the dissident MLC liberals) has been seriously

² September 29. See Document 108.

eroded due to their having collaborated with the Somozas in the past. These groups lack significant organization and rank and file support. They are more like "coffee klatches" made up of relatives and close friends and led by and composed of part time politicians. The strongest group in the opposition, in terms of organization and capacity to act in the short run (not to be confused with nor imply a long run ability to capture votes in any free electoral process) is the FSLN—which is not directly represented in FAO. The Group of Twelve (G-12) representatives have refused to be specific about the extent to which they speak for the FSLN. The lack of clearly established FSLN representation through the G-12 in the FAO is likely to continue to be a problem.³ The popular belief of FSLN support for the G-12 will give that group major weight while, at the same time, the FSLN does not run the risk of having its militant image tarnished by open participation in political negotiations. Meanwhile, everyone, including the mediators will have to worry whether any political agreement will forestall (or weaken) further FSLN activities. (Note: At this moment, Embassy has intelligence indicating plans for new FSLN attacks during the first week of October. This has been confirmed by an FAO leader who has informed Amb of a plan to coordinate attacks with the ongoing mediation effort, possibly with the purpose of establishing a provisional government or some type of territorial stronghold prior to a ceasefire.)

C. The FAO political committee (FAO-PC) recently named by the FAO, has no independent decision-making authority to represent the FAO. Rather, its mandate is extremely narrowly-defined. Further, Ramirez is a Marxist; Robelo is a businessman of extraordinary ambition and little political savvy and whose followers participated, in coordination with the FSLN, in the attacks of Managua police stations on September 9; Cordoba Rivas is a political (as distinct from social or economic) radical conservative party (PCN) partisan. Embassy knows that FAO-PC agents outside of Nicaragua have been advocating the immediate establishment of a provisional government headed by the FAO-PC thus creating internal FAO problems. The FAO-PC plays an ambivalent role: on the one hand, prepared to negotiate with the GON; on the other, seeking support for heading a provisional government independent from a mediated solution. On balance, the FAO-PAC appears willing to permit the FSLN to play a large role in any post-Somoza government. Because the FAO-PC's position within the FAO is tenuous and ultimately it accepts recourse to violent action, it is prone toward radicalism. Recently (witness the flap over the deletion of the Church Amendment to the FY 1978 aid authorization bill), the FAO-PC has

³ Oxman bracketed this sentence, underlined the word "problem," and wrote in the right-hand margin: "It's also an asset."

demonstrated a willingness to act independently of FAO instructions and a greater preparedness to threaten to abandon the game whenever events not to its liking occur than the FAO itself. The mediators will have to be alert to the possibility that FAO-PC contacts may not always be reported accurately back to the FAO and that FAO positions may not always be accurately reported to the mediators by the FAO-PC.

3. The constitutional issue:

A. Somoza was elected in December 1974 for a term to expire in May 1981. In that election, which resulted from the liberal-conservative pact of 1971 and which was based on the 1974 constitution, Somoza won in a landslide with only minor reports of fraud. His victory was due to effective liberal party machine politics, ineffective conservative party opposition, and an active electoral abstention campaign on the part of the opposition spear-headed by Pedro Joachin Chamorro.

B. Somoza contends that, in accordance with his electoral mandate and the constitution, he must serve until 1981. He argues correctly that there is presently no constitutional provision for a referendum. The traditional way for affecting major political change in Nicaragua is the convocation of a constituent assembly to come with "total reform" of the constitution. However, the present constitution, specifically precludes that possibility until 10 years from its adoption (i.e., 1984) (Art 336). Therefore, this avenue for an early Somoza departure appears closed.

C. Whether Somoza's term could be foreshortened by partial amendment (Art 338) is problematic. There is no precedent for such a change; some PLN leaders consider that the only constitutional solution to remove Somoza before 1981 would be (1) his death, (2) his physical incapacity, or (3) his resignation. However, other reputable lawyers opine that Somoza's term might be constitutionally shortened.

D. Despite Somoza's claim he is prohibited by the constitution from resigning, there is no such impediment according to Nicaraguan constitutional lawyers.⁴

E. The dilemma is that with the opposition adamant it cannot live with Somoza until 1981 and this position reinforced by the prospect of further serious violence and deterioration in public order as long as he is in office, the decision as to whether he will resign appears to be totally in Somoza's hands or in his acceptance of "partial" constitutional reforms (which could not take effect before mid-1979.) To date, Somoza appears more likely prepared to take his sinking ship down with him than to resign and give it a chance to right itself by revitalizing the PLN and the GN.

⁴ Oxman underlined this paragraph and drew a star in the right-hand margin.

4. *Conclusion:* It is difficult to see how an end to the violence is possible—especially if Somoza is unwilling to surrender power. Only through a combination of his early departure and solution permitting the GN and PLN⁵ to remain cohesive forces with a constructive role to play, does a peaceful transition seem presently likely (avoiding the post-Trujillo-type events that transpired in the Dominican Republic). Nicaragua's political system is not integrated within a constitutional framework, i.e., the constitution and legal system are subservient to politics and not vice versa. The political system has been held together through Somoza's control of the GN and PLN machinery. Mediation, inevitably, must define new legal "rules of the game" and allow additional actors to meaningfully enter the system. The mediators must play a key role in the crystallization and implementation of these new rules, as well as permitting new actors to develop to the point that a chaotic transition can be avoided. A partial solution which does not lead to Somoza's raide [*rapid?*] departure will likely split the opposition. Only the moral weight of the international presence in favor of a partial solution might lend such a solution sufficient legitimacy to restore a semblance of peace but, in this case, the US will have undertaken a very significant commitment to insure that such an agreement is fulfilled.

Solaun

⁵ Oxman circled this abbreviation, drew a line from it to the end of the paragraph, and wrote: "(Liberal Party)."

111. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 7, 1978, 1859Z

4935. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation Team No. 7: Mediators' First Meeting with Somoza.

1. Negotiating Group principals² met alone for one and half hours with Somoza in his "bunker" on October 6. First hour was largely a monologue in which Somoza sought to demonstrate that: (a) the Liberal Party rule of Nicaragua was not much different from the ruling PRI Party in Mexico, and (b) Nicaraguan history showed how the liberal and conservative parties have alternated in power and sometimes worked together in supporting single candidates.

2. Turning to recent events, he placed responsibility for his present trouble largely on Venezuela and the United States. He described the hostility of Carlos Andres Perez and secret meeting he had with him. He said the Carter administration human rights policy, "as administered by middle level officials", had given his opposition encouragement to renew efforts to overthrow him. With Venezuela supporting armed action and the United States applying the economic screws the Sandinistas believed they could force his withdrawal and take over the country. He had crushed them with a lamentable loss of life (1,300 killed, 2,000 wounded). Now he was pleased the negotiation group had arrived to "help them climb down from the coconut tree".

3. Jimenez thanked Somoza for his presentation and explained the group's mission. He asked Somoza whether news reports quoting him as saying that the negotiating team would have total freedom in talking to any groups it wished were correct. Somoza replied in the affirmative. Obiols carried the point a step further by expressing the assumption that these contacts would be without prejudice to any of the people concerned. Somoza took this without any outward manifestation of arrogance and nodded his assent. Jimenez then asked what might be done to improve the climate for our negotiations, mentioning specifically the lifting of press censorship. Somoza at first took the tack that there was no obstacle to the opposition press printing daily if they so desired, subject to certain restrictions affecting public order. Then he came around to saying that perhaps an understanding could be reached covering publication of anything having to do with efforts to work out

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2509. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² Jimenez, Obiols, and Bowdler.

a peaceful solution. We left it that we would come back to him after we have talked with the opposition.

4. By way of broaching the state of siege/curfew issue, I asked Somoza when the present period is due to expire. He replied on October 12 but he would have to extend it until the end of the harvest in order to make sure there was no serious disruption of this essential process. He nevertheless showed a willingness to consider "modifications" when Jimenez pushed him for a review of this measure. Somoza volunteered that he had released all detained political leaders with whom we might wish to meet.

5. At the end of the session Somoza asked what he wanted in the way of further meetings. Jimenez explained that we would talk with opposition leaders on Saturday and would appreciate a second session on Sunday.³ Somoza said he planned to be out of town but would come back. We set the appointment for 11:00 am.

6. As we left his office, Somoza by obvious pre-arrangement had a photographer in the antesala and asked that we stop for a picture. We are compensating for this by alerting the wire services that there may be a picture opportunity after we meet with the FAO.

7. Comment: In this opening skirmish Somoza was his usual confident and affable self. He played heavily on the non-interventionist theme (Venezuela support for armed action and United States economic strangulation) for the benefit of my colleagues but did not dwell on the Communist menace as I had expected. He seemed eager to continue the dialogue. While he gave no chips away, we detected more flexibility on censorship, and possibly the state of siege, than what we had anticipated. The second round after we see the opposition will be more revealing. As I commented to my colleagues after the meeting, our task will be to persuade Somoza that he is higher up on the coconut tree.

8. Department please handle lateral distribution to other interested posts.

Solaun

³ October 7 and 8.

112. Editorial Note

In telegram 4943 from Managua, October 9, 1978, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research William Bowdler reported to Deputy Secretary of State Christopher and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky about the “three-cornered shuttle diplomacy” conducted that day by the negotiating team between Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza, Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, and the political committee of the Broad Opposition Front (FAO). Bowdler noted that the negotiating team “pressed hard for lifting of censorship, release of political prisoners and termination of state of siege.” (See footnote 2, Document 97) Somoza agreed to lift censorship of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa* the next day and remove all press censorship at the “end of present state of siege period, i.e. October 13.” However, he refused to let the state of siege lapse after October 12. Bowdler commented: “Our judgment is that Somoza cynically advanced limited concessions in the hope of producing a FAO split or rejection” and noted that, in that case, the negotiating team would face three options: 1) pressure Somoza to end the siege; 2) depart Nicaragua and assess circumstances; or 3) remain in Nicaragua and canvass elements of the FAO for willingness to continue negotiations with Somoza. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 91D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V) In telegram 4950 from Managua, October 10, the Embassy reported that the FAO political committee “took hard position that without full restoration of rights it would be ‘impossible to continue the negotiations.’” The Embassy concluded: “This is slow, tedious work but inching the two sides to the point where compromise becomes acceptable is best way to handle the parties at this stage.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/9–13/78)

113. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

RPM 78-10384

Washington, October 10, 1978

SUBJECT

Support for the FSLN: Panama and Costa Rica

Summary

Panama's General Torrijos supports the Sandinistas because of a mix of personal and political motives that seems unlikely to change. There are few domestic restraints on Torrijos' involvement in Nicaragua; the types of cautions that might influence policymaking on bilateral Panamanian-US issues are far more feeble in the case of Nicaragua.

[*less than 1 line not declassified*] Torrijos' clandestine maneuvers—including funneling arms and money to the Sandinistas and using both regular troops and government-supported civilian volunteers in support of FSLN objectives—[*1 line not declassified*]

Torrijos shows no signs of substantially moderating his support for the Nicaraguan guerrillas and—under present conditions—clandestine Panamanian assistance to the FSLN and pro-FSLN groups is nearly certain to continue. Some combination of a change in the Nicaraguan domestic situation, a shift in Venezuelan policy, and US pressure would be necessary to deter Torrijos.

Costa Rica, on the other hand, is a powerful asset to the anti-Somoza movement simply by its passive acceptance of a role as the principal guerrilla sanctuary and staging area for operations into Nicaragua.

[*less than 1 line not declassified*], Costa Rican President Carazo [2 lines not declassified] will probably continue to adhere to Costa Rica's instinctively anti-Somoza line while another guerrilla offensive is planned and staged in his country.

¹Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 80T00634A: Production Case Files (1978), Box 13, Folder 72: Support for the FSLN: Panama and Costa Rica. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

114. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 14, 1978, 1206Z

5072. USUN for Shelton. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 31: FAO Turns a Corner.²

1. Summary: Negotiating Group (NG) efforts to bring FAO to more reasonable and realistic negotiating posture paid off afternoon October 13 when FAO plenary decided by unanimous vote to (a) resume discussions with NG beginning 10 am October 14. (b) relegate issue of total lifting of martial law to second place with request that NG keep trying and (c) move ahead with discussions of key issue of Somoza's departure and democratization on basis of substantially toned down talking points rather than polemical written demands. The past week has been a worthwhile learning experience for both FAO and NG. End summary.

2. For past few days NG has met with Archbishop, private sector and individual opposition leaders to urge that they influence the FAO toward a more reasonable and realistic negotiating posture. As reported previously, these groups and individuals have been most responsive to our appeals. The latest response came at noon today when the private sector (INDE and combined chambers) met with the FAO plenary to inform it in no uncertain terms that the private sector would be watching the negotiations closely and that it expected to be not only informed of developments but also listened to by the FAO negotiators. Private sector sources advise us that they fully intend to follow up on this by scheduling periodic meetings with the FAO as negotiations proceed.

3. Our efforts to influence the FAO in a more positive direction paid off afternoon October 13. In plenary session the FAO decided by unanimous vote to:

A. Resume discussions with the NG at 10 am Saturday October 14.

B. Relegate its only partially satisfied demand for a total lifting of martial law and the state of siege to second place, requesting only that the NG keep trying to obtain further concessions on this point from Somoza.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780421-0201. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, San José, Panama City, Bogotá, Caracas, Santo Domingo, and USUN.

² In telegram 5040 from Managua, October 13, Bowdler reported to Vaky that Somoza had delivered a "hardline speech" on October 12 decreeing that the state of siege would be extended until the end of April. Based on his October 13 discussion with Robelo, Bowdler noted that Somoza's speech had adversely impacted the FAO. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2505)

C. Proceed with discussion of key issues of Somoza's departure and democratization process to follow on basis of substantially toned down talking points rather than highly polemical memorandum of demands which FAO had previously intended to present to NG.

4. The final version of FAO talking points for next meeting with NG (text sent septel) clearly demonstrates positive evolution in FAO thinking over past few days.³ It begins by deploring, more in sorrow than in anger, the situation to which the Somoza regime has brought the country. Dwelling briefly on extensive corruption, repression, and incapacity of the Somoza government and its inability to guarantee peace or obtain the assistance needed for reconstruction, the document concludes that the situation has reached a climax. This underscores the importance of the negotiations immediately proceeding to discussion of change in the government. The basis for this change is:

A. Immediate formation of a national government following the definitive separation of Somoza from all civil and military positions and his departure from the country, as well as the separation and departure of all family members holding military position.

B. This national government should be pluralistic and representative of all forces that participate in bringing about democratic change.

C. Implementation of a national plan of political action based on the FAO's sixteen points to create a juridical/political structure for free election of a truly democratic government.

5. When we talked to one of the FAO-PC triumvirate tonight he told us that the FAO almost foundered yesterday when word first circulated about extension of the state of siege. By today reason had gained the upper hand, although he had not anticipated the 15 to 0 vote achieved on the presentation to be made to US tomorrow.

6. Comment: The past week has been a worthwhile learning experience for both the FAO and the NG. We are encouraged by the way in which the moderates have reasserted themselves. The new realism will help them think constructively as they approach the tough issues of spelling out their proposals for the transition. We have learned a great deal about the personalities and inner workings of the FAO. This will assist us in knowing how and when to make our input in their deliberations.

Solaun

³ Telegram 5071 from Managua, October 14, contained the Spanish-language text of the talking points. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/14-22/78)

115. Editorial Note

In telegram 256879 to Managua, October 11, 1978, the Department informed Negotiating Group member and Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research William Bowdler of “recent incidents on the Nicaraguan border that have greatly incensed Carazo and caused him to state publicly that border violations by Nicaraguans must be censured in the OAS.” The Department added that this could have “potentially serious consequences” for the mediation effort in Nicaragua and instructed Bowdler to consult with the other Negotiating Group members. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780415–0216) Bowdler reported in telegram 4994 from Managua, October 11, that the negotiating team felt that Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo’s plan to seek an Organization of American States (OAS) censure of Nicaragua “could be very damaging to our efforts.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780416–0538) In telegram 261354 to Managua, October 14, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky informed Bowdler that U.S. support for the Costa Rican OAS initiative on Nicaragua might result in “Somoza’s breaking off, or threatening to break off, his participation in the mediation process.” If so, Vaky continued, “we would have to react to that strongly, making clear that the mediation and the OAS action are separable matters, that the latter cannot be used as an excuse to get out of the former.” Vaky concluded: “We may well, in short, be coming up to that point where we will have to take the firm stand that we are probably going to have to do anyway sooner or later.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/14–22/78) On October 16, the OAS Permanent Council adopted a resolution proposed by Costa Rica “to censure and deplore knowing penetration of air space of Costa Rica and acts committed by elements of Nicaraguan Air Force.” The United States joined 18 other countries in voting to pass the resolution. (Telegram 263283 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, October 17; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780472–0536)

116. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 18, 1978

SUBJECT

Background on the Sandinistas (FSLN)

At different times, you have expressed interest in the origins and objectives of the Sandinistas. We have just received a rather thorough CIA history of the Sandinistas (Tab A), which I thought might interest you.²

In brief, the FSLN broke into three factions following the arrest and jailing of its leader, Tomas Borges, in February 1978. There emerged an urban faction, which became known as the Prolonged Popular War (GPP), a rural faction, the Terciarios, and an "intellectual group" which took on the name of the Proletarian Tendency (TP).

A new opposition organization, called the Group of Twelve, was formed in 1977 and became instrumental in arranging an alliance between the GPP and the Terciarios in October 1977. This alliance remained in effect until after the successful operation against the National Palace in August 1978,³ when Borges, who was one of the political prisoners freed, and Pastora, the leader of the operation (and one of the leaders of the Terciario Group), had a public falling out in Panama at a press conference.

As to the degree of Marxism of the three factions: the TP is viewed as the most doctrinaire; the GPP is Marxist-oriented because of its principal leader, Borges; and the Terciarios group is the least influenced by Marxism. Perez and Torrijos are close to the Terciarios.

The relative success of the mediation effort had the interesting effect of dividing both the Group of Twelve and the FSLN between the moderates (including the Terciarios), who support the mediation, and the hard-core Marxists (GPP; TP) who correctly see mediation as a threat to their plans. The Cubans have increased their public criticism of the mediation, largely for the same reasons.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/14-22/78. Secret. Sent for information. Inderfurth initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum.

² Tab A, attached but not printed, is a CIA intelligence information cable dated October 12.

³ See Document 81.

117. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 18, 1978, 0255Z

5142. USUN for Shelton. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 44: FAO Proposal for Provisional National Government.

1. Summary: This morning (October 17) FAO–PC presented NG a concise and comprehensive plan for a provisional government. Proposal provides for executive power to be exercised for three years by three member Junta named by FAO; legislative power to be exercised first 2 years by 30 member (two from each of 15 organizations in FAO) council of state and for final year by elected constituent assembly; judicial power to be reorganized by council of state which will elect supreme and appeals court judges with supreme court justices in turn naming other judges; GN to be reorganized professionally and reformed by Junta; a National Police to be created by Junta; an elected constituent assembly to promulgate new constitution and electoral regime; and all articles of constitution and laws not contrary to these provisional arrangements to remain in force. For two hours we discussed in detail the following major problem areas which need clarification or revision:

—Representation of other sectors and PLN which not included in scheme;

—Mechanics of implementation, whether by constitutional or non-constitutional means;

—Measures to achieve national reconciliation; and,

—GN participation in determining its future.

PC will return to FAO plenary to wrestle with these problems. Meanwhile we are urging private sector and church to involve themselves with FAO in this critical stage of process. It will not be easy for FAO to resolve key issues remaining. Their effort in preparing this document represents an important step forward. End summary.

2. Meeting started slowly with PC objecting strongly to Novedades and government radio attacks on FAO members. They encourage rabid anti-Communists to assault them. They also complained about continued heavy repression of radio broadcasts under Codigo Negro. Jimenez

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, San José, Bogotá, Panama City, Caracas, Santo Domingo, and USUN.

promised to raise matter with Somoza and seek guarantees for FAO representatives and their families. He offered little hope that much more could be done about repression of radio broadcasts.

3. With this behind us, PC tabled document setting forth its scheme for a provisional government (PG) (text sent septel)² they explained this was only an outline of what eventually will be a more detailed document. Meeting then recessed for NG to privately consider document. We developed questions to raise and agreed not to go beyond these inquiries at this time. The following discussion of document's individual sections took place:

A. I asked why first, preambular paragraph referred to UN declaration of universal rights but not to OAS human rights convention? Ramirez explained that UN declaration was specified as basic umbrella agreement FAO had no problem with inter-American convention. He promised additional language which would declare intention to accept all of Nicaragua's international obligations and honor all agreements including international human rights convention.

B. Noting that there was no special mention of goal of national reconciliation, I stressed its special importance as basic objective which would encourage elements outside the FAO to support plan. Cordova Rivas noted reference to this in Section II (last sentence) and agreed it should be move forward to first paragraph and highlighted.

C. Obiols, noting that Junta and Consejo appeared limited to FAO participants, asked if PC had considered including important elements outside FAO such as private sector and liberal party (PLN). Ramirez said PG charged with preparing new democratic republic could not be identified with discredited past and Somocismo or it would lose its credibility with the people. Obiols replied that pacific solution was not treaty between victorious FAO and vanquished PLN. Somocismo could be excluded but door should not be closed to other participants who were part of Nicaraguan reality. Cordova Rivas said FAO had not included interests groups such as private sector because it did not wish to establish Spanish-style corporate state and it left out GN to keep it free from politics. Tefel stressed that PG was not permanent and would prepare way for democratic system in which any group could participate. FAO wanted to "de-Somocize" country and break with past. Three-member Junta representing principal forces was not optimum solution but did satisfy minimum conditions. Obiols persisted, questioning whether peace could be assured and solution endure if signifi-

² Telegram 5141 from Managua, October 18, included the full Spanish-language text of the FAO-PC's proposal for a provisional national government. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780425-1159)

cant sectors were excluded. He warned that from minute PG was installed opposition to it would begin, especially from those outside. Ramirez replied that plan was to achieve peace and stability by eradicating Somocismo, not granting concessions to it. If this could not be accomplished via mediation then it would have to be done by violence because the people demanded it. Mediation had been accepted to accomplish FAO goals peacefully, not to concede these goals. Padre D'Escoto added that if FAO compromised and accepted Somocista PLN they would be denounced as traitors by people who were determined to die if necessary to rid country of Somocismo. I asked what FAO would do if Somoza with support of excluded PLN and GN refused to depart as FAO desired? Would it not be wiser to offer the assurances and a role which would draw them toward the FAO plan? Several on FAO side pledged fighting would continue, only worse than before.

D. At this point Cordova Rivas diverted discussion from repeated threats of dire consequences. He insisted that FAO was accommodating reality of GN in Section IV, which not only left this "pillar of order" in place incorporated into PG but also treated it with moderation. Tefel emphasized that GN would be retained as nation's sole armed force although bad elements would be cast out. I asked if FAO contemplated GN having an effective participation in its reorganization and drafting of new organic law. Ramirez said Section IV pre-supposes GN participation and was drafted as it is to make clear GN would be under civilian control. Jimenez commented it would build GN confidence if specific reference were made to its participation. PC then indicated that it would revise line one of Section IV to read "the Junta of government, in consultation with an advisory council composed of active duty members of the GN, will reorganize professionally, etc."

E. Proceeding to Section V Jimenez asked how National Police (NP) would be created, who would serve in it and under what Ministry. Ramirez said paper before us would be supplemented by documents that would spell out such specific details. FAO believed NP should be under Ministry of Government (gubernacion) to give it civilian character. FAO did not wish to create parallel armed force to GN but rather a corps with military organization and civil functions. Jimenez asked if GN officers with police experience would participate in NP. Ramirez agreed that they should.

4. Concluding discussion of paper Robelo stressed that some of the points of view which had been expressed by FAO participants were personal. The FAO plenary would now have to reconsider document taking into account this discussion and take formal positions on questions raised. PC would respond with these positions at next meeting. Jimenez emphasized that points expressed by mediators were only questions offered with a view to obtaining a better understanding and

not to dictate to FAO. Ramirez, referring to lengthy discussion of PLN which would be reported to FAO plenary, asked if it was necessary to give NG definitive reply or could question be kept open. Jimenez reiterated that NG had not proposed PLN participation but merely expressed doubt about how reconciliation could be achieved without it. PLN members after all were also members of Nicaraguan family which reconciliation should reunite. I reiterated question about the route by which the PG would come into being. Robelo closed observing that producing this document had been "great labor" for FAO but he thought it constituted important progress. NG agreed.

5. Comment:

(A) The paper given us today is, as the FAO-PC group explained, an outline and not repeat not a full fledged proposal. Many details need to be filled in. This draft was designed to give gist of their thinking on basic issues and stimulate our questions.

(B) This was our most interesting and productive session with PC to date. As foregoing indicates, key issues remain which it will not be easy for FAO to resolve. We will be urging private sector and church actively to participate in their resolution and this critical stage of process. Two footnotes are of interest. First, prior to this meeting we had drawn up list of thirteen key questions which we thought logically and reasonably should be covered in final solution. The FAO document dealt in full or in part with all of them except details of national reconciliation. This is a good omen. Secondly, the threats which Ramirez and others from G-12 made during the discussion confirm reports from moderates that he readily employs this tactic within FAO plenary.

(C) We are preparing separate message³ assessing FAO document, tactical situation and next steps. I will forward this message as soon as I have had a chance to consult Ambassador Solaun. One of big stumbling blocks is the continued FAO refusal to dialogue with the Liberal Party.

Solaun

³ In telegram 5152 from Managua, October 18, Bowdler wrote to Christopher, Newsum, and Vaky that "the FAO outline for a provisional government is a significant step forward," but added that it had "major defects" in that "nothing is said about the transition from the Somoza government to the provisional government" and that the "draft as it now stands gives a monopoly of power both in the Junta and the Consejo to the groups which comprise the FAO," which is "not realistic." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2501)

118. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 20, 1978, 1615Z

5211. For Under Secretary Newsom and Assistant Secretary Vaky only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 50: FAO Meeting with Negotiating Group.

1. We suffered a temporary setback in the talks yesterday as the FAO indulged in an ill-considered play which annoyed the NG. At the conclusion of the meeting last Tuesday,² after we had reviewed the document they presented and they had promised to study our questions and give us a revised paper, I had raised the issue of how they proposed to reach the provisional government stage from the present situation. At yesterday's meeting they came prepared to discuss the constitutional procedure along the lines of Managua 5187³ but before doing so they decided to throw down the challenge that until the NG got Somoza out of the country it would not be possible to start talks with the Liberal Party. This challenge, which had been unanimously approved by the FAO, was cast in the form of the terse note contained in Managua 5210.⁴

2. This is how the brief session unfolded:

A) Robelo of FAO opened meeting by reading brief document which he stressed FAO had unanimously approved in their plenum. He then proceeded to give copies of document to NG. He stressed, as did Cordoba Rivas, first point of document to effect NG should take upon itself the responsibility for ousting Somoza and his family from the GON and GN without delay, and meanwhile no bilateral or multi-lateral aid should be furnished the Somoza regime or its PLN successor.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2499. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² See Document 117.

³ In telegram 5187 from Managua, October 19, Bowdler reported to Newsom and Vaky that he had met with Alfonso Robelo on October 18 and learned that the FAO would approve a new proposal, which represented an "about face." The new proposal stipulated that "as soon as Somoza and his family depart, constitutional procedures would be followed in the establishment of the successor government with the election of a new President from among the ranks of the PLN in the Congress." Next, the "FAO would immediately enter negotiation with this successor government on partial amendment of the Constitution to pave the way" for a provisional government that would be shaped by further negotiation between the "FAO and the successor government." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

⁴ In telegram 5210 from Managua, October 20, the Embassy transmitted the Spanish-language text of the document the FAO gave to the Negotiating Group at the October 19 meeting. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780430–0649)

He said that a new transitional government would be formed, implicitly through the constitutional route. Cordoba Rivas expanded on this point to say that since NG had asked how the transition would be carried out, then FAO answer is that they would work with PLN members in the Congress to implement constitutional succession upon Somoza's putative departure. Cordoba Rivas said the only other alternative would be "another 9th of September", i.e., a resumption of armed civil strife. He concluded rather abruptly that Somoza's departure is "your problem".

B) FonMin Jimenez then told FAO he believed they had interpreted the NG request incorrectly. What the NG had asked for is a more detailed plan of the steps immediately to be taken assuming Somoza were to depart. NG was inquiring, for example, whether a *de facto* regime or a constitutional regime would be the route recommended by the FAO. Jimenez emphasized that NG wants to explore and find a solution to this problem in collaboration with the FAO, but that the response contained in the FAO document did not do so; instead it constituted "un salto atras" (a step back). I concurred in Jimenez' presentation as did Obiols.

C) Robelo then asserted that the FAO position was logical and followed on the NG request for information on how the FAO would carry out the initial steps assuming Somoza departs. Ramirez said that the FAO was trying to accommodate what it considered to be the NG request for more information as to how the FAO would deal with the PLN and the Guardia Nacional. He asserted that the PLN could only become involved in negotiations after Somoza leaves and at that stage the FAO would deal with the liberals on transition arrangements. He asserted that FAO proposal is really a step forward, which would demonstrate that the negotiations were genuine. But in his presentation he also let slip a concept he may have not intended to make. He said that in the post Somoza period he thought the NG's role would be "protocolary".

D) At Jimenez' request the meeting was recessed briefly so NG could consult on its response. In this discussion it became clear that the Latin machismo of my colleagues had been aroused. They were not about to be treated in this cavalier manner. To make the point we agreed to discontinue the session without engaging the FAO in further debate and let our annoyance percolate. Jimenez then informed the resumed meeting that the NG had decided to study the FAO document further, but commented that NG was frankly "decepcionado" (disappointed) with the FAO presentation. The meeting was then adjourned to FAO's perplexity.

3. NG decided to go straight from this meeting to call on Archbishop to register its concern. Jimenez told him what had transpired and

emphasized our disappointment. He added that he and Obiols will now have to return to their capitals to receive further instructions before proceeding with discussions. Archbishop expressed deep regret that this had happened. He said he will take sounding with the opposition tomorrow but did not commit himself to any specific action.

4. The NG went from the Archbishop's to the house of prominent lawyer for dinner. Present were Adolfo Robelo and Adolfo Calero of the FAO as well as Foreign Minister Julio Quintana and head of the Banco de America Ernesto Fernandez Holman. The chemistry of this social event was fascinating. Robelo and Calero were in a state of shock over the NG's reaction to the FAO ploy. Robelo sought out Obiols to make explanation. Calero took me on. We both used the opportunity to stress the seriousness of our purpose and the need to enter into discussions with the liberal party right away. Calero urged that the NG contact the FAO today to resume discussions. They would be waiting for our call. The other significant aspect of the venting is that around the dinner table we had, in effect, the first FAO–PLN dialogue with NG involvement. The exchanges between Quintana and Robelo-Calero were sharp but respectful. These touched mainly on the representativeness of the FAO, the Marxist influence in the FAO and the problem of Somoza's continued presence in the country. Only debating points were scored but the exchange was useful.

5. After dinner I had a few minutes with Quintana alone. I broached the issue of the PLN selecting three representatives to dialogue with the FAO. He said he had been thinking along parallel lines but asked that we take no initiative with Somoza until he gets back from the new Pope's coronation. He said that would be next Thursday, October 26. This is a regrettable delay but it spans the period when my two colleagues plan to be away (septel).⁵

6. Comment: The position that FAO has taken reflects their grave doubt that in the final analysis Somoza can be removed by peaceful means. To satisfy this doubt they have come up with this tactical ploy intended to force the NG to put Somoza's actual departure up from now. This obviously won't wash for the three governments and the FAO has to be brought to understand this.

7. Our initial response was designed to signal to the FAO to stop playing games with us. While this sinks in we will continue our other contacts (today we meet with INDE and private sector, three labor confederations and wealthy businessman Alfredo Pellas and will have

⁵ In telegram 5188 from Managua, October 19, Bowdler reported to Vaky that Obiols and Jimenez were planning trips to their respective nations. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780428–0998)

dinner at Xavier Chamorro's, presumably with some FAO members present). In our discussions we will take the following line:

—Our immediate objective is to bring the FAO and carefully chosen PLN representatives together for discussions which NG would sponsor and attend.

—We cannot accept creating a vacuum, which we believe would result from this latest FAO proposal.

8. The FAO commitment to follow the constitutional procedure in installing the provisional government, which Robelo communicated to me last Wednesday, was notably omitted from its document, although the commitment was implicit in Robelo's comments. We understand, however, that the FAO plenary prior to yesterday's session with us formally approved taking the constitutional route by a vote of 12 for 3 against (G-12, PSN and PCN-Aguero). It is significant that the G-12 and Maoist-Marxist PSN should have cast a negative vote on this basic question. We presume Aguero's vote reflects his long-standing feud with those conservative party leaders who, by going the constitutional route, will be able to keep their members in the officialista posts in the Congress and other branches of GON.

9. Please pass to Deputy Secretary Christopher and Bill Luers.

Solaun

119. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, October 21, 1978, 1831Z

5094. Subject: Demarche RE New Sandinista Attacks. Ref: State 264042.²

1. I met privately with General Paz evening October 20 briefed him on [*less than 1 line not declassified*] reports and urged that Honduras prevent that its territory be used for FSLN attacks. Paz gave me categorical assurances that Honduras will not intervene militarily in Nicaragua but will control Sandinistas on Honduran soil, capturing them and deporting them.

2. I opened conversation by telling Paz that my government had instructed me to communicate with him urgently and that given nature of my information, I wanted to carefully make a number of points to him.

3. I then made following points:

—My government is very concerned that violence might break out in Nicaragua again.

—Our concern is based on information obtained in several Latin American capitals indicating that FSLN may use Honduran and Costa Rican territory to initiate new offensive simultaneously against Somoza at end this month.

—We understand that senior Costa Rican official said in mid-October that he had information indicating that a strong FSLN attack was expected from Honduran and Costa Rican territory, simultaneously on October 29. He added that FSLN was planning to cause uprisings in seven Nicaraguan cities simultaneously. We also understand that an FSLN/Tercario member said in mid-October that Panamanian troops had reached Costa Rica, and that the offensive was to include attacks on Nicaragua originating from Honduras and Costa Rica coinciding with FSLN actions within Nicaragua, aimed at capturing several cities in Nicaragua, including Managua. The same FSLN member said that a high ranking leader of the FSLN/Tercarios had already arrived

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Tegucigalpa 1963–1979. Secret; Niact Immediate; Roger Channel; Wnintel; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, San José, and Managua.

² Telegram 264042 to Caracas, Panama City, San José, and Tegucigalpa, October 18, noted intelligence reports about FSLN planning and instructed the Ambassadors to issue a démarche warning of the “serious consequences” if FSLN attacked in Nicaragua or “from Costa Rica and Honduras into Nicaragua.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables File, Nicaragua, Box 36, 10/16–21/78)

within Honduras in order to receive a shipment of arms for the offensive, and that this leader had been named Commander of the Tercerista forces on the frontier with Honduras.

—In mid-October we understand that an FSLN member in Nicaragua said that within three weeks there would be a strong attack to secure territory within Nicaragua which would permit the establishment of a provisional government. The FSLN/Terceristas wants to take action in order to obligate the mediators and Nicaraguan Government to include FSLN as part of the new government. In addition, the various FSLN factions are discussing the possibility of joint actions.

—A renewed outbreak of violence would imperil the mediation process and increase the likelihood for an eventual radical outcome in Nicaragua.

—My government urges and hopes that the Honduran Government will continue its efforts to prevent its territory from being used for FSLN attacks. At the same time, we urge and hope that the Government of Honduras will continue its announced policy of scrupulously avoiding any activity by Honduran military or police forces on Nicaraguan territory.

4. After I had made my full presentation, Paz said very soberly that, "this is very serious. The Terceristas are very strong. We have a very tough situation." Paz admitted that he was aware of several rumors on possible FSLN action early in November but he felt my report was the most concrete one he had received to date. He said, "we have many Sandinistas here. We have to get rid of them. They may put us in a very difficult situation. If we send them to Venezuela or Panama, they return. They are able to work in Honduras (as migrant workers during current harvest season) and we have little control over them." He then assured me firmly, "we will not go to fight in Nicaragua. We will control them here in Honduras."

5. Paz proceeded to talk at length about his frustrations with the Sandinistas who shield themselves behind "human rights" as soon as they are detained. He insisted that no Sandinista would be mistreated and that they all would be treated humanely. Paz did not want to send the Sandinistas to Costa Rica because they are able to return to fighting almost at once. He said it is better that they go to Panama. Paz felt that it would be even better if the Sandinistas could be sent far away but said that only Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica are willing to accept them. He reported that Panama was to have sent two planes to pick up 100 Sandinistas that Honduras is ready to send away but that the aircraft did not come as expected. Overall, he stated that there are 150 Sandinistas. Paz observed that twelve of these had been captured in the remote Mosquitia area.

6. He reviewed the refugee situation in Honduras, noting that the overwhelming majority are not a real problem and are being cared for

by the Red Cross. He described the migrant labor situation, commenting that Nicaraguan workers are employed throughout the country to harvest coffee and sugar. Much of this work was done formerly by Salvadorans.

7. Paz expressed his frustration over the way the FSLN is able to secure assistance and documentation at the University of Honduras, further complicating any effective control over them.

8. He said that he planned to review the matter I raised with his advisors and would advise us soon of his plans.

9. In taking his leave, he asked me to inform my government that Honduras will not intervene militarily in Nicaragua.

Jaramillo

120. Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

RPM 78–10396

Washington, October 23, 1978

CUBAN SUPPORT TO THE FSLN

Introduction

Castro's enmity toward the Somoza regime is deep-rooted, and there is no government in Latin America, with the possible exception of that of Pinochet in Chile, that Havana would rather see toppled. Havana is well aware, however, that dramatic Cuban support to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)—such as providing “volunteers” or guerrilla advisers—could prove counterproductive to the Sandinista cause. Given the recent fluid situation in Nicaragua and the Castro regime's stake in maintaining its revolutionary credentials, the Cuban response to the FSLN's appeals for aid have been relatively restrained. Working largely through leftist groups in third countries as well as providing on-island training, Havana's efforts seem to be limited to building up the FSLN's logistic and support capabilities for a long-term struggle.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/14–22/78. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. This memorandum was requested by Pastor and prepared in the Latin America Division of the Office of Regional and Political Analysis.

The Cuban Role: Background

Since the FSLN was formed in the early 1960s, the Sandinistas have looked to Cuba for ideological inspiration, strategic guidance, tactical training, material support, and sanctuary.

Some aspects of Cuba's support role are well documented. Throughout the FSLN's existence, Cuba has been a training site; two years ago 60 Sandinistas were there in various stages of training. Cuba is also both a safehaven and propaganda base; one of the guerrillas flown to Cuba after the December 1974 operation remained in Havana until earlier this year to act as FSLN liaison with the Cuban Government, to direct Sandinista propaganda over Radio Havana, and to keep in touch with representatives of other radical organizations. Sandinistas in Cuba may also be in contact with support groups in the United States and other third countries.

In the last few years, however, Cuba apparently declined repeated Sandinista appeals for money, arms, and increased training outside Cuba, limiting its support to training in Cuba and to related expenses, including transportation and documentation. Havana became cautious in its dealings with the FSLN because it was:

- skeptical about the group's capabilities, particularly given the strength and efficiency of the National Guard
- concerned not to damage its improved reputation among some Latin America governments for eschewing armed insurgency
- aware of Moscow's desire for caution
- desirous of avoiding US counter reaction.

The Cubans insisted that before they were prepared to make a major commitment, the FSLN purge itself of factionalism, establish a unified leadership base, and prove itself under fire.

Until the Sandinista surge of recent months, insurgent unification movements within the Central American countries were primarily generated internally. Earlier this year, however, Cuba stepped up its efforts to encourage unification of Central American guerrilla groups. Cuban officials tried several times to set up meetings in Costa Rica and Panama to help the Sandinistas' Tercario (T), Popular Prolonged War (GPP), and Proletarian Tendency (TP) factions iron out their differences. During the World Youth Festival in Havana (28 July–5 August), the Cubans announced that the unification of the three factions had been achieved—an obviously premature and overly optimistic assessment.

More recently, new differences seem to have strained the union. These reflect the divergent tactical approaches taken by each of the factions when they entered the union. Given the level of domestic and foreign support for the FSLN military campaign, as well as basic agreement on the ultimate objective of ousting Somoza, the factions

will probably draw together if any of them succeeds in promoting another major offensive.

Current Cuban Role in Central America

To some extent, the increased cooperation among Central American guerrilla organizations seems to be a result of Cuban efforts. Cuban officials pushed the idea of cooperative Central American insurgency and support for the FSLN at the World Youth Festival in Havana. They also sponsored a meeting of representatives from 15 Latin American insurgent organizations and urged them to stage dramatic operations in their respective countries to demonstrate their solidarity with the Sandinistas and to “distract” the US.

Guatemala’s Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) and El Salvador’s Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) have already undertaken the kinds of actions recommended by Cuba and are planning more. Ecuador’s Socialist Revolutionary Party (PSRE) has reportedly planned an attack on the Nicaraguan Embassy in Quito, to be carried out with support from the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). The MIR also reportedly has a support apparatus in Costa Rica that helps train Nicaraguan guerrillas. Radical groups in Peru and Colombia are reportedly considering sending volunteers to Nicaragua to fight with the FSLN guerrillas. All the Central American guerrilla groups probably provide the Sandinistas with safesites, documents, and assistance in travel and border crossing.

During the World Youth Festival Cuba not only lobbied in the Latin American insurgent groups, but also in Latin American Communist Party representations. [1 line not declassified] the Cubans said they were convinced the Sandinistas had the necessary ideological commitment and popular support to take on the Somoza government. Cuba asked the visiting party delegates to give “financial, propaganda, and perhaps physical support” to the FSLN.

The Cubans reportedly promoted the consultative working conference of the Communist parties of Central America and Mexico and other leftist and anti-Somoza groups that met in Panama City from 29 September to 1 October. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Nicaraguan situation, and Havana very likely continued urging active support for the Sandinista guerrillas.

Cuba has been trying publicly to play down its involvement with the FSLN. On 6 September, for example, Fidel Castro said that the Sandinistas know how to obtain arms and money and do not need Cuba’s help. But Cuba’s strong propaganda support for the Sandinistas demonstrates its interest in the possibility of a revolutionary renaissance in Central America. A solidarity rally was held in Havana in September, and a recent feature article in *Granma* states that Central

America now has all the conditions for a true revolutionary situation. The US Interests Section in Havana has commented that while Cuba makes abundantly clear its hope for a Sandinista success, it apparently wishes to keep its assistance hidden in order to discourage antiguerrilla intervention.

Recent events indicate that the Cubans—while more active—continue to proceed cautiously and to work through third parties where possible. While encouraging the Sandinistas to get as much as they can out of the negotiations approach, the Cubans believe that the FSLN is likely to take power only following a long armed struggle. To prepare the Sandinistas for protracted conflict, Cuba has been active in recent weeks in helping to build up FSLN logistics and support capabilities in countries neighboring Nicaragua.

Panama seems to be the headquarters for Cuba's liaison with the FSLN and with most other Central American guerrilla groups.

—The Castro regime recently assigned Julian Lopez Diaz, a ranking Cuban Communist Party intelligence official whose experience in subversion in Latin America dates to the mid-1960s, to the Cuban embassy in Panama to oversee Cuba's contacts with all Central American insurgent groups.

—A senior security specialist from Cuba's Ministry of Interior, known as "Justo," has been assigned to the Cuban embassy to provide guidance to the FSLN in "special operations."

—[*less than 1 line not declassified*], most of Cuba's financial assistance to the FSLN is disbursed by the Cuban embassy in Panama.

As a direct result of Cuban encouragement, contacts between the Honduran Communist Party (PCH) and the FSLN has grown since mid-1978.

—During September alone, the Cubans "ordered" the PCH to provide the FSLN with [*number not declassified*] blank Honduran passports; whatever arms, radios, and recorders could be collected; assistance in border crossings; and six safesites for [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Sandinistas who would be arriving in Honduras, presumably from Cuba.

—More recently the Cubans have instructed the PCH to find sites in Honduras where training can be conducted for [*number not declassified*] members of the FSLN/GPP faction.

—Later this year the Cubans plan to begin training some [*number not declassified*] Hondurans in Cuba in intelligence and security matters as well as in guerrilla warfare. The purpose of the guerrilla training is to create a contingency force that can be used in Honduras or, if need be, in Nicaragua.

In El Salvador the generally softline Communist Party (PCES)—with Cuban encouragement—has reportedly initiated efforts to provide

money, food, clothing, equipment, and arms to the FSLN. Committees of Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People—generally FSLN front groups—are collecting funds and propagandizing for the Sandinistas in Mexico, Venezuela, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, and other Latin American countries.

[1 line not declassified] an experienced and presumably high-ranking Cuban military or intelligence officer is in Costa Rica, involved in some way with the Nicaraguan guerrillas. [2 lines not declassified]

The Cubans have also used the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left's support apparatus in Costa Rica to provide the FSLN with materials such as disguises and false documentation.

Reports of a Cuban presence in Nicaragua itself are highly suspect. For example, [2 lines not declassified] Cuban advisers were training Sandinistas in underground sites in a town 50 kilometers from Managua. [2 lines not declassified] the FSLN in Nicaragua, [3 lines not declassified] reported to [location not declassified] the rumor that [number not declassified] Cubans were directing FSLN operations.

There is good evidence that Havana has recently also provided some direct support to the FSLN. The leader of the recent Sandinista assault on the National Palace in Managua appears to be one of some four dozen FSLN members who were supplied with Cuban passports in alias by the Cuban Embassy in Panama. And last year a Cuban Prensa Latina official in Venezuela was reportedly trying to help collect money for the FSLN.

Outlook

Various FSLN emissaries have traveled to Cuba in recent weeks to request that Cuba increase its direct support by providing arms, money, and—in one case—even military intervention. Havana doubtless believes that the prospects for the armed struggle are improving not only in Nicaragua but elsewhere in Central America as well. Consequently, Cuba may well intensify its efforts to strengthen the fighting capabilities of local insurgent groups by training programs in Cuba, while urging them to do the necessary grass roots political organization work to build a mass base of support. The Cubans are likely to continue to channel their logistics assistance primarily through third parties, however, and to avoid undertakings that might provoke a strong US counter-response. If, however, it appeared that the FSLN might suddenly be on the verge of a military victory, Havana's hitherto relatively discreet role would probably become more activist and more overt—particularly if Panama and Venezuela were to agree to participate with Cuba in joint operations.

121. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 24, 1978, 0145Z

5272. For Assistant Secretary Vaky only from Bowdler. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 57: Pressure Points to Use with Somoza. Ref: Managua 5251.²

1. Our success in persuading Somoza to leave will depend on two factors which should be mutually reinforcing:

—The degree to which the FAO–PLN talks serve to soften up the elements which prop up the regime, especially the PLN and the GN.

—The amount of pressure we can bring to bear internally and internationally at the time when Somoza receives our message that he should leave.

2. Essential to the effectiveness of both factors is the reasonableness of the FAO proposal and their flexibility in accepting enough of the PLN counter proposals, particularly with regard to dignified departure, appropriate assurances on Somoza assets, viable constitutional transition, amnesty and other reassuring measures for the PLN and GN. This will serve to undermine Somoza's basis of support and to posit a strong platform for international reaction.

3. The immediate actions which can be concentrated around the time our message is conveyed to Somoza are:

A. Induce the "oficialista" conservatives to walk off their jobs in the congress and elsewhere in GON, and to issue a public statement that they will absent themselves until Somoza steps down.

B. Announce immediate departure of Milgp personnel and their families with word filtered to key NG officers that they will return when Somoza departs.

C. Persuade the Presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to send private personal messages to Somoza asking him to step down as a contribution to the peace and tranquility of the Isthmus. (Obiols thinks it is possible to get them to do this.)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2497. Secret; Niact; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. Christopher wrote "D" on another copy of the telegram. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 21, Human Rights—Nicaragua V)

² Telegram 5251 from Managua, October 23, Bowdler discussed the Negotiating Group's plans to continue discussions with the FAO and attempt to convince the PLN to name negotiators. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2494)

D. Encourage the convening of the MFM to consider the Nicaraguan situation in the light of the IAHRC report and his refusal to step down. (We do not know whether the report will be ready in time.)

E. Get a suitable Latin American country to make a statement at the IMF on the status of the CFF, calling for its postponement until Somoza resigns.

F. Get one or more bankers to make a statement that further loans cannot be extended to Nicaragua until Somoza steps down.

G. Turn down Nicaragua's request for an increase in beef "voluntary restraint" level until Somoza steps down. (GON has just written Embassy asking for a fourteen percent increase.)³

H. Stimulate U.S. longshoreman's union to announce boycott on handling all Nicaraguan goods moving to and from U.S. ports until Somoza steps down.

I. Persuade Israel to suspend military sales to Nicaragua and engineer a public statement to this effect. (This step will be effective, inasmuch as Israel has replaced U.S. as primary arms supplier, and not only Guardia but whole country knows Israeli ships have brought, and may soon again bring, military hardware to the Guardia.)

J. Send prestigious and respected friend of Somoza's, from Congress and/or from the U.S. military, to counsel Somoza to resign for his own and his family's safety and welfare, and for the good of his country.

K. Issue a White House statement to effect that Somoza's continuance in office is not viewed favorably by USG, and that we believe he should step down to make possible an enduring, peaceful and democratic political settlement in this country.

4. Meanwhile we should continue in effect several things we are doing now:

—Stop all deliveries of MAP and FMS items;

—Hold up new IMETP training commitments, and also U.S. service academy nominations;

—Extend the freeze on all significant USAID disbursements and other visible actions; and

—Keep the lid on any new bilateral or IFI commitments for Nicaragua as long as Somoza is around.

5. More drastic measures which might be considered in event the foregoing do not suffice are:

³ Not found.

—Recall Ambassador Solaun; our military attache; some of our State, AID and USICA American civilian employees until Somoza steps down.

B. Encourage other governments to withdraw their Ambassadors until Somoza leaves office.

C. Announce plans to evacuate American personnel and dependents on grounds that their security cannot be guaranteed by Somoza's regime.

D. Cut out Nicaragua's existing beef "voluntary restraint" level (one technique would be to find Somoza's meat packing plant does not meet U.S. sanitary requirements, and thus cut off sales from this one plant.) Look for ways to cut out or at least reduce other U.S. imports from Nicaragua.

E. Cut all remaining official economic ties (new OPIC coverage, Exim activity, USAID pipeline and all other USAID programs).

F. Encourage U.S. private banks, and to extent feasible IFI's, to harden loan conditions, "call" loans, etc.

G. Consider freezing assets in U.S. of Somoza, his family and Somoza enterprises. (Lanica aircraft could be seized for debts, possibly, or be held as litigation proceeds.)

H. We might be able to stimulate a series of resignations from the GON, and thereby develop a "sinking ship" mindset among GON officials.

Solaun

122. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 26, 1978, 1530Z

5347. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 63: G–12 Defection from the FAO.

1. The G–12's defection from the FAO introduces a new sense of urgency into the negotiations.² I have hoped that with the FAO intact we could take the time to start direct FAO–PLN talks which would serve to soften up the PLN and GN and make our task of approaching Somoza easier. We may not be able to wait for this leavening effect now that the G–12 has bolted and we are confronted with a greater likelihood of the FSLN renewing operations in order to maintain its credibility.

2. We will concentrate on shoring up the FAO to avoid further defection and stiffen their resolve in the face of possible intimidation by the FSLN. Given what occurred today (October 25) I believe we should renew our efforts with Costa Rica and Venezuela to get them to restrain the Sandinistas. I would be interested in knowing Carlos Andres Perez' views of the G–12–589, particularly in the face of the highly useful plan given us by the FAO this afternoon.³ With respect to Costa Rica, in my last conversation with Adolfo Robelo he asked if we were in touch with Costa Rican Vice Minister of Public Security Enrique Montealegre. Robelo said he is man charged by GOCR with keeping tabs on the Sandinistas in Costa Rica. He knows where all their bases are, force levels and movements. I wonder if we have been

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2491. Secret; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² In telegram 5333 from Managua, October 25, Bowdler reported to Christopher and Vaky that "Aldolfo Calero has just called to say that Sergio Ramirez has resigned from the FAO–PC and that the Group of 12 has promised a letter withdrawing from the FAO." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2493) In telegram 5370 from Managua, October 26, the Embassy analyzed the withdrawal of the Group of 12 from the FAO and "their subsequent asylum in the Mexican Embassy." The Embassy predicted "renewed FSLN attacks" and that the "FAO will now likely be seeking a more rapid negotiated solution to forestall that possibility and living under increased fear of reprisal from both the GON and from the FSLN." The Embassy continued: "Somoza is likely to take the FAO less seriously and be more inflexible on the issue of his departure, but, at the same time, more interested in a rapid negotiated agreement for political change." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780441–0965)

³ Telegram 5336 from Managua, October 26, included the Spanish-language text of the revised working document containing the FAO's proposals for a provisional government. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780439–1002)

in touch with him, how cooperative he is, and whether we cannot persuade him to keep us fully informed of any significant activity.

3. I want to see what happens here today before making any recommendation about the approach to Somoza contained in Managua 5273.⁴ In the meantime would appreciate your thinking about content and timing.

Solaun

⁴ In telegram 5273 from Managua, October 24, Bowdler sent Vaky proposed talking points for use with Somoza to prompt Somoza's resignation "should he refuse to step down voluntarily." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2496)

123. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, October 27, 1978, 0705Z

5380. USUN for Shelton. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 67: The Mediation Process Advanced.

1. Summary: Today (October 26) the NG significantly advanced the mediation process: the FAO-PC gave us final version of its document containing a proposal for a provisional government of national reconciliation (Managua 5348)²; we presented the document to President Somoza; Somoza designated the three PLN negotiators and we scheduled our first meeting with PLN negotiators for tomorrow. The NG also countered the public impact of the G-12's defection, asylum and published statement denouncing the mediation and the FAO. We issued a brief communique intended to back up the FAO which was broadcast on radio and TV and given to local and international press. La Prensa, by agreement, balanced its coverage of G-12 statement with

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780442-1061. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, San José, Bogotá, Panama City, Caracas, Santo Domingo, and USUN.

² In telegram 5348 from Managua, October 26, the Embassy noted that the "FAO gave the NG the revised document which contains a comprehensive and realistic proposal for handling the transition from the departure of Somoza to the establishment of provisional government that we have been seeking." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780441-0142)

the NG press statement, FAO communique and an editorial. In addition we continued our extensive individual contacts: consulting with the Archbishop, and meeting separately with National University Rector Dr. Mariano Fiallos and PLN leader and former Vice President Alfonso Callejas Deshon. End summary.

2. These steps were taken advancing the mediation process:

(A) NG met with FAO–PC composed of Cordova Rivas, Alfonso Robelo, Rodolfo Robelo and advisors Noel Rivas Gasteazoro, Chaguitillo and Rudolfo Robelo's newly designated advisor Dr. Socrates Flores. (Reynaldo Tefel and Roberto Arguello Hurtado have reportedly withdrawn from PC advisor roles because they sympathized with G–12 position.) Jimenez told PC of our call on La Prensa and read NG communique to them. They appeared pleased. Jimenez said FAO document provided a good basis for negotiations and NG would present it to Somoza today. Jimenez' only suggestion was that members of technical council which would advise the Junta on reorganization of the Guardia (Section IV of document) should be active duty officers. Alfonso Robelo explained that reference was broadly stated to permit Junta to have advice of some of the valuable retired GN officers, if it wished. There was no intention to exclude either active or inactive officers. Jimenez did not persist. PC then noted a few non-substantive editorial changes it would make to clarify document. Meeting closed with Alfonso Robelo thanking NG for its efforts, adding that best support FAO could have now is for negotiations to proceed rapidly and produce results that will demonstrate to people value of mediation.

B) At NG meeting with Somoza, Jimenez explained that the NG yesterday received the FAO document containing its proposals. Jimenez then gave Somoza a copy, which he put aside without attempting to read. Jimenez suggested that as next step NG would appreciate Somoza naming three plan representatives with whom we could meet. Somoza said this should be done by PLN Plenum which would be difficult to convene since they were scattered through country. However, he could probably name representatives now and the Plenum could change them later if necessary. Somoza asked when NG would like to meet with PLN representatives and Jimenez replied tomorrow morning if possible. Somoza said he believed he could comply. Jimenez suggested that it would be best if PLN fielded three negotiators, as does PC, adding up to six others as advisors if it wished. Somoza then observed that there had been some movement out of and within the FAO. Jimenez acknowledged that there had been but avoided being drawn into a discussion. With this the eight-minute meeting ended.

C) Somoza this evening informed Jimenez that the PLN representatives will be FonMin Julio Quintana, National District Minister Orlando Montenegro and PLN Secretary Dr. Alcedo Tablada Solis. The latter

two will open discussions with NG tomorrow (October 27); Quintana has not returned from Rome. Comment: NG is pleased with selection of Quintana, who was our own first preference. An intelligent, articulate and experienced political figure known for his independent views, he nevertheless has been loyal to Somoza. Montenegro is not a bad choice. A somewhat shadowy figure, he fell from grace some years ago (after ascending to the Presidency of the Congress) by acquiring a personal political following in Managua where he is still the long-time PLN leader.

His fortunes have revived in recent years as a result of his having reassured Somoza of his loyalty. Tablada is generally regarded as a party hack and stooge of Somoza. As the number-two in the PLN hierarchy he is a logical choice. End comment.

3. To counter the public impact of the G-12's defection, asylum and anticipated attack on the FAO and the mediation, NG this morning met with La Prensa directors (Chamorro brothers and Carlos Holman) and editor Danilo Aguirre. Jimenez told them that FAO had given NG good document but to counter actions of G-12 we now urgently needed La Prensa's support. For its part, NG would issue communique (Managua—septel) text of which Jaime Chamorro (Public Relations Secretary for FAO) agreed fully, stressing importance of mediation moving rapidly to produce visible results on basic issues. He gave us G-12 communique (Managua—septel)³ which La Prensa would publish today. After lengthy discussion, La Prensa Directors agreed to offset G-12 communique and counter climate of fear resulting from G-12 asylum by also publishing today (1) NG communique, (2) FAO resume of FAO document and (3) an editorial.

B) La Prensa came out this afternoon with carefully balanced front page made up of stories bearing on G-12 walkout and advances in the negotiating process. Lead headline was "FAO: No Hay Retroceso". They placed the G-12 communique above the main headline with the lead "Asilo y Documento de los Doce". To one side of the main headline they placed the FAO communique (Managua 5379) under subhead of "Sin Somoza y Sin Pacto o Componenda".⁴ On the other side they placed the NG communique under lead of Mediacion Informa: Documento a Somoza. Conveniently tucked between FAO and NG communiqués, were two AP photos of columns of allegedly heavily armed Sandinista guerrillas reportedly taken "somewhere in Central America". Accompanying editorial (which was more of an ultimatum than

³ Septels not further identified.

⁴ Telegram 5379 from Managua, October 27, included the Spanish-language text of a bulletin issued by the FAO Information Committee and reported in *La Prensa* on October 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780442-0957)

a boost) stated that as a result of G-12 withdrawal, mediation had lost force and representativeness and therefore should rapidly produce a solution which would eradicate the dictatorship as system and implant the process of democratization. Noting that FAO had made the departure of the Somoza family from power a basic condition for resolving the crisis, La Prensa added that a definitive solution also required compliance with the FAO's 16 points. If the mediation did not produce such a solution, it concluded, the G-12 position would be vindicated. Somoza-owned Novadades appearing this morning missed the big news. It carried only a fairly straight report of the G-12's withdrawal from FAO and asylum accompanied by a GON communique stating that the G-12 asylees must be fleeing from leftist terrorists since the GON was not seeking or bothering them.

Solaun

**124. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the
Department of State (Tarnoff) to the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹**

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

The Nicaraguan mediation effort has reached a critical point. It is clear that no negotiated solution which will achieve reconciliation or bring peace and democracy to that country will be possible without Somoza's early departure from power. None of the opposition will accept less. The moderate and responsible opposition have taken a leading role under the mediators' sponsorship. They have presented for negotiation a realistic proposal for a political transition to a provisional government and to eventual elections, but based upon the prompt departure from power of Somoza and his family. They have placed great faith in the mediation process—and in us.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VI. Secret; Sensitive. An unknown hand wrote "10/30/78" in the top right-hand corner of the memorandum and added, "Sent to White House at 5:20 p.m." at the bottom of the first page.

If the mediation process fails, the moderates will be discredited, extremism and a strategy of violence to achieve political change will be legitimized, and the polarization which we have sought to avoid will occur with the accompanying danger of a Marxist takeover.

Somoza for his part has made clear he will not give up power voluntarily. He apparently intends to string out the negotiation, expecting the opposition to break up and split, which it has already shown signs of doing. He may actually seek the polarization we are trying to avoid on the premise that if he can cast the situation in terms of Somoza vs. Marxists, we will have no choice but to support him. From his point of view therefore delay, even violence, will help him achieve his objective of holding on to power for himself and his family.

Overhanging this situation is the threat of an early renewal of widespread violence by the Sandinista guerillas which intelligence indicates may come as early as next weekend or even before. They too want to discredit a peaceful mediated solution because within the mediation they cannot dominate the moderates and control events. Polarization therefore suits them too. Our mediator, Ambassador William Bowdler, believes that we will have to move quickly now if we are to avoid violence—and even civil war—and a discrediting of both the moderates and the process of negotiating a national reconciliation. (See Managua 5430.)² We had hoped that the process of negotiation would in itself have a leavening effect on Somoza, but we no longer have the luxury of waiting for that to occur.

The only way that Somoza will agree to negotiate a transition promptly is if he believes that he has no alternative. In the last analysis, whether he comes to that conclusion is likely to depend on what the U.S. says. He counts on and needs our support to legitimize himself and stay in power. Up to now, our public posture vis-a-vis Somoza and Nicaragua has been neutral. We have suspended bilateral assistance to the Government of Nicaragua in order to underscore our neutrality. Nevertheless, the opposition in Nicaragua and hemispheric opinion generally view our position as ambiguous, with many believing we quietly back Somoza. The extremists in Nicaragua have played on that fear, charging that the mediation process is a trap designed only to give Somoza time to weaken his opposition. Certainly as far as Somoza

² In telegram 5430 from Managua, October 30, Bowdler wrote to Christopher and Vaky that he had "reached the conclusion that we should make our big move with Somoza by next Thursday, November 2, before he makes his announced public statement on the FAO plan and hopefully before the Sandinistas launch another major action." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2484) Telegram 5424 from Managua, October 29, reported that "Somoza-controlled" *Novedades* had ridiculed the FAO proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780446-0075)

himself is concerned, we have never clearly told him what he can expect from us if he tries to hang on to power.

Hence we are now at the point where, if the mediation is to succeed, we must speak frankly to Somoza to make clear that the Government of Nicaragua cannot expect continued support from the U.S. if he does not promptly accept a transition formula and relinquish power. Attached at Tab A are talking points for Ambassador Bowdler to use in such an approach to Somoza.³ In conjunction with this demarche, we would also be prepared to take a series of measures, such as withdrawing our military mission, to make our point as necessary.

Please inform us as soon as possible whether you concur in the use of the attached talking points.

Peter Tarnoff⁴
Executive Secretary

³ Attached but not printed are the draft talking points dated October 30.

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

125. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 31, 1978

SUBJECT

PRC Meeting on Nicaragua, Wednesday, October 31, 1978, 3:30 p.m.

There are four critical questions for the PRC to address today:

1. Is this the right time to deliver the message to Somoza that he had better accept the program proposed by the opposition or else the U.S. will withdraw its support?

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/23–31/78. Secret.

2. What is the best way to deliver the message? By ourselves, with the other two members of the mediation, or some other way?

3. What should the message contain? (Suggested talking points are at Tab C.)²

4. What complementary actions do we need to take both within the U.S. Government (consultations with the Hill, economic and military aid decisions, EXIM Bank, OPIC, etc.) and with other governments (speaking to the Israelis and Argentines about arms sales, IMF, OAS)?

1. *Timing*

Bowdler and the State Department believe that the message has to be delivered by Thursday.³ (State's arguments are at Tabs A and B.)⁴ I am sure that Vaky and Christopher will make the arguments on behalf of a Thursday demarche, but, in short, they fear that unless we move now, there will be further polarization, and that the mediation effort may collapse.

I think the timing is wrong for several reasons:

—First, it will look wrong for us to demand that Somoza completely accept the opposition's program without giving him adequate time to respond. In fact, the opposition's program has certain weaknesses in it—it is especially and dangerously vague on the issue of what to do with the National Guard—and Somoza no doubt will have some observations to make on it; I do not believe that all of his comments are likely to be wrong.

—Secondly, before delivering this message to Somoza, we should be absolutely clear that the rest of the mediation team (Dominican Republic and Guatemala) are firmly behind what we are doing; letters from Presidents of those two countries should be obtained.

—Thirdly, we should line up more international support for what we will do, and we should be in a position to tell Somoza that a number of countries stand behind our message.

—Fourth, to be sure we have this support, we need the proper international climate and I am not sure that we have it at the moment. I expect we will have that climate when the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is published, as we expect it will be in about 10 days.⁵

—Fifth, if the Sandinistas attack after we deliver this demarche to Somoza, Somoza and his allies in the United States will no doubt

² Not attached.

³ November 1.

⁴ Not attached.

⁵ See footnote 8, Document 137.

try to make it seem that our withdrawal of support from Somoza precipitated the Sandinista attack. The President will be criticized for destabilizing Somoza at a critical period, and also for making it easier for the communists to come to power in Nicaragua.

—Sixth, and by far the most important, next Tuesday⁶ will be the Congressional elections in the U.S. Anyone who reads the newspapers is aware that there is a strong conservative current that is flowing through the elections. We have been lucky that the President has not been attacked with any credibility on any foreign policy issue. If we move on Thursday, Somoza will unquestionably convey our message to the right in the U.S., and we cannot exclude the possibility that the Nicaragua issue will be injected into the campaign in a way which will hurt the President. *For that reason, I recommend that you consider elevating the PRC meeting to the NSC level and give the President the opportunity to hear the give-and-take from his Cabinet on this issue.*

It is not clear to me that we need to move this Thursday. It seems to me more worthwhile for us to try to hold off for about 10 days until the Commission's report is released. In the meantime, we should instruct Bowdler to take some type of middle position with Somoza, telling Somoza not to put his legs in concrete, nor to reject the opposition plan as out of hand. We should recommend that Somoza address the substance of the plan in a constructive way, and should indicate to him that we support the general parameters of this plan.

2. *The Modalities of Delivering the Message*

I think it is extremely important that the message of international support for the opposition program be conveyed by all three mediators. At the same time, however, I think it is important for the U.S. mediator to stay behind after the meeting with Somoza and indicate clearly the extent and depth of U.S. support for the effort.

3. *The Message (Tab C)*

I think the talking points at Tab C are quite good. I have made a few changes, which you will see, on three points:

—(f) Instead of saying that it is not possible or desirable for Somoza to remain, I have said that it is possible, but undesirable for all the reasons which I indicate.

—(g) We should also tell Somoza that he can come to the U.S. if he wants.

—(new h) I have added an additional point on the necessity of obtaining Somoza's help for a restructuring of the National Guard. I

⁶ November 7.

think that this is an absolutely critical issue, which we have not focused on sufficiently.

With these changes, I recommend that you approve the talking points.

4. *Complementary Actions*

a. *In the U.S.* Prior to telling Somoza, we need to consult with Congressional leaders, and get all the appropriate agencies to fully understand and support our position. If Somoza says no to our efforts, we should be prepared to cut off almost everything, including OPIC, EXIM Bank, economic and military aid. We should also contact private bankers. If Somoza accepts the plan, we should be prepared to turn on the spigots.

b. *Internationally.* Similarly, we need to get the mediation effort firmly behind us, to get the Israelis, Argentines, and others to stop all arms sales, and line up support in the OAS.

126. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC-4995-78

Washington, October 31, 1978

SUBJECT

PRC Meeting on Nicaragua, 31 October 1978

PARTICIPANTS

Zbigniew Brzezinski; David Aaron; Robert Pastor, NSC; Warren Christopher; Viron Vaky; Brandon Grove, State Department; Robert Bowie; [name not declassified] CIA; William Smith, JCS; two others unknown to me

1. Christopher explained that the mediation efforts in Nicaragua had done well in getting the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) to produce a responsible plan for transition from the Somoza regime to a successor government. Events were proceeding well, but several factors jeopardized the mediation and required that the US now weigh in heavily to persuade Somoza that his early retirement (before 1979) from power is essential. These factors included FAO fragility, impending FSLN guerrilla attacks, and Somoza's intention of publicly rejecting the plan on 3 November.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret. Drafted by Bowie on November 8.

2. State recommended that the approach to Somoza be made immediately and in two stages: (1) Somoza would be told on 1 November that the IMF would be delaying its expected decision on \$20 million in compensatory drawing for at least two weeks, the US would publicly announce that it was holding up all bilateral assistance and AID disbursements, and Somoza would be nudged to accept the FAO plan. (2) If, as expected, Somoza rejects the FAO plan, he would be told that the US favors his early resignation and would begin to take steps to withdraw support (US milgroup, AID mission, embassy personnel) and weigh in with Somoza's sources of arms (Israel, Guatemala, etc.) and finances.

3. Following some discussion, Brzezinski argued that the decision to take these latter steps should be made only by the PRC principals and, in any event, could be delayed for a couple of weeks. He wanted other Latin American governments involved. He was concerned that the National Guard might disintegrate when Somoza left and that the FAO would be too weak to rule.

4. Vaky discussed the problems inherent in delay, but the bulk of opinion supported Brzezinski. There was then general agreement to implement step one immediately and save step two for awhile, perhaps until it could be considered by a meeting of the PRC principals.

5. Aaron suggested that the US ought to be sounding out the National Guard now in order to assure that it would adjust to Somoza's departure in an orderly manner.

127. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 1, 1978

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

Warren Christopher chaired a PRC meeting on Nicaragua yesterday, which I attended.² Bill Bowdler, our mediator in Nicaragua, believes that the time has come to tell Somoza that if he does not accept the proposal of the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), we will withdraw our support from him. Bowdler fears that unless we weigh in heavily today, Somoza will reject the FAO program in a speech he is planning to give tomorrow. We are also receiving reports of impending attacks by the Sandinistas, and Bowdler believes that if Somoza either rejects the entire plan or its central element which calls for the departure of Somoza and his immediate family, the FAO could disintegrate or throw their full support behind the Sandinistas. Our efforts to strengthen the middle will have come to naught.

The consensus of the meeting was that Bowdler's recommendation is premature. We believe he should be instructed to request Somoza to give careful consideration to the opposition's plan, and ask him *not* to reject the fundamental elements in the plan in his speech on Friday. Bowdler should also inform Somoza that we hope he will accept the plan. The instructions at Tab A incorporate those points.³

We should be prepared later to take more serious steps if Somoza decides to reject our advice and the FAO's plan. However our preference is to try to delay taking those steps until the climate changes

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78-7/79. Secret. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Add statement that U.S. supports the basic elements of the package solution. JC." Carter's reference is to the FAO proposal.

² Carter circled the words "a PRC meeting on." The minutes of the PRC meeting have not been found. However, in an October 31 memorandum to Vance, Christopher noted: "After the usual thrashing around, the PRC approved a combination of steps 1 and 2—telling Somoza that mediators (read US) favor the elements of FAO proposal but stopping short of directly telling Somoza to go now. The IMF and AID actions would be reported to Somoza as being reflective of his declining support." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 8, Memoranda to the Secretary—1978) For Robert Bowie's memorandum for the record, which summarizes the PRC meeting, see Document 126.

³ Tab A, attached but not printed, is the instructions entitled "Nicaraguan Mediation: Talking Points for Somoza." For the final version of the instructions sent to Bowdler, see Document 128.

internationally as well as in Nicaragua. We expect this will be the case after the report on Nicaragua prepared by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is published in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, we will try to explore with a number of Latin American nations and particularly with the two involved in the mediation effort whether they will take the lead or work with us in an effort to withdraw support from Somoza if he rejects the FAO plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the sending of the instructions at Tab A.

128. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, November 1, 1978, 1527Z

277722. Eyes Only for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation: Talking Points for Somoza.

1. You are authorized to approach Somoza as soon as possible, preferably November 1, and make the presentation outlined below. This is intended as a first step in making clear to Somoza that he should take the FAO proposal seriously; that he should not repeat not paint himself in a corner by rejecting the FAO plan or any important element in that plan in his public statement Friday;² and in testing his real reaction to the idea of his leaving early.

2. You should seek the support of the other mediators so that you can speak on their behalf generally, but we believe you should make this demarche privately one-on-one.

3. Please report Somoza's reaction soonest so that we may consider both the timing and modalities of a possible second step along the lines you had earlier suggested.

4. Talking points, begin text:

A. My colleagues and I want (or I have been instructed by my government) to give you our very candid appraisal of the current

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in S/S-O and in draft by Pastor; approved by Christopher.

² November 2.

situation in Nicaragua and to seek your cooperation in achieving a peaceful, enduring solution to your country's internal crisis.

B. We believe we still share with you the common objectives of avoiding further suffering for the Nicaraguan people and of preventing a radical takeover of this country and the destabilizing effect this would have in Central America. These objectives prompted our initiatives in seeking a peaceful solution and now bring us (me) to seek your cooperation in making such a solution possible.

C. During the weeks that our three-nation group has been in Nicaragua we have met with a broad cross-section of Nicaraguans, including some from your own government and party. The picture of the crisis facing Nicaragua which has emerged is most disturbing:

—Since the murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro³ and the violence of September your country has become dangerously polarized and radicalized. There is a widening gulf—not just the obvious conflict between the government and the FSLN but, far more importantly and more seriously, between the people of this country, on the one hand, and the Somoza government.

—There is great concern, uncertainty and fear throughout the country.

—The danger of renewed violence on an ever more destructive scale than in September is imminent.

—The situation is on a downward spiral. You cannot continue to ignore the demands of your opposition except at the price of draconian repression; but that in turn will simply breed further violence. I repeat: the situation is on a downward spiral.

D. Faced with these hard realities and mindful of our common objectives, I and my colleagues have tried over the past month to find a basis for a peaceful solution. We believe that the package solution now offered you in the FAO plan provides the basic elements for reconciliation and peace. The fundamental elements of this plan permit constitutional procedures to be followed and provide for the careful preservation of such institutions as the Guardia Nacional. We believe that it is essential to the preservation of your nation and to the hope of a peaceful future for your country that you accept the fundamental elements of this plan and negotiate its details with the opposition.

E. I should point out to you that the depth of international concern over the situation in Nicaragua is illustrated by the extraordinary step taken today by the nations of the world in voting to postpone action on Nicaragua's request for the IMF compensatory drawing. This is a

³ See footnote 3, Document 64.

measure of international opinion, of all our nations' hope for the mediation process and of their consequent unwillingness to take any action that would prejudice that process or be misinterpreted as partiality.

F. Similarly, it was in recognition of the extraordinary situation in Nicaragua that the United States has, as you know, decided to withhold discretionary economic and military assistance, and temporarily to delay disbursements pending development of a political solution in your internal crisis.

Until such a solution is found, such bilateral instance would be interpreted as support for one party or another and it would be improbable that the purposes for which such assistance is extended could be attained.⁴

G. (In the event a postponement is not achieved in the IMF,⁵ the following talking point should be substituted for the above two points: I should point out to you that the depth of our concern over Nicaragua's situation is illustrated by the statement we felt it essential to make today when acting on Nicaragua's request for a drawing from IMF compensatory facility, a copy of which I have here. As you will note, we felt it necessary to make clear that our action should not be misinterpreted, and to make public our actions in suspending discretionary bilateral assistance, which we have, as you know, already done.)

H. I mention these things to illustrate the depth of our concern and of our earnest hope that Nicaragua's internal agony can be assuaged.

I. We must say that we have been perplexed and deeply disappointed that the representatives you have named to negotiate for the Liberal Party have so far been unwilling to deal with this proposal, and have not shown any positions or views which have any hope of resulting in an enduring solution.

J. Consequently, we want to urge you most earnestly to instruct your negotiators to act without delay in negotiating with the opposition sectors promptly and in good faith an agreement within the parameters of this plan.

K. We hope that in your public statements this week, which you have announced you will make, you will not close off your options by

⁴ In telegram 279876 to Managua, November 3, the Department wrote: "Department and AID have determined that, in light of the unsettled economic and political situation in Nicaragua and in order to give the mediation efforts currently under way a reasonable chance to succeed, it will be necessary for the United States to suspend our bilateral assistance activities in Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780453-0516)

⁵ In telegram 278301 to multiple posts, November 2, the Department reported that the United States had successfully supported a postponement, on November 1, by the IMF Executive Board of consideration of Nicaragua's compensatory financing request. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780451-0484)

rejecting the plan or any of its important elements but rather show your willingness to work out an enduring solution embodying the fundamental elements contained in this plan which the U.S. in general endorses.

L. If you wish, we are prepared to review and explain these proposals to you in detail. If you wish to suggest specific changes or amendments we will take them up with the FAO.

M. What we ask in short is your realistic understanding of the situation and of your country's tragedy and the exercise of the highest form of statesmanship. End text.

Vance

129. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 2, 1978, 2230Z

5549. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Ambassador Solaun. Subject: Embassy Views on the Current Political Situation.

Summary. Since the FAO presented its plan to the NG I have had several conversations with moderate liberals and conservatives and businessmen, who see no chance for rapid movement in the negotiations, which they all agree is essential, until Somoza is forced to accept the inevitability of his resignation. On the other hand, these contacts indicate Somoza will be harder to convince unless he can clearly see an exit which he does not view as a sell-out of the interests of the family, the PLN and the GN. Even though we are hearing, and have reported, that some elements in the PLN and the GN, under proper circumstances, accept the need for his resignation, Somoza is not receiving the same message, and these elements will not likely speak up until he has indicated that he will resign. The sources also believe that Somoza and his supporters will find serious problems with the FAO plan because it forces not only Somoza to resign but also the PLN to give up its hegemony in the Cabinet, Congress and local government. Thus we have a paradox whose solution might require two phases: (1) persuade Somoza to resign and get from him a counterplan accept-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780453-0174. Secret; Immediate; Exdis.

able to him (i.e., his “Puente de Plata”) and (2) negotiate such a plan with the FAO and the private sector. End summary.

1. All recent contacts with moderate liberals and conservatives and businessmen have yielded the same common themes: (a) the issue of timing is now of critical importance, (b) there currently is high expectation for the NG’s success, (c) if there is not rapid, tangible progress, there will be an enormous let down which will weaken moderate forces and strengthen radicalism, (d) the current FAO plan is a thinly disguised coup d’état which will be unacceptable to the GON because it reduces the PLN to a position of impotence, (e) Somoza must resign now for true political compromise to take place, (f) once Somoza’s resignation is assured moderates will be strengthened and an acceptable constitutional provisional government can be agreed on.

2. The general feeling is that a true breakthrough in the negotiations is necessary within the next week or two. By that, our interlocutors mean Somoza’s resignation. Several opposition contacts said that if that happens, the FSLN would lose credibility, its banner.

3. Moderate sources from both parties argue that the FAO plan hinders rapid progress because it is an unacceptable starting point for negotiations as it only provides an insignificant role for the PLN in the transitional government and would be a threat to the GN. In one conversation, two distinguished independent liberals said the PLN could not accept surrendering entirely their control because they have not yet lost the war. This same thinking is likely to be found in the GN. What the FAO plan does is to unite the PLN and the GN behind Somoza, several sources said. Another two said that the plan does not provide Somoza’s “Puente de Plata,” and that his acceptance of any plan is a *sine qua non* for success of the mediation. A conservative said the junta concept was unworkable because it could not constitutionally be implemented before 1979. The common denominator in these positions is that the urgent need, the first priority, is not structural reform but rather the removal of the person who has perverted the constitutional structure, i.e., Somoza, and that to obtain this Somoza must be asked by the U.S. to resign and propose his “Puente de Plata.”

4. A problem in dealing with the PLN and a significant sector of the PCN is that they suggest only minor changes of personalities, structures and laws following a resignation. They would like an interim President until 1981 with a continuing Congress. Conservative sources describe the need for a person honest and not discredited on the basis of past close allegiance to Somoza, while at the same time being acceptable to the GN and Liberal Party. They argue that Nicaragua needs a referee in the presidency like Balaguer, not another strong, military charismatic leader. A few think such a person could even be found within the liberals in the Congress.

5. The difficulty with this analysis is that it is unacceptable to the non-traditional political parties and groups which have the majority and loudest voice in the FAO. The [omission in the original] basically is that most FAO groups have no participation in the current Congress or other formal government institutions, that traditional liberals and conservatives that are in the government are currently largely discredited, and that there is a need for a thorough electoral reform. In sum, as an immediate election is impossible, a national reconciliation solution requires a transitional, provisional government with a new constitutional structure capable of representing FAO groups and interests.

6. In response to these contacts I have urged that all concerned Nicaraguans must make their voices heard, that they should work to provide a climate of flexibility and maintain contacts with all key sectors. To the liberals I have urged that they work within their party to emphasize their perceived need for change and to seek clarification from the FAO as to the future role of the Liberal Party and the GN. I have emphasized that I believe that the intent of the negotiators is to assure guarantee for PLN and the GN, and that PLN role in any future government is still negotiable. To all I have emphasized that they must not simply criticize the FAO plan but rather formulate and foment constructive suggestions and counterproposals.

7. Comment: From these contacts, I get the impression that there is a misconception with regard to the FAO plan. Many see it as a fait accompli rather than a negotiating document. Nevertheless, these comments about the plan reflect a true problem in that the PLN and the GN likely do not see any guarantees for themselves. To the extent that this is the case, the plan does not contribute to soften Somoza's position, as he cannot betray his loyalists by resigning under these conditions. For this reason many of our contacts want the NG to immediately explore with President Somoza his terms for a "Puente de Plata." Assuming Somoza cooperates, then true negotiations based on the premise of Somoza's departure can succeed and, thereby, minimize the potential for chaos and the collapse of public order. I have kept Ambassador Bowdler informed of these conversations and my thinking on these issues.

Solaun

130. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 3, 1978, 1712Z

5564. For Assistant Secretary Vaky and Ambassador Luers only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 94: NG Meeting with Somoza

1. NG met for half an hour with Somoza in the “bunker” at 4:00 pm on November 2. The purpose of the meeting was to:

—Ask him to refrain from commenting publicly on the FAO plan in ways which would close options,

—Inquire whether he could advance the timetable for delivery of the PLN proposals from Monday, November 6 to at least Saturday, November 4.

—Urge him to intercede with the PLN directorate so that the proposals which are given to the NG contain the necessary flexibility to allow significant advance in the negotiating process.

2. Somoza said that he had refrained from commenting on the FAO plan and would continue to do so. He would, however, make reference to it in a speech he will deliver on Sunday, but he indicated his remarks would not foreclose options.

3. On the second point Somoza said he could not advance the date. The PLN directorate would meet Friday, November 3 and it would take until Monday to complete preparation and consultation of the paper.

4. Somoza’s comment on the third point was to the effect that we will be surprised by the degree of flexibility in the PLN position. He charged that it was the FAO which was imposing rigid requirements. They are the ones demanding surrender of the PLN and GN. I pointed out to Somoza that this sweeping assertion was not accurate. While it was true that the FAO paper had a fixed point of departure, what it contemplated was a sharing of power in the interest of national reconciliation and not surrender. Somoza did not respond.

5. Somoza then turned to the IMF action yesterday.² He said the decision represented a serious deviation from IMF practice of acting on purely technical grounds. Nicaragua would now have to default on its international payments. If the GON was not allowed to acquire

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua Cables: 11/1–3/78. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 5, Document 128.

dollars, it would not meet its dollar obligations. Not only had the fund action deprived Nicaragua of this line of credit, it had also led a group of European banks to withdraw a \$15 million dollar loan that was to have been signed today. Somoza went on to describe the IMF decision as "removing Nicaragua from the Western group of countries and he had still not applied for entry into the Eastern Bloc." Turning to me he asked that I convey to Washington that he was under great pressure from persons in the government (unidentified) who regarded the USG as no longer neutral and questioned US impartiality in the negotiations. I explained to Somoza that the three week postponement was not a hostile or punitive measure but an effort to avoid, within the context of the delicate Nicaraguan situation, actions which might complicate the search for a solution. Somoza's only comment was that the IMF decision worked to the advantage of the opposition.

6. Comment:

(A) After the meeting I discussed with my colleagues the noticeable differences in demeanor of Somoza from previous sessions. We all agreed that there was a change. We found him subdued (*apagado*). The ready smile, self-assurance, and flow of words was not there. He was cordial as ever but clearly showed signs of stress.

(B) Nevertheless, throughout his various interventions there was a perceptible tone of defiance as he made reference to:

—How long suffering the Nicaraguan people are.

—How independent of outside pressure they have been throughout their history.

—How the solution to the present crisis will come from inside Nicaragua and not from outside.

We got the impression that these remarks were more in the nature of barbs tossed by a man under pressure than a signal that he was about to pull out of the negotiations.

Solaun

131. Telegram From the Embassy in Venezuela to the Department of State and the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Caracas, November 4, 1978, 0451Z

10485. Managua for Ambassador Bowdler Only. Subject: Results of President Perez' Conclave.²

Summary: President Perez presented me tonight³ with the results of his meetings with Nicaraguan visitors. I did not meet any of them but had an hour conversation with the President and Foreign Minister. Perez extracted the following deal. Robelo and Chamorro will return to Managua and on Monday⁴ will meet with the FAO and GN to say they accept the general outline of the FAO plan. They will agree to give the GN a month to complete the plan. Once the FAO agrees to a plan, Tunnerman will state from Costa Rica speaking on behalf of the Group of 12, that the plan is the best solution for Nicaragua. Pastora will make no public comment of support but will refrain from military action during the timeframe of approximately one month. I told the President that I would report this to Department and that I thought he had achieved our objective of maximizing the support for the mediation while heading off violence. End summary.

1. President Perez called me to Miraflores tonight where I met with him and Foreign Minister Consalvi. There was no member of the Nicaraguan group in the room although they were nearby. The President was understanding with my reasons for not wanting to meet with any of the group. He had completed his meetings yesterday and today and gave me a general rundown of what had transpired.

2. He said he had met yesterday Robelo, Chamorro, Romiro Cardenal and Tunnerman. He had told them the following:

—He was pessimistic about a mediation effort but fully supported it and the United States' effort to avoid chaos in Nicaragua.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850101–1973. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis.

² In telegram 10432 from Caracas, November 3, Luers reported that he had been invited to "participate with President Perez in a meeting with Nicaraguans" that afternoon and requested instructions. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2480) The Department responded in telegram 280167 to Caracas, November 3, instructing Luers not to participate in the meeting because he was "not the mediator" and because he "could not portray all the nuances or latest information, your participation would not be that helpful." The Department added that Luers should instruct Perez to tell the Nicaraguans that the United States Government could succeed and that it had made progress. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua: 11/1/78–11/3/78)

³ November 3.

⁴ November 6.

—He criticized the decision of the Group of 12 to withdraw from the mediation saying that this created a division within Nicaragua and created competition between elements over which was the most qualified to rule at a time when national unity was essential.

—He offered to write a letter urging the Group of 12 exiled in the Mexican Embassy in Managua to resume their role in the FAO.

3. Perez said that he subsequently covered similar ground with the group plus Pastora and one other member of the Sandinista group who arrived this evening from Panama. Cap's summary of the reactions to his presentation were as follows: Tunnerman indicated that the die was already cast by the Group of 12 and it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to rejoin the FAO. Pastora described the situation within the Sandinista movement as being somewhat difficult to control but that since the FSLN-T had the strongest forces and were the best armed, he believed he had control over the situation. Pastora and his colleague (neither the President nor Consalvi could remember his name) discussed the type of bourgeois democracy that they would like to see established in Nicaragua after Somoza is "eliminated." Pastora stressed that in order to accept President Perez's urgings he would have to understand what the timeframe was. Tunnerman also said that he could speak for the Group of 12 who are in the Mexican Embassy in agreeing to a certain timeframe. Robelo, moreover, was apparently helpful in supporting Perez in urging for support of the mediation for a period of time.

4. I then read to the President and Foreign Minister from a Spanish translation of the instructions I had received from the Department with some helpful addenda provided by Bill Bowdler. The key phrase for the President was clearly that we believed that an agreement could be completed by the first of December and preferably before. In addition to reading slowly the very helpful text I received from the Department, I described the impact of the US action with regard to the IMF postponement and how Somoza had taken this badly.

5. The President after hearing my presentation said that he was encouraged by what he had heard but had to say he was still skeptical that Somoza would actually leave. He then said that he wanted to be precise about what he had extracted from the group. He described the following agreed scenario:

—Robelo and Chamorro will return to Managua and meet with the FAO and the GN on Monday at which time they will accept the general FAO scheme and agree to participate in final negotiations.

—They will set roughly one month as the timeframe for completion of the plan. (Cap was somewhat vague on this point and at one point said that the group would give the GN 15 days after the presentation of the plan to Somoza to carry out the program of removing Somoza).

—Once FAO accepts the plan, Tunnerman agreed to issue a statement from Costa Rica in the name of the Group of 12 stating that the plan was the best way to save Nicaragua from chaos.

—Pastora agreed that he would make no statement in support of the plan but would withhold military action for the agreed period.

—Cap said that all agreed that the removal of Somoza and all of his family was a major condition of the program.

6. Cap said he was skeptical that the US would be able to remove Somoza. He said he wanted to believe we could do it and would do everything he could to support our efforts. He said that he had described to the Nicaraguans his earlier proposal to me that Venezuela work with the United States and other governments to prepare a military logistics plan that would be brought to bear should violence erupt in Nicaragua and the Rio Treaty⁵ be invoked. Cap said he fully agreed that no joint military force could move into Nicaragua to put down civil strife without a decision under the Rio Treaty. But he asked whether the United States would encourage him to send an emissary to Colombia, Panama and a few other countries to have a force in place just in case it was required. I replied that I had discussed this earlier with the Foreign Minister⁶ and that we did not agree to any such pre-positioning or pre-planning, certainly at this stage. Foreign Minister Consalvi said, partially in jest, since the United States' troops are always ready to intervene, we do not need to discuss such matters with other countries. Perez said that his suggestion was merely to provide to the United States unilateral backup should force be required to save lives. I said I would convey his suggestion again to the Department.

7. Cap also had several other points to make regarding the situation in Nicaragua. He said that the United States must stop Israel from supplying arms to Nicaragua. He said that we could use his name in talking to Israel and say that President Perez will criticise them before the world on behalf of Latin America if they do not cease the shipment of arms which, according to the Nicaraguans with whom he has talked, have been very large in recent weeks and months. Secondly, he said that he had learned that the Papal Nuncio in Managua, who was a strong supporter of Somoza, is planning to seek the appointment of Leon Pallais as Archbishop of Managua. President Perez said he talked today to the Papal Nuncio here to pass the word to the Pope that the church and the people of Nicaragua are all opposed to Somoza and to indicate that the Papal Nuncio was seeking to support Somoza. Thirdly, he said that when the time comes that the United States must bring

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 331.

⁶ Not further identified.

pressure to bear on Somoza. He is prepared to participate actively in any way possible. He was speculating on how Venezuela might use its oil exports to Nicaragua to bring short-term pressure in support of other pressures.

8. We discussed briefly the IMF decision. I told him that it was my understanding that the Spanish representative had ceded his chair to the Nicaraguan who then proceeded to vote against our proposal for postponement. I said I was somewhat surprised given the close relations between Venezuela and Spain that the Spanish had not cooperated. Perez was shocked and said that he felt betrayed by the Spaniards and instructed Consalvi to talk to the Spanish Ambassador immediately. He was prepared to call Madrid to find out what had gone wrong but he [garble—said?] that he had decided not to call Suarez the night before the vote since he felt certain that Spain would support the United States' position. The Department is requested to supply any clarification I might need on the Spanish role.

9. I told Perez when I left that I thought his role had been exceptionally supportive. He said that if we could continue to work together this well over the next month, we should be able to maximize the chances of achieving our common objective of establishment of the beginnings of a democratic process in Nicaragua. I said I would report to my government the conversation and would be in touch again with him Monday evening or Tuesday with any reactions. My initial reactions were, however, that he had achieved all that we could have asked of him.

Luers

132. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 7, 1978, 0340Z

5649. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 110: Scenario for Dealing with PLN Proposal.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua Cables: 11/4-10/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

1. This afternoon (November 6) PLN negotiators gave NG a carefully crafted document (Managua 5648)² stating their party's official position which is designed to make the PLN appear forthcoming without Somoza giving up his control of the country. The document is positive in stating the PLN's willingness to dialogue and compromise and requesting immediate establishment of a negotiating mechanism to rapidly solve the country's political problem. The document also expresses a readiness to negotiate the FAO's 16 points³ as well as a number of issues (electoral Supreme Court and GN reforms) which are important but nevertheless secondary to the issue of Somoza's departure. On this primary issue, the PLN, professing adherence to constitutional order, proclaims that it is the unavoidable duty of the President to "remain exercising his office until the legal termination of his mandate." In other words, in the PLN's view, its ostensibly forthcoming offer to negotiate cannot extend to discussion of the President's tenure in office.

2. The PLN proposal leaves the NG with a difficult problem. In the normal course of a mediation we would promptly present the PLN document to the FAO and seek its response. The FAO would no doubt welcome negotiation of the issues raised in the PLN document, adding a few of its own which are omitted. However, a *sine qua non* of the FAO entering such negotiations is its provision that Somoza first leaves or announces that he will leave. Thus, presenting the PLN document to the FAO as it stands will produce a flat no that will leave the mediation at a dead end.

3. Searching for room to maneuver, the NG has found a tactical opening through which we intend to proceed. The document's statement that the President must serve until the legal termination of his term is merely the PLN's position, not Somoza's personal position. Moreover, by referring to "legal termination" the PLN itself allows for Somoza's resignation which would meet this standard since it is specifically provided for in the constitution. Taking advantage of this, the NG will proceed as follows:

A) We will call on Somoza at noon tomorrow (Nov. 7). Noting that we have the PLN's view on the issue of his departure which appears to leave the matter up to him we will ask him for his position. This puts the issue squarely up to him instead of putting the monkey on the FAO's back by forcing it to reject the unacceptable PLN offer.

² Telegram 5648 from Managua, November 7, included the Spanish-language text of the PLN proposal. (Ibid.)

³ See Document 117.

B) If Somoza's response is positive, our problem will be to convince the FAO to negotiate without having⁴ a firm prior commitment that Somoza will leave, however, [garble], as we anticipate, he will not concede his departure,⁵ he will try to persuade him to do so. If this fails, we will try to stop him short of a definitive no that would⁶ put us at an impasse. We will insist that he think the matter over carefully and meet with us again twenty-four hours later.

C) Following our noon meeting with Somoza the NG will meet with Alfonso Robelo at 3:30 tomorrow to brief him on developments and seek his advice on how to handle the FAO-PC. Depending of what Alfonso says we will meet with the FAO-PC and tailor our presentation according to his advice.

D) Hopefully having kept Somoza from setting himself in concrete and held the lid on the FAO, I will call on Somoza Wednesday morning (November 8) to make my demarche (Managua 5650).⁷

4. This scenario is certainly not as solid as I would like but with a bit of luck it may work. In any event it will give us a chance to first try to corner the cat through a multilateral approach and if this fails to sell him with our bilateral demarche.

Solaun

⁴ Pastor wrote "a," and drew a circle around it, next to the word "having." He also drew an arrow to the right-hand margin and wrote: "Not clear. Together or not. 1) Obiols. 2) Int. support. 3) GN contacts."

⁵ Pastor wrote "b," and drew a circle around it, next to the word "departure."

⁶ Pastor wrote "c," and drew a circle around it, next to the word "would."

⁷ In telegram 5650 from Managua, November 7, Bowdler asked for approval of revisions to the talking points meant to make them "tough." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) See Document 134.

133. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 8, 1978, 0031Z

5688. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky Only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 112: NG Conversation with Somoza.

1. The three principals called on President Somoza at the “bunker” at 12 noon. The only other person present was FonMin Julio Quintana.

2. Somoza opened the conversation by asking us how we had spent the weekend. Jimenez answered first by describing his trip to the “Isletas” on Sunday. Obiols said that he had visited with friends. Turning to me the President said “Mr. Ambassador, and how did you spend your time?” I replied that I stayed at home to listen to his speech.² A wry smile crossed his face and he jabbed back with a comment about the unwarranted IMF action.

3. Jimenez then began to present the points in our aide memoire (Managua 5671).³ As he read, one sensed a dramatic rise in tension. About half way through the presentation Jimenez’ voice began to falter and he turned to Obiols and asked him to finish making the presentation.

4. When Obiols finished the presentation, there followed about two minutes of total silence while Somoza, chin in hand, stared at the floor. His first words were “I knew from the beginning that sooner or later you were going to pose this question.” Somoza then lapsed into another long silence. His next comment was, “the question that you have asked me has been posed by many newspapermen but you are an international commission made up of important countries which represent

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VII. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² Telegram 5621 from Managua, November 6, reported on Somoza’s November 5 speech, which was broadcast nation-wide. The Embassy noted that Somoza spoke from a bulletproof booth. He “equated current outside pressures allegedly orchestrated by the opposition to past foreign interventions (especially U.S.) in Nicaragua” and “vowed to resist these pressures and to fulfill his oath to uphold the Constitution even at the risk of his life.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor File, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua Cables: 11/4–10/78)

³ In telegram 5671 from Managua, November 7, Bowdler included the Spanish-language text of the NG’s aide-memoire to be presented to Somoza and remarked that “my Guatemalan colleague agreed with Jimenez and me to very candidly lay it on the line asking Somoza directly whether he will consider resignation or early departure to resolve current acute national crisis.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2535)

'el andamiaje de las Americas' (the structure of the Americas) and which must operate with justice."

5. At this juncture he picked up the aide memoire which Jimenez had given him and read sections of it. Another long pause followed. This interlude was broken by his statement that some of the language of the aide memoire was not felicitous. Jimenez asked him what he referred to. Somoza answered that it amounted to an "ultimatum". Obiols responded that it posed a question which was basic to our work and not an ultimatum. Somoza said that by setting a 24-hour period by which he had to reply we are forcing him to respond within a given time frame. Obiols explained that by suggesting that he might wish to take until tomorrow to think over our presentation we were saying that we knew that he did not want to make a quick decision and would want some time to think it over. If tomorrow was too short a period, I added we would, of course, wait the time he required.

6. Quintana entered the conversation during the foregoing to echo Somoza's ultimatum remark. He went on to comment that our question amounted to a request for the President's resignation which the Congress probably would not accept. In any event the President would want to consult the PLN leadership on so important an issue. Somoza seemed to agree, paused, and then asked rhetorically "well, in the final analysis the decision is mine, isn't it?" This remark led me to point out that the language in the last sentence in paragraph 4 speaks of separation but leaves open the route to be followed. Obiols explained that there is more than one constitutional route and this could well be the subject of negotiation. Somoza nodded.

7. There followed another long pause which Somoza again broke by saying "Encima de mi cabeza estan todos esos cadaveres" ("All those cadavers will be my responsibility"). He was clearly referring to the fact that if his reply to our question was in the negative the responsibility for what was to follow would be his.

8. Toward the end of the meeting, and after another long pause, Somoza turned to us and said "If you see me calm and non-polemic, it is not because I have changed my convictions; it is because I have to examine my conscience." On that note the half hour meeting came to an end with Somoza saying that he would get in touch with us sometime tomorrow afternoon.

9. Comment: Somoza seemed to be caught off guard by the fact that all three members of the commission were putting the critical question so directly and explicitly to him. He seemed to be at a loss on how to respond and gave no hint on which way he would go. After the meeting Obiols commented that he thought that we had gotten him half way down the coconut tree. I would like to think that this is the case. He is a smart and resourceful man, and we will have to wait

for his response tomorrow. Yesterday's PLN document in effect put the monkey on the FAO's back. Through our initiative this morning we returned the monkey to Somoza's shoulders. Tomorrow we will see whether he gives us a straight yes or no answer or resorts to another maneuver to evade the issue.

Solaun

134. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, November 8, 1978, 0138Z

283900. For Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation: Talking Points. Ref: A) Managua 5650² and B) State 277722³

1. You are authorized to make private demarche November 8. However, we ask that you use the talking points contained reftel B (see adjustments in para 2 below), rather than those in reftel A. The purpose of this demarche is to urge Somoza to accept all the fundamental elements of the FAO plan (which of course includes the central opposition concern of departure). It stops short of the "ultimatum" cast of the stronger talking points.

2. Repeat of reftel B's talking points adjusted to update them are as follows: Begin text.

A. I have been instructed by my government to give you our very candid appraisal of the current situation in Nicaragua and to seek your cooperation in achieving a peaceful, enduring solution to your country's internal crisis.

B. We believe we still share with you the common objectives of avoiding further suffering for the Nicaraguan people and of preventing a radical takeover of this country and the destabilizing effect this would have in Central America. These objectives prompted our initiatives in

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua Cables: 11/4–10/78. Secret; Flash; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in substance by Pastor; approved by Christopher. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2446)

² See footnote 7, Document 132.

³ See Document 128.

seeking a peaceful solution and now bring me to seek your cooperation in making such a solution possible.

C. During the weeks that our three-nation group has been in Nicaragua we have met with a broad cross-section of Nicaraguans, including some from your own government and party. The picture of the crisis facing Nicaragua which has emerged is most disturbing:

—Since the murder of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro and the violence of September your country has become dangerously polarized and radicalized. There is a widening gulf—not just the obvious conflict between the government and the FSLN but, far more importantly and more seriously, between the people of this country, on the one hand, and the Somoza government.

—There is great concern, uncertainty and fear throughout the country.

—The danger of renewed violence on an ever more destructive scale than in September is imminent.

—The situation is on a downward spiral. You cannot continue to ignore the demands of your opposition except at the price of Draconian repression; but that in turn will simply breed further violence. I repeat: the situation is on a downward spiral.

D. Faced with these hard realities and mindful of our common objectives, I and my colleagues have tried over the past month to find a basis for a peaceful solution. We believe that the package solution now offered you in the FAO plan provides the basic elements for reconciliation and peace. The fundamental elements permit constitutional procedures to be followed and provide for the careful preservation of such institutions as the Guardia Nacional. Indeed, it shares many of the points contained in the document submitted to us by the PLN, diverging in the one major respect we noted yesterday. We believe that it is essential to the preservation of your nation and to the hope of a peaceful future for your country that you accept the fundamental elements of the opposition proposals and negotiate their details with them.

E. The depth of international concern over the situation in Nicaragua and its impact on the economy was illustrated by the extraordinary step taken last week in the IMF to postpone the IMF compensatory drawing. Similarly, it was in recognition of the extraordinary situation in Nicaragua that the United States has, as you know, decided to withhold discretionary economic and military assistance, and temporarily to delay disbursements pending development of a political solution in your internal crisis.⁴ Until such a solution is found, such bilateral

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 128.

assistance would be interpreted as support for one party or another and it would be improbable that the purposes for which such assistance is extended could be attained. (Please note that you may drop this point if you think it better to do so.)

F. I mention these things to illustrate the depth of our concern and of our earnest hope that Nicaragua's internal agony can be assuaged.

G. We welcome your willingness to discuss the sixteen points advanced by the FAO in their proposals. I note, however, that the PLN document presented to us on Monday⁵ does not express a willingness to discuss the issue which is critical to achieving national reconciliation. Unless the question is addressed by the negotiators promptly and in good faith an agreement to resolve the Nicaraguan crisis peacefully will not be possible.

H. Consequently, we want to urge you most earnestly to instruct your negotiators to act without delay in negotiating with the opposition sectors promptly and in good faith an agreement within the parameters of this plan. Failure to do so will endanger the mediation and lead to repercussions inside and outside Nicaragua which are in everyone's interest to avoid.

I. We hope you will show your willingness to work out an enduring solution embodying the fundamental elements contained in this plan which the U.S. in general endorses. If you wish, we are prepared to review and explain these proposals to you in detail. If you wish to suggest specific changes or amendments we will take them up with the FAO.

J. What we ask in short is your realistic understanding of the situation and of your country's tragedy and the exercise of the highest form of statesmanship. End text.

Vance

⁵ November 6; see Document 132.

135. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 8, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaraguan Update

Whenever I can, I will try to submit a one-page summary of cables and intelligence on Nicaragua so as to keep you up-to-date.

This morning, we received the report of Somoza's meeting with the negotiating group yesterday.² It was a melodramatic meeting, and the Dominican's voice cracked when he posed the "ultimate question" of Somoza's resignation. Somoza said that the question was one he had heard from reporters before, but from the mediation team, it was very different, and he appeared shaken. He balked at having to respond in 24 hours, but agreed to. Bowdler went in this afternoon to give a private demarche.³

I worked with Vaky this afternoon to get out a cable asking several Latin American governments whether they will support us in our efforts. Pete is not excited about the cable, but has agreed to send it.

The FSLN have indicated publicly a deadline of November 20, which Perez had agreed to. Perez had also apparently told them that he would cut off Nicaragua's oil imports.

A member of Somoza's Liberal Party gave our embassy an interesting insight into the divisions within the Liberal Party and the perception of political events. He said that if there had been elections after the September FSLN attack, he believed that the FSLN could have won free elections at that point.

Bowdler informs us today that the opposition is very clear in its desire to have a prior commitment from Somoza to leave before it authorizes its political committee to negotiate an agreement on transition.

Intelligence reports indicate that FSLN forces are positioning themselves in Costa Rica along the Nicaraguan border. Many are said to be

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 1/77-11/78. Secret. Inderfurth initialed the memorandum in the upper right-hand corner of the first page.

² See Document 133.

³ For the Department's instructions to Bowdler, see Document 134.

armed with M–16 rifles and may possess some heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles.

The Commission of Jurists appointed last July by Somoza to analyze the status of the Chomorro assassination investigation finally made public its recommendations on November 7. They were obvious suggestions to the investigating judge to examine the gun cartridges found at the scene of the murder, inspect the car, etc., all of which the opposition have been demanding since last July.

We have made a demarche to the Cubans to urge them to cease their unhelpful attacks on the mediation effort.

November 9, 1978

I just returned from a meeting between Secretary Vance and the Foreign Minister of Guatemala.⁴ The Guatemalan Foreign Minister's perception of the situation in Nicaragua leads me to believe that he is getting his information from Somoza rather than from his mediator. He strongly solicited U.S. concern for the situation there, and he interpreted the cause of the problem as being outside intervention. He fears—and in this, he was conveying the concern of his President—that the Communists will take Nicaragua and Guatemala will be next.

The Foreign Minister did not appear to be aware of the demarche made by the three-member mediation team, nor is it clear to me that he understood our position, or even the position that his mediator is taking. When one of his assistants asked Vaky directly whether the U.S. wished for Somoza to depart as part of the plan, Vaky's answer was very general, and it is not at all clear to me that the Guatemalans understood it. Secretary Vance repeated with great vigor our hope that the mediation team will remain unified.

In sum, Guatemala's position is equivocal and they could go either way. Although the conversation served to reinforce Vaky's feeling that we have to be very clear not only in requesting Somoza's departure, but also in bringing that about unilaterally if necessary, I left with a different impression. I believe that we must be more certain of international support before more definitive action is taken, and we should seek that support.

⁴ No record of the conversation has been found.

136. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 9, 1978, 2218Z

5746. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 116: Conversation with FonMin Julio Quintana.

1. FonMin Quintana asked me to come to his office at noon today for a chat. He started off the conversation by asking whether the Negotiating Group could not go back to the FAO and ask them to change their rigid position on departure of the President. I told him that we had talked at length about this aspect with the FAO and it was clear to us that they would continue to insist on this point. My impression is that they were willing to negotiate all other aspects but not this one.

2. Quintana said that the President has the full support of his Cabinet, the National Guard and the leadership of the Liberal Party. They had all prepared documents manifesting their support. The President could not see why he should step down when he has this kind of backing as well as the popular following demonstrated in the rally last Sunday.² Furthermore, added Quintana, the President is essential to the maintenance of law and order. Were he to leave, fighting would break out and the Sandinistas could well take over.

3. I responded that I thought the government misread the mood of the country. I told him I did not question his assertion that the Cabinet, Guardia and Party leadership were behind the President but in our almost six weeks in the country my colleagues of the Negotiating Group and I were persuaded that a very large proportion of the people, and particularly among those with influence in national affairs, sincerely wanted a fundamental change. Not everyone agreed on the specifics of the FAO plan, but we have found a widespread desire for the President to step down in order to bring about a national reconciliation. I asked Quintana if he had seen the communique published yesterday by the Chamber of Industries. He said he had. I noted that this conservative group had been specific in their call for the prompt change of government.

4. There followed another exchange about the rigidity and unconstitutionality of the FAO plan. I again explained to Quintana that my sense of the FAO position was one of strong adherence to the point

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2438. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis.

² November 5; see footnote 2, Document 133.

that Somoza should leave but there was flexibility in negotiating how that might be accomplished and the nature of the government to follow. I told him that there need not be a political vacuum which would invite civil strife. The FAO and the Negotiating Group contemplate the negotiation of a constitutional transitional arrangement which takes into consideration the views of the FAO, the Liberal Party and the National Guard. Agreement on a transitional government which had the support of the three elements plus the backing of all the major professional and agricultural business associations would go a long way toward insuring peace and national reconciliation. I also told him that I did not share his fear about the danger of "Sandinismo" if a good arrangement could be worked out now rpt now. With such an arrangement the Sandinistas would lose their principal standard. Quintana said "what assurance is there that countries like Venezuela would not continue to support them?" I expressed personal confidence that if a settlement can be reached with the support of the three groups mentioned above, which also included the departure of Somoza and his family, I was confident that his concern would be unfounded.

5. Toward the end of the conversation I said to Quintana that I assumed that he knew that I had asked for an appointment with the President. He answered affirmatively, going on to say that the President had asked him to have his personal chat with me because he wanted to avoid being confronted by a request from the United States that he should step down. I told him that my instructions contemplated a conversation like the one we were having in which I could convey not an ultimatum but a friendly assessment of how we saw the reality of the Nicaraguan situation. It was not my purpose to threaten or demand but to reason with the President in a friendly way. Quintana said this placed a different light on my request for an appointment and he would go straight to the President to speak with him. The implication was that he would advise him to give me the appointment but Quintana was not explicit on this point.

7. Comment: The purpose of this meeting, I think, was twofold:

A. To try to persuade the NG to go back to the FAO to press them to be flexible about the President remaining in power and,

B. To test the purpose of my request for an appointment with the President.

Somoza for the past two days has been meeting with the leadership of the Guard, Liberal Party, and his Cabinet. He recognizes that he needs them and is obtaining certificates of fealty and support to use in buttressing a decision to hang on. All sources indicate that he now intends to give the NG a negative reply but he still has not made his move to call the NG in, wanting first to take another sounding of where he stands with the USG. I told Quintana that before the President

answered the NG, it would be useful for the President and me to have a private chat. I think he is going to try to persuade the President to do this before closing the door.

8. Quintana has just called to say that the President will receive me in the morning.³ Still no move to meet with the NG.

Solaun

³ See Document 137.

137. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 11, 1978, 0015Z

5775. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky Only From Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 121: Conversation With Somoza. Ref: Managua 5770.²

1. I met with Somoza in "his bunker" for an hour and 45 minutes. The conversation was candid yet friendly throughout. There was no bitterness nor recrimination. He did not raise subject of President Carter's statement at yesterday's press conference³ nor the NG demarche on Tuesday.⁴ Somoza gave me the impression of a man still struggling with the decision of whether or not he should stay on.

2. I opened the conversation by expressing appreciation for the opportunity to have a private chat. I then proceeded to make the points

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10/78–12/78. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 5770 from Managua, November 10, the Embassy transmitted Bowdler's condensed version of his meeting with Somoza. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VII)

³ During a November 9 news conference in Kansas City, Missouri, Carter noted the Negotiating Group and U.S. efforts to negotiate "actively now to reach an agreement in Nicaragua to control bloodshed, to minimize disputes, and to set up a government there that will have the full support of the Nicaraguan people." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book II, p. 1993)

⁴ See Document 134.

contained in State 283900⁵ Somoza heard me out without interruption. At the end of the presentation he said that he found little difference from the message which Ambassador Solaun had given him following the death of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. I noted that a great deal had occurred since that tragedy to demonstrate that Nicaragua is on a downhill slope to greater violence which unless reversed is going to produce untold bloodshed, grief and instability which could usher in a Sandinista victory. The danger is acute and prompt decisions on basic change are necessary.

3. Somoza came back with arguments that:

—He is providing constitutional government and making every effort to bring peace and prosperity to his country,

—The Liberal Party is clearly the majority party, as repeatedly made clear in internationally supervised elections, and there is no reason why they should surrender power to disparate elements which have little political strength.

—The violence is largely the work of conservative party elements representing special interests, who, frustrated in their electoral ambitions, have now turned to violence by joining forces with the Communist-led Sandinistas.

—The Sandinistas are able to carry out operations in Nicaragua because of the moral encouragement provided by the current human rights policy of the Carter administration and the financial and material support coming from Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica.

—The FAO represents very little in comparison with the Liberal Party but if they want to test their strength via a plebescite he would be only too happy to comply. He did not press the plebescite proposal.

4. At this point I told Somoza that I wanted to be respectful but also very candid. I told him that the basic problem facing his country was his continued presence in power as he himself had recognized in his first meeting with the Negotiating Group. This fact antecedes any charge of foreign influence. I pointed out that there is no confidence in the efficacy of the democratic process as long as he and his party are in control of the government structure. Violence is growing in the country because of the frustration of people over the lack of honesty in government and their inability to affect the political process in any meaningful way. The polarization and radicalization of the population, especially the youth, posed a security problem far greater than he might imagine because of the potential it offered to the Sandinistas. The September fighting had clearly demonstrated that. I emphasized that

⁵ See Document 134.

fear stalks the country and not only among those opposed to his government. I told him that his close followers were perhaps too loyal to tell him the truth, but after the assassination of Senator Granera Padilla⁶ they also are increasingly fearful for their lives and the safety of their families. All of this frustration, enmity and fear centered on him. The only way that I could see to break out of this impasse was for him to take the tough decision to step down. Somoza took his medicine without disputing me.

6. Somoza referred to the inadequacies of the FAO plan. This afforded the opportunity to go through its essential elements to explain that it offered a viable framework for negotiations. I told him that liberal charges that it was unconstitutional and called for the dismemberment of the Liberal Party and the National Guard were simply not so. The FAO plan is a negotiating document. During these negotiations I would assume that he and his negotiators would bargain for an appropriate role for the Liberal Party in the transitional government, the careful selection of the men who would occupy key posts in that government, and the maintenance of the National Guard as an institution. In this he could count on the support of the Negotiating Group. If he wished to make changes in the proposed mechanics for the transition period, there would be the opportunity to do that. I informed him that we had only yesterday received a proposal from an outstanding group of professional Nicaraguans deeply concerned over the future of their country. This document⁷ which also calls on him to step down, had many useful concepts that might be considered at the appropriate time.

7. I told Somoza it would be a tragedy if the present opportunity to reach agreement on a peaceful solution to the crisis is lost. I indicated that he stood at an historic crossroads. He could choose the path of defiance which would lead the country into further violence and counter-violence which would bring untold suffering and isolation for Nicaragua and threaten the peace and stability of the whole isthmus. He could choose the path of high statesmanship, admittedly at a personal sacrifice, in which he could personally negotiate the government that was to succeed him. He could do this without humiliation or loss of dignity by capitalizing on the manifestations of support which I understood he had been receiving during the last few days. This support afforded a basis for him to go before the country to say that despite this backing he had decided to step down for the greater interests of

⁶ In telegram 5722 from Managua, November 8, the Embassy reported Liberal Party Senator and First Secretary of the Senate Ramiro Granera Padilla had been assassinated by unknown assailants. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780465-1207)

⁷ Not found.

Nicaragua. This courageous act might not win him affection, but he would earn gratitude and respect at home and abroad.

8. Throughout my presentation, Somoza stopped me on three occasions to say that I was presenting convincing arguments for him to go. These were punctuated by long pauses during which he obviously was struggling with a decision. One of the occasions was when I referred to the genuine fear of his followers despite their pledges of loyalty. He admitted that this was the case. A second opportunity came when I referred to the great longing of vast numbers of people for an end to the killing and suffering which they attribute to him. The third occasion was after I had described the role that he would play in negotiating a strong transitional government and in so doing cloak his departure with prestige and dignity. He appeared on these occasions to be on the verge of saying that he would go but each time he hung back and ended up seeking refuge in the need to finish his constitutional mandate. I came away with the feeling that he is not irrevocably determined to stay on. He came closest to saying this when he indicated that the question of his resignation was a matter which in effect came up every day depending on his health and other possible factors. He warned me not to read too much into that statement but this was clearly not the expression of a man who had made up his mind to fight to the bitter end.

9. As I left, I expressed regret that he had not seen his way clear to step down. He thanked me for my not pulling any punches. I asked him to think over what I had said and refrain from taking any extreme position in his press conference. He made no commitment.

10. The meeting with the Negotiating Group at 11:00 am was an anti-climax. He informed us that he had searched his conscience on the question we had asked and reached the conclusion that he should carry out his constitutional mandate until 1981. I asked him to give us time to deliver the PLN proposals to the FAO before holding his press conference and making the document public. He agreed to hold off until 5:00 pm. During this short session he made two caustic references to President Carter's press conference statement.

11. I believe Somoza may be wavering. However, he is not yet sufficiently convinced of (a) the seriousness of USG intent and its determination to take measures on behalf of a peaceful solution and (b) the seriousness of the crisis situation facing the country. Our immediate objective should therefore be to do all that we can to convince him on both counts. I recommend that we proceed with the second stage demarche and back up measures to include:

- Announce AID suspension
- Withdraw MilGrp

- Get Israelis to terminate their military supply relationship
- Recall Ambassador Solaun for consultations

Publication of the IAHRC report on November 18 will fall into this pattern of pressures (State 285352).⁸ I believe these measures, taken within the next 7–10 days, will remove any doubts which Somoza may have concerning our intentions and our determination to act decisively. Some of these measures, particularly aid suspension, may also serve to worsen the crisis situation and hopefully will heighten Somoza's appreciation of it. The aspect of the crisis which will have greatest impact on his willingness to leave will be the military/security situation. We, of course, cannot act in this area, although withdrawal of MilGrp and termination of the Israeli connection will have an indirect impact. However, I believe we can expect the FSLN to at least escalate the level of violence, if it does not launch an offensive (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* some FSLN activity may be imminent.)

12. The above measures will not only undermine Somoza's confidence but will also have a favorable impact on the FAO. If we are seen to be acting forcefully, it will reinforce our appeal to them to stay with the mediation and facilitate their convincing their constituents to do likewise. We made an appeal to the FAO-PC this afternoon, asking them to take several days to carefully study the PLN response before reacting. We told them that some of us will be returning to our capitals for consultations with our respective governments on next steps. We will return next Tuesday⁹ to meet again with them.

13. As part of this scenario, I had thought of returning to Washington tomorrow. (My two colleagues have already made arrangements to leave and be back on Tuesday.) However, our meeting this afternoon with the FAO convinced me that one of us should stay behind to be available for handholding. Robelo specifically asked for this and I said I would stay unless the Department instructed me otherwise. Jim Cheek

⁸ Telegram 285352 to Managua, November 9, noted the impending release of the IAHRC report on Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780463–0996) The IAHRC issued its report on Nicaragua on November 17. Pastor summarized its findings in a November 27 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron: "The report finds that the government of President Anastasio Somoza systematically committed atrocities against its citizens. Citing instances which have occurred during recent years only, the IAHRC report refers to three general periods: (1) the capture, disappearance, and confiscation of lands of 338 campesinos (small farmers) from 1975–1977 at the hands of the National Guard; (2) the general strike and unrest following the assassination of Dr. Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, a prominent political figure and journalist, in Managua January 10, 1978; (3) the September 1978 'mop-up' exercise conducted by the National Guard following the August 22 seizure of the National Palace by the FSLN and the insurrection that followed." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/23–30/78)

⁹ November 14.

will be able to assist in drafting talking points for a second demarche to Somoza, as well as help prepare a strategy of specific measures which will reinforce the message to Somoza and at the same time serve to convince the opposition to keep the door to negotiations open. Jim will carry my views on the plebescite idea which I think Somoza will use as the front piece of his effort to demonstrate reasonableness.

Solaun

138. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, November 11, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: Next Steps

Our Nicaraguan mediation effort is at a critical point. Our mediator, Ambassador Bowdler, is returning tomorrow for consultation, and we will be exploring with him his evaluation of the situation and what our next steps might be. I want to postpone my recommendation to you until after his return and after the PRC meeting set for Monday.² In the meantime, this memorandum is intended to give you a summary of where we are and what our various options appear to be. It describes the nature of the core issue in Nicaragua, where we are in the mediation, and the courses that now seem open to us.

I. THE CORE ISSUE—THE ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND:

What we face in Nicaragua is a most difficult and explosive political succession problem, one that threatens not only widespread violence in the country but the drawing in of other nations on one side or the other.

A generation ago the Caribbean basin area was largely ruled by despotic leaders relying on cruel measures to control their countries. The gradual succession from these leaders to non-family replacements and toward more open governments has resulted in a long series of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 77, Sensitive X: 11–12/78. Secret. There is no indication that the President saw the memorandum.

² November 13; see Document 139.

crises which have regularly drawn the U.S. into the Caribbean and the Caribbean into U.S. domestic politics. In general, the outcomes have been positive—Venezuela and Colombia have become democratic; you contributed to another major step toward democracy in the Dominican Republic in May; gradual liberalization seems to be underway in Haiti, although an explosion is yet possible; only in Cuba has there been a foreign policy disaster.

In Central America the situation is tense, and Nicaragua is an explosive mixture. The 40-year old regime of the Somozas suffers from "regime fatigue." Economic corruption has become more intense and visible since the 1972 earthquake. The rapid economic growth has led to the development of a generation of technicians, professionals and students who find one-man corrupt rule reprehensible. Our human rights policy has held out hope of change, and the disaffection and opposition has been growing and becoming more vocal.

Somoza has tried to appease both the U.S. and part of his opposition. He has made a series of small concessions, but he retains absolute control of power, and has created an organization in the National Guard and the Liberal Party loyal only to himself and his family.

Because Somoza has so personified public affairs in Nicaragua and so controls all power, the opposition of all stripes unites on one—and only one—point. The Somozas must go. Although guerrilla groups—the Sandinistas—are still relatively small, there is wide tacit support for them as the "anti-Somoza" force. The extent of current anti-Somoza feeling is shown by the declarations against his rule from virtually every organization outside his direct control, from the Church, the Chamber of Commerce to the Communist lining political groups. With the upsurge in feeling following the death of a respected opposition leader, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, this opposition has accelerated; with the violence of September, the bitterness and resentments have multiplied. The moderate opposition groups have tried general strikes and other pressures without success. They have put their faith in the mediation efforts. If those fail the responsible middle will be either discredited or radicalized.

Overhanging this issue is violence and external stimulation of it. The Sandinistas and some other elements favor armed struggle as the way to get rid of Somoza. The Sandinista guerrillas (broken into three factions) are Marxist oriented. They have had Cuban support in training and logistical help but probably no significant supply of arms. The largest and least ideological faction, however, has also been supported by Panama and Venezuela with money and arms. Receiving such international support, and staging out of Costa Rica (which the Costa Rican Government does not condone but cannot control) a Sandinista attack would have international dimensions and raise questions of "external invasion."

In short, the mixture is highly explosive, passions are high, patience is running out, polarization is increasing. Fear, uncertainty and despair are growing and the pall of violence hangs over it all. Time is running out for a peaceful resolution of this internal crisis.

II. THE CURRENT SITUATION—THE MEDIATION:

Faced with this core problem, the bloody violence of September and the OAS call for nations to offer good offices,³ we helped organize the three-nation mediation effort to try and negotiate a reconciliation and recreate a national consensus. The mediators succeeded in energizing a broad coalition of opposition forces (FAO)—business, agricultural, labor, church, political parties—predominantly moderate and center. This group drew up a plan for a political transition to eventual democratic government providing for constitutional procedures and the preservation of the National Guard. A fundamental element of the plan is that Somoza relinquish power. In addition, the FAO has insisted on Somoza's stepping down from power, or agreeing to step down from power, as a *sine qua non* to any further negotiation.

The mediators—and Ambassador Bowdler separately and privately—have told Somoza that he must face this basic issue of his tenure squarely, and that the future of the mediation process depends upon it. They have told him that they see no agreement with the opposition possible which does not depend upon that element of the FAO proposal.

On November 10, Somoza publicly rejected this demand. He countered with an offer to undertake various reforms, and suggested a plebiscite or referendum to test the strength of the various political groups and to share political power accordingly. The opposition has indicated it will not accept that offer. Frustration is now threatening the opposition coalition's unity.

We are thus for the moment at an impasse. If this continues, the opposition coalition will abandon the mediation and probably disintegrate in the process. Large parts of it will support an early resort to violence by leftists guerrillas. International support of violence to overthrow Somoza on the part of Venezuela and Panama, and perhaps Cuba, and a possible counter-involvement by Guatemala and El Salvador, are likely.

When Ambassador Bowdler spoke privately to Somoza on November 10, he believed him wavering on the question of whether he should resign, although Somoza stated he had to remain to finish out his term. Bowdler's interpretation is that he is less than resolute on this question,

³ See footnote 5, Document 100.

and that perhaps pressure may yet lead him to a different conclusion. Bowdler's cabled account of his conversation is at Tab 1.⁴

We have also kept Latin American countries informed closely of our efforts and where we are. We have consulted in particular with Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Jamaica, Panama and Barbados. All have indicated they support what we are doing; and most said they would understand if we stepped up pressure to secure a resolution. I attach at Tab 2 some of these replies to give you the flavor of them.⁵

Faced with these realities, our alternatives are as follows:

1. *Accept Somoza's statement that he will not step down from power before 1981.*

This would effectively mean the end of any possibility of negotiating a political succession arrangement with the opposition. This would in turn mean continued tensions, polarization and recurring violence. In these circumstances we would have to decide what our relationship to the situation should be. We could return to business as usual, continuing our ties and support to the Somoza regime, as a bulwark against the Marxist guerrillas. This does not seem a viable course, however, given our human rights policy, and our efforts in Nicaragua to date. Such a policy would appear to identify us with dictatorship and repression and put our human rights policy and our credibility in doubt for large parts of Nicaragua and Latin America.

We could on the other hand distance or disassociate ourselves from his regime. This would require the withdrawal of all our military and economic ties, including the withdrawal of our military missions and the cutting of the AID pipeline. Disassociation would not be credible if our missions remain and pipeline disbursements are continued. The difficulty with disassociation is that we in effect walk away from an explosive situation; and lose any leverage to influence events. Such an act might in fact stimulate violence and encourage extremism by appearing to isolate Somoza and weaken him.

2. *Explore with the opposition Somoza's offer (to the opposition, not to us) of a plebiscite/referendum to see if some acceptable arrangement could be worked out.*

What Somoza proposed was not properly a plebiscite, but a registration of party voters to see who has the most strength. We can easily discuss with both sides the possibility of crafting some other plebiscite

⁴ Tab 1 is attached but not printed; see Document 137.

⁵ Tab 2, attached but not printed, contains telegram 18706 from Mexico City, November 10, in which the Embassy reported that Roel said "that Mexico fully agrees that Somoza must go in order to achieve a peaceful solution to Nicaraguan situation."

arrangement that might be effective, but there appears to be little chance of our succeeding. Our mediator, Ambassador Bowdler, does not believe that this can practicably be done, given the opposition's great distrust and fear of Somoza, and its organizational and media disadvantage compared to the Somoza machine. There is a history of Somoza using "international observers" as cosmetics, so that the opposition distrusts totally any argument that international supervision would work as long as a Somoza Government presides. I attach at Tab 3 Ambassador Bowdler's cabled assessment of Somoza's plebiscite offer which is worth noting, especially his analogy to SWAPO and Namibia.⁶

3. Exert pressure on Somoza to change his mind and negotiate his departure under controlled circumstances, and the formation of a transitional and provisional government.

To be effective in forestalling violence and the disintegration of the opposition coalition, this would have to be done quickly and firmly. Given Somoza's present state of mind, it is possible that an indication of firmness on our part would cause him to seek a plausible way out. An illustrative list of actions we might take for this purpose is attached at Tab 4.⁷

The argument for this course of action rests on the premise that only Somoza's departure provides any chance for a negotiated peaceful solution to the political crisis, and that a negotiated settlement would provide a good chance to create a post-Somoza structure which could resist extremist take over. On the other hand, if he does not leave, the likelihood of violence will greatly increase and our capacity to influence events to avoid extremism will diminish. If a negotiated agreement is not reached based on his departure, we may soon be faced with the unpalatable choice between a repressive Somoza and Marxist-led revolt.

On the other hand exerting pressure to get Somoza to negotiate his departure is a politically difficult and controversial course, and would be opposed by many in the Congress. There is no guarantee that even exerted pressure would be successful in getting him to change his mind. And if he did depart, there is no guarantee that the negotiated structure designed to replace him would be viable or keep leftists from taking power. We might thus be accused of destabilizing a situation, removing an anti-Communist dike and creating a vacuum. Moreover,

⁶ Tab 3, attached but not printed, is an excerpt from telegram 5778 from Managua, November 11, in which Bowdler wrote to Vaky that "we should approach the question of a 'plebiscite' with extreme caution." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2431)

⁷ Tab 4, attached but not printed, is an undated list entitled "Measures to Exert Pressure on Somoza."

many of the individual measures we would probably have to use to demonstrate our seriousness are controversial in themselves in that they create undesirable precedents and politicize arrangements.

139. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 13, 1978, 5:30–7 p.m.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Ambassador Viron Vaky, Assistant
Secretary for Latin American Affairs
Ambassador William Bowdler, U.S.
Mediator to Nicaragua

Defense

Mr. David McGiffert, Assistant Secretary
for International Security Affairs
Mr. Michael Armacost, Deputy Assistant
Secretary for East Asia, Pacific, and
Inter-American Affairs)

JCS

Lt. Gen. William Y. Smith, Assistant to
the Chairman

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

NSC

Robert Pastor, Note Taker

CIA

Robert Bowie, Director, National
Foreign Assessment Center
[name not declassified] Office of
Regional and Political
Analysis Analyst

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Purpose of Meeting.* To review the state of the mediation effort in Nicaragua and the political situation and to decide on the next steps which the USG should take in order to move the process closer to a peaceful, enduring, and democratic solution in Nicaragua.

2. *Bowdler's Report.* Ambassador Bill Bowdler reported on the state of the mediation effort. Somoza has made a counter-proposal to the Broad Opposition Fronts (FAO) Plan. He has suggested a plebiscite

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/1–22/78. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

which will, in effect, be a registration of voters with a view of determining the relative strength of political parties. Then, on a basis proportional to their electoral strength, representatives of these parties will be considered for incorporation into General Somoza's government. The opposition has rejected the plan.

3. *A Plebiscite.* The discussion focused on whether the U.S. should work with the FAO to shape a plebiscite which will give the Nicaraguan people an opportunity to determine whether Somoza should step down. There were two views on that subject, and it was agreed that a decision memo should be sent to the President which spelled them out.²

One view is that Somoza's plebiscite proposal is intended as a delaying tactic to discredit the mediation effort, to discourage and fragment the moderate opposition, and to polarize the political situation so that he can remain in power. According to this view, we should continue on the same track we have been following *before* the plebiscite. Bowdler should tell Somoza that we reject his proposal, and that Somoza should accept the main elements of the FAO plan, which includes his departure. If Somoza rejects that, we will have to withdraw our support from him and distance ourselves from his government.

A second view is that Bowdler should seek agreement within the Negotiating Group (NG) on the necessity of dealing with the concept of a plebiscite plan. Then the NG would try to persuade the FAO of the importance of a plebiscite which would be free and fair and under legitimate international supervision. The final plebiscite proposal would have to be agreeable to the FAO. Bowdler would inform the FAO that if they agreed to a plebiscite, the U.S. would place its full weight behind it when presenting it to Somoza.

4. *Consultations.* If the President chooses to follow the plebiscite track, Congressional consultations need not be as intensive or as extensive as if he chooses the other option. Consultations with leaders of regional governments should occur regardless of which option is chosen, but these consultations will have to be more extensive if the plebiscite option is chosen.

5. *Down the Road.* When we place the weight of the U.S. behind an approach with which Somoza disagrees, we should be prepared to take firm steps—like withdrawing our AID missions and our Milgroup and considering the withdrawal of our Ambassador—in order to distance ourselves from the Somoza government.

² See Document 140.

6. *With the National Guard.* It was agreed that it is important to begin contacting people, like General Julio Gutierrez, Nicaragua's current Ambassador to Japan, who could play important roles in a future government.

140. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 15, 1978

SUBJECT

Next Step in Nicaragua

The State Department has prepared a decision memorandum (Tab A) setting out three options from which you can choose the next step in our policy to Nicaragua.

Somoza has responded to the plan of the opposition (FAO) by suggesting a plebiscite which would, in effect, be a registration of voters according to political party preference. Somoza would thus broaden the base of *his* government to take into account the relative strength of the different parties. The FAO believes this is a delaying tactic designed to divert the US from what it views as the fundamental issue: Somoza's departure.

We agree that Somoza is trying to seize the initiative and discredit the FAO and the mediation effort, but we also believe that the idea of a plebiscite is a compelling one which we cannot ignore for domestic and for international reasons. If the conditions for a free and fair plebiscite are established—and we believe they can be—a plebiscite provides us an invaluable opportunity to legitimize our policy of seeking Somoza's departure within the context of a negotiated and democratic solution. If he loses, he will almost certainly have to step down; if he refuses, we can more legitimately apply pressure to facilitate his departure.

There are pitfalls to each of the options, and State's memo describes them very well. It will not be easy to structure a fair plebiscite in a nation which has been controlled by the Somoza family for forty years, nor will it be easy to persuade the opposition that the OAS and the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/1-22/78. Secret. Sent for action. Carter initialed the first page of the memorandum.

US can assure a free election with no intimidation or reprisals. However, I think the alternative (Option 2) would be indefensible domestically (how can we reject a Head of State's request for a vote of confidence?); and internationally, it would strip away from our position the cloak of legitimacy, leaving us as the Colossus of the North intervening once again in the internal affairs of a small country.

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, on balance and with some sense of uneasiness, I recommend that you approve option 1—to explore the feasibility of a plebiscite as a solution to the Nicaraguan crisis. You will note that Cy does not state his preference.²

Tab A

Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter³

Washington, November 14, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: Next Steps

I am attaching a memorandum outlining the options open to us with regard to Nicaragua which reflect our discussion in the PRC meeting November 13.

Recommendation

That you approve one of the following options:

Option 1:

Explore the feasibility of a plebiscite as a solution to the Nicaraguan crisis.⁴

Option 2:

Reject plebiscite idea and proceed with demarche to Somoza and supporting measures if necessary.

² Carter indicated his approval of option 1 and wrote: "Provided the toughest public standards are required by us for the plebiscite—I understand that Cy strongly favors Option 1. J.C."

³ Secret; Sensitive.

⁴ Carter indicated his approval of Option 1 and placed his first initial in the margin next to the option.

Option 3:

Discontinue mediation efforts and return either to business as usual or distance ourselves from the Somoza regime.

Attachment**Paper Prepared in the Department of State⁵**

Washington, undated

*NICARAGUA—OPTIONS PAPER**Option 1*

Explore the feasibility of a plebiscite as a solution to the Nicaraguan crisis.

1. The Negotiating Group (NG) would consult the FAO and Somoza to determine their willingness to accept a plebiscite on the issue of whether Somoza should leave office and a provisional government be established to take the country to free elections. Prior to making the approach, the NG would take soundings to determine what conditions are essential to holding an open and fair plebiscite. Illustrative conditions which might be discussed are set forth in the attachment. (The U.S. Mediator would let the FAO-PC leadership know privately that if the FAO agrees to a plebiscite with reasonable conditions, we will strongly endorse the proposal and try to persuade Somoza to accept it.)

2. If both sides accept the proposal, the NG would bring the parties together immediately to phrase the question to be put to the voters, fix the date, and establish the conditions.

3. If both sides reject the proposal, inform the Department and await instructions.

4. If the FAO accepts the proposal and Somoza rejects it, the U.S. Mediator, after consultation with Washington, would proceed with the strong demarche.

5. If Somoza accepts the proposal and the FAO rejects it, inform the Department and await instructions.

Arguments in Favor:

1. The plebiscite on the issue posed would allow the Nicaraguan people to decide whether Somoza should resign and new elections be held after a transition period.

⁵ Secret.

2. Under the conditions envisaged for a plebiscite the opposition will be able to mobilize its forces nationwide as it has never been able to do under the Somoza dynasty.

3. An opposition victory would give legitimacy to the formulation of a provisional government which it otherwise would not have.

4. Should Somoza try to remain in power if the vote goes against him, the task of persuading him to step down is facilitated and legitimated, and our ability to explain our actions on the U.S. domestic front is enhanced.

5. If Somoza is confirmed in the presidency, the problems of maintaining correct relations with his Government are eased.

6. A potentially highly useful precedent will have been established which may help in the resolution of serious internal conflicts in other countries.

Arguments Against:

1. The technical and financial difficulties of mounting a plebiscite on short notice are enormous. These are complicated by the lack of experience of the OAS in the management of such a project.

2. The conditions in Nicaragua are not conducive to obtaining a free expression of the will of the people because:

—The country has had no normal political life or free competition of political forces for almost half a century;

—Somoza, his party and his Government (which are one in the same) and his National Guard enjoy a total monopoly of power which cannot be neutralized within the time available, no matter how many foreign observers are present;

—Nicaragua, under a state of siege and beset by ongoing violence and repression, is in no condition to hold a free and democratic plebiscite.

3. Without carefully weighing all the implications, the FAO may reject the proposal, thereby leaving Somoza in an advantageous position vis-a-vis the moderate opposition without a test of the public will.

4. Should Somoza win the plebiscite, the process will have confirmed Somoza in power and probably insured continuation of the Somoza dynasty. The Sandinistas, and some moderates, will not accept this verdict, and continue the armed struggle.

5. In campaigning actively against Somoza the moderate opposition will expose itself. Should they lose the plebiscite, Somoza may well take retribution.

Option 2

Reject Plebiscite Idea and Proceed with Demarche to Somoza and Supporting Measures if Necessary.

The USG concludes that Somoza's offer of a plebiscite is basically a diversionary maneuver and realistically a non-starter. With only

six days of the deadline established at Caracas remaining,⁶ and with indications that Somoza may be wavering, we decide to press for his voluntary departure to permit a national reconciliation and a negotiated, peaceful solution to the crisis facing Nicaragua. To accomplish this we take the following steps:

1. Urge the FAO, via the negotiating group, to enter into direct talks with the PLN on the FAO premise that Somoza should leave plus the FAO 16 points. This is to insure that the talks continue.

2. Authorize Ambassador Bowdler to privately convey an emphatic message to Somoza saying:

- We have regretfully concluded that, under the circumstances, the plebiscite does not afford a realistic basis for reaching a solution to the present crisis.

- The central problem continues to be his control of the government.

- No peaceful solution to this problem is possible unless he and his family leave the country.

- If he is prepared to do this, we will assist him in negotiating with a broader group than the FAO, if he prefers, and in achieving the method of departure he finds most acceptable.

- If he refuses to follow this advice, he must understand that the USG can no longer lend military or economic assistance to Nicaragua.

3. Send General McAuliffe (or another selected General) to Nicaragua to reinforce this message and to underscore the seriousness of our concern.

4. If our demarches fail to persuade Somoza, we would, subsequent to your review, proceed promptly with:

- Suspension of all economic and military assistance, including what is in the pipeline.

- Withdrawal of the MilGroup.

- Withdrawal of Ambassador Solaun for consultations.

- An approach to Israel to suspend its flow of military supplies to Somoza, as well as to any other countries that may be suppliers.

Arguments in Favor:

1. We avoid the risk of Somoza using the plebiscite proposal to envelop the U.S. in a morass of negotiations to delay and discredit the mediation.

2. We avoid a waste of precious time on the unpromising plebiscite idea, taking our best shot before a return of violence and armed confrontations deprive us of the opportunity.

⁶ See Document 131.

3. We fulfill the commitment to use all our influence to persuade Somoza to leave, which is implied by our mediation and IMF initiative and is clearly expected of us by the opposition and others. In doing so we preserve our prestige and credibility for use in future situations.

Arguments Against:

1. We risk Somoza not leaving as a result of our pressures or a radical government replacing him if he does.

2. Openly pressuring a constitutional President to resign will set a bad precedent and be criticized at home and abroad.

3. The case against the plebiscite is not definitive: It should at least be explored. We will be particularly vulnerable to domestic criticism if we ignore the plebiscite possibility and move instead immediately to seek his resignation.

4. If we take these measures now and fail, we will have lost a great deal of our ability to influence future developments.

Option 3

Discontinue mediation efforts and return either to business as usual or distance ourselves from the Somoza regime.

1. Each of the foregoing options carries political costs and high risk and uncertainties. If we were unwilling to incur the costs and risks of either, the only alternative would be to accept the current impasse and conclude our mediation effort. We could justifiably say that we tried to find a solution but could not bring the two sides together, and therefore had no choice but to terminate the negotiation process. This would in turn heighten the tensions and the probability of continued violence and repression. We would stand accused by those who trusted the mediation effort that we aroused expectation and did not follow through hard enough.

2. In these circumstances we would have to decide what our future relationship to Somoza should be. We could return to business as usual, continuing our ties and support. Given our human rights policy, and our efforts in Nicaragua to date, such a course would identify us with dictatorship and repression. It would also put our human rights policy and our credibility in doubt for large parts of Nicaragua and Latin America.

3. We could, on the other hand, distance ourselves from his regime. This would require the withdrawal of all our military and economic ties, including the withdrawal of our military mission and the cutting of the AID pipeline. Disassociation would not be credible if our AID and military missions remain and pipeline disbursements are continued. The difficulty with disassociation is that we in effect walk away from an explosive situation, and lose any leverage to influence events.

Such an act might in fact stimulate violence and encourage extremism by appearing to isolate Somoza. Moreover, we have been deeply involved and the opposition elements have exposed themselves trusting in our efforts; we therefore give up only at the price of alienating them and perhaps endangering them. It can be argued, on the other hand, that since we cannot influence events anyway without unacceptable intervention, distancing ourselves would put us in a position to readjust to circumstances later as they occur and keep us in the least disadvantageous position.

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Department of State⁷

Washington, undated

ILLUSTRATIVE CONDITIONS FOR A NICARAGUAN PLEBISCITE WHICH MIGHT BE RAISED

1. Lift the state of siege at the outset of the campaign period. (This action automatically terminates the curfew.)
2. Confine the National Guard (except predetermined police units concurred in by the PLN and the FAO) to barracks for the period of the plebiscite.
3. Remove the censorship code so that all radio stations can function freely.
4. Require government-owned radio and television stations to grant equal time to the PLN and FAO and assign OAS monitors to insure compliance.
5. Prohibit use of government facilities (buildings, transport, printing press, etc.) in support of any group in the plebiscite.
6. Place the entire plebiscite operation under the supervision and control of the OAS.

⁷ Secret.

141. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 15, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update

Somoza plans to send a high-level mission to South America to explain his case to various governments. The mission, to be headed by Defense Minister Nogueira, will visit Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. Given the dire economic straits Nicaragua now faces, the mission will also probably seek financial and military assistance. State is getting out a cable to our Embassies in these countries asking our Ambassadors to bring their Foreign Minister up-to-date on our mediation effort.² Vaky also promised to get the cable out to Mansfield today on General Gutierrez.³

Within the next few days, Nicaragua expects to receive a \$20 million loan from the Central American Common Market stabilization fund. Separate lines of credit may be extended by the governments of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, though the latter's Minister of Planning denies that his government is considering such a request. The GON decision to withdraw its request before the IMF for the CFF loan was undoubtedly influenced by the knowledge it would receive the \$20 million common market loan and perhaps other financial assistance.

The U.S. Army officers from Southcom will be visiting Managua shortly to review the emergency evacuation plan for U.S. official personnel. They will also be examining the possibility of withdrawing the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10–12/78. Secret. Brzezinski wrote to Aaron at the top of the page: "DA This will split LA right down the line. ZB." Aaron wrote to Brzezinski: "ZB—If an effort to develop a moderate alternative to Somoza fails and a Castroite takes over they will reunite in criticizing us. DA."

² These instructions were delivered in telegram 291407 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, November 16. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840139–1838)

³ Brzezinski placed a vertical line in the right-hand margin next to this paragraph. Vaky sent his message to Mansfield about Gutierrez in telegram 290120 to Tokyo, November 15. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

MILGP should that option be chosen in the future. The officers will travel in civilian clothes and will coordinate their activities fully with the Embassy.

Vaky spoke with Orfila briefly today about the possibility that the OAS may be called upon to supervise a plebiscite in Nicaragua. Orfila was aware of the possibility, and said that the OAS is looking into it. There will, however, be a problem of who funds it.

In Bowdler's brief meeting with the President today, Bill left with the impression that the President would find some more historical background on the current situation in Nicaragua very useful. I spoke to Vaky about that, and we agreed that it would be very useful to the President if he could meet with someone who could give him some insights both into the person, Somoza, and into the current situation there and how it relates to previous Caribbean crises. I will try to work on such a memo, and see if I can find a person who could give the President that understanding. We should keep in mind that while the President has been receiving memoranda on Nicaragua from us, he has never really—at least to my knowledge—engaged in a give-and-take discussion on these issues in the way that we have. Perhaps an NSC meeting instead of a PRC meeting would be appropriate.

142. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 17, 1978, 0130Z

5920. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 135: Meeting with Congressmen Murphy and Wilson.

1. Congressmen John Murphy and Charles Wilson called on me this morning immediately after my arrival in Managua to give me their views of how the USG should treat the Somoza regime as related to

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2414. Confidential; Immediate; Nodis.

current mediation efforts.² Murphy led off with general presentation to effect that US press and USG have been treating Somoza unfairly. Murphy and Wilson both said USG should not exert pressure on Somoza's regime, which has been long-time friend of US.

2. Regarding AID and IMF decisions, Wilson said he had been assured that economic aid would be continued but believes that entire AID program is in suspense. He said he would be interested in talking to USAID Director to get a detailed breakdown on ongoing aid activities. He recalled congressional controversy of a year ago, in which he and other Congressmen were able to restore military and economic assistance for Nicaragua. He claims he had been assured by the Department that economic aid would go forward. He said it had never occurred to him to inquire from Treasury and other senior officials who frequently testified before the Appropriations Committee whether political consideration might be brought to bear on the IMF decisions. I avoided getting drawn out on either economic aid or IMF decisions, and with respect to the latter said he could obtain a more detailed description from those directly involved in Washington. I added that I understood that decision was a postponement of two or three weeks rather than a disapproval, but Wilson claimed that there would have been further political interference if the application had been pursued by the GON. Wilson also criticized some of the younger Carter appointees who, he alleged, have dealt too harshly with the Somoza regime. He claimed that even with human rights improvements earlier this year the Department had not eased up sufficiently on its restrictions on aid to Nicaragua. He and Murphy alleged that the Somoza regime should not be penalized for human rights or other policy reasons.

3. Murphy and Wilson both charged that Venezuela and other countries are adding unnecessarily to Somoza's current problems by supporting the Sandinistas. Murphy made same point as in State

² In telegram 5908 from Managua, November 16, Bowdler asked Christopher and Vaky how to respond to Murphy's request that the Embassy arrange a press conference for himself and Wilson. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VII) The Department issued Christopher's response in telegram 291484 to Managua, November 17, instructing Bowdler and Solaun to urge Murphy and Wilson against holding a press conference in Nicaragua, owing to Bowdler's status as the President's officially designated representative in the mediation process and "it is essential that the U.S. speak with only one voice." Christopher stressed: "In their capacity as U.S. Congressmen, anything they say will almost inevitably be construed as an official U.S. position, especially by the public in Nicaragua." Christopher warned that their public statements would "create confusion," which "could have adverse effect upon U.S. efforts to find a peaceful solution in a dangerous situation." If Murphy and Wilson decided to proceed, Christopher concluded, the Embassy should not assist in the event. (Ibid.)

287382³ regarding his August warning to Department that guerrillas should have been interdicted in Costa Rica to avoid serious civil strife and bloodshed in Nicaragua. He said he believes USG has not done all it can to curtail support from these neighboring countries to the Sandinistas. I made clear that we had been most active with them in trying to prevent escalation of the fighting and elisting their support in the mediation effort. Wilson acknowledged that Venezuela had withdrawn its aircraft from Costa Rica.

4. Both Congressmen commented on the mediation negotiations, particularly the projected plebiscite. Both emphasized that Somoza is offering a straightforward election and one in which civil restrictions would be removed so as to allow a fair campaign. Both stated that they thought Somoza would make concessions with respect to the wording to be used as the issue in any upcoming plebiscite, although both repeatedly referred to a choice between Liberal Party and FAO, and between the Liberal Party and other political parties. They made the point that if Somoza wins he still intends to carry out the reforms which the plan and Somoza had offered the FAO. Thus, the opposition would share in Cabinet and other government posts in the making of the new government from the time of the plebiscite to the end of Somoza's term in 1981. Both Congressmen pointed to the anomaly of reports to Washington from the Embassy that the opposition is strong, and yet the opposition seems reluctant to take on Somoza in an election. Neither said specifically what he thought Somoza would do if Somoza were to lose a plebiscite vote.

5. Presumably reflecting his membership on the appropriations committee, Wilson predicted that Congress would have difficulty in considering and approving funds for IMF and AID, because of his and others' concern over recent policy decisions with respect to Nicaragua. Both Congressmen said that there is a swing bloc of Congressmen who would be watching these issues closely when the time comes for crucial votes on IMF, IMET and AID programs.

6. Comment: As the foregoing indicates, the two Congressmen in our hour long meeting made no attempt to hide their partiality and support for Somoza. They did not press me, however, on the plebiscite issue as I had anticipated. I explained that I wanted to speak with my NG colleagues on their consultations in their respective capitals after which we would renew our talks with the FAO on the basis of elements

³ In telegram 287382 to Managua, November 12, the Department described Murphy's meeting with Newsom regarding Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2430)

of the PLN document including, of course, the plebiscite issue. This seemed to satisfy them.⁴

Solaun

⁴ In telegram 5939 from Managua, November 17, the Embassy reported that Wilson and Murphy had given a joint press conference at Managua's Intercontinental Hotel and commented "the conference was arranged by the GON and, as expected, the Congressmen supported Somoza's position on the plebiscite." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VII)

143. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 17, 1978, 1520Z

5924. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky—Caracas for Ambassador Luers only from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 138.

1. Summary: On my return I found considerable concern being expressed on plebiscite issue by my Dominican NG colleague and by the opposition. Problem has been complicated by Karen DeYoung article² which has led to lessening of interest by Dominican Government in the negotiations. However, Dominican FonMin Jimenez, while initially resisting plebiscite approach, became increasingly supportive in his and my approach to FAO leaders. Robelo, Calero and other opposition leaders are reluctant to go along with plebiscite, among other points fearing that FAO might break up over this issue. Nonetheless in my conversation with them tonight they came around to listing their minimum conditions for holding a plebiscite, including full restoration of civil rights and OAS supervision of the election. Group insisted that any plebiscite initiative would have to come from NG rather than FAO, and urged that NG contact FSLN to persuade latter to extend the truce

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2407. Secret; Flash; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas.

² Karen DeYoung, "U.S.-Led Mediation in Nicaragua Feared Near Collapse," *Washington Post*, November 14, 1978, p. A13.

beyond November 21. We will press ahead further tomorrow with FAO leaders on plebiscite issue. Meanwhile I suggest that President Perez be briefed fully on situation, with view to his exploring whether he can arrange further delay in FSLN armed action while we attempt to work out details of option one.³

2. On my return to Managua I have found changes in attitude on part of NG member Jimenez (I have not spoken yet with Obiols) and FAO which complicate the task of achieving agreement on option one but do not rule it out.

3. Karen De Young story has not been well received. Jimenez gave me to understand that the article was the reason for President Guzman's desire to have him wind down his participation in NG. Story gave the impression that Washington was calling the shots on an international mediation and the other two members were window dressing. I emphasized that this was not the case. My coming to consult him on next steps was clear evidence of our cooperation effort. I proceeded to outline our thinking on the advisability of sounding out the FAO on the plebiscite idea along the lines of option one. At first he seemed highly skeptical and reticent, but as we talked he loosened up and agreed to join me in informal soundings with Alfonso Robelo and Adolfo Calero as a starter. He made clear, however, that he preferred the course contemplated in our option two with decisive action by the USG but he did not press the point. He did say, however, that he would not be able to take any formal action in the FAO-PC on the plebiscite before first getting instructions from his President. Since he has no safe communications with Santo Domingo, he said he would have to send his Assistant Padilla. I offered our communication facilities, which he may use.

3. This afternoon Jimenez and I spent three and a half hours with Robelo and Calero. The atmosphere was not good but improved somewhat as we went along. They both referred to the Karen De Young story, questioning the motives of what they referred to as "the leak". One thing they said would have been to consult on the concept of a real plebiscite privately as we were doing. The publicity caused serious problems within the rank and file of FAO. Robelo went so far as to suggest that the Karen De Young report had prompted the G-12 communique issued by Tunnerman in Costa Rica yesterday (Managua 5919) which made things very difficult for the FAO.⁴

³ See Tab A, Document 140.

⁴ Telegram 5919 from Managua, November 17, reported that Tunnerman had called on FAO organizations to withdraw from mediation "if by FAO deadline of November 21 Somoza and his family have not departed GON, National Guard, and the country." The Embassy also transmitted the Spanish-language text of the Group of 12's communiqué. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780473-0212)

4. Having navigated through the initial storm, I steered the conversation toward reasonable conditions for a plebiscite. At the outset Robelo and Calero focused on reasons why the idea could not be sold to the FAO:

—A plebiscite would take too long and this would play into Somoza's hands who is engaged in a stall operation to gain time to harvest the good crops and reslove his economic difficulties.

—Under the best of circumstances Somoza's influence over the process could not be neutralized.

—It would split the FAO wide open, lead to its collapse, and thereby make Sandinismo the only alternative to Somoza.

—The FSLN would never buy it and without an extension of the Caracas Conclave Truce, the holding of a plebiscite would be impossible.

5. By persisting on the request for their views on reasonable conditions, first Calero, and with his help Robelo, began to focus on this aspect. After a long discussion Robelo picked up paper and pencil and began jotting down his thoughts. The piece of paper (I should add very reluctantly prepared) contains the following points:

(A) Approval of basic agreement for a plebiscite by November 21, and agreement on implementing steps by November 27.

(B) Declaration of political amnesty, and authorization of full constitutional guarantees to all citizens.

(C) Departure of Somoza's brother and/or son, followed by Somoza's own departure from the country for duration of the plebiscite period December 1 through January 14.

(D) National Guard troops except for those with police duties to be confined to barracks for the plebiscite period.

(E) Cancellation of obligatory 5 percent contribution by public employees to Liberal Party.

(F) Denial of use of government-owned facilities by and for the Liberal Party (and the opposition).

(G) Elimination of radio censorship code (Codigo Negro).

(H) Equal time for both Liberal Party and the opposition on radio and television to be paid for by the government.

(I) Control of national radio network by OAS during the plebiscite campaign.

(J) Full supervision and control the plebiscite by the OAS.

(K) Educational campaign on plebiscite by OAS. As we proceeded with this part of the conversation, Jimenez, who had remained aloof, began to take part and seemed to warm up to the plebiscite concept as the discussion unfolded.

6. Toward the end of the meeting we asked Robelo how we should proceed in taking soundings with the FAO. He described three key groups led by Rodolfo Robelo (PLI), Rafael Cordova Rivas (autentico) and Jaime Chamorro (La Prensa Group).

7. At 7:30 pm Robelo called me to ask that I join him at his house where a group of key FAO people were discussing the plebiscite idea. I immediately joined him. Present were Jaime Chamorro, Rafael Cordova Rivas, Noel Rivas Gasteazoro, and seven members of Robelo's MDN. It was obvious that he had briefed them on our earlier conversation. They had reacted negatively as he had, and he wanted me to get an expanded exposure to FAO thinking. For the next two hours (until curfew forced everyone home) I went through very much the same conversation as Jimenez and I had with Robelo and Calero. The meeting ended up with a still highly skeptical but nevertheless more rational attitude on the part of the FAO representatives toward the plebiscite. The only new elements were: (1) a strongly held consensus that the plebiscite counter-proposal would have to emerge as a NG initiative; and (2) the NG should make every effort to contact the FSLN to persuade them to extend the truce beyond November 21.

8. Comment: We will hold talks with Rodolfo Robelo tomorrow morning (Friday, November 17) and then check back with Robelo on approaches to the FAO-PC. I would suggest that President Carlos Andres Perez be fully briefed on situation with a view to seeing whether he can obtain further delay in FSLN armed action while we attempt to work out details of option one.

Solaun

144. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, November 18, 1978

SUBJECT

IAHRC Report on Nicaragua

ISSUE FOR DECISION

What position should the U.S. take in the OAS regarding the IAHRC Report on Nicaragua?

We need guidance particularly on two matters:

- the timing of OAS consideration of the report, and
- what action we are prepared to support, or initiate, in the OAS on the report.

DISCUSSION

The IAHRC Report on Nicaragua is most severe. It does not include details of the GON's comments. The report was transmitted to the OAS Secretary General November 17.² He will in turn distribute it to members, probably by early next week. The OAS will be holding its Special General Assembly on the Budget from November 20 to November 22, 1978, and a few additional days will probably be required for delegates to receive instructions. It appears likely, therefore, that the report will become an active OAS concern during the week of November 27.

The line-up of members on this issue will be similar to the situation throughout the Nicaragua crisis: Venezuela, Jamaica, Panama, Costa Rica, and probably Colombia will be pressing for the strongest possible OAS actions; with Guatemala, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Haiti, generally supportive of the Somoza regime; and the other Southern Cone countries willing to support a compromise, but at the same time reluctant to support measures which might serve to create a precedent by strengthening the IAHRC as an institution.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780176–1094. Confidential. Drafted by Yohn. Concurred in by Michael Kozak (L/ARA) and in substance by Patrick Flood (HA). Vaky initialed for both Flood and Kozak. Tarnoff also initialed the first page of the memorandum.

² The IACHR resolution adopting the "Report of the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua" was dated November 17. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—IACHR Report, 11/17/78)

There will be two main areas where we will be faced with decisions:

- the *mechanical question* on how and when to consider the report; and
- the *substantive question* of what OAS action should be taken on it.

The Mechanics

Normally an IAHRC Country Report is processed through the OAS Permanent Council for consideration by the annual General Assembly. The next Regular GA, however, will not be held until late 1979. The OAS must first decide whether it wishes to abandon the normal route, and use the exceptional procedure of referring it to the open-ended MFM which is considering the Central American situation.

The only advantage in using the regular procedure is that it would keep Argentina, which has agreed to a Commission visit in May 1979, from excessive alarm and would reassure Uruguay and perhaps Paraguay about the kind of treatment they can expect to receive in their dealings with the IAHRC. This advantage is outweighed, however, by the obvious disadvantages (i.e., failing to respond to the plight of the Nicaraguan people, whitewashing the Somoza regime, etc.).

We, therefore, recommend that we be authorized to press for the fastest possible consideration of the report, taking into account that there will be considerable sentiment among members to allow the GON to make a detailed rebuttal.

The Substance

The hardline anti-Somoza nations will seek the toughest possible MFM resolution—one which will weaken the Somoza regime. The elements of this could parallel OAS action against Trujillo in the early 1960's: a call for suspension of diplomatic relations, and possible limited economic sanctions. Depending on the actual contents of the report, and the tone of the Nicaraguan rebuttal, our best estimate now is that these actions will have substantial support in the MFM, but will fall short of the two-thirds vote required for passage.

Pro-Somoza forces in the MFM will probably favor a moderate condemnation of the human rights abuses in Nicaragua, but will oppose sanctions.

A third possibility would be an MFM resolution: condemning past abuses, calling for immediate remedial action by the GON, recommending a follow-on IAHRC inspection within a short period of time, and holding out the possibility of additional measures (i.e., sanctions) to be taken if remedial action does not occur.

We believe that a resolution along the lines of the third alternative is an acceptable position and recommend that you authorize us to seek such action if circumstances dictate.

We believe that it may be, however, that under certain circumstances we would wish to work for the first alternative, i.e., application of sanctions. This will require additional study before we can specify what actual measures we are prepared to support. We will pursue this, and prepare for your consideration next week, a list of sanctions we could support in an OAS resolution.

Recommendations

That the U.S. join with the other OAS members who favor earliest possible consideration of the IAHCRC report.³

That the U.S. seek to obtain an OAS resolution containing the elements of the third alternative above.⁴

³ Vance placed a checkmark on the approval line. "11/20" is written in the margin next to the option.

⁴ Vance did not indicate his preference with respect to this recommendation.

145. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 20, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Today

Although the FAO rejected the idea of a plebiscite as proposed by Somoza, they agreed to hold open the possibility of considering a fair plebiscite which posed the question of Somoza's departure, but only after the Negotiating Group obtained Somoza's acceptance of it.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 1/77–11/78. Secret.

² Bowdler reported this information to Christopher and Vaky in telegram 5954 from Managua, November 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2392) In telegram 5950 from Managua, November 19, Bowdler informed Vaky that he would "opt for an internationally administered plebiscite rather than merely a supervised election." He elaborated: "The GON from Somoza down to the last Juez de Mesta (essentially a combination of sheriff and justice of the peace in each canton) is controlled and staffed by the Liberal Party." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2406)

The mediators are working with the following schedule in mind: Today, they will meet with Somoza to relay the FAO reject of his version of the plebiscite, and to try to draw him out on the conditions he would be willing to accept for the type of plebiscite we have in mind. On Tuesday,³ they will prepare a proposal for a plebiscite with reasonable conditions and give it to the two parties. On Thursday, on the basis of comments they expect to receive, they will revise the proposal and make it public. We will then consider next steps.⁴

As the deadline set by the FSLN of November 21 (by which time they would begin hostilities unless Somoza agreed to step down) approaches, there are increasing signs of attacks. In demarches to the Costa Ricans, Panamanians, and the Venezuelans we asked that they restrain the FSLN to give the NG more time to promote a plebiscite that would be acceptable to both the FAO and Somoza. These three governments have agreed to intercede with the FSLN to postpone their planned attack. (C)

In our canvassing of Latin governments to obtain support for a genuine plebiscite in Nicaragua, four have indicated their support (Uruguay, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Guatemala) and two (Panama and Venezuela) have expressed misgivings about its wisdom. Others have yet to answer. (C)

Nicaraguan Vice Minister for Atlantic Coast Development Renner told Ambassador Solaun that the general feeling inside the Liberal Party was to repudiate Somoza, but they feared taking any actions. Renner indicated that if the US supported a pro-Liberal GN (National Guard) solution, the Liberals would rebel against Somoza. Renner also said that in a true referendum on Somoza's tenure, ninety percent of the voting population would be for his resignation. (C)

Vice Mayor of Miami Reboso called to ask again if I would be willing to speak to Somoza in Managua. I said no. He asked if I would meet Somoza's Assistant, Max Kelly, who is in Washington today, and I said that I would get in direct contact with Kelly. Unless I hear otherwise, I assume there are no problems meeting with Kelly. Especially since, at State's request, I have met with opposition leaders, including Dr. Jerez, a brain surgeon who was here this weekend and who represents Robelo on the FAO. Jerez told me that the National Guard continues to kill moderate opposition people, including two leaders of his party, and continues to terrorize the population at night.

³ November 21.

⁴ In telegram 5952 from Managua, November 19, Bowdler proposed a schedule for the ongoing Negotiating Group program, which included several meetings and the preparation of an "NG proposal for a plebiscite." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2402)

He was quite explicit in asking us not to intervene, but at the same time he asked that we withdraw our Milgroup, which he sees as a sign of support for Somoza, and make a demarche to the Israelis, who are supplying arms to Somoza.

146. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 21, 1978, 0337Z

5995. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 149: Meeting with President Somoza.

1. Negotiating Group had a 45 minute meeting with President Somoza at the "bunker" this evening.² Only other person present was FonMin Julio Quintana.

2. Jimenez opened the discussion by informing Somoza of the FAO negative to his formulation of the plebiscite. He then went on to give the reasons for the negative. He described these as:

—The issue to be put to the Nicaraguan people is not the proper one,

—The political climate is not appropriate,

—The system for conducting the plebiscite is not adequate.

3. Using the reasons of the FAO negative Jimenez sought to draw Somoza out on what he was prepared to do on this point. Somoza reiterated his intention to stay in power until 1981. With regard to the political climate he agreed to lift the curfew right away and stop forcing private radio stations to join the national network in order to carry government programs. Somoza also indicated that he was willing to lift the state of siege and grant a general amnesty as soon as the FAO agreed to a plebiscite. Our efforts to get him to lift the state of siege right away were unavailing.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2529. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, San José, and Panama City.

² November 20.

4. We told Somoza that we were developing our ideas on a plebiscite and would probably be in touch with him rather frequently during the course of the week. Somoza said that he would be at our disposal.

Solaun

147. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 22, 1978, 0305Z

6022. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 155: NG Meeting with Somoza.

1. The NG met with President Somoza in the "bunker" at 3:00 pm local time.² Only other person present was FonMin Quintana. The meeting lasted 70 minutes.

2. I started off the conversation by expressing appreciation for the prompt action taken in lifting the curfew and discontinuing requirement that all radio stations join in national chain for government propaganda programs.

3. Jimenez then presented the NG proposal (Managua 6018) which Somoza and Quintana read with great care.³ Somoza was the first to speak declaring "this amounts to a golpe de estado". Quintana quickly echoed the comment. I intervened to say that this was a misreading of the proposal: a "consulta popular" was not a coup d'etat.

4. Quintana at this point took over the conversation to argue that the proposal was unconstitutional because it contemplated the possibility of the President leaving office before completion of his term in 1981. He also made a historical and legal distinction between plebiscite,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/1-22/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² November 21.

³ Telegram 6018 from Managua, November 21, included the Spanish-language text of the Negotiating Group's proposal submitted to Somoza and the FAO-PC, which endorsed a popular plebiscite supervised by an international authority like the Organization of American States, an amnesty for political prisoners, and the elimination of censorship, among other issues. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P820112-0339)

referendum, and the NG proposal contending that what the NG suggested was without precedent and not contemplated in the constitution. A third argument he advanced was that the country was faced with a serious Communist threat and could not afford to let the totally inexperienced FAO group takeover the government.

5. Obiols and I refuted these arguments pointing out that the special circumstances confronting Nicaragua required a special approach to achieve a peaceful solution. Nothing unconstitutional was being proposed. The “consulta popular” was in effect advisory. If the result were adverse to the President, he had constitutional avenues for stepping down. There was no need to have a power vacuum in Nicaragua. Our proposal contemplated a negotiated settlement for a transitional government involving the opposition, Liberal Party and the Guardia Nacional.

6. Throughout the foregoing exchange Somoza made several short interventions. He complained that the proposal put all the responsibility on him—“it personalizes the whole dispute”. He turned to me at one point and strongly protested the personal vilification contained in today’s *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.⁴ Most interesting of all was the devastating confession that “I am afraid I would lose the vote you propose.”

7. While everything that Somoza and Quintana said indicates a strong opposition to the NG proposal, they accepted the document and said they would study it. Somoza went into immediate Cabinet session after we left.

8. The depth of Somoza’s feeling over the NG effort to turn his plebiscite proposal back to the central issue of his departure was reflected in his comment to me as we filed out of his office. I was the last to leave and as we shook hands he said with heavy sarcasm “Thanks for all of your help”. The tone was so biting that Obiols, who was within earshot, commented about it as we left the “bunker”.

Solaun

⁴ The references are to a *New York Times* editorial entitled “The Nicaraguan Exception,” November 21, 1978, p. A20, which noted that “General Somoza has made war against his own civilian population and alienated all the forces whose cooperation would be needed in a democratic society;” and to a *Washington Post* editorial entitled “D Day in Nicaragua,” November 21, 1978, p. A18, which described Somoza as a “bloody dictator.”

148. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 22, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Today

Costa Rica broke diplomatic relations with Nicaragua last night after it said two of its Civil Guards were killed by the Nicaraguan National Guard in the border zone. Costa Rica introduced a resolution this morning at the OAS that a permanent commission of observers be sent by the OAS to the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border to maintain the peace. The resolution also calls for an *ad hoc* committee to investigate the incident, which occurred yesterday. Nicaragua, claiming that its territory had been violated, supported the resolution, and it is expected to be voted upon tonight.

The NG presented its plebiscite proposal to Somoza, who responded: "I am afraid I would lose the vote you propose."² He said he would study the proposal further, but expressed strong negative initial reservations.

From Somoza's bunker, the NG proceeded immediately to the FAO headquarters, where Robello said that it had been decided not to accept the NG proposal because to agree to consider a plebiscite—whether Somoza-style or an honest one—would be violating the will of the people who believe Somoza has "prostituted" the word "plebiscite." To give consideration to the plebiscite idea, he said, would make it appear that Somoza was a "democrat."

The NG responded that it had to deliver the proposal and hoped it would be seriously studied. After a break, the FAO leader returned with the statement that the FAO was "deeply disillusioned" by the proposal, but after considerable debate with the NG, the FAO accepted the proposal. They then caucussed privately for three hours and issued a vaguely worded press release that the mediation effort had failed to achieve its democratization objective. Nonetheless, the FAO promised a response.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/1-22/78. Secret. Sent for information.

² See Document 147.

The meeting with the FAO is well described in the cable which is attached at Tab A.³ The strain was very great. It does not appear that Bowdler has yet used the most important card that we gave him—that if the FAO accepted the plebiscite, we would tell Somoza that he should accept it as well, or risk losing our support.⁴ I spoke to Vaky about that, and he is confident that Bowdler will use it—if he hasn't already—at the right time. I don't like the idea of second-guessing either Bowdler or Pete, but I am nervous that this *is* the time, and we might lose the opportunity if we don't seize it now. I think the FAO is going through an extremely difficult decision-making process, and they need our encouragement and some signs of the depth of our commitment to the idea of a plebiscite. I think we must be more certain that that message is being delivered. We should also not be reluctant to inform the FAO that Somoza has told us that he knows he would lose such a plebiscite. You may want to call Christopher on it.

At Tab B is a letter which Douglas Fraser of the UAW sent the President.⁵ It represents some of a growing number of calls by liberal groups in the US to withdraw our support from Somoza.

I hesitate to say that I believe we have reached a crossroads, only because we have said it so many times before, but I strongly believe in a plebiscite as a device which would facilitate and legitimate our objectives, and I fear that a final decision on the idea may be made before we have had a chance to bring to bear our full concerns. I do not fear Somoza's rejection of the plebiscite, but I do fear the rejection by the FAO, because while I can understand the kinds of pressures and suspicions under which they are working, I don't believe the American people will understand it.

Once we have played out the plebiscite idea, however, regardless whichever way it goes, we need to be prepared to take some of the steps outlined in Fraser's letter; in his words, not giving Somoza an ultimatum but simply withdrawing our support.

³ Not attached. Bowdler reported on the negotiating team's meeting with the FAO in telegram 6026 from Managua, November 22. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) Telegram 6019 from Managua, November 21, contained an English-language translation of the Negotiating Group's press communiqué. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780480-0163) Telegram 6025 from Managua, November 22, included the Spanish-language text and English-language translation of the statement issued by the FAO on November 21 in response to the Negotiating Group proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780481-0528)

⁴ See Document 139.

⁵ Not attached.

149. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 23, 1978

SUBJECT

My Conversation with a Nicaraguan Opposition Leader

On Wednesday evening,² I received a call, requesting that I meet with Ramiro Cardenal, who is a leader of the opposition and very close to Alfonso Robelo, the leader of the FAO. Like Robelo, Cardenal is a businessman and studied in the US. Cardenal, in fact, has an MBA from the Harvard Business School. I had met him before, and he is a sound, reasonable, decent man.

Cardenal had spoken with Robelo a few hours before our meeting on Thursday.³ He conveyed from Robelo a great sense of depression and disappointment with the US. He said that the FAO has lost faith in the US, and it is difficult for Robelo and him, both closely identified with us, to defend us anymore. He believes the plebiscite idea is totally illegitimate; it won't work, and it plays into Somoza's hand by delaying the dénouement. He is *certain* the Sandinistas will attack within the next month, making it impossible to hold a plebiscite. Somoza will react with tremendous repression, and the middle will be squeezed out. He said that the US should be prepared for thousands and thousands of refugees, including people like himself.

I explained to him in some detail the reason why the USG considers a plebiscite important. I told him that from the beginning, we tried to combine the opposition's strong desire for Somoza's departure with a recognition of the importance of developing a viable and enduring democratic alternative. I said that we were encouraged by the give-and-take of diverse groups within the opposition during the mediation effort. We believe a plebiscite provides a further opportunity for the FAO to demonstrate not only its ability to manage a difficult democratic process, but also to show that it enjoys the tremendous popular support of the Nicaraguan people. I said that we are prepared to work with other nations to see that the plebiscite is free and fair. I asked him

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 1/77-11/78. Secret.

² November 22.

³ November 23.

what conditions would be required to make it free and fair, and he said that nothing could make it free and fair. But after I pressed him, he basically sketched the illustrative conditions which are in our proposal. However, he asked whether we would accept the departure of Somoza just before the plebiscite as an added condition. I said that such a condition struck me as unfair and unrealistic. How can one claim a plebiscite is free if one demands that the central party to the plebiscite depart? I said that it was analogous to Cuba's demand that Puerto Rico should be independent before making a decision on political status. The American people do not view it as fair.

Cardenal said that the real problem is that the US still has not made it clear to the FAO that it wants to see Somoza depart. He told me that there is a tremendous risk that the opposition would fragment if it accepts a plebiscite. I told him that I thought the risks would be even greater if the opposition rejects our proposal, and Somoza accepts it. I said that the ideal goal from our perspective would be for both sides to accept a plebiscite. From his perspective, it appeared to me that his optimal goal would be if the FAO accepted it and Somoza rejected it, since that would show the world that the FAO is willing to test the will of the Nicaraguan people, and Somoza isn't. *He asked what would we do if the FAO accepts it, and Somoza rejected it.* I told him that only Ambassador Bowdler could convey the answer to that question, but I did say that such a scenario would certainly make easier the kind of steps (withdrawing US support) which Cardenal wanted to see. On the other hand, it would be much more difficult—perhaps impossible—to consider taking those kinds of steps if Somoza accepted the plebiscite, and the FAO rejected it, or even if both sides rejected it. I urged him to take that message back to Robelo: that it is very important for the FAO to accept the proposal as it would legitimize their position in the eyes of the world.

(Comments: After listening to Cardenal, and speaking to Vaky, I am convinced that it is very important for Bowdler to communicate privately to Robelo that if the FAO accepts the proposal, we will go to Somoza and tell him that we will withdraw our support from him if he does not accept the proposal. If we do not do that, I think the chances of obtaining the support of the FAO for the proposal are slim. Furthermore, I think the FAO needs more encouragement from us right now if they are going to be able to stick together. I repeat my strong recommendation from yesterday's nightly report, *that you call Christopher and suggest that we tell Bowdler that the time has come for him to tell the FAO of the importance we attach to the plebiscite proposal.*⁴ *If they accept the proposal, and Somoza refuses it, we would withdraw our support from him.*

⁴ Not found.

You may want to check with the President first to make sure that he supports this. The last round of memoranda to the President approves this point, but does not address it quite as specifically as the above. I attach it for your information at Tab A.⁵ Your memorandum of November 15 states that if Somoza refuses, “we can more legitimately apply pressure to facilitate his departure.”

Cardenal informed me that the FAO plans to officially respond to the proposal within 72 hours—meaning by Saturday⁶ at 4:00 p.m. We should try to get the new instruction down to Bowdler before then.)

⁵ Not attached. See Document 140.

⁶ November 25.

150. Editorial Note

In telegram 297641 to Managua, November 24, 1978, the Department of State instructed Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research William Bowdler that “this would appear to be a good time for you to indicate privately to the FAO–PC leadership that if the FAO would agree to the plebiscite proposal we would endorse that acceptance and would press Somoza to accept the proposal.” The Department continued: “You could add that if the FAO accepts and Somoza does not, the USG would have to make clear to him that our relationship with Nicaragua will be very strongly affected.” National Security Council Staff member Rick Inderfurth underlined this sentence and wrote a note to National Security Council Staff member Robert Pastor on a copy of telegram: “Bob—This cable contains the message you wanted sent. Rick.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/23–30/78) Bowdler responded in telegram 6100 from Managua, November 25, noting that he had used the authorized language in meetings with Broad Opposition Front leaders Alfonso Robelo, Adolpho Calero, and Rafael Cordova Rivas. Bowdler wrote: “I did not use it with Rodolfo Robelo because I do not have the same degree of confidence in him. The statement was helpful with Calero and Cordova Rivas but not with Robelo.” Bowdler also noted that he was “happy to have the language” provided in telegram 297641 to Managua, “which was not included in original statement of option one,” and that “I will

put this to good advantage at appropriate time since it covers an aspect on which FAO leaders have been pressing me.” (Ibid.)

151. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 26, 1978, 0340Z

6111. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler—Caracas for Ambassador only. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 174: Next Steps On Plebiscite.

1. NG met this afternoon to take stock and decide how to proceed in the face of the negative responses received yesterday from Somoza² and the FAO³ to our plebiscite proposal.

2. In our analysis of the situation we identified these elements:

—Both sides are equally intransigent but each left the door open for further talks.

—The government fears going to a plebiscite of the type recommended by the NG because it believes it will lose (this was reconfirmed to Obiols this morning by sub Secretary Bodan who came to see him

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/23–30/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 6107 from Managua, November 25, the Embassy reported that the Negotiating Group had met with Somoza on November 24 and that Somoza had given an “essentially negative reply” to the plebiscite proposal which he described as unconstitutional. The Embassy noted that Somoza stated that he “could not accept personalization of the plebiscite question” and that “trying to change the government” could “usher in a period of instability” or “lead to a military coup.” Somoza also gave the Negotiating Group a written response from the Liberal Party that rejected the plebiscite proposal describing it as “unconstitutional” and as involving a “coup d’etat.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/23–30/78)

³ In telegram 6104 from Managua, November 25, Bowdler reported to Christopher and Vaky that the FAO had issued a “non-committal reply” to the plebiscite proposal which amounted “to a tacit ‘no.’” Bowdler commented that the “two Robelos” had swayed the rest of the FAO against accepting the plebiscite proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2376) Telegram 6102 from Managua, November 25, included an English-language translation of the written FAO response to the plebiscite proposal. The FAO stated that “any national democratic process” was “impossible” with Somoza and his “relatives with military positions” still present in the country. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780485–0602)

at Somoza's instigation to say that the NG proposal was unacceptable and to ask that he (Obiols) push the NG, and especially me, to accept Somoza's version of the plebiscite in the face of FAO intransigence.)

—The FAO is divided and has placed unity above cooperation with the NG on the plebiscite. The split is 9 to 3 with the minority under Alfonso Robelo calling the shots;

—Unfortunately, with the sole exception of Marxist labor leader Domingo Sanchez who has been disciplined by the CGT-I for his advocacy of the plebiscite, not a single leader of stature or organization has come out publicly in support of the NG proposal, and La Prensa has been negative;

—The local and foreign press (the latter despite my pointing out the openings which remain) have cast the responses of the government and FAO toward the NG proposal as a total rejection;

—The mediating effort, notwithstanding the limited gains in terms of restrictions removed and violence curbed, is increasingly regarded by the public here as a failure because their excessive expectations (departure of Somoza, end to stage of siege, amnesty, etc.) have not been met and because the moderate groups and the media have not had the conviction or courage to endorse the plebiscite and explain to the public why this vote would be different from any other held over the past 44 years.

3. In the face of this situation, and after making another effort with La Prensa this afternoon, my colleagues and I believe we should give Somoza and the FAO one more chance to reconsider their attitudes toward the plebiscite before giving it up as a lost cause. My colleagues, keenly attuned to criticism here and at home, want to meet with the two sides (FAO if they are willing to renew regular sessions) to answer their objections and urge reconsideration. In order to safeguard the NG's public image they also want to issue a statement immediately following the two meetings:

—Explaining that the NG proposal contemplates nothing illegal or unconstitutional;

—Reiterating that the central issue remains the continued presence of Somoza in the country;

—Emphasizing that the solution must be a Nicaraguan solution and that the plebiscite offers the best way to accomplish this;

—Making clear that a grave responsibility falls on the GON, the FAO and all groups actively involved in the search for a solution if they do not take advantage of the mediation effort to avoid further deterioration of the situation;

—Indicating that the NG will wait another 48 hours for reconsideration of positions at the end of which, if forthcoming replies are not

received, the NG would suspend its efforts and leave the country until our presence is again considered necessary.

4. I have gone along with this approach except for the last tick. On this, I have told them I would need instructions from Washington. Both Jimenez and Obiols understand my position but they are also firm in pressing this course if the NG is stymied on the plebiscite initiative. They argue, with logic, that the basic issue from the beginning has been the departure of Somoza, either permanently as part of a settlement or temporarily during the plebiscite. If one of these cannot be achieved there is no solution in sight and our presence in the country will become a wasting asset.

5. I believe we have come to the point where we need to deliver the strong message to Somoza contemplated in option two. The best time will be between Monday⁴ when we answer the document he gave us yesterday and the 48-hour deadline for a positive response.

6. Tomorrow morning (November 26) the NG convenes at 9:00 am to draft the statement referred to in paragraph 3. I will get it off to you as soon as completed. I will also send suggested talking points for the strong demarche to Somoza. We will be preparing talking points for Bill Luers to use with CAP in the hope we can enlist his influence with the FAO and La Prensa in this last effort on the plebiscite.

Solaun

⁴ November 27

152. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 28, 1978, 0325Z

6136. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky From Ambassador Bowdler—Caracas, San Jose and Panama For Ambassador. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 180; Negotiating Group Note Calling Parties to Settlement.

1. NG met with Somoza for an hour and a quarter this morning. November 27. FonMin Quintana joined the group about a third of the way through the session.

2. Jimenez presented the NG note (Managua 6117).² Somoza glanced through it quickly to get the gist and commented that we continued to personalize the issue by asking for his departure. He proceeded cleverly to play on the nationalistic, anti-US sensibilities of my colleagues, a game which went on for about half an hour and in which Quintana participated with gusto. The themes used were not new but were played in a louder way. These included references to the “Washington plan” hatched in the State Department, a review of past U.S. interventions in Nicaragua and how these had failed, the unconstitutionality of the NG proposal, the Communist threat in Central America, and the dangerous precedent which the NG action would constitute for other small LA states which run afoul of the USG.

3. My colleagues did not fall for this, although I sensed that some of the arguments struck responsive chords. They helped me bring the discussion back to the central issue of Somoza’s continued presence in Nicaragua as the impediment to a peaceful solution. This opened the way for a candid group exchange on the need to test public opinion on his continuation in power and how the succession would be handled in the event of an adverse vote. While there was no ground covered that I had not gone over with Somoza in our two-hour conversation on November 10 (Managua 5770),³ it was the first time that he was getting the message so directly from my colleagues against the background of our impending departure if he and the FAO did not take a

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2359. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, San José, and Panama City.

² Telegram 6117 from Managua, November 27, included the Spanish-language text of the final version of the Negotiating Group response to Somoza and the FAO concerning the Negotiating Group’s plebiscite proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780488–0727)

³ See footnote 2, Document 137.

more constructive attitude toward the NG proposal. Somoza this time seemed to want to explore the possibility of his departure and the arrangements to fill the power vacuum. He asked that we meet informally with him after he had consulted with his advisers. My colleagues emerged from the meeting encouraged by the exchange. I counselled caution since I detected no give beyond the disposition to talk further. In the absence of concrete indications of willingness to leave or accept our formula for a plebiscite, Somoza's apparent flexibility may be no more than an effort to gain time, and cast himself in a more favorable light, especially now that the FAO has taken such an intransigent position.

4. While NG was delivering note to Somoza, Dick Barnebey delivered our note to Rafael Cordova Rivas since Alfonso Robelo was not to be found. In order to maintain the image of no FAO dialogue with the NG Cordova Rivas went out of his way to schedule the encounter in a private home. He left the meeting of his own political group (UDEL) to receive statement, and said he would raise it at FAO meeting scheduled for 4:00 p.m. today.

5. Cordova Rivas read statement through carefully, but made no specific comment on it. He did make some general observations on the plebiscite issue. He said the main obstacle to FAO's favorable consideration of the plebiscite proposal is that FAO leaders' credibility with their rank-and-file supporters would be jeopardized if they support this initiative. The plebiscite, he said, is criticized as just another in the opposition's series of discredited arrangements with Somoza. He said that unity of the FAO might be endangered over plebiscite issue. He also questioned possibility of holding an honest election while Somoza is in power. As illustration, he said Somoza in his reply to NG had cleverly referred to having to keep local authorities (Jueces de Mesta) at the scene of the elections. Cordova Rivas did, however, hear out Barnebey's response that a rigidly supervised election, with international observers at each consolidated voting precinct, could counter this standard Somoza/PLN interference with the balloting.

6. Barnebey urged that Cordova Rivas do what he could to assure that FAO consider this proposal calmly, and avoid an abrupt and ill-considered response. Cordova Rivas agreed, suggesting FAO would probably not give the NG an immediate reply. He noted NG's willingness to meet with FAO to clarify or explain its proposal, but made no request for any such meeting. Tonight, however, I received a call from Javier Zavala of Robelo's MDN, who asked for a meeting for himself and Jaime Chamorro with the NG tomorrow, prior to MDN meeting.

No reservations were expressed over their willingness to meet with NG as a group at the Guatemalan Embassy.

Solaun

153. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 30, 1978, 0049Z

6205. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 183: Private Conversation With Somoza.

1. I spent 3½ hours with Somoza at his house perched above “the bunker” but it was not a very productive session. Much of the time was spent in going over the same ground that I covered in my previous private talk and in sessions with the NG. I delivered the message contained in State 301569.² His only reaction was to the reference to consequences on US/Nicaraguan relations if he refused a negotiated solution or the plebiscite approach. He thought this singled him out for harsher treatment than the USG gives to other countries with which it has disagreements.

2. The only new element which came out in the discussion was his clearly stated preference for a plebiscite over other approaches to his possible departure. He said he had not ruled out leaving, but it had to be dignified. The short route of resigning and negotiating the formation of a transitional government did not afford a graceful exit. A plebiscite, on the other hand, would be a vote which, if it were adverse, the Liberal Party and the guard would understand and accept as justifying his abdication from power prior to 1981. I questioned him carefully on this because a volunteered departure would seem to afford a much more dignified exit than a national vote of no confidence. He insisted the plebiscite was his preferred route.

3. In expressing a willingness to use the “consulta popular,” Somoza made clear that he could not accept an up or down vote on his continuing in office. His clear preference was for a test of relative party strength. He did throw in, however, the variant of holding an election for a constituent assembly which could decide whether he should remain in office. This would also serve to measure relative

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2531. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² The Department instructed Bowdler in telegram 301569 to Managua, November 29, that he should make a *démarche* to Somoza informing him that if he continued to refuse to negotiate a transition government or to accept a plebiscite Bowdler would return to Washington and “our relations with your country will be very strongly affected.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2355) Bowdler had sent proposed talking points to use with Somoza as a “last effort to get him to accept the plebiscite or agree to step down in favor of a transitional government of national reconciliation” in telegram 6112 from Managua, November 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2371)

strength of the parties. I told him that trying to hold the plebiscite on the basis of party affiliation is a non-starter. The opposition would not accept and neither could the NG. With respect to the constituent assembly idea, I told him the NG had not examined this idea in detail, but I could anticipate strong FAO objection because of an unhappy experience in the recent past and the competitive advantage which the Liberal Party, supported by the bureaucracy, would enjoy. I made clear, however, that this alternative would have to be examined with the FAO if the PLN presented the proposal.

4. I asked Somoza how he planned to reply to the NG's latest communication. He first said that the response would express a willingness to discuss our proposal for a plebiscite. I told him that a simple willingness to discuss was not adequate. It would represent very little advance over their earlier reply. It could be taken as a dilatory move. If he and the PLN were prepared to accept our proposal in principle and discuss the details, they should say so. Somoza clearly got the message but made no firm commitment.

5. I told Somoza that while I appreciated the opportunity to talk personally, I was a member of an international commission and it was important that he meet with the three of us. I recalled his expressed willingness to see us informally to exchange views prior to his response to our November 27 communication.³ He promised to get in touch with FonMin Quintana this afternoon to set up a meeting with the NG.

6. Comment: Somoza was affable throughout the meeting. He took the talking points and some very candid remarks on my part as to how he is viewed by the opposition in stride. He did not accept these views but expressed concern over his position in history. He also sought refuge behind the need to protect Liberal Party and National Guard and prevent a Communist takeover.

While he expressed concern over American attitudes toward him and particularly future measures which the USG might take, he left me with the clear impression that he does not think the pressures bearing down on him are yet sufficient to compel him to throw in the sponge. Unlike his comments on previous occasions he expressed readiness to gamble on a plebiscite but his refusal to accept our formula led me to believe that he may also think that he can string this process out in order to gain time. (The CA stabilization fund balance of payments loan authorized yesterday provides some relief.) I concluded from this session that unless we take some of the specific measures contemplated in our options paper, our warnings are still not credible to him. A signal or two at this time may convince him that we mean

³ See footnote 2, Document 152.

business on prompt action to settle the crisis. It looks as if the FAO will tonight or tomorrow accept our version of the plebiscite in terms that will put Somoza on the spot. (Managua 6206)⁴ Announcement of aid suspension and intention to withdraw the MilGrp is the kind of pressure we need to push him to a decision. I am not convinced that a plebiscite is his preferred way out. It is more humiliating than a volunteered departure. If we are firm on a plebiscite as the NG has designed it and convince Somoza that the USG means business, there is a chance that we can edge him toward a decision to negotiate his departure with the FAO.

Solaun

⁴ See Document 154.

154. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 30, 1978, 0100Z

6206. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky From Bowdler—Caracas, Panama and San Jose for Ambassador only. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 184: FAO Moves Toward Support Plebiscite.

1. In meeting with FAOGPC leader Alfonso Robelo this morning I carefully went over talking points (State 301569).² Robelo said NG's latest plebiscite statement was persuasive and had been well received by his MDN colleagues. He seemed confident plebiscite would be approved in this afternoon's FAO plenum.

2. Robelo added that FAO has now heard from Carlos Andres Perez regarding mediation and plebiscite proposal. Perez, he said, had urged FAO to approve plebiscite proposal, and to be "audacious" in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2353. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² See footnote 2, Document 153.

order to seize the initiative and approve proposal before Somoza reacts to it.

3. At luncheon given today by banker Eduardo Montealegre for large number of conservative and liberal politicians, businessmen and various opposition representatives, conversations centered on plebiscite. Opposition leaders said they have brought around Robelo's MDN and some other erstwhile opponents of plebiscite. As of mid-afternoon they believed they could count a 10-to-2 vote in favor, and were still working on Rodolfo Robelo's leftist PLI. FAO-PC member Cordova Rivas told Ambassador Solaun and Dick Barnebey, in separate conversations, that FAO would vote favorably, and attempt to keep conditions out of the FAO reply. Instead these could be offered later on, when definitive plebiscite arrangements are made. Reason, according to Cordova Rivas, is to put Somoza on the spot as he tries to respond to the NG; Somoza thus could not object to specific FAO conditions as pretext for refusing to concur with the basic plebiscite proposal. In my presence heads of Banco De Nicaragua and Banco De America pledged to Cordova Rivas that FAO could count on whatever funds are necessary to conduct the plebiscite campaign.

4. Robelo also told me FAO representatives would call on Archbishop Obando this afternoon before the FAO vote, hoping to obtain his concurrence on the plebiscite issue. Obando, for his part, issued another general statement calling for a peaceful settlement (without mention of the mediation effort or the plebiscite proposal).

5. Media coverage has dismissed since yesterday, and treatment continues mixed on the plebiscite proposal. La Prensa ran a short AFP item quoting Somoza as saying to a reporter he intends to stay in presidency until 1981. (Comment: Paradoxically, this item, which was also widely carried on radio, may have helped persuade some FAO critics of plebiscite to support it, since they expect Somoza to block it and therefore to be blamed for intransigence.) La Prensa editors told Ambassador they would carry more favorable coverage on plebiscite in tomorrow's issue.³

Solaun

³ In telegram 6225 from Managua, November 30, Bowdler sent an English-language translation of the FAO's November 27 qualified acceptance of the Negotiating Group's proposal and stipulations to "guarantee the effectiveness of the popular vote." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VIII) In telegram 6213 from Managua, November 30, the Embassy included the full Spanish-language text of the FAO reply to the Negotiating Group's plebiscite proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780494-0639)

155. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 30, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update

Today the FAO announced that it would accept the NG's plebiscite proposal, with several conditions,² the most important of which were: Somoza would have to be absent from the country during the period prior to the plebiscite as well as the Commander of the National Guard; the National Guard, itself, must be confined to barracks 15 days prior to the vote; and all Nicaraguans living abroad must be given the chance to vote.

Rudolfo Robelo and his leftist group could not agree to the plebiscite and apparently have withdrawn from the FAO.

Venezuelan President Perez had contacted the FAO leadership yesterday and urged them to approve the plebiscite proposal—to be “audacious” in order to seize the initiative and approve the plan before Somoza reached a decision.

We remain in the dark on Somoza's response. The PLN recommended that he take up NG's offer to discuss and clarify the proposal. In meetings with his Cabinet and PLN leadership he seemed more confident than at earlier times. He referred to a phone call of support from Paraguay's President Stroessner, the \$20 million loan approved by the Central American Monetary Council, and a call from a high-ranking official from Washington (Congressman Murphy?).

Bowdler delivered the strongly worded demarche and Somoza seemed to take it in stride,³ though he did complain that it seemed unusually harsh to be presented to a friend of the U.S. Somoza spoke of a “dignified” departure and stated that he preferred the plebiscite option over that of outright resignation. As to the terms of the plebiscite, he still held out for his first proposal of one organized to assess the strength of the various political parties.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 11/23–30/78. Secret.

² See footnote 3, Document 154.

³ See Document 153.

Bowdler was left with the strong impression that Somoza was not convinced of the firmness of the U.S. position concerning the plebiscite plan as proposed by the N.G. Nor was he sure of the strength of our resolve to alter drastically our relations with his government should he refuse to go along with the plebiscite. Bowdler concluded that we need to take steps, such as formally cutting off AID or removing the MILGRP, to correct Somoza's erroneous impression.

I had an interesting conversation this evening with Adolfo Calero, who manages Coca-Cola's interests in Nicaragua and is a leader in the FAO. Among the observations he made were: (1) Congressmen Wilson and Murphy detracted from the U.S. mediation effort in Nicaragua; their public statements created confusion in the minds of many common Nicaraguans as to where the U.S. stood;⁴ (2) he believed the "show of force" employed by the NG in its insistence that both sides reconsider the plebiscite was exactly what was needed to get them to consider the plan seriously; and (3) the U.S. needs to be careful not to be caught in another "Bay of Pigs" situation. The U.S. assumed a responsibility when it determined to act as a mediator in Nicaragua; expectations were raised. Should the effort falter, the U.S. cannot leave before a solution is found.

The comment on "Bay of Pigs" was interesting, and it reminded me of a comment by Cardenal last Saturday.⁵ When I prodded Cardenal that some people in the FAO might invite U.S. troops if they thought that would help, he responded sharply, by saying that the only thing that could drive him into the arms of the Sandinistas, seeking a violent solution, would be U.S. military intervention.

I pressed him on the reasonableness of the conditions the FAO had attached to its acceptance of the plebiscite, e.g., the demands that Somoza absent himself from Nicaragua prior to the plebiscite and that the National Guard be confined to barracks 15 days before the vote. He argued strongly that given the long history of Somoza's oppressive rule, with the Guard as his instrument of power, it was difficult for Nicaragua to believe that a truly democratic vote could be taken with Somoza being present. Using the analogy of a Corporation Board of Directors, Calero said that on questions touching upon the person of a board member, that member would be expected to voluntarily leave the room while the matter was discussed and voted upon. On the National Guard issue, he said that an OAS peacekeeping force could replace it if necessary.

⁴ See Document 142.

⁵ November 25.

Just received word that Somoza accepted the plebiscite. We have not yet heard his conditions, but we can be reasonably certain that Bowdler and company will be bouncing back-and-forth for a while more.⁶

⁶ See Document 156.

156. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 1, 1978, 0530Z

6238. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler—Caracas, Panama, San Jose for Ambassador only. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 190: Strategy in Next Steps of Mediation. Ref: (A) Managua 6237² (B) Managua 6239.³

1. By separate messages we have forwarded text of Somoza/PLN reply to our note of November 27⁴ and transcript of Somoza's press conference. The reply was delivered by Quintana and Tablada to Jimenez at 6:00 p.m. Jimenez said there was no discussion of the response. Obiols and I joined Jimenez immediately after delivery of the reply and together listened to Somoza's press conference which began at 6:30 p.m.

2. After the press conference my colleagues and I analyzed the FAO and Somoza responses and reached tentative agreement on how we should proceed. In essence we now have acceptance by both sides of a plebiscite based on the central issue of whether Somoza should

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103-1786. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² In telegram 6237 from Managua, December 1, the Embassy included the Spanish-language text of the PLN response to the Negotiating Group's plebiscite proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

³ In telegram 6239 from Managua, December 1, the Embassy included an unofficial transcript of Somoza's remarks, made before Somoza read the text of the PLN statement concerning the Negotiating Group's plebiscite proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua VIII)

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 152.

remain in power for now. The FAO qualified its acceptance with a series of conditions, the most difficult of which is that Somoza, his brother and his son should leave the country during the period of the plebiscite. In conversation with Jaime Chamorro and Xavier Zavala this afternoon we determined that FAO agreement on this condition is what enabled all elements of the FAO to go along with the plebiscite and the condition probably rpt probably cannot be compromised without rejection of the solution by an important segment of FAO groups. All other conditions are negotiable.

3. The Somoza/PLN response accepts the plebiscite on the issue as formulated by the NG but wraps it up with a proposal for a constituent assembly designed either to provoke FAO rejection or to string the negotiating process out so long that he can complete his term until 1981. This gambit, as plausible as it may seem, does not provide a peaceful solution to the political crisis which Nicaragua needs in the short term to reverse the radicalization/polarization process and halt the bloodshed and human suffering which continues here as the FSLN presses its campaign and the National Guard reacts with increased repression.

4. In the face of the position taken by the two sides, my colleagues and I tentatively agreed tonight (subject to further discussion tomorrow) to recommend to our governments a strategy involving these elements:

A) Based on the responses, prepare a proposal for resolution of the crisis which the NG regards as reasonable within a democratic and constitutional framework.

B) This proposal would recommend going ahead with the plebiscite on whether Somoza should resign or not and postponing the constituent assembly advanced by Somoza as part of the plebiscite and by the FAO during the transition period on the grounds that:

(1) The country is in no shape to go to elections for a constituent assembly and will not be until it has had a period of peace in which confidence in government and the democratic process can be rebuilt,

(2) A total revision of the Constitution is not necessary or desirable during an interim period leading to democratic elections in 1981,

(3) Minimum partial amendment will take care of whatever changes are necessary to establish a government of national reconciliation for a transition period of two years.

C) Propose that in the event Somoza wins the plebiscite, the present government will be restructured on the basis of what the PLN and the FAO agree using the PLN proposals for resolving the crisis (Managua 5648);⁵ and if Somoza loses, a government of national reconciliation

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 132.

(GNR) will be established drawing on the FAO document. (Managua 5210).⁶

D) Outline what the NG regards as a reasonable formula for structuring the GNR which provides for a fundamental change with a minimum of constitutional alterations to take the country to general elections on schedule in February 1981. This would involve:

- Resignation of Somoza using Article 187 of Constitution;
- Election by the Congress of a temporary replacement from among its ranks as now provided in the Constitution (the choice to be agreed to by the PLN and FAO);
- Formation of a new Cabinet and replacement of top leaders in the National Guard, autonomous agencies, Supreme Court, electoral tribunal, accounting tribunal, and municipal governments on a PCN/FAO agreed basis to achieve national reconciliation;
- Partial amendment of the Constitution, following the established procedure, to allow election of a provisional President from outside the Congress to govern the country from May 1, 1979 to April 30, 1981 (this is essential in order to balance off retention of the present Somocista Congress with an executive branch that is rearranged along national reconciliation lines.)

5. Tomorrow my colleagues and I will be drafting a communication to the parties and the people of Nicaragua embodying the approach outlined above before Obiols returns to Guatemala on Saturday and Jimenez to Santo Domingo Sunday. They want to consult their governments on next steps. I would like to return to Washington on Sunday for the same purpose. All three of us would plan to be back in Managua by Wednesday, December 6 to make any last minute adjustments in our draft and present it to the two sides the following day. In making the presentation we would emphasize that we expect them to accept or reject the proposal with no further counter-proposals or basic conditions, it being understood that if the plan is accepted, the specifics will be negotiated directly and rapidly by the two sides under the sponsorship of the NG. My colleagues and I agree that we cannot permit this negotiation to drag out any longer. Cohesiveness of the FAO will not allow it. Without the FAO we see no viable negotiating alternative. Our final proposal calls for important concessions from both sides and offers them a reasonable solution.

6. I hope that by tomorrow night we will have a fairly good draft of our plan to forward to the Department.

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 118.

7. I think it important that we consult Carlos Andres Perez on the plan before the NG returns to Managua. My colleagues agree. In this way he can call the FAO, G-12 and FSLN shortly after presentation to convey his approval and urge their support. It might be useful to have Bill Luers come to Washington on Monday or Tuesday so that we can give him a full briefing. Alternative would be for me to return to Managua via Caracas to brief CAP. Under this option I would like to have Southcom pick me up in Caracas, fly me to the zone to brief Gen. McAuliffe, and then on to Managua by Thursday⁷ morning at the latest.

8. Request instructions on my return for consultation.⁸

Solaun

⁷ December 7.

⁸ In telegram 304597 to Managua, December 1, the Department authorized Bowdler to return to Washington for consultation. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780496–1037)

157. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 1, 1978, 0551Z

6280. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Caracas and Panama for Ambassador only. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 196: Strategy for Handling NG Note.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Managua 6279² contains the communication which the NG drafted today in response to the replies received from the FAO and PLN on our plebiscite proposal yesterday.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N780010–0044. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas and Panama City.

² Telegram 6279 from Managua, December 2, included the proposed Spanish-language text of the NG response to the FAO and Somoza concerning the plebiscite. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) For the English-language translation of the text, see Document 158.

3. You will see that we have decided to use the agreement in principle on the plebiscite to press forward on it and step aside Somoza's effort to frustrate the process with a constituent assembly. By fixing dates for start of direct negotiations on plebiscite/government of national unity accord and start of plebiscite period we hope to maintain pressure on both sides to accept. Since time table and consequences of plebiscite for establishment of government of national unity are so interconnected, we decided to push the parties for direct conversations covering both. In opening door for COSEP and church to observe direct negotiations we are asking them to stand up and be counted and thereby generate support for FAO. All of this is bold gamble to force the pace in expectation that FAO will probably accept and Somoza will have little choice but to come along or assume full weight of negative.

4. Our thought yesterday was to deliver the communication after our return from capitals. I changed my mind on this for fear of losing momentum. My colleagues agreed we should move quickly. Obiols has already signed the communication and will leave for home tomorrow morning. I am sending the text to Santo Domingo tonight with a message from Jimenez to President Guzman. Jimenez hopes to get green light to go ahead by noon tomorrow (Dec. 2). Jimenez leaves for DR on Sunday³ noon. Jimenez and Obiols plan to be back here by Wednesday⁴ evening. I will await your authorization to proceed with the document. Our hope is to deliver it to FAO and PLN, COSEP and the Archbishop tomorrow afternoon. It will also be given to the press to obtain widest possible public dissemination.

5. I will be available to go to Panama on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday to meet with Ambassador Luers and Gen. McAuliffe. From standpoint of impact on Somoza it would be best to have trip take place on Tuesday at latest so that McAuliffe's contact here will come before Somoza responds. Please advise when I should plan to be in Panama and whether I should go commercial or SouthCom Aircraft will pick me up.⁵

Solaun

³ December 3.

⁴ December 6.

⁵ In telegram 305334 to Managua, December 2, Vaky authorized Bowdler to proceed with the proposed Negotiating Group statement on the plebiscite. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780497-0719)

158. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 2, 1978, 0552Z

6281. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 195: Translation NG Reply.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Herewith our hasty translation of NG reply to FAO and Somoza/PLN replies on plebiscite.³

3. Quote

The international commission of friendly cooperation and conciliation for a peaceful solution to the present crisis in Nicaragua, composed of Foreign Minister Ramon Emilio Jimenez of the Dominican Republic, Ambassador Alfredo Obiols Gomez of Guatemala, and Ambassador William G. Bowdler of the United States of America:

4. In view of the acceptance in principal by both the President of the republic and negotiating commission of the GON, on the one hand, and the political commission of the FAO, on the other, of its proposal that the people of Nicaragua should decide by means of popular consultation whether or not General Somoza is to remain office;

5. Interpreting the counter proposal of the President and the Negotiating Commission of the PLN to include in the consultation of the people a proposition for a constituent assembly as a reflection of concern over a breakdown in the constitutional order due to a lack of detailed explanation in point five of the reconciliation proposal presented on November 21, 1978:

6. Considering that the problems afflicting Nicaragua make impracticable and inadvisable a complete constitutional reform, which would run into different interpretations of Article 336 on the one hand, and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/1–20/78. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In a December 4 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor summarized telegram 6281 from Managua and noted that the FSLN had issued a communiqué on December 3 that “condemned the mediation effort and called on the FAO to pull out.” Pastor also noted, “we have brought the statement to the attention” of Carazo and Perez “and asked them to counsel the FSLN leadership to remain quiet during this delicate period.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10–12/78)

³ See footnote 2, Document 157.

on the other the emotion sorrow and resentment that recent events have generated, as well as the evident absence of a free political process;

7. In the belief that with partial reforms there can be achieved both confidence in the constitution and support for a government of national unity, and that it is desirable to await the establishment of a government which genuinely represents the popular will before dealing with the delicate problem of a total constitutional reform;

8. Desirous of achieving a democratic and durable peace in Nicaragua, that will contribute to the formation of a government of national unity as quickly as possible that would have as its fundamental objective to move the country along the path of democratization, leading in the near future to a government which will respond to the popular will and set Nicaragua on the road of development on behalf of all its inhabitants;

9. Convinced of the desirability of a constitutional solution and the reconciliation of the ideas that the PLN, the FAO and others active in national affairs have presented on the formation of a government of national unity:

10. Proposes to the government and the FAO the following: First: that the PLN and the FAO enter into direct negotiations on December 7, 1978 under the auspices of the International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation and in the presence of representatives of COSEP and the Church, with the aim of reaching agreement on bases in addition to those already agreed to by both sides in the conciliation proposal of November 21. These will govern the holding of a consultation of the people, as well as the formation of a government of national unity, and will be incorporated in the formal agreement between the parties.

11. Second: To hold a popular consultation starting on January 1, 1979 so that the people of Nicaragua can decide whether or not General Somoza is to continue in office;

12. Third: Whatever the result of the consultation of the people, the parties agree to the formulation of a government of national unity on the following basis:

A) If the result of the consultation of the people is favorable to General Somoza, he will preside over the government of national unity and if the result is unfavorable to General Somoza, he is to resign and a joint session of Congress will elect as his successor (Deputy or Senator) not later than May 1, 1979. On that date, in accordance with the Constitution, amended as stipulated in point four of these bases, the Congress will elect a new President proposed by the FAO and accepted by the PLN, for the period of May 1, 1979 to May 1, 1981.

B) To form a Cabinet in the government of national unity made up of one-third members of the PLN, one-third FAO and one-third

independents approved jointly by the PLN and FAO. All executive decisions are to be taken by agreement of the Council of Ministers.

C) To reorganize the judicial system by replacing the incumbents, who will submit their resignations to a joint session of Congress, with respected professionals accepted and approved by both the PLN and the FAO.

D) To reorganize the National Guard through the creation of the armed forces of Nicaragua with three branches—army, navy and air force—in accord with a new organized law drawn up by a technical council of National Guard officials named by the Council of Ministers.

E) To create and organize a national police force charged with maintaining public order under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Government and in accord with a proposal to be presented by a commission of experts.

F) A commission composed equally of representatives of the PLN and the FAO will be created to draft a new electoral law that will guarantee the organization and functioning of the political parties within a framework of democratic pluralism, free elections, effective suffrage based on technical standards and the organization and functioning of an electoral agency free of party pressures.

G) To create, organize and put into operation an independent mechanism of fiscal control that inspires confidence and which, through law and administrative measures, will avoid embezzlement and ensure the proper use of public funds in the interest of the Nicaraguan people and their development.

13. Fourth: The government of national unity will create a special commission, made up equally of representatives from the PLN and the FAO, to draft a partial constitutional reform to bring it up to date, guarantee the effective enjoyment of individual, social and human rights and the institutionalization of the country. The reforms should be in effect no later than the last day of April 1979.

14. Fifth: The government of national unity will present to the Congress legislation to improve social conditions and which are urgently needed for the welfare of Nicaraguans, as well as legislation designed to bring about good state and local administration.

15. The International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation believes that this proposal clarifies and complements its original proposal presented November 21. Given the urgency of reaching a peaceful solution to the present crisis in Nicaragua, the commission urges both parties to accept promptly.

Solaun

159. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 5, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update

Somoza is obviously engaging in some fast contingency planning. He instructed Ambassador Sevilla-Sacasa to query the State Department yesterday on the likelihood of U.S. support for him should he win the plebiscite and establish a government of national unity. Posing the question to Vaky, Sevilla-Sacasa received the assurance that we would respect the result of the plebiscite. Vaky emphasized that it was important for Somoza and the FAO to agree on the precise arrangements of the plebiscite so that everyone will know exactly what will happen given either eventuality. (C)

Simultaneously Somoza sent his cousin and confidant to speak with Bowdler in Managua. Somoza wanted the answers to three questions:²

—Will the USG “guarantee” that it will respect the results of the plebiscite in the event that Somoza wins and will resume normal relations, aid, etc.?

—What assurances could he receive that an orderly transition take place if he resigns the presidency following a defeat in the plebiscite?

—How would the U.S. respond in affording legal, economic, and other protection to Somoza and his family in the event he lost the plebiscite and had to depart the country?

Bowdler referred the first and last questions to State; and responded to the second by saying that the NG’s proposal offered the necessary framework whereby a viable transition government could be formed should Somoza lose and be forced to step down. (C)

Two important leaders inside the FAO met Bowdler yesterday to request the exclusion of questions relating to the transition government from upcoming negotiations with Somoza. Only the plebiscite should be discussed, they said. They also set three conditions before meeting with Somoza: end to the state of siege, amnesty, and reform of the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79. Confidential.

² In telegram 6297 from Managua, December 4, Bowdler wrote to Christopher and Vaky that Somoza had requested answers from the United States about three questions. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2336)

radio censorship code. Bowdler and his colleagues on the NG will try to obtain Somoza's positive action on them before the face-to-face negotiations begin Thursday.³ (C)

On another front, the OAS fact-finding commission returned from Costa Rica and Nicaragua and is drafting its report on the border incident.⁴ We understand that the document, which will probably be presented next week to the OAS, will recommend an OAS border observer mission for the frontier between the two countries. (C)

Conversations with Costa Rican officials reveal that Costa Rica is finding its influence with the FSLN reduced as a result of the increased presence in the border areas. It is also faced with the reality that its public security forces are too inexperienced and ill-equipped to be able to risk a forceful showdown with the FSLN. (C)

³ December 7.

⁴ See Document 148.

160. Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

RP-M-78-10467

Washington, December 6, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: Factors Affecting Sandinista Military Strategy (U)

1. The principal Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) guerrilla faction has sufficient strength to launch major attacks independently and, given the flow of new armament and other preparations, a new offensive could still come at any time. Guerrilla leaders, however, are evidently weighing potential constraints, several of which appear to recommend a policy of hit-and-run attacks, at least as long as the international mediation effort continues. (S/NF)

2. The guerrillas' major offensive has been expected, and in fact repeatedly announced, for weeks, and preparation continues unabated. The Terciario faction in particular has the advantages of substantial

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 80T00634A: Production Case Files (1978), Box 13, Folder 90: Nicaragua: Factors Affecting Sandinista Military Strategy. Secret; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon.

foreign backing—the latest arms delivery from Panama two weeks ago was sufficient for 500 men—and success in recruiting—the armed force in Costa Rica alone may number 700 or more. (S/NF)

3. A number of factors, however, currently seems to favor an FSLN policy of hit-and-run attacks rather than an all-out offensive. The principal Terciario faction reportedly has denounced the mediation and the proposal for a national plebiscite, but the bulk of Terciario leader Pastora's rank-and-file followers—newer recruits presumed to be motivated more by anti-Somoza sentiment than revolutionary ideology—may prefer giving the plebiscite a chance. Certainly Pastora needs active popular backing inside Nicaragua, which would be less forthcoming if his offensive were perceived to be undermining a promising and peaceful alternative means to oust Somoza. Moreover, among the Sandinistas' international backers, Fidel Castro and perhaps Venezuelan President Perez, for different reasons, are counseling against a major attack. (S/NF/NC/OC)

4. The guerrillas also are certainly weighing military factors. They have greater numbers and better arms than ever before, but so does the National Guard. The FSLN may have 2,000 armed followers, while the Guard probably has over 10,000 men. Moreover, the Guard has reinforced the Costa Rican border area, and within the next few weeks, the Organization of American States could post observers along the border as well. The Terciarios, who operate largely out of Costa Rica, are not for the most part suicidal fanatics. They recognize that another drubbing like the one suffered in September could demoralize anti-Somoza forces of all stripes and strengthen the government's overall position. (S/NF)

5. The military balance is unlikely to change significantly unless the guerrillas acquire aircraft or receive much greater, direct foreign military support. Several vague reports have suggested that the FSLN has acquired some planes, but we have no details or corroboration. (S/NF/NC/OC)

6. Tomas Borge, the Popular Prolonged War (GPP) faction leader, opposes Pastora's strategy of uniting various anti-Somoza forces to promote immediate popular insurrection, because he believes it is premature and non-ideological. The GPP favors an authentic revolution achieved through prolonged guerrilla action beginning in the mountains and culminating in a general insurrection to establish a socialist state. Fidel Castro evidently has counseled Sandinista leaders, including Borge and Pastora, to pursue this course. (S/NF/NC/OC)

7. A generally reliable source reports that the GPP faction will engage in continuing small scale hit-and-run attacks against National Guard units rather than participate in Pastora's major offensive. The GPP also is reportedly attempting to compound the economic squeeze

on the Somoza government by destroying some of the harvested cotton and coffee crops. On 5 December they set fire to coffee stocks in Diriamba and San Marcos, reportedly causing considerable damage. Another source reports that 200 members of the GPP faction recently crossed from Honduras—the new base of operations for the faction's national leadership—into Nicaragua to begin military actions. In fact, there have been several skirmishes in the past week between the Guard and guerrillas in the mountains of northern Nicaragua not far from the Honduran border. (S/NF/NC/OC)

161. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 6, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update

The FAO has publicly presented its response to the NG's proposal on the plebiscite.² As anticipated, the FAO said it would agree to negotiate the details of holding a plebiscite only if three conditions were met: (a) the lifting of the state of siege with full restoration of civil liberties, (b) granting amnesty to all those charged with political crimes, permitting free entry into Nicaragua by all exiles, and (c) removal of all restrictions on free access to the media. It added that if Somoza wins the plebiscite, the FAO would refuse to become part of the government of national unity. (C)

In a long conversation with Bowdler, who had flown to San Jose to brief the GOCR on the mediation effort, President Carazo expressed his anxiety over the activities of the armed FSLN groups in Costa Rica.³ He admitted that he had little effective influence over their actions and said Venezuelan President Perez "remains in charge of the Sandinistas

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10/78–12/78. Secret.

² See Document 147.

³ In telegram 6342 from Managua, December 6, Bowdler reported to Christopher and Vaky about his discussion with Carazo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2343)

in Costa Rica." Carazo claimed that Torrijos had become disillusioned with the "theatrical Sandinistas" and had not been giving them support for at least a month. Carazo said that he had originally thought Eden Pastora was a real leader, but now found him to be "courageous" but vacillating and inconstant. (S)

The IAHRC report⁴ on Nicaragua received full press coverage in Managua, with the opposition viewing it as proof of Somoza's disregard for human rights and the GON calling it one-sided. Continued reports of disappearances and arrests are appearing in the Nicaraguan press, as are articles on deaths attributed to the National Guard and to FSLN-performed executions. (C)

An important coffee processing plant was destroyed by fire December 5 when a group claiming to be representatives of the FSLN-Proletarian Tendency poured gasoline on the machinery and warned workers not to call for help. Given the dependence of Nicaragua's precarious economy on this year's agricultural harvest, the FSLN may now be resorting to efforts to sabotage the harvest in order to bring additional pressure to bear on Somoza. (C)

John Murphy and Charlie Wilson have begun their campaign to turn the USG around and get some support for Somoza. Wilson has been working on Henry Owen, and has threatened to kill next year's AID bill—which is a credible threat, according to Beckel—unless we turn our policy around.

⁴ See Document 144.

162. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 7, 1978, 2232Z

6424. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 216: NG Meeting with Somoza.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2323. Confidential; Immediate; Nodis.

Summary: NG had over two and a half hour session with Somoza on the night of December 6 during which we clarified two questions regarding our December 2 proposal² and pressed him to lift the state of siege, grant a general amnesty, and abrogate the radio-TV code. For over an hour Somoza paraded all the reasons why it was hard for him to comply but in the end, and after I had made my acute frustration and annoyance clearly manifest, he backed off and promised to act on all three, not because of the FAO demands but because of the NG's specific request. End summary.

1. This is an account of how the NG obtained the "Three Pearls."

2. Obiols did not return from Guatemala until 7:15 pm (Dec. 6) despite efforts to get him to come on the morning flight. Jimenez arrived back at noon. By pre-arrangement FonMin Quintana obtained an appointment with the President at 9:00 pm so that we could deal with the clarifications he wanted and, more importantly, we could push for the three actions essential to get direct talks underway. Somoza received us in "the bunker." He was accompanied by Quintana and PLN Secretary Tablada.

3. Somoza asked for only two clarifications. He, with Quintana's support, again brought up the subject of inscription of voters during the Sundays preceding the plebiscite vote. As the discussion proceeded it became clear that their concern centered on preventing secondary school students from voting who are not eighteen years old or have their high school diplomas. Somoza said that unless this issue is resolved, there will be great confusion and controversy at the "Mesas Electorales". I told Somoza the NG was aware of this. We had discussed it and considered it a matter that the parties should address in the direct talks in order to reach agreement.

4. Somoza next turned to the sentence in point 3 (B) of our December 2 proposal which states that all executive decisions shall be taken by the Cabinet Ministers in council. He wanted to know the scope of the provision as it curbed presidential prerogatives. Obiols responded that the decisions referred to had to do with significant legislative measures and not day to day administrative actions. I commented that I had received several inquiries about this sentence and its scope obviously needed to be defined with greater precision. I used this observation as a springboard to clarify, as we had agreed in a pre-meeting huddle, that our December 2 proposal should not rpt not be regarded by the parties as a definitive plan but rather as a NG contribution to the negotiating process to help the two sides focus on some of the key

² See Document 158.

issues. We anticipated that the FAO and PLN would have ideas of their own, all to be negotiated in the direct talks we had projected.

5. Somoza then brought up the FAO response to our December 2 communications. He described it as a rejection and again made disparaging remarks about the immaturity of the FAO leadership. I told the President this was a serious misreading of the opposition at this critical juncture of the negotiations. The principal point of their response is the sixth paragraph. The three measures requested are important to them but they are also important to us as mediators. We had raised the need to improve the climate for the negotiations at our first meeting with him. We had also included the three points as basic conditions in our plebiscite proposal. The negotiations had now reached the point where favorable action on all three was essential if we are to move forward.

6. This touched off a long discussion of the advisability of taking the three steps in which Somoza and Quintana focused on the inherent problems. On the state of siege they mentioned the danger of cross border attacks from Costa Rica. Somoza said that GN intelligence showed the Sandinistas had closed their camps in the Orosi Volcano-Upala area and were moving eastward along the border. They feared an attack on San Carlos. He also worried about Sandinista spectaculars and attacks on the coffee and cotton harvest.

7. On the amnesty question Somoza had no problem with amnesty per se but threw up a lot of smoke about pardons and suspension of judicial proceedings. He carried on at length about the independence of the Nicaraguan judiciary and how executive interference would weaken the judicial system. He claimed that he would have a revolt on his hands in the Guradia if he pardoned Sandinistas who had been convicted of killing guardsmen. He brought up the difficulty of defining what is a political vs. a common crime. Indeed to hear him talk one got the impression that Nicaragua was a model democracy. Quintana was helpful to us on this subject, pointing out that certain flexibility could be found in getting the amnesty law through Congress quickly and in the release of at least some prisoners. We urged Somoza to move rapidly on amnesty and if need be set up a group to meet with the FAO to review difficult cases.

8. In the discussion on radio and TV censorship Somoza agreed that he had a duty to protect the Nicaraguan home from invasion by irresponsible stations which broadcast subversive material. He asserted all countries have to protect their airwaves. Obiols pointed out that the problem was probably less in the law itself than in the way it was administered. He urged administrative measures and suspension of the "Codigo Negro" while a new law is prepared.

9. When after an hour of examining all the reasons why it would be difficult to act on the three measures, Somoza asked what conces-

sions the FAO would give in return (he specifically mentioned a guarantee against FSLN attacks) and Quintana suggested the President might concede one of three steps, I felt the theater had gone on long enough. Aware that Somoza and Quintana had been watching me carefully throughout I scowled back at Quintana, shook my head, put my pen back in my pocket, uncrossed my legs, reached for my briefcase, and looked at Jimenez to catch his attention—all to convey an impression of acute frustration and annoyance. Somoza watched the performance, got the message and after a brief pause declared that he would not take the action because the FAO requested them but to meet the NG's desires. After suitable expressions of appreciation by the three of us Somoza said he would still have to consult with his advisors before giving a final response and strode out of his office into the cabinet room with Quintana and Tablada in his wake.

10. An hour and twenty-five minutes later, after a series of conferences with key Cabinet members, PLN leaders and Guardia officers, Somoza returned to his office. He asked Quintana to read a statement setting forth what he was prepared to do. The statement contained the "three pearls" but explicitly tied the actions to the request of the NG. Somoza said he assumed we had no objections. We said we did not since the request goes back to our first session with him. Quintana then commented that he supposed our governments would be willing to comment favorably to the press on Somoza's generous action. I replied that I was hopeful the President's action would lead to quick acceptance by the FAO of direct talks and I was prepared to recommend to my government that it express satisfaction over the efforts made by the two sides to achieve a peaceful solution. My colleagues echoed this response and the meeting came to an end.

11. Department please pass to Caracas, Panama and San Jose for Ambassador only.

12. Comment: Neither before nor after this meeting has Somoza or any of his emissaries tried to follow up on the answers to the three questions posed by Pallais (Managua 6297).³

Solaun

³ See footnote 2, Document 159.

163. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 8, 1978, 1525Z

6427. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler—Caracas, Panama and San Jose for Ambassador only. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 222: FAO Reaction to Somoza Granting of “Pearls”.

1. The FAO plenum held two sessions yesterday, December 7, to fix its position on Somoza’s announcement lifting the state of siege, granting general amnesty, and abrogating the radio-TV code—the so-called “Three Pearls”. The first session lasted from 11 am to 1:30 pm; the second from 4 pm to about 8:30 pm.

2. At 6 pm when the NG had still not received any response from the FAO on the Somoza concessions, we decided to call Alfonso Robelo to see what was going on. Our inquiry produced an SOS call from him to come to the FAO plenum. As he described it, the plenum was lost in a storm over Somoza’s statements in his press conference,² particularly the reference to 20–30 days to obtain an amnesty law and his reference to a continued need for a constituent assembly. We immediately left for the MDN headquarters where the plenum was gathered. For the next hour we listened to the now familiar cant over Somoza’s untrustworthiness and the necessity for full compliance with the general amnesty before the FAO could sit down at the same table with Somoza’s achievement and the opening which it gave for further pressure on Somoza to obtain compliance and move forward to the plebiscite, we were dumbfounded by the short-sightedness and the pettiness of the argumentation. As a result all three of us spoke forcefully about the need for the FAO to seize this opportunity or lose the initiative with unforeseen consequences.

3. When we left the meeting we were not optimistic about the impact of our presentation although Robelo whispered to Jimenez that our strong language was most helpful to him in trying to bring the group around. Our timely intervention, indeed, did have positive results because the plenum decided, however, reluctantly, to enter into

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2277. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² In telegram 6407 from Managua, December 7, the Embassy reported that Somoza had read the text of the PLN communication “on lifting of state of siege, amnesty and radio TV code and acceptance direct negotiations with FAO” during a nationally broadcast press conference that day. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780504–0808)

direct conversations with the PLN starting today, December 8. The FAO plans to meet today at 10 am to draft a brief communication to the NG accepting direct talks.

3. Our plan is to meet separately this morning with the PLN and FAO groups to outline to them the schedule and agenda that we suggest for the direct negotiations in order to complete the “Acta-compromiso”, covering plebiscite and transitional government, by December 20. I do not know, given the highly controversial issues which still remain to be solved, whether we can meet that target date but will make every effort to do so.

4. If all goes according to schedule we will bring the parties together, using the facilities of the Banco de America in what used to be downtown Managua, at 4 pm today, December 8—for the first time 64 days into the negotiations.

5. Comment (a) The opening of the talks this afternoon would seem to be an excellent opportunity for the Carazo initiative of trilateral (Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela) endorsement of the negotiations. I would hope that President Carazo with the assistance of our Ambassadors could press this initiative forward. I will flash a message to Department and addressees as soon as talks get underway to confirm that there has been no last minute hitch. (b) Pursuant what I said in paragraph 10 of Managua 6424³ I recommend that the Department issue an appropriate statement, after I have flashed confirmation, expressing satisfaction that conditions have been created for direct talks and that the talks are now underway.⁴

6. For Panama: Please brief General McAuliffe fully on the foregoing.

Solaun

³ See Document 162.

⁴ In telegram 310422 to Managua, December 9, the Department sent the text of a press statement released on December 8 that recognized the commencement of direct negotiations between the PLN and FAO. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780507–1016)

164. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 8, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update

Following Somoza's acceptance of the three FAO conditions (lift state of siege, amnesty, lift censorship), the FAO agreed to direct negotiations which are going on at this moment. Even if the objective to set up a plebiscite fails, the achievement of getting the two sides to sit down together is nothing short of remarkable. The NG, again led by Bowdler, employed extraordinary skill and imagination to bring about this event, 64 days after the mediation effort began. (C)

The first session is apparently being dominated by a debate over the amnesty which Somoza stated could not be instituted for 20 to 30 days because of the need for Congressional action. The NG has provided both sides with the schedule and agenda in order to target the completion of the talks for December 20. (C)

President Carazo of Costa Rica has agreed, at our request, to urge his colleagues—Perez and Torrijos—to issue a joint declaration reconfirming their support for the mediation effort and to rein in the Sandinistas. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10/78–12/78. Confidential.

165. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 12, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update (U)

The GON is apparently responding to demands to speed up the promulgation of the amnesty law.² Somoza announced on radio and TV the draft amnesty decree. PLN leaders estimate that it will be formally passed into law by Thursday, December 14. In the meantime some 77 political prisoners were released over the weekend when the state of siege was lifted. (C)

Contacts with the Archbishop and the leaders of the private sector indicate that both groups are wary of participating as observers in the FAO–PLN negotiations. They are canvassing their supporters to insure their participation has firm backing. (C)

A PLN national board member told Ambassador Solaun that there is “discomfort” inside his party over the NG proposal for a two-step transfer of executive power to a PLN interim president till 1981. They are apparently upset that the PLN is excluded from the presidency as a result. Because the PLN believes that Somoza will lose the plebiscite, the board member said there was some consideration being given to having Somoza resign and turning over the presidency to a congressionally-picked successor—thereby avoiding a plebiscite. He quickly admitted that no one had been willing to raise this possibility with Somoza. (C)

The Costa Rican Foreign Minister returned from his mission to Venezuela and Panama with news that those two governments will join his in issuing separate statements supporting the mediation effort in Nicaragua. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/1–20/78. Confidential.

² In telegram 6458 from Managua, December 9, Bowdler reported to Vaky that PLN and FAO delegations had met at the Dominican Republic residence on December 8 to commence direct negotiations. Bowdler noted that the FAO's primary concern was “implementation of amnesty and revision of the radio-TV code.” PLN representative Quintana stated that “the GON cannot submit to pressure, but will act as rapidly as possible” regarding the amnesty. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2315)

The Costa Rican government launched a drive to clean up FSLN camps in its territory. It passed the word in advance, however, that any Sandinista giving up voluntarily will be provided safe passage to Panama. (C)

166. Editorial Note

In telegram 6631 from Managua, December 17, 1978, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research William Bowdler reported that delegations from the Liberal Party of Nicaragua (PLN) and the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) met for "the first substantive direct negotiation" on December 16 at the Guatemalan residence. The discussions focused on "the question to be put to the voter in the plebiscite" and on whether the FAO would be obligated to participate in the government if Somoza prevailed in the "consulta popular." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780521-1019) Bowdler reported on "our second round of substantive negotiations on December 17 at the U.S. Embassy," in telegram 6632 from Managua, December 18. He noted "a net loss of ground as the PLN retreated from the position taken on the question to be used in the plebiscite and the two sides deadlocked on the consequences of the plebiscite in the event Somoza should win." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780522-1102) In telegram 6649 from Managua, December 19, Bowdler reported that "after two 3½ hour sessions on December 18 the negotiations have reached an impasse which threatens failure of the effort." Bowdler continued: "The deadlock continues to center around whether the FAO should participate in the government in the event Somoza wins the plebiscite" and he added that "the FAO/PC refuses to agree to language to this effect, arguing that it would be suicide to enter into such a deal given the pressures it is under within its own ranks, the FSLN and G-12, and the public at large." Bowdler also noted that the "PLN, sensing it has an issue on which to pin responsibility on the FAO for failure of the talks, is insisting that the FAO publicly state its willingness to join in Somoza's government if he wins the plebiscite." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780524-0417)

167. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 19, 1978, 1424Z

6650. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler—Caracas, Panama and San Jose Ambassador only—Southcom for Gen. McAuliffe. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 256: New Demarche to Somoza. Ref: A) Managua 6631,² B) Managua 6632, C) Managua 6649.³

1. (S-Entire text)

2. In view of the negative attitude and obstructive tactics displayed by the PLN delegates since the substantive talks began last Saturday⁴ (reftels), I think the time has come to apply new pressure on Somoza. As a starter I believe we should ask General McAuliffe to come here tomorrow to convey with me our deep concern over the PLN intransigence and the consequences of failure of the mediation. For this message to have teeth we should remove two of the MilGp members right away and the remainder immediately thereafter if Somoza fails to negotiate an acceptable formula for the plebiscite and follow-on action based on the outcome. Curtailment of aid and other measures should be brought to the ready for implementation.

3. I recommend that the message to be conveyed to Somoza follow these points:

A) After two and a half months of intensive negotiations the mediation effort is on the brink of failure. This failure is largely due to the intransigence of the PLN negotiators.

B) After the cooperation received from you over this period in improving the political climate in Nicaragua so that these talks could prosper, our government fails to understand why the Nicaraguan Government negotiators have now become the principal obstacle to reaching agreement on a plebiscite.

C) The unwillingness of the FAO to enter a government under your direction in the event you win the plebiscite is not a valid argument for refusing to negotiate a plebiscite package. There are historical and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780187–2290. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Sent for information to USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See Document 166.

³ For telegram 6632 from Managua, December 18, and telegram 6649 from Managua, December 19, see Document 166.

⁴ December 16.

tactical reasons that make this understandable. Furthermore, your victory in a plebiscite held under international supervision and control, plus a FAO pledge to remain as a peaceful, constructive opposition—as it has agreed to do, constitutes a more than adequate outcome in the plebiscite contest.

D) If these talks break down over the issue raised by your negotiators, responsibility in the minds of the Nicaraguan people and world opinion is going to be placed on you. Under these circumstances you are going to find yourself further isolated.

E) Indeed, after the intense and sincere effort to find a peaceful, negotiated formula for resolving the political crisis in Nicaragua, failure to reach a solution for the reasons adduced by the PLN negotiators will have a seriously adverse effect on US-Nicaraguan relations.

F) Unless the negotiating effort is allowed to come to a rapid and successful conclusion—and our conversations with the FAO indicate a willingness to arrive at a settlement which is reasonable and fair to both sides—the U.S. Government will be forced to take immediate steps to disassociate itself from your government.⁵

Solaun

⁵ Oxman sent a copy of the telegram to Christopher under a December 19 memorandum in which he summarized Bowdler's three requests: using McAuliffe in a joint démarche to Somoza, pulling out two MilGroup members, and using the talking points contained in paragraph three of the telegram. Oxman continued: "I think #1 makes sense. Vaky agrees. Pastor thinks it's premature. As for #2, we may want to conserve this leverage. Vaky is getting DOD's reaction to it. He thinks, and Pastor agrees strongly, that it is not clear we need to take this step right now." Finally, regarding the third option proposed by Bowdler, Oxman suggested a "slight softening of the last talking point (I have suggested a possible reformulation). Pete agrees that it needs softening." Oxman's handwritten reformulation appears on the copy of the telegram. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX)

168. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua and the Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command (McAuliffe)¹

Managua, December 20, 1978, 1820Z

319955. Military Special Exclusive—Managua for Amb Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation: New Demarche to Somoza. Ref: Managua 6650.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. General McAuliffe is authorized to go to Managua to accompany Ambassador Bowdler in the demarche proposed reftel. He should communicate immediately with Ambassador Bowdler as to timing.

3. The question of removing some or all of U.S. Government personnel should be examined in the light of the demarche to Somoza.

4. Talking points in reftel are approved with the following amendments/additions:

—For talking point c, we suggest some added arguments as follows: The willingness of the FAO to enter a government under your direction in the event you win the plebiscite is not a valid argument for refusing to negotiate a plebiscite package. There are no historical precedents where the incumbent government compelled reluctant opposition party or group to agree to a coalition government before a significant event, like a vote of confidence. In France, Great Britain, Italy, even Colombia (where there have been pacts before an election), and other countries, the opposition has always been free to decide whether or not to join a coalition government. You cannot compel the FAO to join your government if they feel they could help Nicaragua better by being a constructive, moderate opposition party. Your position will not have any international support. In any case, . . . your victory in a plebiscite held under international supervision and control, plus a FAO pledge to remain as a peaceful, constructive opposition—as it has agreed to do, constitutes a more than adequate outcome in the plebiscite contest.

—For talking point F: unless the negotiating effort is allowed to come to a rapid and successful conclusion—and our conversations with the FAO indicate a willingness to arrive at a settlement which is

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/1–20/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted and approved by Vaky; cleared by Pastor, Armacost, and Gen. William Smith. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780526–0284)

² See Document 167.

reasonable and fair to both sides—you can expect relations between our two governments will be strongly affected.

5. We suggest the following point be added to reference: to ensure that a precipitous power vacuum does not occur, the USG supports the continuation of a restructured Guardia Nacional and National Police Force as the guarantors of domestic tranquility during the perilous transitional period. It is essential that this or a similar safeguard be available to preclude opportunistic power-plays or a general breakdown of authority.

Vance

169. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 21, 1978, 0415Z

6712. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 265: Delivers Acta-Compromiso to PLN and FAO.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. The NG spent the day December 20 honing the language of the Acta-Compromiso to be presented to the two sides this evening. During the morning we consulted with two highly respected constitutional lawyers on provisions in our proposal bearing on the presidency and the Congress which would require modification of the Constitution. Having received state 319871² I raised with my colleagues the issue of extending the plebiscite outside Nicaragua. They both argued strongly in favor of absentee voting as important in obtaining FAO approval. They pointed out that the way the paragraph was phrased it authorized rather than required the international authority to provide for voting in other countries. I decided not to make a major issue of this matter.

3. At 6 pm the NG met at the U.S. Embassy residence with the teams of the PLN and FAO, together with the three private sector

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/21–22/78. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 319871 to Managua, December 20, the Department authorized Bowdler to include absentee balloting outside Nicaragua in the compromise plan. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2288)

observers. After presentation and approval of the minutes of the previous session (which PLN delegate Tablada for the second time refused to sign) FonMin Jimenez proceeded to present the Acta-Compromiso proposal.³ By way of introduction he explained that the document reflected the views accumulated over a two and a half month period and had been prepared with the desire of achieving effective reconciliation and providing a peaceful, democratic, and durable solution. Jimenez expressed the hope that the two sides would give their agreement in principle by sometime tomorrow. If this were done, explained, the details could be negotiated quickly. He recognized at the same time that the sides might wish to take longer to formulate their views. While the NG members would be returning to their capitals for the Xmas holidays, he said, they would be available to return to Managua.

4. Following this introduction Jimenez and Obiols alternated in reading the text of the Acta-Compromiso. The FAO delegation followed the reading intently as did FonMin Quintana of the PLN delegation. PLN delegates Tablada and Montenegro, on the other hand, displayed unusual comportment throughout the reading: laughing, sneering, gesticulating, making derogatory comments and repeatedly muttering “we will never sign this.” At one point Tablada held up a sign he had sketched on a yellow pad saying “intervention”. At the end of the reading Jimenez closed the meeting again indicating the NG would be available to the parties tomorrow. As the delegates rose, Tablada remarked loudly “not even the FAO will accept that document.” In leaving the residence, Montenegro turned to Dick Barnebey and said “there are different ways of coming to power: by votes, by arms, but not this way.”

5. Following the session the FAO delegates and private sector observers stayed behind for drinks. Robelo apologized to the NG for the shameful behavior of his compatriots. Commenting on the Acta-Compromiso Robelo expressed admiration for the quality and balance of the document. He expressed personal support for it and said that he would convene the FAO plenum in the morning with the hope that a favorable response could be given to the NG during the course of the day. The private sector observers were particularly outspoken in their praise of the proposal, indicating that they would work to see that it received strong backing.

6. The proposal was handed to the local and international press at 6:30 pm.

Solaun

³ Telegram 6710 from Managua, December 20, included the revised Spanish-language text of the NG's proposed agreement on the plebiscite. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780526–0700)

170. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 21, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update (U)

With the direct negotiations between the two sides at a standstill, the NG took matters into its hands today and presented a "compromise proposal" to both sides for their approval (or rejection) by next week.² The NG proposal contains provisions which had been discussed in earlier negotiating sessions, and which, it is hoped, will be acceptable to both sides. The principal compromise modifications advanced in this latest document are: (C)

(1) Somoza's brother and son, who occupy key command positions in the National Guard, will be relieved and named to posts abroad before the plebiscite is conducted on February 25, 1979. (C)

(2) Should Somoza win, he would be obligated to form a "national government of reconciliation" and the FAO would be obliged to maintain a peaceful, democratic, and constructive opposition. (This is changed from the earlier drafts which required the FAO's participation in the government.) (C)

(3) Should Somoza lose, he would resign immediately and voluntarily absent himself from the country three days later, and remain abroad until at least May 1, 1981. (C)

(4) Following the election by Congress of an interim President, Congress would adopt certain constitutional changes by April 15, 1979, which would permit the election by Congress (FAO nominates and PLN approves) of a new President on May 1, 1979, who would serve with legislative and executive powers until May 1, 1981, with the help of a fifty-person "Committee of Notables," who in turn will be charged with drawing up a draft of a new constitution. A Cabinet will be named by the new President composed of one-third FAO, one-third PLN, and one-third independents chosen by mutual agreement between the FAO and PLN. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 10/78-12/78. Confidential. Inderfurth initialed the top of the page.

² See Document 169.

(5) A constituent assembly will be elected on November 1, 1980, (Note: Although it is not mentioned, presumably a new President will be popularly elected under the terms of the current constitution, to assume power on May 1, 1981, to replace the interim President.) (C)

The other major ideas of the NG proposal, i.e., the reorganization of the Supreme Court and the National Guard, the particulars and timetable of the carrying-out of a fair plebiscite under the control of an international authority—have not changed from earlier positions tabled by the NG. (C)

Initial reaction to the compromise plan has been negative on the government side.³ General McAuliffe and Ambassador Bowdler met with Somoza today and informed him that we have been disappointed in the government's unyielding position during the discussions of the past several days. It appears as if Somoza believes that by stalling long enough, he will be able to create sufficient divisions among the FAO to cause it to break off negotiations, and thus bear the onus for having failed to reach an agreement. (C)

I just learned that the meeting between Bowdler and McAuliffe and Somoza went very poorly. Somoza apparently stonewalled, and tried unsuccessfully to persuade McAuliffe that 30 years of a military alliance should not be repaid in this manner. McAuliffe and Bowdler are cabling their recommendations for tough action on our part. McAuliffe believes that half measures will not persuade Somoza anymore. They may be recommending withdrawal of the entire MILGROUP, the entire AID Mission, the Ambassador, and I would not be surprised if they included the furniture. We will have to have an SCC meeting to discuss this tomorrow. Christopher will probably raise it with you at your 6:45 a.m. meeting. (C)

³ See Document 171.

171. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff¹

Managua, December 21, 1978, 2145Z

6740. Department for Assistant Secretary Vaky and Deputy Secretary Christopher from Bowdler—SecDef for McGiffert from McAuliffe—JCS for General Jones from McAuliffe—This is a joint Bowdler-McAuliffe Message. Subj: Nicaragua Mediation No. 266: McAuliffe/Bowdler Talk with Somoza.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. General McAuliffe and Ambassador Bowdler met with President Somoza at 10:30 am December 21 at “Lacurva”, his home sitting on the hill above “the bunker.” No one else was present. The meeting lasted about an hour and twenty minutes.

3. Using the talking points contained in State 319955² Bowdler first reviewed our concern over the position taken by the PLN negotiators. Bowdler told him we failed to understand why they had adopted this attitude. We do not consider valid their argument about the FAO’s unwillingness to enter his government in the event of victory in the plebiscite. There are no historical precedents where an incumbent government compelled a reluctant opposition group to agree to a coalition government before a significant event like the plebiscite. This position would not find any international support. Bowdler asked him whether a victory under international supervision and a pledge by the FAO to remain as a peaceful, constructive opposition—as it had agreed to do—was not an adequate outcome for him and the PLN? He did not attempt an answer. Instead he shifted the conversation to specific aspects of the proposal arguing that these were interventionist, damaging to national dignity or “unequivocal” as between what was asked of the FAO and the PLN.

4. This led to a plowing of many of the same furrows covered in Bowdler’s two previous talks with Somoza, such as: Somoza as the central issue to the political crisis, lack of public confidence in the formulas advanced by the PLN for a plebiscite and constituent assembly, partial vs. total constitutional revision, role of the PLN and Guardia Nacional in working out the political solution, etc. He asked Bowdler

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2287. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, San José, Panama City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See Document 168.

the first two of the three questions raised by Pallais and Bowdler repeated the answers. He did not raise the third. The only hint he gave about the PLN reply to the NG proposal was that a detailed response would be prepared covering various aspects that the PLN could not accept, such as the internationally controlled elections and “radical” changes in government structure. It was clear that he was not thinking in terms of what the NG had requested, i.e., a clear cut answer of whether the PLN found the proposal acceptable in principle or not. (Subsequent to our talk with Somoza, Quintana called Jimenez to say that the PLN was drafting a counterproposal that would be ready “early in January.” Quintana asked whether the NG would come back to receive it. Jimenez told him that the NG would return if there were a disposition to accept the NG proposal and work out the details. Otherwise Quintana could send the counterproposal to the NG members through their Embassies. The NG planned to convene in Santo Domingo December 27 or 28 to draft its report to the MFM.)

5. After this exchange General McAuliffe entered the conversation, making the following points:

—His presence there was evidence of the concern of the JCS and DOD;

—The US military want peace and stability in Nicaragua and in Central America; instability and violence provide opportunities that Cuba and other inimical elements can exploit. (Somoza referred to the region as America’s “underbelly.”)

—We have had a long and effective military relationship with the Guardia Nacional and in particular with Somoza.

—However, the situation has changed, and we now foresee no durable peace in Nicaragua so long as Somoza remains;

—It is important that the GN continue to function to ensure tranquility in the country and to preclude opportunistic power-plays during the transition; however, it should be restructured to separate the police from military functions.

—The present mediation effort and proposed plebiscite offer the best means of ensuring a peaceful and fair solution and should be kept on track; further compromises on his part would be needed to do so.

6. President Somoza at this point undertook an extensive review of the position he has taken and the compromises he had made at the request of the United States since he first assumed positions of responsibility in the country. He repeated virtually all the arguments previously made to Ambassador Bowdler and to Ambassador Jorden. He acknowledged that the major issue was “Somoza” and that the current mediation team proposal was a clever way to remove the Somozas. He protested the unfairness of the positions taken by the

mediation team and backed by the opposition. He reiterated that the plebiscite was not in accordance with the Nicaraguan tradition, nor as fair as the American election process. (It was clear from his comments to Bowdler and McAuliffe that he found the international supervision and control of the plebiscite especially troublesome.) He said that he appreciated the concern of the JCS for the seriousness of the situation, and that he, too, was deadly serious. On the GN, he indicated that he had considered (or was considering—this was waffled) removing the two Somozas, by retiring Jose and having Tachito take up another profession. In brief, he took pains with General McAuliffe to defend his position.

7. Assessment: President Somoza turned the demarche around to a vigorous defense of his position and of the actions taken by his PLN negotiators. He obviously saw the meeting as a means of conveying his views to the U.S. military. He appeared confident that he has the upper hand, and controlled the situation. He does not appear convinced that the United States fully opposes him, although he acknowledges that some sectors do. He is embarked on a course of delaying the negotiating process until it fails, but will take pains to try to shift responsibility to the FAO and the NG or at least fudge the issue.

8. Recommendation: It was clear to us that we are not going to have any significant impact on Somoza until he understands that his failure to accept the NG proposal will result in concrete action by the USG against him. We do not believe the gradual, piecemeal approach will work. Consequently we recommend:

A) That Somoza be told by Saturday, December 23 (so that it may influence formulation of the GON response) that unless the present mediation team proposal is accepted at least in principle and the PLN negotiators instructed to cooperate in rapidly negotiating a final document with the FAO, the United States will take immediate action to withdraw from the country the U.S. military group, the AID Mission, ICA, and Peace Corps and the US Ambassador.

B) That, within the USG, provision be made so that, when a new government is formed in Nicaragua in the future the MilGp and other elements mentioned in (A) can be restored.

9. Ambassador Solaun has seen this message and concurs in the recommendation.

Solaun

172. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 22, 1978, 1645Z

6748. For Deputy Secretary Christopher and Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler—Caracas, Panama and San Jose for Ambassador—SouthCom for McAuliffe. Subject: Nicaragua Mediation No. 270: PLN Response to NG Proposal. Ref: Managua 6740.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. By separate message (Managua 6747)³ I am sending the PLN response to the NG proposal which was delivered to FonMin Jimenez during the night.

3. As you will see, it ostensibly leaves the door open to further negotiations but raises so many objections to the NG proposal as to constitute as negative. Hence the objective which Gen McAuliffe and I described in reftel (i.e. give Somoza such a jolt prior to the PLN reply so as to bring about acceptance of the NG proposal) is OBE. The indication that the PLN will in due course present a counter proposal is designed to escape shouldering full responsibility for failure of the talks. The fact remains that Somoza has decided not repeat not to accept the kind of an independent plebiscite which is required and the only type which the FAO—and we—can accept.

4. I do not think that this development alters the need to proceed rapidly with the steps recommended in reftel. In the face of the events of last September, the human rights situation here (despite the improvements won by the NG), and the [garble] to the NG proposal, I do not see how we can return to business as usual with Somoza. Our credibility with the moderate democratic forces in Nicaragua whom we have encouraged—and exposed—is at stake. The same might be said for our human rights policy in the hemisphere.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2285. Secret; Flash; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See Document 171.

³ In telegram 6747 from Managua, December 22, the Embassy included a translation of the PLN response to the NG's draft compromise plan noting seven objections: revisions to the voter registration system; voting by non-resident Nicaraguans; removal of all Somoza family members from the National Guard; oversight of the vote by an international authority; modification of the constitution following the outcome of the vote; the loss of authority for selecting symbols by the political organizations; and the reorganization of electoral districts. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78)

5. If the balance of democratic governments vs military regimes in the hemisphere were more favorable, we might consider OAS action to condemn and diplomatically isolate Somoza as the regional body did with Trujillo; but the balance is different today. So I think we should take the lead unilaterally and invite likeminded states to do the same. The NG will be meeting next Wednesday December 27 in Santo Domingo to draft its report. Whether this report, together with the IAHRC report,⁴ will establish sufficient basis to persuade enough OAS member governments to condemn the Somoza regime and call for its diplomatic isolation, I am not in a position to judge. I would hope so. But in the face of this uncertainty, I think our cause in Nicaragua and the hemisphere would be served if we were to take, while the rejection of the mediation is still fresh to clearly draw a cause-and-effect relationship, the measures recommended in ref tel in advance of any OAS conclave on Nicaragua.

Solaun

⁴ See Document 144.

173. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Acting Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, December 22, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua and the PRC Meeting

Bill Bowdler has just informed me by phone that the PLN has just submitted its response to the mediators' proposals. The response is basically a no on the proposal substance. There are, however, the cosmetic qualifiers which Somoza can claim leaves the door theoretically open.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX. Secret. Drafted by Vaky.

In Bill's opinion this changes the circumstances somewhat. His original recommendation was intended to prevent Somoza from taking a negative position on the proposals. Now, however, the question is can we use pressure to push him backward and take advantage of the theoretically open door.

I see the elements as follows: (A) It is clear that Somoza is not taking us seriously and it is important that we make it clear to him that he should. (B) Bill is inclined to think that the ballgame is already over; I do not think we should jump to that yet. I think the hill is steeper than it might have been but I think we must make a final last effort to reverse Somoza and reopen the process. (C) I think we should have Bowdler and Solaun (who will be in the U.S. on Christmas leave) and McAuliffe (whom we should call up) meet with the PRC group early next week to analyze and review the circumstances.

I recommend that we seek in the PRC today² the following: (A) Instructions to Bowdler to go into Somoza before he (Bowdler) leaves tomorrow and say that we are disturbed by Somoza's position, that we think he is not taking us seriously, and that if he persists in this position we will have to withdraw our customary support. Bowdler would then add that he has been called back to Washington, Solaun is being called back from Christmas leave and McAuliffe is being called back to Washington, all for consultation. The U.S. Government is considering the withdrawal of the military mission, and the substantial reduction of our diplomatic mission and other Agency's representation, and the withdrawal of our Ambassador. Much will depend upon Somoza's reactions. (B) The PRC should agree to meet Tuesday, December 26 with Bowdler, Solaun and McAuliffe.

² Reference is presumably to an SCC meeting. See Documents 174 and 175.

174. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 22, 1978

SUBJECT

Nicaragua SCC Meeting Today (S)

The McAuliffe/Bowdler meeting with Somoza yesterday was a fiasco. Apparently, Somoza has stopped taking our concerns seriously. The recommendations of Bowdler and McAuliffe, however, strike me as wrong. Pulling out our MIL Group, our AID mission, our Ambassador, Peace Corps, ICA., etc., is a bankrupt approach, which will not only deprive us of any leverage on Somoza, it could also put us in a position where we will be blamed by everyone for abandoning our responsibilities. (S)

I have just learned from Vaky that Somoza's party has responded to the Negotiator Group's (NG) proposal with a counter-proposal, which reflects Somoza's intention to draw out the process indefinitely. (S)

I believe that we need to demonstrate to Somoza our seriousness. We should proceed with carefully measured steps. I recommend that you seek agreement at the SCC meeting on the following:

(1). Analysis of the situation: That Somoza is trying to draw out the process, and if he succeeds, the opposition will either fragment or become more extreme. We need to try to bring the negotiations on a plebiscite to a head and to a conclusion by next week.

(2). To accomplish that objective, Bowdler should be instructed to go in to see Somoza Saturday morning,² and inform him that the United States Government is very concerned with his dilatory tactics, and that he, Ambassador Solaun, and General McAuliffe have all been recalled to Washington for consultations early next week. Bowdler should inform Somoza that the United States Government will be exploring the option of withdrawing some or all of our MIL Group, AID mission, Peace Corps, and reducing our Embassy staff. We would hope that Somoza will adopt a more flexible approach which will permit him

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/21-22/78. Secret.

² December 23.

and the opposition to reach agreement early next week on a plebiscite and the nature of a government that will be following such a plebiscite. (S)³

³ Brzezinski wrote in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph: "Agree. ZB."

175. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, December 22, 1978

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 22 December 1978

PARTICIPANTS

Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, Brandon Grove, State Department; David Aaron, Robert Pastor, NSC; Robert Bowie, [*name not declassified*], CIA; William Smith, JCS; David McGiffert, Defense; three others unknown to me

1. Christopher summarized the current status of the US-sponsored mediation effort in Nicaragua as follows: the mediators tabled a proposal for a national plebiscite on whether Somoza should leave office and on the nature of the succeeding transition government if he should either win or lose the plebiscite. The Broad Opposition Front (FAO) agreed to negotiate directly with President Somoza's representatives providing three steps were taken to establish an atmosphere conducive to negotiation, i.e. lifting the state of siege to restore constitutional guarantees, granting an amnesty for political prisoners, and revision of the radio-TV censorship code. With this done, direct talks began last week, but quickly reached an impasse on the question of compulsory participation by the FAO in the government if Somoza should win the plebiscite. The mediators drafted a revised overall proposal, which the FAO accepted, but to which Somoza's side raised numerous objections.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; Sensitive. No drafting information appears on the memorandum, which was drafted on December 23. No official record of this mini-SCC meeting was found. In a December 22 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor summarized the results of the meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/21–22/78)

2. Ambassador Bowdler, the US mediator, believes that Somoza's response is a tacit rejection of the proposal and the concept of a plebiscite on his tenure. Bowdler, according to Vaky, believes Somoza has fought a delaying action in the talks and now believes he has won through attrition in the FAO.

3. Christopher recommended that Bowdler be instructed that before he leaves Nicaragua on 23 December he is to tell Somoza that the US believes he has been unreasonable and dilatory, and if he is not more forthcoming after Xmas, the US will be considering certain actions to disassociate itself from his government. Christopher believed that the decision on what those actions will be can wait until another SCC meeting on 26 December, which could be attended by Ambassadors Bowdler and Solaun and perhaps General McAuliffe of Southcom.

4. Vaky explained that Bowdler believes the mediation is lost. Bowdler is to join his colleagues in the Dominican Republic on 27 and 28 December to draft their report on the mediation to the MFM of the OAS. Christopher questioned whether the report should be delayed, lest it signal finality, but it was decided to let it go forward as a status report.

5. Christopher was not convinced that the mediation effort was lost. Aaron recommended that before leaving, Bowdler advise Somoza that the US believes he has employed dilatory tactics; that Bowdler is returning to the US for consultation on our options, which will include withdrawing the Milgroup, AID mission, Peace Corps, ICA, and the Ambassador. The US wants a clear answer by a particular deadline on whether Somoza is prepared to work out the details of a plebiscite on the issue of his continuation in office. This recommendation was adopted.

6. A representative from State explained in detail the problem with Congress, and with particular Congressmen, on the suspension of AID disbursements. The Nicaraguan government has met all its obligations, but many US contractors will be in dire straits unless US funds are released.

7. Returning to the question of Somoza's response to the mediators' proposal, [name not declassified] pointed out that it would be exceedingly difficult to extract a clear yes or no from Somoza; his strategy is to delay and to avoid shouldering the blame for the collapse of the mediation. He will continue to focus on those points where the opposition's case is weakest in order to divide them and to give his own case the best public image. Aaron responded that the US must demand of Somoza a clear acceptance or rejection in principle of the mediators' proposal.

8. McGiffert suggested that an update of the September IIM on Nicaragua would be useful to have before the 26 December SCC meeting, particularly the judgment that if Somoza stays in office, a down-

ward spiral of violence is likely over time, with increasing polarization leading eventually to the ascendancy of the radical left or right. There was no time available to discuss precise terms of reference, but Bowie said this could be done.

9. Vaky said the US could not at this point go back to “business as usual” with Somoza, particularly in view of the Carter administration’s policies on human rights and the fact that the mediation had exposed the moderates to possible reprisals.

10. No terms of reference for the 26 December SCC meeting were spelled out, but it was apparent that Ambassadors Bowdler and Solaun and General McAuliffe would be present to brief the SCC on their efforts and to make recommendations on where the US goes from here. Likely to be considered are the specific pressures to be employed to induce Somoza to negotiate in good faith the plebiscite and transition, or if this is deemed unworkable, a scenario for disassociation with Somoza’s government.

176. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 23, 1978, 2035Z

6775. Mil addee handle as Specat Exclusive. For Christopher and Vaky from Bowdler. Caracas, Panama, San Jose, US SouthCom for Ambassadors and General McAuliffe only. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 272: Meeting with Somoza.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. I have just come back from two-hour and 40 minute conversation with Somoza during which he declined to make any commitment to accept the Negotiating Group proposal. He claimed that he personally

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78. Secret; Flash; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Panama City, San José, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 322490 to Managua, December 23, the Department informed Bowdler of the result of the December 22 mini-SCC meeting (see Document 175) and instructed him meet with Somoza and deliver talking points that described the U.S. Government’s “view of the situation” in Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78)

thought it was a workable plan but that there was strong opposition to it in the ranks of the Liberal Party. The Guardia Nacional had misgivings about the plan but the main resistance was from the PLN which saw itself threatened. I asked him specifically what the difficulty was since the NG had purposely built into the proposal active participation of the Liberal Party throughout the entire process. Somoza said that there were two basic problems. One was what he described as the question of "sovereignty." By this he was referring to the role of the international authority in organizing, controlling, and supervising the plebiscite. The second had to do with "assurances" of continuing US support of Nicaragua publicly stated regardless of the outcome of the plebiscite. He also referred in a minor key to the question to be posed in the plebiscite and the "cumbersome" procedures for moving from his resignation to the establishment of the provisional government.

3. I reviewed the NG proposal at great length to meet the arguments that he had raised. I emphasized that while the international authority would have the role which he described, he should keep in mind three factors: (a) this was a very special procedure to deal with a very special situation and not an electoral plan that would be built into the Nicaraguan electoral code; (b) Nicaraguans of both sides would participate in the plebiscite supervision process in the mesas electorales up through the vote count at the national level, and (c) the proposal was not an imposed solution but one which Nicaraguans represented by the FAO and by the PLN would agree to in advance. Somoza acknowledged these points and said perhaps the undesirable appearances could be taken care of by "cosmetic changes." I tried to get him to define what he meant by "cosmetics" but I could not get him to be specific. I told him that this is an aspect which the NG could look at provided what he had in mind by "cosmetic change" did not repeat not affect the fundamentals of the plebiscite as contemplated in the NG proposal.

4. On the question of "assurances" I also tried to get him to be specific. He claimed that the PLN leaders were all scared of how the working out of the plan would affect their future. To be frank, he went on, they fear a US double cross. To guard against this they would like to have a specific USG public statement indicating that the United States would continue its traditional friendship and economic support regardless of how the plebiscite came out. I reminded Somoza of what I had told Luis Pallais when he had raised this question with me. Somoza said that that response was not enough. I told him that this is a matter I was prepared to take up in Washington if he were to agree in principle to the NG proposal and promptly negotiate its final terms with the FAO. He claimed that he was unable to give me that commitment without further consultations with his cabinet and party leaders.

5. I asked Somoza by when he could complete this consultation and give us the response requested in the demarche. He replied that he would have it by Dec 26 and he would like for me to return to discuss it with him. In saying this, he noted that the PLN was on the public record as saying that it was going to prepare a counter proposal for the NG. I reminded him that the USG very strongly believes that the time has passed for counter proposals and delaying tactics. I told him that if what he had in mind by way of a response was only the PLN counter proposal, I doubted the utility of my returning to Managua. Again, without making a specific commitment to accept the NG proposal, he urged that I return to have a private conversation with him after his consultations. I agreed to do this, leaving the day vague as to whether it would be the 26th or the 27th.

6. Comment: I was not reassured by Somoza's unwillingness to accept the plan in principle. On several occasions he spoke favorably of the proposal's workability, even if—as he put it—it represents a clever scheme to get rid of the Somozas. Despite my misgivings I recommend that I be allowed to follow through with Somoza's request to return to Managua to speak to him. I suggest that we go ahead with the programmed PRC meeting on Dec 26 in order to review the situation in depth and consider the options that we have. I can catch the 10 p.m. Eastern flight to Miami that night and take the early Lanica flight the following morning which will put me in Managua by 10:15 a.m. Arrangements might be made for me to see him immediately and either fly back to Washington for further consultations that evening or catch the Iberia flight to Santo Domingo. From there I can report back to the Department what Somoza had to say and at the same time follow through with my commitment to work with my NG colleagues in preparing our status report.

7. I will be departing Managua tonight on the Lanica flight going straight to Miami where I will overnight at the airport hotel continue to Washington on first available flight Sunday morning.³ On arrival in Washington I will be in touch with Pete Vaky to see how the Department wants me to handle the steps described in the previous paragraph.

Tucker

³ December 24.

177. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 26, 1978

SUBJECT

PRC Meeting on Nicaragua—Today at 3 P.M.

The main purposes of the meeting this afternoon are: (1) to hear Bowdler's report on the status of the negotiations on the plebiscite; and (2) to decide on ways to bring the negotiations on the plebiscite and on the transitional government to a conclusion by the end of this week. (S)

Somoza has managed to string out the negotiations, but whenever Bowdler was instructed to make a strong demarche on a particular issue, Somoza backed off. That is the way I interpret Somoza's reaction to the latest demarche. (Tab A),² he recognizes that we are serious, and I believe that when Bowdler returns tomorrow, Somoza will make some concessions, and perhaps make a counter-proposal. This won't be enough, however, to conclude an agreement. (S)

I should point out that Bowdler thinks we have come to the end of the line, and that Somoza will stonewall him when he returns. I respect Bill's judgment, but on this question—are we at the end of the line? Will Somoza accept a plebiscite?—I disagree with him. Provided we are firm and press Somoza by giving Bowdler sufficient bargaining room, I believe we can get Somoza to accept a plebiscite and the Negotiating Group (NG)'s proposal for a transition government. (S)

But clearly we are running out of time, and for three reasons, this PRC meeting must find a way to expedite the process so that we can keep to the NG's timetable of beginning the plebiscite on January 5. First, with Guadeloupe,³ the Middle East, China, etc., coming up, we cannot expect to continually engage your attention or that of the President or the Secretary's. We have to make a package of decisions today. Second, members of the FAO are increasing their contacts with the Sandinistas, at least in part because they are losing faith in the mediation

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78. Secret. Pastor did not initial the memorandum.

² Not attached. See Document 176.

³ Carter travelled to Guadeloupe, France, January 4–9, 1979, to meet informally with French President Giscard d'Estaing, German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and British Prime Minister James Callaghan.

effort. Third, we cannot let Somoza jerk us back and forth on each and every item on the NG proposal. We have to give Bowdler some arrows to keep in his quiver (or to use, if necessary) and some guidance on where he should be tough and where he can negotiate. (S)

These are the kind of instructions which I hope will emerge from the PRC meeting:

1. *Scenario*. After full consultations in Washington, Bowdler should see Somoza tomorrow with the purpose of trying to get Somoza's agreement in principle on the plebiscite and the NG proposal (Tab B).⁴ If successful, Somoza and the FAO would sign the Acta-Compromiso (compromise plan) before Friday,⁵ and then the mediators would submit a report to the O.A.S. on January 2, summarizing their efforts and making recommendations for O.A.S. supervision of the plebiscite. (S)

2. *Guidance on Principal Issues*. Somoza's party (PLN) had seven objections (Tab C)⁶ to the NG proposal; I believe the PRC should focus on two of them: (1) On the issue of whether the plebiscite should be supervised by Nicaragua or by an international authority (the O.A.S.), we have to be very tough on insisting that it be international. (2) The NG has accepted the FAO's demand that Somoza's half-brother and his son be dismissed from the National Guard and sent abroad during the plebiscite (January 5–February 28, 1979), and if Somoza loses the plebiscite, he will "voluntarily depart" from Nicaragua. It seems to me to be fair and important to try to get Somoza's son and half-brother out of the Guard during the plebiscite period, but I don't see how we can insist that they should be exiled when we have asked Somoza to let opposition exiles back in the country. Bowdler should be told to be soft on this issue. (S)

3. *Arrows for His Quiver*. If Somoza is unreasonable in his conversation with Bowdler tomorrow, Bowdler needs to be able to tell Somoza that the President regrets Somoza's lack of faith in the plebiscite proposal, and he has been instructed to inform Somoza of the President's intention to withdraw half of the MIL group and to reduce the AID mission and U.S. Embassy personnel. He should also tell Somoza that he will fly from Managua to Santo Domingo to prepare a report with his NG colleagues which will be submitted to the O.A.S. In the light of the O.A.S. debate on this report and on the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the USG will re-evaluate our entire relationship with Somoza. (S)

⁴ Not attached. In telegram 6687 from Managua, December 20, the Embassy sent for an English-language translation of the draft compromise agreement. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780527–1200)

⁵ December 29.

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 172.

4. *Additional Items*. The PRC should also decide to be a little more explicit with the Israelis on our concerns about arms sales. (S)

David requested an up-date from the C.I.A., and that is at Tab D. (S)

Tab D

Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁷

Washington, December 24, 1978

SUBJECT

Review of Judgments from IIM 78-1002IC, 15 September 1978, *Situation in Nicaragua* [classification not declassified]

1. President Somoza appears more confident of his ability to retain power than at any time in recent months. His dilatory tactics in the mediation—making concessions in order to buy time and to challenge his opponents to follow suit—have been reasonably successful. Because the opposition has neither the cohesive strength nor the flexibility of Somoza's power structure, continued concessions over time will likely further splinter the Broad Opposition Front (FAO). Consequently, he will not reject outright the mediators' general proposals, for this would place on him the onus of destroying the mediation. [classification and handling restriction not declassified]

2. As long as the mediation continues, Somoza appears likely to strengthen his position further. He has increased the size of the National Guard from 8,200 to roughly 10,000, an effective increase in combat forces of more than 30 percent. These forces are now well armed and facing no critical munitions shortages, save perhaps field rations. Guard loyalty to Somoza still appears solid. He evidently believes that only mass civil uprisings, direct foreign intervention, or guerrilla neutralization of his air power—none of which seems likely at the moment—would pose a critical military threat to his government. [classification and handling restriction not declassified]

3. Somoza's confidence is also likely bolstered by his perceptions that: the Broad Opposition Front is headed for collapse; international pressures from Venezuela, Panama, and Costa Rica have lessened; and completion of the coffee and cotton harvests in a few months will ease

⁷ Secret; [handling restriction not declassified]. Prepared in the Latin American Division of the Office of Regional and Political Analysis.

Nicaragua's financial crisis. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

4. The Sandinista guerrillas are well armed and number roughly 2,000. They have not, however, staged the long expected all-out offensive, and currently they seem inclined to restrict their activities to hit and run strikes. The reasons for this are: continuing factionalism, counsel from such foreign backers as Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Perez, the lure of the recently granted amnesty, the military imbalance in favor of the Guard, and, for some, the hope that the mediation and plebiscite might remove Somoza peacefully. [*classification and handling restrictions not declassified*]

5. Over the longer term, however, if the mediation effort fails, some of these factors will change. The current low level of violence and polarization is due to guerrilla inactivity and the anticipation of peaceful change through a plebiscite, not resolution of the fundamental issues. Collapse of the hope for peaceful change—and presuming the US disassociates itself from the Somoza government will serve to galvanize anti-Somoza efforts inside Nicaragua as well as abroad. This would not remove all the causes of factionalism within the FSLN, but it would boost public support for the guerrillas as they would increasingly be seen as the only means to oust Somoza. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

6. Foreign support for the guerrillas and for the anti-Somoza movement in general would likely increase. Regardless of how technically sound Somoza's case might be on the question of whose intransigence killed the mediation, international opinion will simply become more polarized, with the bulk of it against Somoza. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

7. Under these circumstances, Panama's General Torrijos would probably step up the level of arms support to the FSLN, and, particularly if mass civil war were to ensue, might well go beyond that. Venezuelan President Perez has retreated from his previous policy of providing arms to the guerrillas. Because he would like desperately to see Somoza ousted before his own term ends in March, however, his greater involvement cannot be ruled out. Costa Rica would probably continue to provide the guerrillas their critical sanctuary as well as more concrete forms of support. Cuban backing has been cautious but increasing, and as the level of violence grew, Castro would be tempted to up the ante. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

8. All of this would exacerbate polarization, and while Somoza might be able to retain power through draconian measures, the only two choices would be a police state or a downward spiral of violence ending in the ascendancy of the radical left. There are no assurances, on the other hand, that should Somoza depart peacefully, the relatively

untested opposition would be able to govern effectively enough to win the confidence of the Guard, while at the same time thwarting encroachment from the radical left. But the radical outcome seems less certain if the Somoza dynasty is dismantled systematically and with a measure of control than if it is put to the violent test in which only one extreme can prevail. *[classification and handling restriction not declassified]*

178. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, December 26, 1978

SUBJECT

United States Policy to Nicaragua

Cy chaired a PRC meeting to hear Ambassador Bowdler's report on the state of the mediation effort, and to formulate some recommendations on next steps.² (S)

Last Saturday,³ Bowdler met with Somoza to underline the seriousness with which we view the mediation effort and our great disappointment with his response to the mediators' proposal.⁴ Bowdler told Somoza that he had been recalled to Washington for consultations and to consider the following options because Somoza's response was unsatisfactory: withdrawal of the US Milgroup, reduction of the U.S. AID mission, and reduction of our diplomatic mission. Informed of this, Somoza asked Bowdler for another meeting, and Bill plans to meet with him at 10:30 A.M. tomorrow. (S)

The PRC believes that we have reached a critical stage in the mediation. We question Somoza's seriousness in wanting a plebiscite. We believe that he has been stalling and our intelligence confirms this. We suspect that he may respond with a counter-proposal tomorrow

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 25, Meetings—PRC 84: 12/26/1978. Secret. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig— Option 1 looks better as first move. J." A notation on another copy of the memorandum indicates that it was sent via LDX to the President at Camp David on December 17. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78)

² No minutes for this meeting were found.

³ December 23.

⁴ See Document 176.

to slow the process even more. We have already postponed the beginning date of the plebiscite till January 5; if we postpone it again, the credibility of the mediation will be seriously jeopardized. The other two mediators are thinking of abandoning the effort, and our intelligence suggests that the opposition has begun private talks with the Sandinistas. We believe the time has arrived for us to demonstrate our seriousness with Somoza. (S)

The PRC agreed that Bowdler would meet with Somoza to reiterate our seriousness, and to hear Somoza's response. Our objective is to try to secure his agreement in principle to a plebiscite and a transition government based on the mediators' proposal, with the understanding that the details will be negotiated. If Somoza's response is not satisfactory, Bowdler would tell him that he intends to report to Washington, and to proceed to Santo Domingo to consult with his colleagues and write their report to the O.A.S. This report will indicate clearly Somoza's responsibility in rejecting the plebiscite and the mediators' good offices. (S)

In addition, Bowdler would inform Somoza that the U.S. Government is reviewing the options he mentioned on Saturday and will make a decision based on his conversation with Somoza, Bowdler's recommendations and the mediators' report. (S)

The PRC also discussed the three options we should consider if Somoza's answer is unsatisfactory:

Option 1. Phased Withdrawal

—Withdraw the Milgroup. (General McAuliffe of SOUTHCOM supports this as does Cy, Harold Brown and the JCS.) The DAO would stay.

- Reduce our AID mission substantially.⁵
- Withdraw Peace Corps for security reasons.
- Reduce our Embassy staff somewhat. (S)

Option 2. Total Approach

—Same as Option 1 only all of AID mission would be withdrawn, our Embassy staff would be reduced significantly and our Ambassador would be recalled. (S)

Option 3. Total Plus

—Same as Option 2 only all of our AID loans would be phased out. (S)

⁵ An unknown hand crossed out the phrase "Reduce our AID" and underlined the point.

The presumption is that if option #1 does not result in obtaining Somoza's cooperation after an appropriate interval—a week or so—we would then move to Option #2, i.e., withdraw the rest of our AID mission, recall our Ambassador, (and phase out AID). (S)

These options represent the conclusion of the PRC principals that Somoza will only take the plebiscite proposal seriously if we are prepared to make some hard decisions. Cy favors option #2. The other PRC members recognized the necessity of selecting one of the options, but did not indicate their preferences. I favor option #1. (S)

Cy and I believe that you don't have to make a decision until we have received Bowdler's report on his conversation with Somoza tomorrow.⁶ When we do, we will speak to you. (S)

⁶ See Document 179.

179. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, December 27, 1978, 1813Z

6804. For Christopher and Vaky from Ambassador Bowdler. Caracas, Panama, San Jose for Ambassadors only. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 273: Meeting with Somoza.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. I saw Somoza at the bunker immediately after arriving in Managua. The session lasted 30 minutes. No one else was present.

2. He opened the conversation by asking me what I had brought from Washington. I told him that there was keen disappointment and concern with his failure to accept the NG proposal in principle. I then asked him what he had for me in the light of our conversation last Saturday.² He handed me the PLN counterproposal.

3. After reading through the lengthy document (septel), I commented that there was a fundamental change in who was going to run

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187-2283. Secret; Flash; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² December 23.

the plebiscite.³ I noted that the OAS role had been relegated to one of observer rather than controller. He said that “sovereignty” made it impossible to accept what the NG proposed. I also pointed out the several aspects of the conditions prescribed by the NG had been left out to which he made no comment.

4. At this point I went through the speaking points prepared in Washington yesterday, at the end of which I asked him whether this proposal was the bottom line.⁴ He indicated that it was. I commented that I doubted that this afforded a solution to the Nicaraguan problem. As I left I told him that I would be in Managua until 1 p.m. and thereafter in the Dominican Republic for 2 or 3 days in case he wished to get in touch with me.

5. Comment: As we had anticipated the PLN counterproposal is a very cleverly drafted document which incorporates to a considerable degree the concepts of the NG proposal and on the face of it looks very reasonable. The way the OAS has been built into the supervision and certification of the process is particularly skillful.

6. The principal difficulty I see is the psychological one involving FAO acceptance and voter confidence in the process. While a special electoral authority would be established for the plebiscite, it is a national authority. Registration of all voters is contemplated in advance of the plebiscite which will greatly inhibit the willingness of fearful or suspicious voters to take part. The question to be put to the voter may be comprehensible to the politically sophisticated voter but not the majority of illiterate voters. In other words, while the process outlined is logical and on the face of it reasonable to other governments and to the American public, in the Nicaraguan context it will be very difficult to sell to the FAO and does not draw a sharp enough distinction between elections of the past and this plebiscite to give the voter the impression that this “consulta popular” is indeed a break with the past.

³ In telegram 6812 from Managua, December 27, the Embassy included a translation of the December 26 PLN counterproposal, which Bowdler had received that morning. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780535–0924) In a December 28 briefing memorandum to Vance, Vaky reported: “I have been informed by one of my Nicaraguan sources resident in the United States (and a very reliable and knowledgeable one) that Somoza’s counterproposal for a plebiscite was written with the help of Congressman Murphy. According to the source, what Congressman Murphy would like to see happen is string out the negotiations until the U.S. Congress reconvenes and then use the Panama Treaty implementation legislation to frustrate any actions against Somoza by the USG.” (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, August–September)

⁴ Possible reference to a document prepared in ARA entitled “Statement to Somoza in the Event that his Response is not Satisfactory,” which Vaky sent via LDX to Pastor on December 26. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78)

7. Another significant difference is in the selection of the provisional President. We had contemplated a President chosen from the Congress for a two-month period to do the partial revision of the Constitution, often which a President chosen by the FAO, with PLN concurrence, would govern for the remainder of the term. The PLN counterproposal would have only one President chosen from the present Congress to govern during the entire period.

8. My belief that Somoza is drafting this document was looking to debates in the OAS, and the US Congress, and with the American public at large was confirmed by two statements: (a) his comment that the US quarrel with Nicaragua comes from "an administration" and not from the American public; and (b) his comment that he doubted that the MFM would support measures infringing upon the sovereignty of a member state.

9. The PLN counter proposal will be a very difficult document to deal with. Since I am drafting this in such haste, I have not had the time to think through all of the implications. When I arrive in Miami this afternoon I will comment further to Pete Vaky.

Tucker

180. Telegram From the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State and the White House¹

Santo Domingo, December 29, 1978, 0159Z

7272. NSC for Pastor. Department for Secretary Vance and Vaky. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation 276: Further Thoughts on PLN Counterproposal. Ref: Managua 6804.²

1. (Secret-Entire Message)

2. In the message I sent from Managua during the short interval between seeing Somoza and emplaning for Miami (reftel), I summarized the difficulties I saw in the PLN counterproposal, both with respect to its acceptability as a viable solution and the problems it poses for us in the OAS and with U.S. public opinion. The purpose of

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780537-0731. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Managua, San José, Panama City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See Document 179.

this message is to elaborate these points and suggest where we go from here on the mediation.

3. On the first point of acceptability, the document needs to be analyzed not only for what it says, but also the context in which it was prepared and how it will be perceived from a Nicaraguan standpoint. To someone not familiar with the Nicaraguan milieu, the counterproposal is a reasonable document which has the PLN and FAO working jointly in management of the plebiscite with a strong OAS input to monitor and verify different aspects of the process. The procedures look good and the safeguards adequate. What is not evident to the outsider is how 44 years of Somoza monopoly of power transforms what to all appearances seems fair and reasonable into a decided PLN advantage. Practical politicians will understand this aspect. Four decades of Somoza dictatorship have left the opposition, including the traditional conservative party, divided, leaderless and ineffective as political organizations. This gives the government and its political instrument—the PLN—a great advantage in organizing for a political contest both with respect to above-board operations (e.g. registration of voters) and electoral slight-of-hand (e.g. chain voting). Another significant aspect are public perceptions of the political process resulting from 44 years of Somoza rule. During this period, the Somozas have resorted to so many constitutional and electoral tricks that any process in which they or their surrogates are involved is automatically suspect. The history of pacts, deals and understandings between opposition leaders and one or another of the Somozas have invariably led to the Somozas coming out on top, to the embarrassment and discredit of the opposition which entered the trap, the track record on this score has been so dismal that there is an acute psychosis among the opposition about entering into any kind of venture with Somocismo, no matter how noble the cause.

4. The content of the PLN counterproposal, looked at through the prism of those realities and perceptions, has four major drawbacks from the standpoint of the opposition:

A) The joint PLN–FAO electoral authority: this is seen by the opposition, as reflected in Robelo's comments to me this morning (Santo Domingo 7270),³ as a dangerous adventure in which the FAO shares the responsibility of a co-participant without a corresponding ability for making an input into management of the plebiscite process.

³ In telegram 7270 from Santo Domingo, December 29, Bowdler reported that Robelo had read the PLN counterproposal and "observed that the FAO could not accept a plebiscite under the conditions proposed by Somoza." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780537–0670)

B) The question to be put to the voter: The over-riding issue in the crisis which envelopes Nicaragua is the continuation of the Somoza dynasty in power, heightened by the fear—if not the fact—that Somoza is grooming his son in the National Guard to continue the family's control. The question presented in the PLN counterproposal is cast in terms of Somoza's constitutional period and the holding of a constituent assembly, concepts which are difficult to understand for the average unsophisticated voter. Phrasing the question in this manner tends to confuse the basic issue, complicate the campaign effort, and reduce the inclination of the voter to go to the polls.

C) The prior registration of voters: requiring prior registration of voters favors the party with the organization to mobilize those who are eligible. The GON-PLN has such an organization based on the bureaucracy and the party cadre. The FAO has no such organization and is not in a position to develop such an apparatus on short notice. Registration also works against the FAO in a subtle psychological way. It inhibits the campesino from voting because past experience has taught him that registration is one of the devices used by Somocismo to know who voted and how. The fear of reprisal is a strong disincentive to vote. The fact that the PLN counter-proposal drops the NG condition about recall to Managua of "Jueces de Mesta" on voting day reinforces the belief that the plebiscite will follow past patterns.

D) The organization of voting districts: the PLN counterproposal provides for the present Cantonal system (some 2300 Cantons) to serve as the basis for establishing polling places. This again follows the old electoral pattern which in rural areas is associated with manipulation of the vote. It too will work to the detriment of FAO in discouraging rural voters.

5. Mindful of the history of electoral fraud under Somoza and the negative attitudes this has engendered among the electorate toward the political process, the NG in its plan sought to neutralize the practical and psychological advantages which adherence to previous electoral patterns would give Somoza. We regarded it as basic to have a plebiscite which inspired voter confidence by breaking with past procedures. This is the rationale for proposing: PLN and FAO acceptance of international supervision and control; changing the pattern of voting districts; no prior registration but tight control through use of effective marking techniques; complete control of ballot printing, distribution and counting; and a simple, easily understood question which summed up the central issue in Nicaragua's crisis. The introduction of this special process to deal with a special situation is what Somoza found unacceptable because he fears that he would lose in such an open, free system.

6. In assessing the PLN document, the Department should also keep in mind the tactics employed by the PLN negotiators at Somoza's

instructions. It will be remembered that they did not play a constructive role. They could well have advanced some of the ideas contained in their counterproposal as a positive contribution to the discussion of our Dec. 2 plan, but they did not. Instead they were dilatory and obstructive. Only after the NG refused to permit these tactics and they found themselves on the defensive as a result of the NG plan and the FAO acceptance, did they come forward with their proposals.

7. With respect to how we should handle the PLN counter-proposal, I have these suggestions:

A) From Robelo's reaction this morning and the views expressed to Embassy Managua by his two FAO/PC colleagues, I do not believe it fruitful to reopen the talks. The gulf between the FAO and Somoza's position is too wide. Further efforts to bridge it at this stage works more to the advantage of Somoza than the FAO. Indeed, there is the danger that if we attempted to push the FAO into accepting major elements of the PLN plan, it could lead to the break up of the FAO which would be to Somoza's advantage and would put FAO's collapse at our doorstep.

B) Instead, I think it would be better for the NG to answer the PLN, with a communication that would also be made public, that it has carefully studied the counterproposal and finds that it would not create "the conditions necessary for a peaceful solution" as contemplated in the OAS Resolution of September 23.⁴ We would have to explain non-polemically why this is so in the historical psychological context described in earlier paragraphs of this message. The NG communication would also restate the belief that its plan is fair and workable and regret that the PLN was not able to accept it in principle as the FAO had done.

C) The NG would next proceed to prepare a status report to the MFM, explaining its efforts over the past three months, noting the lack of success to date, and leaving the door open to assist the parties whenever the two of them believe it would be useful.

D) The MFM might then meet to receive the IAHRC report and the NG report. This would afford individual states an opportunity to address the problem of violation of human rights in Nicaragua. I assume it is not in the cards to obtain the necessary votes for a condemnation of the GON, but there might be enough for a collective expression of concern. This translates into pressure on Somoza. On the NG report, the MFM might note with regret that the efforts at conciliation have not been successful and echo the NG's availability to assist the parties when they so request.

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 107.

E) The specific steps discussed in the PRC meeting last Tuesday could then follow.⁵ Care would be taken to make clear that the actions are protective measures to safeguard the welfare of U.S. official personnel who might be caught up in the strife between the FSLN and Somoza. This would sidestep responsibility for the impasse in the mediation, but at the same time convey a clear message to Somoza and help maintain our credibility with the moderate opposition to Somoza in Nicaragua.

Yost

⁵ See Document 178 and footnote 2 thereto.

181. Telegram From the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State¹

Santo Domingo, December 30, 1978, 1437Z

7316. Department for Secretary Vance and Vaky. NSC for Pastor. From Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 278—NG Discussions on Reply to PLN Counterproposal.

1. (S-Full text)

2. My NG colleagues and I yesterday discussed the PLN counterproposal at length and prepared a response both to it and the PLN's preceding letter to the NG (Managua 6747 and 6805).² Jimenez and Obiols, who had already received the text and discussed it before my arrival, took the position that the counter proposal did not rpt not offer an acceptable basis for a peaceful solution. They found the same faults listed in my analysis (Santo Domingo 7272).³ They considered it a tactical move (1) to prolong the negotiations without any real interest

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780540-0005. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Caracas, Managua, San José, Panama City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See footnote 3, Document 172. In telegram 6805 from Managua, December 27, the Embassy included the Spanish-language text of the December 26 PLN counterproposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780535-0675)

³ See Document 180.

to find a solution and (2) to create a situation in which the FAO would have to reject the counter proposal or further fragment by renewing talks on a proposal already accepted by them. My colleagues were also highly suspicious and resentful that the PLN should now seem to present itself as reasonable after deliberately frustrating the substantive talks during the critical week before Christmas.

3. Their attitude has been further complicated by Somoza's visit to Guatemala to speak with President Lucas.⁴ Obiols told us that Somoza had complained about his role in the negotiations and the bias of the NG toward the FAO. Obiols observed that fortunately his personal relations with President Lucas are such that these accusations made no difference. But as a result of them, his president had instructed him to engage in no further direct talks with the PLN unless they first accepted the NG plan in principle. In response to my question whether President Lucas had found any flexibility in Somoza's attitude toward remaining in power, Obiols replied that, on the contrary, Lucas had found him determined to continue.

4. Before starting to draft our reply we discussed the content and method of delivery. On content my two colleagues, their machismo aroused, were determined to answer the insinuated and explicit criticism of the NG contained in the PLN letter of December 21.⁵ My argument that we should avoid polemics and concentrate on the substance of the counterproposal fell on deaf ears. With respect to the counterproposal, Jimenez and Obiols were equally firm in insisting that our reply must state that the PLN alternative is not an acceptable basis for a solution and once more invite Somoza to accept the NG plan. In the discussion of this point, they expressed again their doubt that Somoza had any intent of accepting any plebiscite process that did not provide a strong prospect, if not certainty, of his winning. On the basis of this assumption, reinforced by President Lucas' assessment of Somoza's intention, they saw no reason to be drawn into further negotiation with the wily Somoza which would allow him to gain time, escape responsibility for failure of the negotiations and in all probability lead to the collapse of the FAO. My argument that on the basis of the Bodan-Pallais conversations with Embassy Managua, we might find significant areas of flexibility in the PLN position and thereby justify another effort to bridge the gap did not convince them. They argued that the NG plan is fair, workable and defensible. It places the NG role

⁴ In telegram 6857 from Managua, December 30, the Embassy reported that Pallais had noted that Somoza had travelled to Guatemala and met with the Presidents of Guatemala and El Salvador on December 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780540-0131)

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 184.

in Nicaragua on a high plane and leaves the FAO virtually intact with the advantage of having accepted the NG proposal. Their fear is that getting drawn into further negotiations with Somoza on the basis of the unacceptable counterproposal can bring no advantages to the NG or the FAO and runs the serious risk of eroding the advantageous position they now enjoy. Behind this line of argument there emerged for the first time significant domestic considerations. President Lucas has enough problems with the left without aggravating his situation by contributing to the collapse of the FAO. If Somoza is not going to accept anyway, it is better for Lucas to show that he supported a fair settlement accepted by the FAO. Jimenez commented that his role in the mediation had caused strains in the PRD for President Guzman as well as some press criticism. He mentioned Pena Gomez and Jorge Blanco as being highly supportive of the opposition to Somoza and unsympathetic to his role as a mediator. If the NG could not overcome Somoza's resistance to a fair plebiscite, he too preferred to rest the mediation on the present favorable stand than to let Somoza gain some advantage that could be criticized at home.

5. On the method of delivery I tried, after talking with Pete Vaky, to get my two colleagues to join me in going to Managua on Wednesday⁶ to deliver our reply and make a last effort to persuade Somoza to negotiate on the basis of the NG plan. Obiols said categorically he would not go unless Somoza accepted our proposals in principle in advance so that all that would remain is to make the necessary adjustments and sign the document. Jimenez at first agreed to go with me but eventually pulled back in favor of having the three Ambassadors present the reply to Quintana with an indication that all three of us would come promptly to Managua if the PLN accepted the NG plan in principle. Obiols bought this formulation.

6. During this conversation, I mentioned Pallais' interest in going to Washington with Quintana to discuss a possible compromise between the NG and PLN plans. Obiols and Jimenez reacted very negatively to this. They saw it as a clever Somoza move to open a new negotiating front in order to stretch out the negotiating process, confuse the issues and escape responsibility for failure of the mediation. They hoped that we would not agree to such a move but keep the pressure on Somoza to accept the NG plan in principle and negotiate the details. They again with some bitterness referred to PLN tactics prior to the Christmas break to frustrate the talks and the current effort to circumvent the NG in order to escape responsibility for the impasse.

⁶ January 3, 1979.

7. The proposed reply to the PLN (Santo Domingo 7315) reflects the foregoing views.⁷ The principal criticisms levelled against the NG in the December 21 letter are answered firmly but non-polemically. The reasons for the non-acceptability of the PLN counterproposal are set forth succinctly. These will be readily understood by Somoza and the public in Nicaragua. They would need further elaboration for persons not familiar with Nicaraguan political realities. The NG is aware of this latter aspect but considered this was not the appropriate vehicle for making the explanations. The status report to the governments, on the other hand, could serve this purpose. Obiols signed the letter before returning to Guatemala this morning. Neither Jimenez nor I have done so, pending consultation and authorization.

8. I am not sure where all this leaves us as to next steps. It is not clear to me whether the Bodan-Pallais approaches⁸ show a genuine concern over future USG–GON relations following my conversations with Somoza on December 23 and 27,⁹ or a ploy to escape shouldering the responsibility for the impasse or at least to blunt the measures on our part suggested in the last two demarches. On the one hand, I am attracted by the opportunity to test Pallais and Quintana (men with whom one can deal) on the degree of flexibility in the GON position. One has to keep in mind, however, that these are not the fellows who decide and their initiative may be no more than a spoiling mission. Even if there is a considerable measure of flexibility, we will have to decide (in view of the attitude of my colleagues and FAO) whether it is sufficient to reinvolve them in the mediation and to obtain FAO acceptance without fragmenting that fragile organization. The decision on this will also have to factor in our own domestic considerations which I am not in a position to judge.

9. This leaves the question of the proposed NG reply: The content, timing and method of delivery. This obviously will depend on how we respond to the Pallais-Quintana mission. If the Department decides to give the green light, the reply should be held up pending the outcome. If the light is red, I recommend that the response be conveyed

⁷ In telegram 7315 from Santo Domingo, December 30, the Embassy included the Spanish-language text of the proposed NG reply to the PLN communications of December 21 and 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780540–0004)

⁸ Telegram 6833 from Managua, December 29, noted Bodan's appeal that the "US contemplate Somoza's remaining in full control until the end of his term in 1981." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780538–0217) Telegram 6854 from Managua, December 29, reported Pallais's concerns that Bowdler "had termed the PLN counter-proposal unacceptable before he had studied or discussed it," and that the NG "had not been impartial." Pallais also proposed that he travel with Quintana to Washington to seek a compromise. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2280)

⁹ See Documents 176 and 179.

through the three Ambassadors to Quintana privately with a clear indication of the NG's willingness to return to negotiate a final document. Public release of the document would depend on the PLN response and other related factors.

10. Yesterday the NG members prepared an outline of our status report to the MFM via the governments. We did not get down to drafting because most of our time was devoted to an analysis of the PLN counter-proposal and our reply. We agreed to work on different sections of the paper and (tentatively) to return to Santo Domingo January 5 to put it together. Obiols inability to stay here over the weekend prevented us from wrapping up the report on this round. I did raise with my colleagues the mechanics mentioned in State 326061.¹⁰ My colleagues and I prefer the second method described as being less likely to generate heated debate. We are not thinking in terms of a resolution critical of the GON. The report itself should explain how the impasse occurred and this will speak for itself. A resolution noting the result, expressing regret at the lack of success to date and urging further efforts if events allow is as much as one could hope for at this stage.

Yost

¹⁰ In telegram 326061 to Santo Domingo, December 28, Vaky provided Bowdler with some preliminary scenarios for the mechanics of the Negotiating Group's presentation to the OAS, including a proposed "second approach" which was to not circulate the Negotiating Group's report in advance (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780536-1110)

182. Telegram From the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State¹

Santo Domingo, December 31, 1978, 1705Z

7319. Department for Secretary Vance and Vaky. NSC for Pastor. From Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 281: English Text of Proposed Revised NG Replies to PLN Letters of December 21 and 26. Ref: Santo Domingo 7318.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Following is the revised English text of the proposed replies to the PLN letters of Dec. 21 and 26.³ I have coordinated these with Foreign Minister Jimenez, but we shall have to seek approval of ING. Obiols via Embassy Guatemala. I will do this by separate cable to Ambassador Boster.⁴

3. Begin text of reply to December 21 letter: Quote the International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation acknowledges receipt of the communication dated 21 December of the Negotiating Commission of the PLN, which make reference to the Project of Agreement (Acta-Compromiso) presented to solve the political crisis in Nicaragua in a conciliatory, democratic and peaceful way.

In this communication, the Negotiating Commission of the PLN makes various assertions with regard to the work of the International Commission, which the International Commission wishes to comment upon with a view to reaffirming its position of absolute impartiality in the face of the great responsibility with which it is charged.

The International Commission as a matter of record wishes to state that the closing of the session of December 20th in an “incontienti” fashion was due to the unusual reaction by some of the representatives of the PLN during the official presentation of the proposal by the President of the International Commission.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790001–0204. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Managua, Guatemala City, San José, Panama City, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² In telegram 7318 from Santo Domingo, December 30, the Embassy sent an initial version of the proposed NG reply to the PLN counterproposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780540–0042)

³ See Document 169; footnote 3, Document 172; and Document 176.

⁴ In telegram 7321 from Santo Domingo to Guatemala, December 31, Bowdler requested that Boster coordinate with Obiols regarding the Negotiating Group’s proposed replies to the PLN letters of December 21 and 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790001–0190)

Confronted with the accusation that "there was no compliance with the norms convened on for the development of negotiations, having ignored point four", the International Commission would like to establish clearly and definitively that there was no violation of said norms on its part, and that instead it was the PLN delegation which contravened the same when it tried to reopen consideration of points which had been previously agreed upon.

The Commission would also like to record that it at all times followed the agenda at all times after it had been accepted by the parties in the session of December 16,⁵ and the agenda was followed until the representatives of the PLN created an impasse on the second point on 'consequences of the popular consultation', and did not allow for the consideration of the remaining points. This forced the International Commission, in order not to stop the negotiations, to present proposals on the third point ('conditions for the popular plebiscite') and fourth ('mechanics for the national plebiscite'), without direct negotiations among the parties, but gathering, nevertheless, the impressions of each of them, obtained throughout the entire process, and having present at all times that what was at stake was the destiny of the Nicaraguan people.

The International Commission reiterates that its proposal was never inspired nor did it insinuate an unconstitutional solution, and it understood that in the search for a peaceful and lasting solution for the Nicaraguan crisis there were no limitations in the measures to obtain that goal when these fall within the provisions of, or are not prohibited by, the Constitution.

In the seventh paragraph of its communication, the Negotiating Commission of the PLN asserts that the FAO rejected as "irreducible" the holding of a plebiscite or national consultation. The International Commission wishes to declare that, on the contrary, the Political Commission of the FAO has communicated to us its acceptance of the proposal (Acta-Compromiso) made by the Commission on December 20, as set forth in the document of December 21 that is attached.⁶

The International Commission affirms that at no time did it take upon itself constitutional attributions of any kind, like the ones referred to, i.e., the destitution on Supreme Court justices, dissolution of the national Congress and others which "would imply a serious detriment of the functions which can only be executed by organs of the constitutional government of the republic."

⁵ See Document 166.

⁶ Not attached.

The foregoing is evident from the fact that it simply restricted itself to submitting a proposal which was subject to the consent and approval of the parties. Furthermore, it should be remembered that on page four of the document of November 6,⁷ presented by the National Liberation Party, “its decision to discuss the reforms with the political opposition is manifested, among others: the reorganization of the Supreme Court, as a first step, of the judicial branch through the appointment of judges whose professional competence and civic qualities, accepted by all sectors, guarantee its integrity and political independence”; and in that same document, the purpose of the revision, reorganization and restructuring of the Electoral Board and the revision of the National Guard is also clearly expressed. Unquote.

Begin text of reply to December 26 letter: Quote

The International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation acknowledges receipt of the communication from the Negotiating Commission of the PLN of December 26, 1978 to which is attached a counter-proposal to the agreement (*Acta-Compromiso*) suggested by the International Commission.

The International Commission, meeting in Santo Domingo, has given careful consideration to the counter-proposal with a view to determining whether it offers an acceptable solution to the political crisis through which the people of Nicaragua are passing.

After detailed study of the document and taking into consideration all the factors at play, practical as well as psychological, in the Nicaraguan situation, the International Commission has reached the conclusion that the counter-proposal does not offer the conditions necessary to achieve a peaceful solution.

In the evaluation of the Nicaraguan situation, following extensive consultations with all sectors of the nation, there emerged two fundamental aspects: (1) a deeply and widely held belief that the present crisis is due to the continuation of General Somoza in power, and (2) a profound distrust by the people of Nicaragua in the electoral processes of the country.

The foregoing considerations led the International Commission to include in its proposal: a plebiscite based on a simple question understandable to all the people; and the organization, control and supervision of the entire plebiscite by an international authority, with the participation of the PLN and FAO, which would restore credibility, both within and outside Nicaragua, and ensure the purity of the results.

⁷ See Document 132.

Among other aspects, the International Commission finds that the counter-proposal of the PLN has negative aspects which makes it unacceptable to important sectors of the country whose support is indispensable if a peaceful solution is to be achieved. These aspects are as follows:

A) The use of a national system of elections which lacks the necessary credibility;

B) The complicated question which does not clearly express the basic issue in the Nicaraguan crisis;

C) The use of a system of prior registration of voters and the existing system of voting districts and polling places that in present moments would serve to inhibit the free expression of opinion;

D) The elimination of various measures with regard to the National Guard and local authorities (Jueces de Mesta y Canton y Capitanes de Canada) that if not retained, would likewise work against achievement of an appropriate atmosphere for the plebiscite.

The International Commission considers that its proposal of December 20 overcomes these negative aspects and therefore offers a reasonable and workable solution that deserves the support of all the Nicaraguan people.

The International Commission reiterates its proposals contained in the agreement (Acta-Compromiso) of Dec. 20, already accepted by the FAO, and hopes that the President and the PLN, conscious of the grave responsibility and consequences of a negative response, will accept it as soon as possible, considering the need of the people for a democratic, peaceful and lasting solution of the present Nicaraguan crisis.

The International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation in the same manner expresses the desire to know prior to January 8, 1979 whether the President and the Partido Liberal Ncionalista would be disposed to accept the "Acta-Compromiso" proposed by the International Commission. In the case of an affirmative answer, the International Commission would be prepared to return to Nicaragua, as soon as called, to make the necessary adjustments which may be agreed upon and to proceed with signature of the document.

If the answer is negative and after the expiration of said date, the International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation will submit its report through its governments to the meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas. Unquote.

Yost

183. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

The Mediation Effort in Nicaragua: At the Brink? (S)

We have reached a critical point in the mediation effort in Nicaragua, and your comments yesterday on the draft response of the Mediators prompted me to draft this memo and place the current decision in a broader context.² Let me review briefly the history of the mediation effort; describe the current situation; and then identify the options which you have at this time. (S)

I. History of the Mediation

On August 25, 1978, the business community in Nicaragua took the lead in initiating a General Strike. Within a week, the people of Managua and a half dozen other towns in Nicaragua set in motion what can only be described as a full-scale insurrection, demanding that Somoza and his family leave Nicaragua. The repression which followed has been documented graphically by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. (S)

The issue of political succession has always been the central issue in Nicaragua, and we have recognized that when Somoza began to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1–16/79. Secret. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. Carter initialed the top of the page and wrote: "Zbig." Pastor wrote "Jan 2, 1979" and "recd. this back—*long* after meeting," at the top of the page. Pastor sent the memorandum to Brzezinski under a January 2, 1979, covering memorandum, noting: "After long conversations with Pete Vaky, and after feeling that our policy to Nicaragua is in complete disarray, at this time, I decided to write the memorandum at Tab I.—to place the current decision, which the President has apparently made, in a much broader context and to describe the possible consequences of such a decision at this time. I hope you will give this memorandum to the President and urge him to call a small meeting in the afternoon with Bowdler, Vance, Vaky, you and me to discuss these options and decide on our next steps. We are floundering now, and we cannot afford to let this mediation effort slip through our fingers." (Ibid.)

² Presumably a reference to telegram 7319 from Santo Domingo, December 31, (see Document 182), which includes text of the proposed NG reply to the PLN letter of December 26, 1978. No indication of Carter's comments on the draft response of the NG have been found. On an undated and slightly revised version of a copy of telegram 7319, Pastor wrote "an excessive demand" beside the fifth paragraph, which stipulated "a plebiscite based on a simple question understandable to all the people; and the organization, control and supervision of the entire plebiscite by an International Authority, with the participation of the PLN and the FAO." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/23–31/78)

lock up and kill members of the moderate opposition in late September, we decided it was time to act. Together with mediators from the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, the U.S. in early October joined an effort which was blessed—if not sanctioned—by the O.A.S. Our principal concern at that time was to try to preserve (and then to strengthen) by peaceful and overt means the political middle in Nicaragua as a “legitimate alternative” to both Somoza and the Sandinistas. Our fear was that if we didn’t succeed, Somoza would prevail over the Sandinistas in the short-term but that he would eventually fall. The longer it took the more radical the outcome. (S)

Our goal was to create a process which would facilitate and legitimate the involvement of the moderate opposition in a process and ultimately in a new governmental arrangement. When Somoza suggested the idea of a plebiscite on November 10, we grabbed at it as a way to legitimize the succession, which we knew was the only solution to the problem. The opposition (FAO) saw the plebiscite idea as a ruse, either a delaying tactic or a fraud which Somoza would perpetrate. The FAO knew that with total control over the National Guard and local judges and administrators, it would be impossible to have a free election. (S)

We weighed in very strongly with the FAO, trying to persuade them to accept the proposal. There were some who viewed the proposal as a “tar baby” which would engage us in protracted, sticky negotiations with Somoza, but we overcame the skepticism of most of the FAO by pledging our full support through an international mechanism for a free and fair election. (S)

As negotiations on specific conditions bogged down, the moderates in the FAO were increasingly pressed by radicals who saw the whole exercise as a delaying tactic by Somoza. The Mediators moved to develop a proposal which they viewed as a compromise on the major issues, but in order to guarantee that the election would be fair, they felt compelled to recommend that it be administered by an international authority.³ In addition, their proposal (Tab A) recommended a simple question on whether Somoza should continue in power so that all the Nicaraguans could easily understand the issue.⁴ The Mediators decided against prior registration because they felt this could lead more easily to voter intimidation by Somoza’s local party apparatus. These points were included in the mediator’s proposal, which was submitted to both sides on December 20. (S)

³ Carter underlined “felt compelled” and “administered.”

⁴ Attached but not printed at Tab A was telegram 6687 from Managua, December 20, 1978. See footnote 4, Document 177.

One week later, on December 27, Somoza responded. There are about eight differences with the Mediators' proposal. Two are probably acceptable to the FAO; about two are negotiable, but about four are fundamental. (Bowdler's analysis is at Tab B.)⁵ The most fundamental is who should organize the plebiscite—a national or an international authority? (S)

II. *The Current Situation*

Upon receiving Somoza's counterproposal, the Mediators met in Santo Domingo to draft a response and also to draft a report to the O.A.S. As the cable at Tab C⁶ indicates, Obiols and Jimenez are angered by Somoza's response and signed off on a letter which declares it unacceptable. Bill is officially awaiting our reaction before committing us to the response; he returned Tuesday night⁷ for consultations. (S)

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have launched a couple of attacks, and these are indications that the business community may shut Managua down next week in protest to Somoza's impeding the mediation process and in commemoration of the anniversary of the assassination of Chamorro. (S)

III. *Options*

I realize that your comments on the draft response suggest that you have already selected the first option suggested below, but I thought it would be useful to you to examine all three options which are available to you systematically, taking into account the arguments that have been made for and against each. (S)

(1) *Seek a Compromise Between the Mediators' Proposal and Somoza's.* This would probably mean negotiating a new *national* mechanism for running the elections with strict controls and a sufficient number of international observers in place during the organization of the plebiscite and during the voting. There are several problems with this option:

—Bowdler and Amb. Solaun believe that the other two mediators and the FAO will never accept it since they believe Somoza's military and political apparatus throughout the country will make a free election impossible.

—If we try to dilute the Mediators' proposal by accepting a national as opposed to an international authority to run the plebiscite, we run the risk of losing all credibility with the moderate opposition since this

⁵ An unknown hand crossed out the sentence: "(Bowdler's analysis is at Tab B.)" Tab B was not attached.

⁶ Not attached. See Document 181.

⁷ January 1.

was the kind of mechanism we pledged to support to overcome their skepticism about a free election in Nicaragua.⁸

—Finally, even if the compromise is accepted, negotiating the specifics of a national authority will be extremely difficult and time-consuming, and it is doubtful whether we have that much time.

If we do pursue this option, I think the best strategy is to concentrate on the other differences between his counterproposal and the Mediators' proposal, leaving the issue of national vs. international authority aside while we test Somoza's sincerity on the other issues. If he holds up the mediation because of his position on one of the other issues, he will find himself in a much weaker, less legitimate position than if we fight it out on the big issue first. Moreover, the FAO will be encouraged by this preliminary strategy while we try to win their support for a national authority.⁹ (S)

(2) *Support the Original Mediators' Proposal; Reject Somoza's.* This, of course, was our original strategy. We had intended to place our full weight behind the Mediators' December 20th proposal by sending Bowdler in after the Mediators' report was sent to him to request that Somoza reconsider, and to inform him that we intend to withdraw our Milgroup, cut our AID mission, etc. if he doesn't. This is the time of maximum influence on Somoza. It will be difficult to walk back to this point if we follow one of the other options. You have correctly identified a potential problem with this: it is possible that some countries and people will side with Somoza's interpretation of the "sovereignty issue", believing that a plebiscite should be run by a national rather than an international authority. (S)

(3) *Let the Mediators Report to the O.A.S. that the Mediation Effort has Broken Down.* We would accept this outcome and not try to press either Somoza or the FAO any further. This option relies on the vague force of international public opinion to solve the problem. It has the advantage of permitting us to walk away from Nicaragua without losing our credibility with the moderate elements in Nicaragua and in Latin America. (S)

Let me suggest that instead of making a decision, you discuss these options in a small meeting with Bill Bowdler, Cy, Pete Vaky (Assistant Secretary/Latin American Affairs), Bob Pastor and me this afternoon. I think we are at a critical point in the mediation effort where we could lose everything we have worked so hard to achieve. A meeting to

⁸ Carter underlined the words "we pledged to support" and added a question mark in the right-hand margin next to the point.

⁹ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph: "may be best."

discuss these options and issues could help you to think these problems through. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That I be instructed to put together a small meeting on Nicaragua this afternoon.¹⁰

¹⁰ Carter indicated his approval and initialed. No other record of such a meeting taking place (on January 2) was found.

184. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic¹

Washington, January 5, 1979, 0023Z

2585. Guatemala/Santo Domingo for Ambassadors from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Negotiation No. 284: Revised Draft of NG Reply to PLN Counter-Proposal. Ref.: Santo Domingo 7319 and 7320.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Reproduced below is further revision of proposed Negotiating Group reply to the PLN counter-proposal for a plebiscite. I would appreciate your personally giving a copy to Jimenez and Obiols, respectively, with the following oral explanation from me:

—I have carefully reviewed the PLN counter-proposal and our suggested reply with my superiors. The view here is that while the substance of our reply should be essentially retained, it would be prudent to vary the concept of our international authority to allow combination with the idea of a national plebiscite authority contained in the PLN counter-proposal.

—There are two reasons for this: (1) it removes a vulnerability in our proposal stemming from almost exclusive outside control of an

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790006–0618. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua, Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Drafted by Bowdler; cleared by Vaky and Tarnoff; approved by Vance.

² For telegram 7319 from Santo Domingo, see Document 182. Telegram 7320 from Santo Domingo, December 31, 1978, included the revised Spanish-language text of the proposed Negotiating Group's replies to the PLN letters dated December 21 and 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790001–0189)

election process; and (2) it makes our proposal more acceptable in the OAS context. These advantages can be achieved without giving up the necessary degree of supervision essential to maintain confidence and credibility in the process.

—Secretary Vance has reviewed the draft with President Carter and both believe that the modified version places the NG in the strongest position for insisting with Somoza that he accept the NG proposal as reflected in the proposed reply.³

—I hope this further change will meet with your approval. Alfonso Robelo was in Washington today and I had the opportunity to test the general idea (but not repeat not the specific language) with him. He said he favored a mixed body provided the supervisory role of the international authority is clearly established and our other essential conditions are maintained.⁴

—I look forward to seeing you in Santo Domingo to finish our reply and consider our next steps.

3. Begin text: The International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation acknowledges receipt of the communication from the Negotiating Commission of the PLN of December 26, 1978 to which is attached a counter-proposal to the agreement (Acta-Compromiso) suggested by the International Commission.

The International Commission, meeting in Santo Domingo, has given careful consideration to the counter-proposal with a view to determining whether it offers an acceptable basis for negotiating a solution to the political crisis through which the people of Nicaragua are passing.

After detailed study of the document, and taking into account all the factors at play, practical as well as psychological, in the Nicaraguan

³ Vance sent Brzezinski a revised draft of the Negotiating Group's response to the PLN "counterproposal" under a January 3 covering memorandum, upon which Brzezinski wrote at the top of the document "RP OK as changed." Pastor had added the following language to the section of the draft that endorsed the special Plebiscite National Authority: "provided that it is carefully and systematically monitored by the OAS or its designated instrument, and that any disputes which arise between the parties working in the National Authority should be resolved by this international instrument." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1-16/79) An unknown hand wrote on another copy of Vance's January 3 memorandum to Brzezinski: "ZB called Pastor who suggested several changes—notably giving power to arbitrate to an international authority—which CV accepted." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78-7/79)

⁴ In telegram 4016 to Managua, January 5, the Department described Robelo's January 4 meeting with Vaky, Bowdler, and Barneby. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1-16/79)

situation, the International Commission finds that with regard to the mechanism for conducting the plebiscite the concept of a special National Plebiscite Authority (NPA) is one which warrants careful consideration by the parties, provided that the authority is carefully and systematically supervised and monitored by the Plebiscite International Authority (PIA) and that any disputes which arise between the parties working in the national authority should be resolved by this International Authority. In the opinion of the International Commission it would be important, in order to establish public confidence and acceptance of said authority, for the parties to agree to the following delineations of responsibility between the national authority and the PIA.

—The PIA Executive Director should have the right to participate in all the deliberations of the plebiscite national council, and his representatives at the departmental and cantonal levels should have the same right. Any disputes which arise between the parties working in the NPA shall be resolved by the PIA.

—The PLN and FAO, with the assistance of the PIA Executive Director, should prepare the guidelines under which the national authority is to operate.

—In the event that the PLN and FAO representatives are unable to agree on the choice of a third Nicaraguan citizen to preside over the national and departmental councils and cantonal directorates, the corresponding PIA representative should choose the person from a single list of candidates prepared by common agreement by the corresponding PLN and FAO representatives.

—Once the ballot design has been approved by the parties, with the concurrence of the PIA Executive Director, the printing and distribution to the voting places for election day of the numbered ballots should be handled by the PIA Executive Director and his representatives.

The International Commission finds that the plebiscite provisions of the counter-proposal of the PLN have other key aspects which we anticipate will make it unacceptable to important sectors of the country whose support is indispensable if a peaceful solution to the nation's political crisis is to be achieved. In the evaluation of the Nicaraguan situation, following extensive consultations with all sectors of the nation, there emerged two fundamental issues in achieving an agreed solution:

- 1) A deeply and widely held belief by significant sectors of Nicaraguan opinion that the central issue of the present crisis is whether President Somoza should continue in power, and 2) A profound distrust by these sectors in the traditional electoral processes of the country.

The principal aspects of the PLN plan which cause serious concern are:

A. The phrasing of the question in a complicated way which does not clearly convey what the basic issue is, and which may therefore not be understood by large segments of the electorate;

B. The use of a system of prior registration of voters and the existing system of voting districts and polling places that in present circumstances the opposition believes would serve to inhibit the free expression of opinion;

C. The elimination of various measures with regard to the National Guard and local authorities that if not retained would likewise, in the view of many Nicaraguans, work against achievement of an appropriate atmosphere for the plebiscite.

The differences on these points are so deep that the International Commission does not believe they can be compromised or negotiated on the basis of the conceptual premises of the PLN plan.

On the other hand, the International Commission considers that its proposal of December 20 does offer—without violating national sovereignty or dignity—a reasonable and workable solution that can receive the support of all Nicaraguans.

The International Commission, therefore, in commending to the parties the mechanism of the national plebiscite authority as described in preceding paragraphs, reiterates all other aspects of its proposals contained in the proposed agreement of December 20. The Commission hopes that, considering the need of the Nicaraguan people for a democratic, peaceful and lasting solution of the present crisis, the President and the PLN, conscious of the grave responsibility and consequences of a negative response, will accept as soon as possible the foregoing as a basis for reaching an agreement with the FAO. End text.

Vance

185. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Dominican Republic¹

Washington, January 6, 1979, 0124Z

3700. Military addree handle as Specat Exclusive. Subject: Nicaraguan Mediation: Talking Points for Response to PLN. Santo Domingo for Ambassador Bowdler. SouthCom for General McAuliffe.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. You are authorized to present to President Somoza, together with your NG colleagues, the approved reply to the PLN counterproposal contained in State 2585.²

3. You are also authorized to convey privately to President Somoza the following points:

—The plan outlined in the response I and my colleagues have presented was carefully reviewed and personally approved by the President and Secretary Vance.

—The USG believes it is a fair and workable plan and that its provisions are essential if the plebiscite is to be a fair and true test which can resolve the country's political crisis. It has taken into account the concerns expressed by Somoza regarding a national plebiscite authority and sovereignty. We do not believe that its elements can be compromised any further without destroying the credibility and fairness of the plebiscite arrangement, and rendering an agreement among all Nicaraguan parties impossible.

—As I indicated before, the USG does not believe we can string this process out any more. The time has passed for further counterproposals and delaying tactics. We believe that the PIA must have the responsibility to resolve disputes that arise on the plebiscite's details within the National Authority or the process would be drawn out too long.³

—I therefore have been instructed to urge you to reconsider your position and to accept this plan—as a framework for concluding

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, San José, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights. Drafted by Vaky; cleared by Aaron (NSC), Armacost (DOD/ISA), Edward Coy (AID), Thyden (S/S-O), and in substance by Gen. W. Smith (JCS); approved by Vaky.

² See Document 184.

³ Pastor added this sentence to an undated draft version of the telegram. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1–16/79)

promptly an agreement with the FAO, and accordingly to instruct your negotiators to enter immediately into serious discussions to conclude such an agreement—not only for the plebiscite but for the post-plebiscite arrangement so as to avoid chaos, a vacuum and radicalization of the country. If you are willing to do this, the Negotiating Group will immediately convene the PLN and FAO negotiators to complete the task.⁴

—I want to repeat clearly that this plan represents an irreducible minimum for negotiating a satisfactory and fair solution to the country's problem. If you reject it, no national agreement will be possible. We will conclude that the mediation effort can no longer succeed and will terminate that effort.

—If that occurs, your country will—as I have pointed out in the past—face increasing tension, violence and polarization, and move on a downward spiral. It will not be possible for us to maintain the relationship with your government we have had in the past.

—I am instructed to inform you that if you reject this and the mediation collapses, we intend to readjust our relationship and we will withdraw the Military Mission, the Peace Corps and substantially reduce our AID Mission and other staffing in our diplomatic Mission.

—I am therefore instructed to convey to you urgently and strongly my government's hope that you will consider your position carefully and accept this framework for a solution to Nicaragua's crisis so as to avoid further violence and the danger of radicalization of Nicaragua and Central America.

Vance

⁴ Pastor added this sentence to an undated draft version of the telegram; see footnote 3 above. (Ibid.)

186. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, January 8, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

Over the weekend Bowdler succeeded in obtaining Obiols' agreement to the Mediators' response to Somoza's counterproposal. Obiols suggested a few minor changes in the draft and asked that the paragraphs be rearranged. He further agreed to accompany Bowdler to Santo Domingo to present the new package to Jimenez, and consented, rather reluctantly, to travel on to Managua to deliver the proposal to the FAO and Somoza. During a luncheon meeting, President Lucas endorsed Obiols' decision to return to Managua.² (C)

While in Guatemala, Bowdler was able to discover what Somoza had discussed at the secret summit meeting with the presidents of El Salvador and Guatemala on December 27.³ Apparently Somoza raised the danger of an attack by Venezuelan forces using Costa Rica as a base. Somoza warned his colleagues that should this occur, he will invoke the CONDECA mutual defense obligations and will expect these to be honored. (C)

A further conversation between Somoza confidant Pallais and Ambassador Solaun in Managua last Saturday indicated that Somoza might be flexible on most of the points of his counterproposal, with the exception of the pre-plebiscite departure of his son and his brother and the prior registration of voters.⁴ Pallais agreed, however, to discuss the latter issue further with Somoza in order to discover whether any flexibility existed. (C)

In addition to the planned demonstration by the opposition in Managua on January 10 to commemorate the death of Chamorro, the Embassy has received an intelligence report that a demonstration might

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79. Confidential.

² In telegram 110 from Guatemala City, January 7, Bowdler described his conversations with Obiols and Lucas. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1–16/79)

³ See footnote 4, Document 181.

⁴ January 6. In telegram 99 from Managua, January 7, Solaun discussed this meeting. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790009–0382)

be launched against it on the same day.⁵ Apparently the protesters will charge that the U.S. “gave Somoza more time to arm against the people.” (C)

⁵ Not found.

187. Telegram From the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State¹

Santo Domingo, January 9, 1979, 0330Z

127. For Asst. Sec. Vaky from Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua Negotiation No. 289: English Text of Proposed Reply to PLN Counter-Proposal.

1. (Confidential-Entire text)

2. Following is our hasty English translation of proposed NG response to PLN counter-proposal contained Santo Domingo 0121:²

Begin text:

The International Commission of Friendly Cooperation and Conciliation acknowledges receipt of the communication from the Negotiating Commission of the PLN of December 26, 1978, to which is attached a counter-proposal to the agreement (Acta-Compromiso) suggested by the International Commission.

The International Commission, meeting in Santo Domingo, has given careful consideration to the counter-proposal and observes with satisfaction that it accepts some of the points of its proposal of December 20³ which reduce differences between the parties and holds forth the hope that a peaceful solution of the political crisis through which the people of Nicaragua are passing can be reached.

After detailed study of the document, and taking into account all the factors at play, practical as well as psychological, in the Nicaraguan

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis.

² Telegram 121 from Santo Domingo, January 8, included the Spanish-language text of the proposed Negotiating Group reply to Somoza and noted Jimenez's “strong reluctance” both to amend the Negotiating Group's reply and travel to Managua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850011-1414)

³ See footnote 3, Document 169.

situation, the International Commission finds that the plebiscite provisions of the counter-proposal of the PLN have basic elements which the Commission anticipates will make it unacceptable to important sectors of the country whose support is indispensable if a peaceful solution to the nation's political crisis is to be achieved.

In the evaluation of the Nicaraguan situation, following extensive consultations with all sectors of the nation, there emerged two fundamental problems which need to be overcome in order to obtain an agreed solution:

I. A deeply and widely held belief by significant sectors of Nicaraguan opinion that the central issue of the present crisis is whether President Somoza should continue in power and;

II. A profound distrust by these sectors in the traditional electoral processes of the country.

The principal aspects of the PLN plan on the plebiscite which cause serious concern are among others, the following:

A. The phrasing of the question in a complicated way which does not clearly convey what the basic issue is, and which may therefore not be understood by large segments of the electorate;

B. The use of a system of prior registration of voters and the existing system of voting districts and polling places that in present circumstances the opposition believes would serve to inhibit the free expression of opinion;

C. The elimination of various measures proposed by the International Commission with regard to the National Guard and local authorities that if not retained would likewise, in the view of many Nicaraguans, work against achievement of an appropriate atmosphere for the plebiscite.

Nevertheless, the International Commission finds that with regard to the mechanism for conducting the plebiscite the concept of a special National Plebiscite Authority (NPA) is one which warrants careful consideration by the parties, provided that the Authority is carefully and systematically supervised and monitored by the Plebiscite International Authority (PIA).

In the opinion of the International Commission it would be important, in order to establish public confidence and acceptance of said Authority, for the parties to agree to the following delineations of responsibility between the NPA and the PIA:

—The PIA Executive Director should have the right to participate in all the deliberations of the NPA, and his representatives at the departmental and cantonal levels should have the same right.

—The PLN and FAO, with the assistance of the PIA Executive Director, should prepare the guidelines under which the NPA is to operate including the location and number of polling places.

—In the event that the PLN and FAO representatives are unable to agree on the choice of a third Nicaraguan citizen to preside over the national and departmental councils and cantonal directorates, the PIA representative will make the selection of the person by lot from a single list of three candidates previously agreed upon by the PLN and FAO.

—Once the ballot design has been approved by the parties, with the concurrence of the PIA Executive Director, the printing and distribution to the voting places for election day of the numbered ballots should be handled by the PIA Executive Director and his representatives, and the count, certification of results and transportation of ballots, used and unused, to Managua will also be the responsibility of the PIA representatives with the participation of the PLN and the FAO.

On the other hand, the International Commission considers that its proposal of December 20, amended in relation to voting authorities as noted above, does offer—without any appearance of possible violation of national sovereignty or dignity—a reasonable and workable solution that can receive the support of all Nicaraguans.

The International Commission, therefore, in commending to the parties agreement on the mechanism of the NPA and PIA as described in preceding paragraphs, reiterates all other aspects of its proposals contained in the proposed agreement of December 20.

The commission hopes that, considering the need of the Nicaraguan people for a democratic, peaceful and lasting solution of the present crisis, the President of the republic and the PLN, conscious of the grave responsibility and consequences of a negative response, will accept as soon as possible the foregoing as a basis for reaching an agreement with the FAO, to which a copy of this communication is being sent for consideration and reply.

The International Commission which is meeting in Santo Domingo to draw up a report to their governments for the 17th meeting of consultation of Foreign Ministers, looks forward to a prompt reply from the PLN and FAO.

If these replies are affirmative, as is hoped, the International Commission will be ready to return to Managua to make the necessary adjustments that are agreed upon and to proceed to the signing of the agreement. End text.

Yost

188. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 13, 1979, 0505Z

219. Subj: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 293: NG Conversations with FAO.

1. (Confidential-Entire text)

2. NG, with Pedro Padilla pinch hitting for Fon Min Jimenez, arrived Managua morning of January 12 and proceeded to the Dominican Embassy for a meeting with the FAO political committee at 11:00 am.²

3. We explained purpose of our trip and read them proposed response to PLN counter-proposal.³ The immediate reaction of all three was negative, with Robelo being the most emphatic. They said the FAO plenum had met yesterday and decided not to accept any change in our December 20 proposal.⁴ If we pushed them for a response to the national plebiscite authority now, it would have to be a rejection.

4. Robelo went into a long and rather emotional explanation of the pressures which the FAO was under and how their position is eroding as groups defect to join the Patriotic Front. He argued that continuation of the mediation weakened rather than favored the FAO. He personally considered the mediation at an end and now regretted that the FAO had not said so publicly on December 27 after seeing the PLN counter-proposal.

5. We explained that our purpose was not to undercut the FAO. We had come to consult them in advance in order to avoid taking actions that would put them in the position of rejecting the NG plan. We frankly thought that the NPA concept as circumscribed in our communication had the advantage of meeting a PLN criticism of our plan without conceding on the essentials underwriting confidence and credibility of the plebiscite process.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790017–0766. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information Priority to Caracas, Panama City, San José, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² In telegram 205 from Santo Domingo, January 11, Bowdler noted that he “feared the FAO would not rpt not find the National Plebiscite Authority (NPA) acceptable,” and that Padilla believed that the pursuit of a reply to the PLN would diminish the standing of both the FAO and the Negotiating Group. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790015–0928)

³ See Document 169.

⁴ See Document 180.

6. After this explanation Cordova Rivas, and especially Luis Sanchez Sancho, took a more conciliatory line. Latter asked for recess so that they could consult among themselves. When we resumed Sanchez reported their view in these terms:

A) They stood by their Dec. 21 letter accepting the NG proposal.⁵

B) It was for the NG to persuade the PLN to accept the NG plan.

C) They would refrain from passing judgement on the NPA concept until NG had the PLN's response.

7. I told them that it was important for us to know whether the FAO was going to reject the NPA variant to our draft even if Somoza were to accept the totality of our plan as contained in the letter. Sanchez, replying for the group, said FAO would not give us a green light at this stage on NPA because the PLN had not accepted the essential of the NG plan. The FAO did not want to make piecemeal judgements on changes such as NPA until there is a clearer indication of PLN willingness to accept our version of the plebiscite. In saying this he gave us to understand that the FAO position on NPA would not rpt not be negative if the other major conditions remained as stated in the December 20 proposal.

8. With this statement of position we decided to modify the last three paragraphs of our response to the PLN in order to delete the requirement that the FAO respond on the NPA variant in the same time frame as the PLN. The FAO representatives understood that we will be asking them to concur if the PLN is willing to accept the other aspects of our proposal.

9. Tonight I talked with Adolfo Calero about this evening's FAO plenum. He reported that Robelo had briefed the group on our reply to the counter proposal and at the same time introduced a motion of non-approval of the NPA. He did not get support for the motion, according to Calero. Almost all the delegates indicated they personally thought the variant was acceptable on the basis presented in our document. The plenum decided that each delegate should consult his organization in order to discuss the matter further on Monday.⁶ Calero thought the outcome would be to support NPA but the FAO would not communicate its position until the PLN answered the NG letter.

Solaun

⁵ Telegram 6745 from Managua, December 22, 1978, contained the Spanish-language text and the English translation of the FAO's "favorable response to the Negotiating Group's plebiscite proposal." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 12/21-22/78)

⁶ January 15.

189. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 13, 1979, 0740Z

220. Subj: Nicaraguan Mediation No. 294: NG Meeting with Somoza.

1. (Confidential-Entire text)

2. The NG met with Somoza at 4:00 pm in “The Bunker”. Only other person present was FonMin Quintana. After an initial round of new year best wishes and explanation of FonMin Jimenez absence, we presented the NG replies to the Dec. 21 and 26 PLN letters.² Somoza and Quintana read through them carefully before making any comment.

3. On the response to the first PLN communication Somoza made only passing comments. He noted our statement on the unusual comportment of the PLN delegates during the presentation of our December 20 proposal and the responsibility we placed on the PLN for the impasse during that critical week of direct talks. He tried to shift the blame to the FAO for refusing to serve in his government in the event the plebiscite was favorable to him. Quintana then made deprecating remarks about the FAO falling apart and if we waited a few days we could be witnesses to its demise.

4. On the response to the counter proposal Somoza said that an official reply would be forthcoming within the time frame specified (January 19) after he had discussed it with his advisers. Then on a personal level he made a series of observations on the NG plebiscite plan and the political scene the highlights of which were these:

A) The NG plan for the plebiscite called for a major change in Nicaraguan thinking and way of doing things that might be acceptable to a small group of the elite opposed to him but did not reflect the wishes of the large mass of Nicaraguans of more modest means who were comfortable with the way things had been done in the past fifty years. To introduce this degree of change would be disruptive. He pointed to the case of the Shah of Iran to support his thesis that too brusque a change in institutional patterns can be highly destabilizing.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to Caracas, Panama City, San José, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² See Document 181. Guzman and Jimenez had agreed on January 8 that Jimenez would stay in Santo Domingo in preparation for Pope John Paul II’s visit. (Telegram 126 from Santo Domingo, January 9; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850011–1411)

B) He does not believe that violence is on the increase and does not fear radicalization and polarization. Nicaragua faces violence from outside and within. With OAS help along the Costa Rican border, external violence could be reduced. He thinks he can deal with internal violence.

C) He is confident that the FAO will soon disappear leaving the political arena to the government and the extreme left. This is not unique to Nicaragua. He should not be made responsible for growth of the left. That is a consequence inherent in the capitalist system. We see it in France and Italy. The outs want in so that they can run things their way. In the socialist system the right would grow if allowed to do so which the Communist regimes do not.

D) He deprecated the FAO as a small group of well-intentioned political novices who had no idea how to govern. The business elements associated with them he dismissed as frustrated malcontents who "suck the milk and bad-mouth the cow." He reaffirmed his duty to stay in power and defend the interests of the people of Nicaragua.

5. Comment: This was not the talk of a man considering leaving office. The most disturbing aspect was the certainty and relish with which he and Quintana were predicting the collapse and disappearance of the FAO. They expected the Patriotic Front to take its place. This Somoza described as the legal front of the Communists. My colleagues and I received the distinct impression that Somoza wants the moderate third force to disappear so that the choice that is left is between the government and the Communists.

6. After the meeting with the NG, I asked Somoza if I could see him alone. He readily agreed. I told him that in connection with his study of the NG response to the PLN counter-proposal, I wanted to convey how we saw the situation. I proceeded then to go through the talking points contained in State-3700.³ I digressed at two points to tell him that we did not agree with his estimate that violence will remain a manageable problem and we did not share his view that polarization, with the demise of the FAO, was not a matter of concern. We took a very serious view of the violence both in terms of Nicaragua and the instability which exists in other parts of Central America. On the point dealing with the specific steps we intend to take if he turns down the NG proposal with the NPA variant I took a slightly different tact. I told him that if our mediation efforts fail as a result of his refusal to accept our plan, he could not expect our relationship to continue as it has been. In our previous conversation, I had indicated that it would be adversely affected and I had mentioned some of the options. I

³ See Document 185.

wanted him to understand the seriousness of this aspect. I did not repeat the specific measures we have in mind.

7. Somoza's reaction to this was calm and almost matter of fact. He said he did not know why the USG was always threatening him. He noted that Ambassador Solaun and Jorden had done it before my arrival on the scene. He was aware that the USG was out to get him "since January 1977". I told him we were not dealing in personalities but realities. What had taken place in Nicaragua during 1978 was a matter of deep concern. We wanted a peaceful solution to the crisis in his country. That is the purpose of the mediation. The NG plan is regarded as an objective, and fair way to let the people decide the fundamental issue.

8. Somoza's response to my rebuttal was that he wanted to study the NG letter. He noted that the NPA seems to be acceptable. I told him he was correct in this interpretation, although what we propose represents a substantial modification of the PLN plan. I explained that what we wanted is a plebiscite process that will be acceptable to both sides and credible to all concerned. Our plan meets this test. Somoza then asked me whether I realize that others than himself had to be convinced to accept the plan, especially in the Liberal Party. I told him I was fully aware of vested interests, but I was also confident that with his personal support and the fact that our plan calls for participation of the PLN and the Guardia Nacional in any future government, should the plebiscite be adverse, this type of resistance could be overcome. He laughed and said I overestimate his persuasive powers. On this note we left it that he would study our communication and reply before January 19.

9. Comment: The two meetings with Somoza were cordial throughout. He was affable and relaxed. He seemed more self-confident, especially in the meeting with the NG as he described the local scene. Interestingly, he made no mention of voter registration in either of the meetings. Obiols told me, however, that Quintana had placed special emphasis on the point while waiting for me to emerge from the private session. I think the PLN response may well center on this aspect.

Solaun

190. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research (Bowdler) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, January 15, 1979

Nicaragua

The latest round with Somoza has left the Negotiating Group with the impression that he is confident he can see the crisis through and complete his term until 1981. As Somoza sees it:

—the FAO is disintegrating and it is in his interest to accelerate the process;

—disappearance of the moderate opposition will leave the field to him and the extreme left which he will exploit to make the choice appear to be between himself and communism;

—polarization and radicalization does not represent that much of a danger: the OAS observers on the Costa Rican border reduces the external threat and the expansion of the National Guard allows effective internal control;²

—the danger of political pressures from the US or the OAS are not that imminent or serious.

The FAO presents a mixed picture. Robelo, disappointed by his trip to Washington and traumatized by the assassination of Luis Medrano, was personally highly negative to continuation of the mediation.³ On the other hand his Political Committee colleagues, Cordova

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, January 1979. Secret.

² Telegram 11997 to Managua and San José, January 16, noted that following weeks of OAS discussions the OAS Permanent Council authorized the departure of the first five civilian observers for the Costa Rica-Nicaragua border area. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790022-0667) According to Pastor's January 16 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, the OAS could find only six countries (Paraguay, Panama, Jamaica, Honduras, Surinam, and Grenada) that were willing to send observers to insure "the integrity of the frontier." Pastor wrote: "Though seven had been authorized, the OAS Permanent Council Chairman broke the impasse by proposing that five observers would be sufficient, at least initially, and that Surinam would hold its nominee in abeyance pending the naming of a seventh member." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78-7/79)

³ Telegram 11840 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, January 16, stated: "Luis Medrano, Secretary General of the AIFLD-Affiliated Confederation of Labor Unification was shot and killed on January 9 while distributing leaflets urging attendance at the events relating to the Chamorro anniversary. The police have arrested a suspect who has reportedly confessed to the shooting, claiming it was accidental. It is as yet unclear as to whether the killer had any GON connections other than friendly relations with a police officer who had loaned him a rifle." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1-16/79)

Rivas and Sanchez Sancho showed themselves more realistic and practical. They see the mediation as their only hope and want it to continue but are caught in the dilemma that prolongation of the negotiations with further concessions in the NG plan makes them vulnerable to attack and erosion from the extreme left. Under these circumstances they prefer that the negotiation proceed between the NG and Somoza, with sufficient pressure brought to bear on Somoza to force him to agree to the NG plan with minimum changes.

The Negotiating Group is not without its problems. The Dominicans have virtually opted out of the mediation unless Somoza accepts the NG plan without further major revision. They went along with the National Plebiscite Authority change, but I am doubtful they will accept any more. Their clear preference is to let things stand where they are so that any further weakening of the FAO cannot be attributed to NG pressures. Guatemala shares this view but with less firmness, perhaps because they do not have the same internal political problems with the mediation. Another factor is that during the course of the mediation Obiols personally has become increasingly concerned over the impact of the Nicaraguan crisis on the stability of the Central American area. He believes there is an urgent need for a peaceful settlement.

It is hard to predict how Somoza will answer the NG response to the PLN counter-proposal. I doubt very much that he will accept the revised NG plan because it does not give him the necessary control over the electoral process to influence the outcome. I expect him to avoid rejection because stretching the negotiation out gains him time and he wants to avoid responsibility for terminating the mediation. We can look for an intermediate position perhaps building on the NPA concession and probably focussing on the voter inscription question which is key to influencing the vote and on which his lieutenants have placed so much emphasis in their recent conversations with us.

The basic decision we need to make is whether we want to try to maintain a democratic third force against the day when Somoza might be more amenable to a settlement or back off and let nature take its course in Nicaragua. If our objective is the former we need a strategy for (1) holding the FAO together and (2) increasing the pressures on Somoza. If the decision is to follow the other alternative, we should suspend, but not terminate, the mediation and disassociate ourselves from Somoza to the degree necessary to preserve USG credibility.

The FAO still represents a not insignificant coalition of forces: the three principal elements of the Conservative Party, the major labor organizations, and the private sector represented by COSEP. Their preference is to maintain themselves as a separate, moderate third force, resisting pressures or blandishments from Somoza or efforts of

the far left to have the FAO join a new Patriotic Front.⁴ In order for them to hold an independent posture and continue on the mediation track some outside encouragement is essential. They must see that they have not been abandoned by those outside who share their views and that their internal efforts will have external backing.

To have any hope of success in persuading the FAO to maintain its independence we would have to:

—*make publicly clear that there are to be no further concessions on the NG plan.* Whatever Somoza's response to the NG's January 12 letter. We would have to insist on acceptance in principle as the FAO has done;

—*start implementing the measures we have warned Somoza we would take.* We should start with the four measures mentioned to him in the demarches and proceed to tougher economic measures, if he refuses to accept the NG terms for the plebiscite;

—*consider convening an MFM to review the Nicaraguan situation in the light of the IAHRC and the Negotiating Group reports.* Among the actions the MFM might take are: express concern over violation of human rights and call for respect of those rights; find that the internal conflict in Nicaragua represents a threat to the peace and stability of the Central American area and is therefore a matter of concern to the government of the OAS; and note the report of the NG and express regret that one of the parties has not accepted the recommendations for a peaceful settlement. The votes for suspension of diplomatic relations are probably not available. A substitute would be for the professed democratic governments following the MFM to announce they are withdrawing their ambassadors until Somoza agrees to the NG plan for a plebiscite and follow-on action.

Looking at Central America in general I see indications of serious instability during 1979. Despite Somoza's expressed confidence, I believe that the situation in Nicaragua will degenerate into greater violence. The confrontation between the government and the violent opposition in El Salvador, when added to the serious demographic problems and socio-economic imbalances, presents another explosive situation. President Lucas told me he expected the present calm in Guatemala to last only until the end of the month. As the Sandinistas operate from safe-havens in Costa Rica and Honduras, it would not be surprising to see border incidents heightening the general tensions in the area and aggravating the problems of an already battered Common Market. All these factors argue for continuing our efforts to pressure

⁴ Telegram 268 from Managua, January 16, reported that the National Patriotic Front was near formal launching and noted that the Embassy expected this "new opposition super-coalition" to "be heavily influenced by leftist, radical groups and to adopt a confrontational strategy," and that "the FAO appears to be resisting the mounting pressure (including that of Alfonso Robelo) to join the FPN." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/1-16/79)

Somoza to accept the NG settlement as an important step toward defusing the critical panorama in Central America. A solution of the Nicaraguan crisis could open the door for tackling other problems (e.g. the Salvador-Honduras dispute) on an individual and regional basis.

191. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 18, 1979, 2121Z

314. For Assistant Secretary Vaky and Ambassador Bowdler. For Santo Domingo and Guatemala: Please deliver to FonMin Jimenez and Ambassador Obiols. Dept also pass to USSOUTHCOM PR. Subject: PLN Response to NG Proposal. Ref: Managua 310.²

Following is our hasty informal translation of PLN response transmitted reftel.

Quote.

Managua, D.N., 17 January 1979.

Very excellent Sirs: It pleases us to advise you of the receipt of your polite communication of 12 January of this year, related to ours of the 26th of December 1978, to which was annexed our counter-proposal to the “act of commitment” presented by your excellencies. “Such an important document has been carefully examined by the authorities of the Nationalist Liberal Party, who we represent, giving priority attention to some of its paragraphs. Effectively it pleases us to note the following:

(Inner quote) The International Commission, meeting in Santo Domingo, has given the greatest attention to the study of said counter-proposal and views with satisfaction that in it appear some of the elements of its proposal of 20 December which contributes toward reducing the differences between the parties and permits the nourish-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78–7/79. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, Santo Domingo, Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² In telegram 310 from Managua, January 18, the Embassy included the Spanish-language text of the PLN response to the Negotiating Group proposal delivered to Somoza on January 12. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790026–0053) For additional information concerning the Negotiating Group meeting with Somoza, see Document 189.

ment of hope for arriving at a peaceful solution to the political crisis which thwarts the Nicaraguan people. (End inner quote)

"It also satisfies us to verify that, upon your excellencies referring to the evaluation of the Nicaraguan problem, you expressed the following:

(Inner quote) Nevertheless, the International Commission believes that, with relation to the mechanism for realizing the plebiscite, the concept of a National Authority of the Plebiscite (ANP) merits the careful study of the parties, in the understanding that said authority will be observed and supervised carefully and systematically by the International Authority of the Plebiscite (AIP) (End inner quote)

"The Nationalist Liberal Party agrees with the content of the previously transcribed paragraphs and shares the hopes of the International Commission of Friendly Cooperation" for arriving at a peaceful solution to our political crisis," and, therefore, reaffirms its undiminished objective of pursuing the dialog with the political opposition to the constitutional government of the republic.

"Likewise, we have duly noted that a copy of your communication has been sent to the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), with the objective, no doubt, of reinitiating the negotiations and carrying to a happy end your conciliatory efforts. Nonetheless, we believe it our duty to demonstrate our concern that the mentioned organization is disintegrating and, therefore, its political capacity to constitute an adversary satisfying the diverse tendencies which must participate in the solution of the political problem confronting the Nicaraguan people has weakened.

"We consider it fair to have the record show that the plebiscite accepted by you was an initiative of the Nationalist Liberal Party and we appreciate your agreement that its organization and control corresponds to national authorities, constituted at all levels by a representative of the Nationalist Liberal Party another from the Broad Opposition Front and a President agreed upon by both parties or selected through lotteries from lists established through mutual agreement.

"Naturally, as we emphasized in our initial proposal and as a legitimate initiative of the Nationalist Liberal Party, we agree that the plebiscite will be verified subject to the supervision of the Organization of American States, which could effect it by means of the establishment of a mechanism through the participation of an Executive Director, observers at the councils: national, departmental, cantonal and poll watchers who will be present, supervise and certify all activities of this organ and, especially, registration, distribution of ballot boxes and ballots, the computation of votes, certifying the results and return of the ballot boxes and ballots for their final computation to be held at the headquarters of the national authority. We believe that these formulae

guarantee the “careful and systematic” supervision of an international organism in the plebiscite.

“We are exceedingly pleased that your communication of the 12th of this month makes express recognition that the initiative for the plebiscite and the supervision of the same by an international authority, without affecting the national sovereignty and dignity, has come from the Nationalist Liberal Party.

“At the same time we note that it is not possible to realize with justice a popular consultation without previous inscription, as has always taken place in Nicaragua and in the majority of countries of America, in full agreement with the political parties, without pointing out the probability that such a necessary electoral requirement could be carried out in less time than that traditionally provided in our country.

“Your excellencies could analyze the amount of inconveniences which could present themselves at the polls on the day of the electoral event, if there were not intervening previous registration. It is easy to suppose the time which could be taken up in analysis of protests related to the voters who do not prove the citizenship legitimacy to exercise his right in the voting which is planned.

“Inscription eliminates in advance the disputes which could arise over the identity and eligibility of the voter, assures the orderly and peaceful development of the voting and permits a better check on the final results.

“Further, we believe that in the plebiscite all citizens qualified to exercise the right to vote should vote in accordance with the constitution of the republic. It comes to our attention that it is proposed to include the Nicaraguans resident outside the country so that they vote outside the national territory, since there never has been the object of a request or controversy among the different political groups of Nicaragua, and that being established only in an exceptional fashion in certain countries, it is planned now to introduce it in this popular consultation as an element foreign to our electoral tradition, for which we reiterate the concepts of our counter-proposal of December 26, last month.

“Neither do we find any basis for changing the present limits of the electoral districts, since these are solely due to criteria of population concentrations, accessibility and familiarity for the movement of the voter, and do not have any political relevance in the electoral process of Nicaragua, given that whatever presidential or congressional or mayoral election is decided by an absolute majority which is recorded in the country, region, or municipality, without whatever change in the electoral district lines being able to affect the results (one person, one vote), for which equally we reiterate the concepts of our counter-proposal of December 26, last month.

"The Nationalist Liberal Party wishes to express its disquiet that the proposals to suppress inscription and the alteration of the district boundaries, only would cause confusion in the electorate, which would lead to a reduction in the participation in the vote of the Nicaraguan people in this process.

"The National Liberal Party affirms that the alternatives to be presented to the Nicaraguan people should be: the continuation of President Somoza in the presidency until 1981 or the convocation of a constituent assembly, so that the Nicaraguan people should have full knowledge that if the vote is adverse to the termination of the constitutional period of President Somoza, it would put into operation an institutional process with the final result the convocation of a constituent assembly. The alternatives should be presented in a clear and precise form, easily understood for all the national electorate, under the electoral symbols chosen by each political group.

"With regard to paragraph 2C of your communication of January 12, the Nationalist Liberal Party, considers that the specifics of B, C, D, and E of the 4th point of our counterproposal of December 26, 1978, assures, under the international supervision, the free access, without pressures or coercions by any authority or individual, for all citizens to the polls; as a consequence, we do not agree with the separation from their responsibilities which they want to impose on officers of the National Guard and the restrictions on the civil authorities, since that does not influence the development and result of the popular consultation.

"Again we reiterate that we do not accept any proposal which imposes ostracism on whatever Nicaraguan, not only because it implies the violation of the individual guarantees consecrated in the political constitution, but also for finding it incongruous with the principles of juridical equality of all Nicaraguans.

"Finally we wish to reiterate that if the popular verdict were to result unfavorable to the termination of the constitutional period of President Somoza, the presidential succession should be decided strictly in conformity with the provisions of the present constitution, because a personalized and politically undefined vote should not be considered as a popular mandate for an ad hoc political grouping lacking stability and in the process of disintegration, above all when it was rejected without greater consideration the proposal of Nationalist Liberal Party regarding a voting by parties, to determine the popular base of each grouping and its resultant participation in the government. Nevertheless, in case of establishment of an interim government, the "Nationalist Liberal Party reaffirms its determination to participate in a government of national unity.

"The Nationalist Liberal Party believes that it must await the definition of the political forces of each grouping in the elections for the

constituent assembly, so that it will determine, as repository of national representation, the participation and influence of each party in the organs of government in conformity with the new alignments and mandates adopted.

“For all the reasons mentioned above, we reiterate the concepts of our counter proposal of the 26th of December, last year.

“The honorable Commission of Friendly Cooperation must consider and examine our response with the serenity required by the goal of finding, as soon as possible, conciliatory formulas which do not injure the sovereignty of the nation.

“We reiterate to your excellencies our recognition of the good will you continue to manifest and we renew the assurances of our highest and distinguished consideration.

(Signed) Julio C. Quintana, Orlando Montenegro, Alceo Tablada S.
Unquote³

Solaun

³ In his January 19 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor noted the PLN's negative response to the Negotiating Group's January 12 proposal and wrote: "In effect the PLN response rejects almost totally the provisions of the mediators' plan and merely repeats the PLN submission of December 26." Pastor also commented that "the door is left slightly ajar for continuation of the mediation; but for all intents and purposes, this stage of the mediation can be considered to be ended." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: Current Crisis: 1–7/79)

192. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 18, 1979

SUBJECT

President's Lunch² with Representative John Murphy (C)

Attached at Tab I is a memorandum from you to the President briefing him for his lunch with Representative John Murphy. As you know, this is a very critical conversation. Murphy will come in well-armed by Somoza to try to turn the President around. If he succeeds, we can kiss Nicaragua good-bye. Moreover, I feel Somoza will give his response to our proposal to Murphy before he gives it to us. That will obviously put the President at a significant disadvantage. Therefore, while I know that you like to keep the briefing paper to the President to one page, I think this luncheon permits an exception to the rule. Besides, I have sent only one of the five briefing papers that the State Department has sent for him.³ (C)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I and send it with the Tabs to the President.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/17–23/79. Confidential. The memorandum was sent through Albright. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. Aaron wrote at the top of the first page "DA. good memo." Inderfurth wrote the word "urgent," underlined it, and initialed at the top of the page.

² Inderfurth drew a line to the word "lunch" and wrote "tomorrow (Friday)" in the right-hand margin.

³ Reference is to an undated paper entitled, "Highlights of President Somoza's January 18 Response to the Negotiating Group on a Plebiscite," upon which Carter initialed the top of the first page. Susan Clough, Carter's Personal Assistant and Secretary, wrote a covering note to the memorandum on January 19 stating: "Rick Inderfurth just brought this from Brzezinski's office, and said you had requested it for your lunch. If it's something you want to give during lunch, please keep. If it's briefing material . . . I'll put it on your desk." Carter wrote at the bottom of the covering note: "No bill yet. Hum Rts—after uprising," referring to his lunch meeting with Murphy. An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the note: "Return to ZB." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/19–23/79)

⁴ Brzezinski did not approve or disapprove of the recommendation.

Tab I

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter⁵

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Your lunch with Rep. John Murphy January 19, 1979

From the foreign policy perspective, your meeting has three purposes: (1) to try to secure the cooperation of John Murphy in passing the *Panama Canal implementing legislation* by June; (2) to inform him that the *proposal* presented by the mediators for a *Nicaraguan plebiscite* on January 12 was our bottom line, and if Somoza does not accept it, or if he tries to draw out the negotiations by bickering over details, our relations with his government will be seriously and negatively affected; and (3) to make clear that you will not permit any linkage between the two issues. (C)

As an opponent of the Canal Treaties, Murphy would be difficult enough to win over even if there weren't policy differences between us on Nicaragua. A classmate and very close friend of Somoza, Murphy is angry that your Administration has abandoned (what he views as) one of America's best friends, Anastasio Somoza. I suggest you read the cable summarizing Murphy's conversations in Panama for a flavor of his views on the two issues of Panama and Nicaragua. (see Tab A).⁶

Panama. Murphy introduced implementing legislation on Monday which causes us a number of problems. In particular, he wants to maintain continued Congressional authority by establishing an appropriated fund agency to run the Canal rather than an independent corporation as we prefer. Also, he wants to draw the American members of the Commission from private life, while we favor appointing

⁵ Confidential. The memorandum is unsigned.

⁶ Tab A, attached but not printed, is telegram 243 from Panama City, January 10, in which Moss reported to Vaky that Murphy visited Panama January 9–10 at the invitation of Royo. Moss wrote: "Murphy said that he advised Royo that Panama stay as far away from the Nicaraguan situation as possible and 'uncouple itself' from the events in Nicaragua; otherwise, the notion of Panamanian involvement could be disastrous for the passage of implementing legislation" for the Panama Canal Treaty. Moss also noted that Murphy had told him: "The United States should see the light, cease its policies of strangling the Somoza regime through cutoff of AID, military assistance, IMF funds, etc., and let Somoza get on with the business of running his country and restoring peace and stability." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/17–23/79)

USG officials so as to assure a coordinated US approach. We expect that our implementing legislation will be submitted next Monday.⁷ You should note our strong interest in cooperating closely with Murphy to pass a bill by June 1 and assure a peaceful and stable transition to a new Panama Canal administration. (C) (see Tab B).⁸

Nicaragua. It seems likely that he will try to exploit whatever leverage he thinks he has to try to reverse your policy on Nicaragua. *You need to be very firm with him.* He is so close to Somoza that if he leaves your lunch thinking that you might reconsider issues such as economic or military aid, he will telephone this information to Somoza immediately. And we have no doubt that Somoza would interpret any such information in a way that could undermine the mediation effort and everything we have been trying to do there.

On January 12, after Bowdler had persuaded the other two mediators to adopt our changes in their initial plebiscite proposal (i.e., accept Somoza's proposal for a national plebiscite authority, although it would be closely monitored and supervised by international observers), the three mediators met with Somoza. Earlier, they had met with the opposition (FAO) which accepted the revised proposal, but refused to publicly commit themselves to it until Somoza accepted it. (C)

Somoza has promised to respond on January 19.⁹ As soon as we receive his response, I will brief you on it, but based on conversations with his Ambassador, we expect Somoza will respond with a "heavily qualified acceptance", i.e. he will insist on pre-registration (he sees this as the last way to manipulate the process and intimidate voters) and on his plebiscite question, which is confusing and side-steps the major issue: whether Somoza should continue in office till 1981.

The mediation effort was established in order to preserve the democratic middle in Nicaragua, which was threatened by Somoza and the Sandinistas. We decided to support a plebiscite because it provides an opportunity for the Nicaraguan people to participate in a process which would peacefully and legitimately facilitate Somoza's departure, if as seems clear, he enjoys practically no popular support. (C)

Somoza has recently told us that he has successfully split the middle, that he can defeat the Sandinistas, and that he can make it without us. We question all three points. First, we believe that the moderate opposition will probably fragment if the mediation collapses: many will join the National Front recently established by the Sandinistas; others will flee the country. Second, Somoza is unquestionably

⁷ January 22.

⁸ Not attached.

⁹ See Document 191 and footnote 3 thereto.

stronger than the Sandinistas *now*, but as the country becomes more polarized, he will find himself in as isolated a position as the Shah; only by then, the only alternative will be the Sandinistas. Finally, we think Somoza still fears U.S. disassociation from his regime. If the U.S. abandons Somoza, he really has nowhere else to turn for international support; even the southern core military regimes won't touch him. (C)

I recommend that you approach Murphy firmly, though more in sorrow than in anger. The mediators have gone more than halfway with their compromise proposal. Unless Somoza accepts it soon, and a plebiscite which is credible to the Nicaraguan people is set in motion, we can not continue our historic relationship. The human rights abuses described in the report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights¹⁰ were tragic and deplorable. We fear that if the mediation breaks down, these abuses will increase as will violence and political polarization. (C)

You may want to tell Murphy in quite specific terms that we have gone about as far as we can, and that you intend to withdraw the Milgroup, reduce the AID mission and our Embassy staff, and for security reasons, withdraw the Peace Corps, unless Somoza accepts the proposal. (Bowdler has not been that specific yet.)¹¹ (C)

¹⁰ See Document 144.

¹¹ On January 19, from noon to 1:05 p.m., Carter participated in a luncheon meeting with Murphy and Murphy's wife Kathleen to discuss the Panama Canal implementation legislation, maritime policy, and the Nicaraguan situation. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the luncheon meeting has been found.

193. Telegram From the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the White House¹

Santo Domingo, January 23, 1979, 1446Z

321. To: The White House. From: Robert Pastor, Santo Domingo 321 Section 1 of 2. To: The White House, For Zbigniew Brzezinski and David Aaron.

The time for decision has arrived. We delay only at the risk of seeing all our efforts in Nicaragua come to naught.

After Somoza responded to the mediators' December 20th proposal by saying that he could not accept an international plebiscite authority running an election in Nicaragua, the FAO and the three mediators all felt that we had come to the end of the line. They said it was time to show Somoza that we were serious when we had told him that rejection of the plebiscite proposal would adversely affect our relations. The President, of course, felt that Somoza's objection had merit, and so we went the extra mile to persuade the other two mediators to accept a revised counter proposal. Because we knew it would be difficult for the FAO to accept a new proposal when they had risked significant internal division to accept the earlier one, we decided that we would tell them and Somoza that this was our bottom line. We did not intend to let Somoza diddle on any of the other plebiscite details, if he insisted on asking for more, we intended to tell him that we would withdraw the Milgroup and Peace Corps, and significantly reduce the size of our A.I.D. Mission and our Embassy.

As those who have been most skeptical of Somoza accurately predicted, he did respond by asking for more. We cannot go around the maypole again. The time has come to inform Somoza that we will take these steps outlined above. The critical question is how do we take these steps in a way which is most likely to encourage Somoza to accept the plebiscite or a change in government, or in a way which will leave him isolated. We also want to make the decision in a way which conforms to our previous pledges to our friends in and outside Nicaragua. I'm afraid State's options paper is not helpful in considering

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/24-31/79. Secret. Sent via Privacy Channels. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Pastor was in Santo Domingo to participate in the Caribbean Chiefs of Mission and AID Directors' meeting January 22-24. (Telegram 18139 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, January 23; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790033-1122)

this decision.² Option B is totally unrealistic, it presumes that we are capable of renegeing on our pledges, and it violates the basic assumption which has guided our policy from the beginning: in the long-term, Somoza cannot win, the longer he hangs on, the more likely we will see a radical solution. Moreover, identifying with Somoza at this time will hurt us much more in Nicaragua and the world than it will help him. Thus, Option B is a recipe for disaster; not only will we look stupid in trying to return to “business as usual”, but it will probably accelerate the radicalization of Nicaragua by making it unambiguously clear to the majority of Nicaraguans who want to see Somoza leave that the Sandinistas are the only alternative.

It is also unrealistic to think that we can “strike a deal” with Somoza. The exercise we have just been through on the plebiscite demonstrates that he is willing to do almost anything just as long as the changes do not touch him directly. But as we have also learned: the issue is not what reforms Somoza can take; the issue is Somoza. On that issue, we can’t deal, and he won’t.

Let me recommend the following scenario for PRC consideration:

(1) First, we need to follow the mediation effort to its conclusion. The mediators should draft their report to the O.A.S. In that report, they need to place the responsibility for the breakdown in the mediation effort clearly on Somoza’s shoulders.

(2) After the mediators have completed a draft and before they formally submit a report, Amb. Solaun should describe it in general terms to Somoza and inform him that we intend to withdraw the Milgroup and Peace Corps, and significantly reduce our A.I.D. Mission and Embassy staff.

(3) When the O.A.S. meeting of Foreign Ministers (MFM) convenes to hear this report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHRC), we should explain in some detail that we had worked sincerely to mediate the crisis in Nicaragua, but that Somoza had evidently viewed it as a way to divert attention from the real crisis facing his

² On January 22, in advance of a scheduled January 26 PRC meeting, Perry sent Brzezinski a paper entitled “Future Policy Toward Nicaragua.” The paper offered two policy options: “Option A. Distance ourselves and adopt a correct but not supportive relationship to Somoza, through a combination of unilateral and multilateral actions as described below, and thereby serve to encourage a broadly based centrist opposition group to maintain cohesion and independence;” and “Option B. Suspend mediation efforts and return to business-as-usual with the Somoza Government.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/24–31/79) Tarnoff sent a revised version of the policy paper, drafted by Bowdler, to Brzezinski on January 24. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua IX) For additional information on the PRC meeting, see Document 194.

country rather than try to address it. The FAO had also extended and exposed itself to try to negotiate a peaceful, democratic solution. It is therefore more with sorrow than anger that we have concluded that Somoza has been insincere and that the mediation has been suspended.

Based on these conclusions and taking into account the very serious report of the IAHRC, we have decided to reduce the USG presence in Nicaragua. We are aware that this presence—including the Milgroup, AID, Peace Corps, and the large Embassy—has in the past been used as an indication of our support for Somoza, and we don't want anyone to misinterpret our position anymore. The International Mediation Group fashioned a proposal which we believe could resolve the crisis. The opposition accepted it but Somoza didn't. We therefore cannot continue to have the same relationship with him in the future that we have had in the past. At this point, we should withdraw our MilGroup and take the other steps. It would have a positive effect on the O.A.S. debate.

(4) At the same time, we remain as concerned about the human rights situation in Nicaragua as ever, and we should be in front of the OAS debate to try to get a resolution deploring the human rights situation there and making it clear to Somoza that the OAS will find any decision on his part to kill or imprison opposition leaders as unacceptable.

(5) Amb. Solaun should not only maintain his contacts with FAO, COSEP and Church leaders, he should increase them—for two reasons: (1) to keep them from shifting their allegiance to the extreme left—a process which has already begun, and (2) to try to save them from Somoza. We have a certain responsibility to the democratic middle, which exposed itself during the mediation effort, and Somoza is likely to be more careful if we place them under our wing.

These are the steps which I hope the PRC will agree on. If we fail to take these steps, we will leave the moderate opposition in Nicaragua exposed; our credibility in Nicaragua and in the hemisphere destroyed, and we will invite a downward spiral of radicalization in Nicaragua.

There is one additional step, which I hope you will consider at this time, and that is to respond positively to the request by Edan Pastora³ for a low-level, discrete, and to the extent possible, secret contact with

³ Robelo met with Vaky, Bowdler, and Barneby on January 4. In telegram 2596 to Managua, January 5, the Department noted that during that January 4 meeting Robelo had "said he had talked to Eden Pastora two days ago by phone, and latter had asked Robelo to inquire if U.S. officials would be willing to receive him." The Department also noted that Vaky had replied to Robelo that "in present circumstances, and particularly in view of U.S. role as mediator, any such meetings would be inadvisable at this juncture." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790006-0031)

the Terciario wing of the Sandinistas. This should be done only if critical members of the FAO approve of the idea. Such a conduit could serve several purposes: (1) it could encourage division within the Sandinistas just at the time when their unity and strength has begun to attract elements from the middle. (2) If the Sandinistas ever overthrow Somoza, it would be good to have had these contacts before, not only because it can be a source of valuable information on their activities and organization, but because we will be in a better position to respond to questions from the public about why we know so little about such a potent political force (the same questions we are hearing about Iran). (3) It is not clear whether we can have much influence on the Sandinistas, but certainly we will have more influence if we contact them than if we don't. Also to the extent that we contact them, they would have less reason to turn to the Cubans. (The Panamanians and Venezuelans played that role for a while, but apparently they took our statements of concern seriously and have, according to recent intelligence reports, reduced their contacts. The Cubans have apparently picked up the slack.) (4) Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Somoza is likely to learn of those contacts, and when he does, he will for the first time realize that we do not intend to come to his support if the alternative is a Sandinista take-over. This may prove even more persuasive than the other steps to reduce our presence.

I have talked to Vaky about the idea of contacting the Sandinistas, and he strongly disagrees for four reasons: (1) It would confuse and undercut the FAO; (2) The evidence that Pastora is a strong or decisive leader is unclear; (3) We will invite Pastora to ask us for things which we can't deliver (i.e., support and blessing); and (4) It could be misinterpreted in the U.S. I obviously do not find his arguments persuasive.

To the situation room; please pass to Richard Brown.

194. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 26, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC on Nicaragua

At Tab I is a memorandum from you to the President which summarizes the PRC meeting and requests your approval of the Conclusions.

Your recommendations were adopted unanimously by the PRC, but after you left, there was discussion on one issue which ran contrary to a point you had made privately to me. The PRC concluded that decisions to continue the suspension of the two AID loans which were signed but not implemented, and a decision not to have any new AID loans would permit a slight reduction in AID personnel in Managua. Apparently there were special AID personnel sent to Managua to administer the two loans which are currently suspended. I assume that is still consistent with the general point you made about not taking a punitive step in the economic assistance area. (S)

John Murphy has written the President a letter (Tab B)² which argues Somoza's position on the outstanding issues of the plebiscite. State has prepared a draft response (Tab C)³ which addresses each of Murphy's points. In addition, at Tab D, I have prepared a brief summary of the outstanding issues, Somoza's (and Murphy's) views, and the US view.⁴ I recommend that you not forward Tabs B, C, or D to the President. I believe that Secretary Vance should respond to Murphy's letter, but I wanted to check with you on that point.⁵ (S)

I also recommend that you read the intelligence report at Tab E.⁶ It strikes me as very reliable, and confirms the premises which underlie

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/24-31/79. Secret. Sent for action. Aaron initialed the top of the page and wrote: "fix it." An unknown hand wrote "done" at the top of the page. Tabs I, A, and D are printed below.

² The letter, dated January 22, is attached but not printed.

³ The response, dated January 25, is attached but not printed.

⁴ An unknown hand, underlined "not."

⁵ In a February 10 letter, Vance replied to Murphy, endorsing the efforts of the Negotiating Group to advance a plebiscite. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua X)

⁶ Tab E, attached but not printed, is a January 26 Intelligence Information Cable, which discussed a meeting among members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the Broad Opposition Front, and the Group of 12.

the PRC's recent decision. You may want to give that to the President. We have also just received a cable summarizing the conversation between Vaky and Panama President Royo (Tab F).⁷ Royo makes the point that if the US stopped extending aid or supporting Somoza, "that would create the necessary pressure" to ease Somoza out, and prevent the Communists from taking power. (S)

RECOMMENDATIONS

That you sign the memo at Tab I and forward it with the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A to the President.⁸

That you approve my contacting the State Department to suggest that Secretary Vance should respond to Murphy's letter.⁹

Tab I

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹⁰

Washington, January 30, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC on Nicaragua (S)

Christopher chaired a PRC meeting to decide on the next steps for U.S. policy in Nicaragua. There was a complete consensus—including Harold Brown and General David Jones—that the time had come for us to take a number of steps which would indicate that the U.S. would no longer be one of the pillars of support for General Somoza. As you will recall, our Ambassador told Somoza that if he rejected the mediators' revised proposal, this would adversely affect our relations. Since then, Somoza has rejected the proposal, and our credibility with the moderate opposition in Nicaragua and with President Perez is at stake. (S)

The PRC therefore unanimously and strongly recommend that you approve the U.S. taking the following steps: termination of our military assistance and withdrawal of Milgroup; reduce non-essential official personnel in our Embassy in Managua; keep in suspense the two AID

⁷ Attached but not printed, is telegram 651 from Panama City, January 26, which described Royo's January 25 meeting with Moss and Vaky.

⁸ An unknown hand approved this recommendation.

⁹ An unknown hand approved this recommendation.

¹⁰ Secret. Carter wrote: "Zbig. J." in the top right-hand corner of the memorandum.

loans signed (but never implemented) last August; and disburse the remainder of the AID loans which have been partially implemented. In addition, for security reasons, we recommend withdrawing all Peace Corps personnel. We also intend to take diplomatic steps in the OAS and with other nations in the region to minimize the violence and increase the pressure on Somoza. (S)

The specific steps are identified in the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A. If you approve, we will announce and explain these steps in a public statement at an appropriate time next week. We will also brief Congressional leaders. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A, and the steps identified in #4.

Tab A

Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹¹

Washington, January 26, 1979, 3:40–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Ambassador William Bowdler,
U.S. Mediator to Nicaragua
Mr. John Bushnell,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Inter-American Affairs

Defense

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown
Mr. David McGiffert,
Assistant Secretary for
International Security Affairs

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner, DCI
[name not declassified]
Office of Regional and
Political Analysis Analyst

AID

Administrator John J. Gilligan
Mr. Edward W. Coy,
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Latin America and the
Caribbean

¹¹ Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote in the margin on the first page: "OK, but see my notes on remaining issues. A plebiscite conducted along terms outlined may provide a fallback option as alternative to armed insurrection. J.C." The President's notes are found in Tab D.

JCS
General David Jones,
Chairman, JCS
Lt. Gen. William Y. Smith,
Assistant to the Chairman

NSC
Ambassador Henry Owen
Mr. Robert Pastor
White House
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Purpose of Mediation Effort.* There was agreement that we had reached a critical decision point. The moderate opposition (FAO) has grudgingly accepted the mediators' revised proposal, but Somoza has not. Bowdler believes that we cannot break the impasse without making concessions which the FAO and the other two mediators could not accept. The mediators intend to submit a report to the O.A.S. which indicates they have not through mediation been successful in finding a solution to the crisis in Nicaragua. (S)

2. *In Nicaragua.* In the short term, Somoza has consolidated his position by significantly strengthening the National Guard. The Sandinistas appear intimidated and have changed their tactics, focusing on a longer term operation. With the Group of Twelve, they have set up a National Patriotic Front and have begun to attract elements of the FAO. The PRC agreed that polarization will increase over time, and that eventually Somoza will be vulnerable to a radical solution. (S)

3. *Political Considerations.* Rep. Charlie Wilson (D-Texas), who strongly supports Somoza, has threatened "to cut the heart out of the AID program" if we terminate reconstruction assistance for Nicaragua. He said he cares less about the question of withdrawing the Milgroup. (S)

4. *U.S. Policy.* The PRC unanimously agreed that we need to take the following politically symbolic steps now to show Somoza and the FAO that we were serious when we said that failure to agree to the mediators' proposal would negatively affect our relations: terminate all military assistance and withdraw the Milgroup; withdraw all Peace Corps for security reasons; reduce non-essential official personnel; in a reconvened 17th meeting of O.A.S. Foreign Ministers, consider the report on Nicaragua of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and the report of the Mediation Group and obtain as strong a censure of the Somoza regime as possible; continue to strongly urge governments likely to sell arms to Somoza or to provide weapons to the Sandinistas not to do so in order to limit escalation of the violence in Nicaragua; keep in suspense the two AID loans signed (but never implemented) last August; disburse the remainder of the AID loans which have been partially implemented; and don't go ahead with any new aid at this time. These steps should be taken to signal our displeasure with Somoza's intransigence and to get some distance between us without losing

the possibility of influencing him in the future. While the decision to go ahead with the AID money in the pipeline will probably provoke criticism from the opposition, the PRC felt this would be balanced by the other steps and by a statement, which we should issue, pointing out the humanitarian aspects of the earthquake reconstruction aid (which Wilson is so concerned about). In the statement which is issued to explain these decisions, there will be a condemnation of violence and any attempt to begin such violence.¹² We would also remain ready to talk with Somoza if he is prepared to reconsider the mediators' proposal. (S)

5. *Next Steps.* The PRC agreed to consider in a few weeks the suspension of on-going loans plus additional steps in a possible second phase effort to resolve the crisis.

Tab D

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council¹³

Washington, undated

Issues Raised in the Letter from Cong. Murphy to the President

1. *Registration of Voters*

Somoza View—Registration must be conducted in advance of the plebiscite to prevent confusion and to insure the bona fides of all voters.

U.S. view—For the plebiscite to be fair, it is not necessary for voters to be pre-registered. Precedent exists (of other referenda and plebiscites held in other parts of the world) that indicates pre-registration of voters is not necessary. Furthermore, the mediators' proposal provides the three-member polling station board (PLN-FAO-PIA) with sufficient authority to determine the bona fides of eligible voters. The mediators found that the FAO would not accept the pre-registration because as Nicaraguans who have lived under the Somoza regime for decades, they sincerely viewed the pre-registration condition as a means through which Somoza would intimidate prospective voters and manipulate the election results in his favor.¹⁴

¹² In telegram 32714 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, February 8, the Department included the text of the press announcement explaining the U.S. actions regarding Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/24-31/79)

¹³ No classification marking.

¹⁴ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this point: "Somoza's willingness to register up to 2 weeks of election would be adequate."

2. *Question Posed in the Plebiscite*

Somoza View—The question should consist of two parts: Should Somoza complete his constitutional term, or should a national constituent assembly be convened.

U.S. View—The question should be a simple, straight-forward proposition: Should Somoza continue as President of Nicaragua. The Somoza question (a) is confusing, (b) leaves open the possibility that Somoza could manipulate and control the constituent assembly if somehow he were to fail in winning enough votes on the first half of the question, and (c) is not acceptable to the FAO who see it as yet another cynical step by Somoza to confuse the issue.¹⁵

3. *Departure of the Somozas in Advance of the Plebiscite*

Somoza View—Would not be reasonable or fair to expect the key figure of a plebiscite to absent himself before the vote. (Murphy has been misled to believe that the mediators want President Somoza to depart before the plebiscite; in fact, they suggested that Somoza's son and half-brother, who are top officers of the National Guard, be assigned abroad prior to the plebiscite.)

U.S. View—In order to help create a climate of trust and confidence among the Nicaraguan general public that a plebiscite could be conducted fairly, the departure of these key family members is essential. Somoza, however, would be free to conduct a normal political campaign in the period prior to the plebiscite.¹⁶

4. *Right of Nicaraguans Living Abroad to Vote in the Plebiscite*

Somoza View—This has never been a practice in Nicaraguan history and would be impossible to administer.

U.S. View—Many Nicaraguans have fled their country because of the repressive policies of the Somoza regime. To permit them to vote would only be fair. They can easily be identified by presenting passports to the three member (PLN–FAO–PIA) board designated to operate a polling station in mutually agreed upon sites abroad. This right is a well-known and widely practiced right, and, in fact, is a legal right recognized and insured to citizens of the U.S. and other democratic countries who reside abroad. It is not specifically prohibited under the Nicaraguan constitution.¹⁷

¹⁵ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this point: "But to leave anarchy behind him is hard to accept."

¹⁶ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this point: "I agree with Somoza."

¹⁷ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this point: "OK if registered up to 2 weeks of election day."

5. *Redistricting Voting Precincts*

Somoza View—Runs counter to customary voting practices, would cause confusion and would result in a degree of disenfranchisement of the rural population especially.

U.S. View—In order to restore confidence in the voting process, which under the Somozas has been fraudulently manipulated and perverted, it is necessary to redraw the districts to remove the precincts and polling stations from the control of Somoza officials. The mediators discovered that in order to dispel the deep skepticism of the FAO that a fair and just plebiscite could be conducted, a break with the Somoza voting structures had to be devised. We have every reason to believe more persons would vote in rural and urban areas if they feel confident that their vote will be truly secret, will be counted, and that they will not be harassed or persecuted for having participated in the voting.¹⁸

¹⁸ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this point: "Somoza is willing to redistrict urban areas—It may be ridiculous to change rural districts. (It would be in Plains)."

195. **Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)**¹

Washington, January 31, 1979

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua (S)

It was a mistake to forward tabs B through F to the President.² The fact that he spent so much time on the issues surrounding the Plebiscite suggests that he is not aware that the decisions that he has made in the Summary of Conclusions are based on the premise that the mediation effort is ended, or at least is in recess. His notes are on issues which are no longer relevant. You and David cleared off on a

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 34, Nicaragua: 1/24–31/79. Secret.

² Reference is to the tabs attached to Pastor's January 26 memorandum to Brzezinski; see Document 194.

cable last Saturday which indicated that we rejected Somoza's proposal, and we, as one of the three mediators, considered the mediation effort in recess.³ Bowdler has since gone to meet with his colleagues to gain agreement on the text of their response. (S)

The President's notes suggest that he is still prepared to bargain, but the bargaining has ended. We cannot open it again. I really cannot understand the President's notes. You probably want to check with him before sending the memorandum at Tab I.⁴ (S)

I do not know how to deal with the President's notes. Obviously, we cannot suggest that the Secretary of State send a letter to Representative Murphy along the lines of Tab C (Tab II) since it runs contrary to many of the Presidents points.⁵ (S)

³ In a January 27 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor requested clearance of an attached draft telegram, which included the Negotiating Group's reply to the January 17 PLN note. (See Document 191.) Pastor wrote: "The cable represents the last response by the three mediators to Somoza's counter-proposal. Its main points are that 'propitious conditions no longer exist' for the mediation to continue because of the inflexibility of Somoza's PLN negotiators. Therefore, the 'mediation is recessed,' and the mediators intend to submit a report to their governments which states this point. The report will then be presented to the OAS." Aaron approved Pastor's recommendation to clear the attached cable. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78-6/79) For the final version of the telegram, see Document 196.

⁴ Not attached. In a February 1 memorandum to Vance, Harold Brown, Gilligan, Jones, and Turner, Brzezinski noted Carter's approval of the Summary of Conclusions for the January 26 PRC meeting on Nicaragua (see Document 194) and repeated its main points. In a February 2 covering memorandum, Dodson noted that the documents were "to be held very closely." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua) An unsigned memorandum to Carter dictated by Brzezinski on February 1 and seen the next day by Carter noted: "Following your decisions, I have informed Cy and Harold and the other PRC participants that we should take the steps recommended by the PRC to signal our displeasure with Somoza's intransigence with the mediation effort and to get some distance between our governments. These steps include Milgroup withdrawal, withdrawal of the Peace Corps for security reasons, reducing our embassy personnel, etc. As regards the mediation efforts, Ambassador Bowdler is meeting with his colleagues and they plan to present a paper to Somoza, which will subsequently be published, indicating that because of Somoza's inflexibility the mediation effort is in recess. The mediators will then present a report to the OAS." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 2/79)

⁵ Not attached. Reference is to the January 25 draft response; see footnotes 3 and 5 of Document 194.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that we forward the President's notes at Tab D (Tab II) to State and let them figure out how to respond to Murphy.

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I and forward it with the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A only.⁶

⁶ There is no indication that Brzezinski approved or disapproved of either recommendation. Under an undated covering memorandum to Vance, Brzezinski sent copies of his February 1 memorandum regarding the January 26 PRC meeting on Nicaragua, the January 26 Summary of Conclusions of that meeting, and Carter's comments on Pastor's undated memorandum on the issues raised in Murphy's January 22 letter. (Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Nicaragua) The January 26 Summary of Conclusions and the undated Pastor memorandum are printed as Tabs A and D to Document 194. Department Spokesman Hodding Carter stated during a February 8 press briefing that the mediation process for Nicaragua was "suspended" and therefore the U.S. Government had "reassessed its relationship with Nicaragua" and would withdraw the military assistance group and terminate (the already suspended) military assistance program; cancel any new AID projects; withdraw the Peace Corps; and reduce the staffing of the Embassy in Nicaragua. (Department of State, *Bulletin*, May 1979, p. 66)

196. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Guatemala¹

Washington, February 3, 1979, 2327Z

30207. Subject: Message to Foreign Minister Castillo on Nicaraguan Mediation. Ref: Guatemala 0779.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Please deliver ASAP following personal message from Secretary Vance to Foreign Minister Castillo:

Begin text. I am writing you about a matter which is of serious concern to both of us: Nicaragua. I have followed events there closely over the past year and share your preoccupation that the violence which has occurred in that country, and is still taking place, endangers the peace and stability of the Central American area.

Indeed, it was because of this concern that the United States supported the effort in which our representatives, together with the Dominican Foreign Minister, participated in an attempt to bring the various Nicaraguan elements together in a negotiated solution.

I regret that this effort did not achieve the success we both had hoped. Nevertheless it did manage to bring about a restoration of constitutional guarantees, a general amnesty and the lifting of the state of siege and censorship which has at least helped to ameliorate the tensions which built up during the course of the past year.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22 Human Rights—Nicaragua X. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua and Santo Domingo. Drafted by Vaky, cleared in S/S-O; approved by Christopher.

² Telegram 779 from Guatemala City, February 3, reported that Obiols was about to be withdrawn from the Negotiating Group and that the Guatemalan Government would not approve the Negotiating Group's proposed reply to the PLN's note of January 17. Castillo noted that Lucas had declined to meet with Bowdler because "he didn't want to be insulted. i.e. high-pressured by the U.S. in an area where his mind was made up." Further, Castillo said that Guatemala would "not repeat not submit independent report either." If the United States "wished to submit a joint report, that was their business" and Guatemala "would probably be obliged to speak against it." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 2/79) Telegram 19476 to Guatemala City and Santo Domingo, January 24, transmitted the draft Negotiating Group reply to the PLN note of January 17 for review by Obiols and Jimenez in Santo Domingo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790036–0433) According to Bowdler's February 6 memorandum of telephone conversation, Jimenez "indicated that he would be prepared to go ahead even though the Guatemalans had raised objections" to the Negotiating Group's reply. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, February 1–March 16, 1979)

—Both our countries can be proud of the fine contribution our two representatives made to this effort, and I hope that we can continue to be unified in our approach to this problem. As you know, Mr. Minister, a letter has been prepared by all three mediators to be presented to the PLN which concludes regretfully that the mediation effort has not been successful in attaining its principal goal of assisting the Nicaraguan people to find a durable and democratic solution to their current political crisis. The mediators conclude, and I agree with their conclusion, that the mediation effort should therefore be recessed. I hope that this letter can be delivered as promptly as possible. I was therefore particularly distressed to learn that you have instructed your Ambassador not to sign that letter. I hope sincerely, Mr. Minister, that you will reconsider this step and agree to having all three representatives sign that letter. It is of the greatest importance, I believe, that this letter go forward to terminate this phase of mediation in reply to the PLN. May I therefore urge you to take that step.

I am also convinced, Mr. Minister, that the record of these negotiations is one of which we can be proud and which should be told. As you know, the three negotiators have also prepared a report recounting their efforts. This is intended simply as an historical record and not as a judgment or for purposes of debate.

I understand that you have reservations about such a report and have decided not to participate in it. I earnestly hope, Mr. Minister, that you will reconsider this decision as well. I sincerely believe we have an obligation to inform the meeting of Foreign Ministers which was convened last September to consider the Nicaraguan crisis on the results of the conciliation efforts, mindful of the fact that the meeting gave specific encouragement to this initiative of our governments in paragraph 5 of its resolution of September 23.³ It is also important for the other member governments of the OAS to know how the effort was conducted and with what result. Finally, the public in our respective countries and throughout the hemisphere should be informed of the scope of the effort. Public understanding will contribute to the search for a solution rather than impede it.

It would be most unfortunate if after so close a cooperation between our three governments on this constructive enterprise, we were not able to act with equal cohesiveness in this final stage of our mediation effort. We should also, I would hope, act with equal unity in telling our regional organization and the world how well we worked in our search for a peaceful solution to the Nicaraguan crisis. It is in this spirit, Mr. Minister, that I urge most earnestly that you authorize your

³ See footnote 4, Document 107.

representative to join with his two colleagues in signing the letter to the PLN to close this procedural chapter. I hope also that you will reconsider your decision not to participate in a joint report to the OAS. Such steps on your part would continue the innovative statesmanlike and constructive role which your government has played in these matters and in Foreign Affairs generally under your leadership.

Respectfully yours, Cyrus Vance. End text.⁴

3. For Guatemala: Castillo's assertion that we cannot meet with Secretary February 12 because he will be in Venezuela for the inauguration is obviously in error. Venezuelan inauguration is March rpt March 12.⁵

Vance

⁴ In telegram 30933 to Guatemala City, February 6, the Department stated: "In view of the fact that Guatemala is in the process of officially withdrawing Obiols from the Negotiating Group and that it apparently will not participate in signing the letter to reply to the PLN's January 18 response to the Negotiating Group, we have decided to ask Jimenez to authorize a reply to Foreign Minister Quintana, acknowledging the receipt of its response and stating that the Negotiating Group has recessed its activities." An unknown hand wrote: "Castillo concurred, Feb 6," in the margin. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 2/79) In a February 7 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor noted that Guatemala had formally ended its participation in the mediation effort on February 6. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78–7/79)

⁵ In telegram 1206 from Guatemala City, February 22, the Embassy reported that Lucas had decided that "no purpose would be served by responding" to Vance's February 3 message to Castillo and that Castillo and Lucas had decided not to accept the offer to meet with Vance on February 12 "because they had concluded that Department officials would not really listen to the Guatemalan view that the mediation group (which was supposed to be a 'friendly commission') had in fact intervened in Nicaragua." Castillo "reiterated that the US had intervened in Nicaragua when it put the Somozas in power. That intervention had polarized the country. The right-wingers who Somoza had made rich now only opposed Somoza because the US had intervened again." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790083–0012)

197. **Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, February 12, 1979

Central America and Nicaragua

I had occasion to discuss the Nicaraguan situation at length with Guatemalan President Lucas and Foreign Minister Castillo Valdez February 9–10 during the Central American Trade Conference in New Orleans. Copy of a cable detailing those conversations (there were three separate ones) is attached.²

What those talks revealed were:

—Lucas is afraid that if Somoza is forced out or leaves early it will create a vacuum which Castristas would fill; he does not believe there is any other alternative to Somoza; and he dismisses the moderate middle as incapable of governing.

—Lucas therefore opposes any pressure on Somoza to step down or negotiate a transition. He thinks Somoza should finish out his term, but should leave after that and not try to perpetuate the dynasty.

—Perhaps as a rationalization of his fear of change, and perhaps partly because he has been convinced, Lucas has clearly bought Somoza's version of the situation. His description of the situation sounded exactly like that Somoza used to lay out for Bill Bowdler.

—Lucas will try to rally his Honduran and Salvadoran colleagues to support a status quo arrangement. He would like the U.S. to support that, or at least passively acquiesce. He would like us to stop creating pressure on Somoza.

—Castillo wants to come to Washington to see the President and you to seek that position.

What in effect is happening is that Somoza is succeeding in rallying his Central American colleagues (less Costa Rica of course) behind him and enlisting their aid in deflecting international—and especially U.S.—pressure on him. What this means in turn is:

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, February 1–March 16, 1979. Confidential; Exdis. Drafted by Vaky. Copies were sent to Newsom, Christopher, and Bowdler. Tarnoff initialed the memorandum.

² Attached but not printed is telegram 36811 to Guatemala City, February 12, entitled "Conversation with President Lucas on Nicaragua."

—Serious ideological division between Costa Rica and the other Central American nations.

—A serious potential risk that we will see a polarization in the whole region, not just Nicaragua. If the regimes band together, the guerrilla groups may do likewise. We may thus see transnational interactions on both ends of the spectrum, which will make the whole region a tinder box and a temptation to Castro.

We will be considering ways to prevent serious polarization, to bolster the middle in all these countries, and to foster support for evolutionary change.

198. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 13, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua Update (S)

Last Thursday² President Perez of Venezuela called our Ambassador to his residence and commented on our move to “distance ourselves” from the Somoza government, which had been announced earlier in the day.³ He urged that we confront the OAS soonest with the IAHRRC report to obtain strong sanctions against Somoza.⁴ (C)

We are consulting with member countries of the OAS to determine the strength of support for a resolution to condemn the government of Nicaragua for its violations of human rights. Seventeen votes will be necessary to pass a resolution, and we count 13 (including ourselves) who will support a strongly worded resolution. The remaining four votes will have to come from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Honduras, or Trinidad. The stronger the resolution, the more difficult

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 2/79. Secret. A notation in an unknown hand at the top of the memorandum reads: “DA has seen.”

² February 8.

³ See footnote 12, Document 194.

⁴ In telegram 1256 from Caracas, February 9, Luers reported on his February 8 meeting with Perez. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790063–0539)

the two-thirds vote. But a very mild resolution will be exploitable by Somoza and will serve his ends. We are hoping for the reconvening of the 17th MFM by February 19. (C)

Dominican Foreign Minister Jimenez agrees with our strategy in convening the MFM of the OAS to present orally and prefactorily the mediation report and to seek a resolution on the IAHRC findings in Nicaragua. He stated, however, that visits to Colombia and Venezuela will make it impossible for him to be in Washington until the first week of March. (C)

We presented demarches to the governments of Cuba, Panama, Venezuela, and Costa Rica to express our concern over reports that they have provided arms and other support to the Sandinistas.⁵ Panama's Torrijos admitted giving aid in the past but said that Perez, Campins (the Venezuelan President-elect), and he had agreed "not to become further involved unless Costa Rica needs help." He believes that we should take stronger measures to sever ties with Somoza, and observed that the only way to deal with Somoza is by a coup. (C)

At a meeting of the leaders of the various FSLN factions in Panama two weeks ago, a message from Fidel Castro was delivered inviting them to Cuba. Torrijos, according to an intelligence report, refused permission for their departure from Panama to Cuba.⁶ If they choose to fly from some other country that would be all right, he said. (S)

From a generally reliable intelligence source we have learned the details of what transpired at the meeting between Guatemalan President Lucas and his Honduran counterpart in Tegucigalpa last week. Lucas enlisted Paz' support in formulating a regional policy (among Guatemala, El Sal., Honduras) toward Nicaragua. In short, because of the collapse of the mediation, Lucas wanted to insure that Somoza stuck to his promise to step down in 1981 and give way to a "democratic and anti-communist" government. In return for Somoza's commitment, they would provide him with at least moral support in his campaign to defeat the FSLN. He asked (and received Paz' concurrence) that Honduras increase its patrols along the Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Nicaraguan borders to prevent the movement of men and arms. (C)

⁵ In telegram 34470 to multiple posts, February 9, the Department requested that the recipients make a *démarche* to the host governments regarding the supplying of arms to the Sandinistas: "Such transnational help provides the basis for Somoza to continue making charges of intervention in Nicaraguan domestic affairs, thereby shifting the focus of attention away from his own responsibility for the critical situation in Nicaragua." The telegram also included specific talking points tailored to both individual posts and groupings of posts. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790066-0647)

⁶ Not found.

199. Memorandum From Robert Gates of the National Security Council Staff to Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, February 26, 1979

On Saturday the President was given a summary of recent cables from Nicaragua in which it was reported that the Somoza Government wishes to normalize relations with us and reinvolve the US in seeking a political solution.² The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs told our Embassy officer that Managua had decided to proceed with the reform measures included in the defunct plebiscite and hoped Washington would at least remain neutral and not undermine these initiatives. Additionally, Somoza spokesman Pallais told our Ambassador of his government's intention to seek a political solution which could overcome the political differences with the US and restore economic cooperation. He indicated Managua is interested in bilateral negotiations at the highest level and wishes the US to exercise its influence with the Nicaraguan opposition to permit negotiations for an internal political solution to proceed.

In the margin, the President noted, "See my previous notes—negotiate, firmly."

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 3/79–5/79. Secret.

² February 24. Reference is to a night note that Brzezinski sent to Carter which referenced telegram 1003 from Managua, February 23. The Embassy reported in the telegram that the Nicaraguan Government "wishes to normalize relations with the U.S. and re-involve the USG in seeking a political solution." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 22, Human Rights—Nicaragua X)

200. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, March 7, 1979

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua (S)

You may recall that the President scribbled on a night note which you sent into him, summarizing a cable which we received from our embassy in Nicaragua, that we should take up Somoza's offer for negotiations, and we should negotiate firmly.² I spoke to Vaky, Bowdler, our Ambassador in Managua, and several others, and it was our unanimous belief that it would be an error to begin to negotiate with Somoza so soon after the mediation effort had failed as a result of his intransigence. We thought it would make much more sense for us to let our decisions sink in in Nicaragua and elsewhere before assessing whether we wanted to adopt a different strategy. I think this posture is also justified by objective circumstances in Nicaragua: Somoza is firmly in place, and the opposition has not really decided what it wants to do at this point. We have received reports—both direct and indirect—that the opposition has been encouraged by our steps. (S)

Vaky spoke to Secretary Vance, who agreed very strongly with the view that we should stand back right now and cool it. The Secretary has sent the memo attached at Tab A, which makes that point. I regret that it took them a week and a half to get the memorandum over to us, and that it arrived after you had departed for the Middle East. But since the President suggested we adopt a different position, the issue is still obviously alive. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I and forward it with Secretary Vance's memo at Tab A (with its attachments).³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79. Confidential. Sent for action. Inderfurth and Reginald Bartholomew initialed the top of the memorandum.

² See Document 199.

³ Aaron wrote: "Redo memo" at the bottom of the page. An unknown hand wrote "done 3/13" and "DA signed 3/14/79" below Aaron's comment. For Tab I and Tab A, which were not attached, see Document 201.

201. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to President Carter¹

Washington, March 14, 1979

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to Nicaragua (S)

You may recall that you asked us to “negotiate, firmly” in response to informal messages conveyed by Somoza’s officials to our Embassy in Managua that he would be open to beginning the process of normalizing relations with the U.S.² My staff immediately set to work with Cy’s to evaluate a number of different options for the U.S. to consider as we enter into a new phase in our relations. At Tab A is Cy’s response. We concluded that it is too soon to consider opening up negotiations with Somoza. We have already received reports from within Nicaragua and in neighboring countries that the steps which we have recently taken to adjust our relationship with Nicaragua have enhanced our credibility among the democratic groups in the region. (S)

One indication of the effectiveness of these steps is that Somoza has already put out feelers to renew our relationship along historical lines. Cy and I believe that we should adopt a cool and correct posture at this time. We should be prepared to listen to Somoza and his government if they approach us, but we should make clear that his problem in Nicaragua cannot be solved by the U.S., but only by a successful dialogue between him and his opposition. We do not want to get in the middle of this right now. We should also look for appropriate occasions to signal our interest in Nicaragua in maintaining a democratic option and in sustaining the democratic middle. (S)

Cy has also attached a cable (Tab 1) summarizing this posture. I recommend that you approve this posture.³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79. Secret. Sent for action. Carter initialed the top of the page.

² See Document 199.

³ Carter indicated his approval and initialed the top of the page.

Tab A**Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to
President Carter⁴**

Washington, March 6, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

You expressed interest in the cable from Embassy Managua (Managua 1003, attached at Tab 2)⁵ detailing GON interest in confidential bilateral negotiations with the USG, and its hope that we would exercise our influence with the opposition in order to negotiate a political solution for 1981, when Somoza's term as President ends.

We have assessed this report, and our conclusion is that Somoza's bid is primarily intended to obtain USG underwriting of and support for his present position of remaining in power, and to dissipate opposition pressure. The reforms suggested, while desirable on their merits, do not deal with the basic issues and are unlikely to lead to a permanent solution.

The basic position and perceptions of Somoza and his opposition are so far apart and mutually exclusive that we do not believe we can now fruitfully negotiate or mediate a real solution to the succession issue bilaterally, any more than we could with an international mediation team. Indeed, to reopen negotiations with Somoza now, after he has rejected our mediation proposal, would undermine the opposition and lead Somoza to believe that we are anxious to normalize relations on his terms. In short, the end result of such a tactic would be to discourage and radicalize the moderate opposition and project an image of U.S. identity with Somoza. We also note that the Embassy has reported a continuing level of serious human rights violations, and another wave of arrests has followed the December amnesty.

I believe that politically and tactically, as well as for human rights reasons, we should adopt for the time being a cool but correct posture, while we reassess the internal situation and its possible future opportunities for USG initiatives that could contribute toward the peaceful resolution of the political crisis.

⁴ Secret.

⁵ Not attached. See footnote 2, Document 199.

I attach at Tab 1 for your approval a reply to Embassy Managua outlining this basic position and policy for its guidance.⁶

⁶ Not attached. See Document 202.

202. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, March 16, 1979, 0117Z

64200. For the Charge from Assistant Secretary Vaky. Subject: GON Desire to Reinvolvement the U.S. Ref: Managua 1003.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. It appears clear that Somoza is currently wedded to remaining in power until 1981 and probably leaving a handpicked successor when his term ends. The reforms described in reftel and Managua 1124³ do not deal with most of the basic concerns of the opposition, and hence do not in themselves promise a definitive solution to the succession issue. Rather they appear designed simply to dissipate pressures to enable the Somoza regime to continue with less difficulty.

3. We therefore interpret the GON approach to us, described reftel, as an effort to regain USG support for and underwriting of Somoza's policy. Thus the end result of the "normalization" requested would be

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790120–0596. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to Caracas, Guatemala City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa. Drafted and approved by Vaky; cleared in INR, S/P, ARA/CEN, ARA, NSC, and S/S–O.

² See footnote 2, Document 199.

³ In telegram 1124 from Managua, March 2, the Embassy reported on Somoza's press conference held that day. The Embassy noted that Somoza had claimed that "the Liberal Party would have participated in the plebiscite had it been arranged." He promised to "organize a commission of noted jurists to study the reorganization of the judicial branch" of the Nicaraguan Government. He also pledged to "name a technical council to study the elaboration of a new organic law for the National Guard;" "to form a commission of experts under the aegis of the Ministry of Government to organize a national police force;" "to name a commission to elaborate a new electoral law promoting greater democratization of the electoral process;" to provide "new laws designed to eliminate corruption from the government," as well as, "laws to guarantee the observance of human rights by all governmental authorities;" and "that the radio and TV code would be reformed and would be one of the most liberal in Latin America." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790096–0034)

to discourage the opposition and project the image of U.S. identity with the GON.

4. We do not believe that at the moment the USG can bilaterally negotiate or mediate successfully a real solution to the succession issue between Somoza and the opposition. The basic position of both has not changed. Somoza is clearly unwilling to contemplate a process that cuts short his term, and the opposition is unwilling (or unable) to contemplate less. There is no reason to believe that the wide agreement necessary for a real and accurate plebiscite to settle the issue is any more likely now than during the mediation. Indeed, entering into "negotiations" with Somoza now, when he is relatively strong and has just rejected our mediation proposal, would lead him to believe that we are anxious to normalize relations basically on his terms. It would also discourage the moderate opposition and radicalize some of it. Hence we might well contribute to the polarization we wish to avoid, and identify the U.S. with a repressive regime.

5. In short, we do not believe that the opportunity exists for productive new initiatives at the moment. For political as well as human rights reasons, our posture should be cool but correct—and not slip back into business as usual relationships—while we assess the internal correlation of forces and possible new opportunities.

6. Accordingly, you should respond to any queries such as those described reftel, along the following lines:

—Our mediation efforts undertaken pursuant to an international attempt to help the parties find a negotiated solution to the internal crisis, regrettably were not successful.

—We do not believe that we can now fruitfully reengage ourselves bilaterally in internal discussions with the GON and the opposition.

—The basic differences of view and objective of the GON and the opposition are too deep and fundamental to be papered over with partial reforms. Unless there is a basic willingness by the parties concerned to honestly confront the central and pressing issue of the Nicaraguan crisis we do not see how "normalization" negotiations with the USG can reestablish internal equilibrium.

—The USG earnestly hopes that a new national consensus can be established with the opposition and all major elements of society; the means for doing this, however, lie clearly in the hands of Nicaraguans. The GON must decide what it is willing to do and how to do it.

Vance

203. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, March 30, 1979, 1604Z

1585. Subject: (S) The Nicaraguan Atmosphere: Despair and Fear

1. (S)-Entire text

2. Summary: Political, social, and economic conditions continue in inexorable deterioration while the level of revolutionary, repressive, and criminal violence increases. There appears to be no significant lessening resolve on the part of either Somoza or the FSLN to fight to the finish, and the large body politic caught in the cross-fire is increasingly afraid. Another major FSLN offensive is widely rumored. The democratic political and private sectors are largely despondent and immobilized. This was demonstrated when the Conservative Party (PCN) backed away from its initiative to foment peaceful change through institutional reform.² With no near-term resolution of the political situation apparent at present, opposition politicians are increasingly accepting that Somoza may succeed in lasting out his term, but they expect that to be at the cost of many further lives. End summary.

3. Signs of desperation and fear: a) The FSLN appears to be on the defensive in the propaganda attacks launched against the USG and the GOCR related to the Costa Rican "operation checkmate, and against the USG, local democratic opposition political groups and private sector leaders for an alleged "imperialist" supported coup plot which would install a civilian-military government and thereby maintain Somocismo without Somoza. There is also evidence FSLN command and control in urban areas has weakened. Local units appear to be hitting targets of opportunity for robberies and extortion, thereby, sometimes, alienating militant oppositionists. The increasing incidence of political assassinations and economic sabotage has recently drawn criticism from La Prensa and the FAO. At the same time they have never been better equipped or had so many veteran fighters.

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, U.S. Permanent Mission to the OAS, Luigi Einaudi Files, Lot 90D413, PRM 46 Admin. Secret. Sent for information to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, San José, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² In telegram 1233 from Managua, March 9, the Embassy reported that the Nicaraguan Conservative Party had "prepared a wide-ranging proposal for constitutional reforms." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790113-0373) In telegram 1553 from Managua, March 28, the Embassy reported that the "PCN withdrew its institutional reform proposal in the congressional session of March 27." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790147-1052)

4. (b) The GON appears to be seriously preoccupied by current and potential U.S. sanctions and also about the deteriorating internal conditions. Evidence of this concern may be seen in the Luis Pallais trips to Washington, approaches to the Embassy by GON officials, the steps to try to improve the GN's image or strengthen command and control over the GN, the Somoza reform initiative, and the fact that Somoza accepted, at least tentatively, to entertain the PCN reform initiative which upstaged his own.

5. (c) The moderates, whether politicians or private sector leaders, have remained hamstrung since the end of the mediation process at the beginning of the year partly for fear and partly for an inability to identify any constructive initiative. *La Prensa*, which is the most influential institution among democratic oppositionists appears to be suffering from schizophrenia, i.e., supporting radicals and publicizing revolutionary activities on the one hand while at the same time urging peaceful democratic change. It has been consistent only in supporting any and all enemies of Somoza. This is presently shifting slightly toward condemning what it considers excesses of revolutionaries.

6. (d) Throughout all this, the general climate has become one of fear. The campesino and the barrio resident both fear being caught between the FSLN and guardia, or being singled out as a sympathizer of one or the other. Businesses and banks, and their employees fear attacks by FSLN or common criminals; middle and upper class residents from armed robberies, and, in the case of the political activists of both sides, assassination. The Sandinistas fear the increasing presence and alertness of the better armed GN and, consequently, have chosen to concentrate on hit-and-run attacks rather than direct confrontation. The Guardia fear the hit-and-run tactics of the FSLN. As more GN are killed, the more nervous, trigger-happy, and over-reactive they become to the harm of innocent bystanders as well as the Sandinistas. As the level of violence increases, counter-action by the GN and GON leads to further human rights violations and repressive measures: this vicious circle has created an almost palpable sense of fear among Nicaraguans who see no early end to upward spiraling violence, nor any viable solution to the political situation. Even those non-PCN oppositionists that might participate in the democratic reform process fear to do so because of likely FSLN retaliation, or take a "what's the use" attitude.

7. The reform initiative: In an almost desperate last-ditch effort in reaction to this increasingly difficult climate, the traditional opposition PCN introduced its reform initiative. The PCN came under attack from all other oppositionists for its continued participation in the regime thereby lending it an appearance of legitimacy. Although the legislative initiative would have succeeded in forcing Somoza's hand to demon-

strate how far and how fast he might accept changes which would fundamentally affect continuation of the dynasty, the PCN succumbed to the criticism and threats and withdrew the proposal. However, most of them are not willing to leave their seats in the Congress.

8. The FAO: The Broad Opposition Front does not show any sign of disappearing. This is in large part because they believe in democratic change and are convinced that to join the Patriotic Front (FPN) would be to support a Marxist-dominated organization. FAO leaders realize that they will lose political relevance unless they are seen to be active. However, other than emitting communiques dissociating themselves from the GON, and criticizing the PCN and the violence of the radical left, they have yet to find a significant positive role to play in the post-mediation environment.

9. The radical left: The FPN was formed when the radical left thought the FAO would fall apart as a consequence of the unsuccessful mediation initiative. It is dominated by the semi-clandestine United People's Movement (MPU), but includes an overlay of radicalized democratic oppositionists who lend it a public face for its propaganda activities. The MPU is virtually indistinguishable in its revolutionary objective from the FSLN which it supports. The goal of the FPN is to coordinate all opposition activities, but so far its influence appears to be largely confined to students, who have long been leftist dominated, and other radical groups which are members of the FPN. There are tensions between the radicalized democratic groups and the MPU. There already appears to have been some soul-searching and defections in the "popular" Social Christian Party Faction (PPSC). There have been some second thoughts also among the Group of Twelve. This alliance of democratic and leftist groups likely will last only as long as the democratic groups are willing to let themselves be used by the revolutionaries.

10. The private sector: The business community is divided on what strategy to follow to affect political change and even on what strategy it would like the USG to follow. Traditionally, they have been outside of politics and have benefited from the Somoza rule. They realize they are culpable, but are now faced with choosing the left which is inimical to their interest or the, by now, much hated Somoza. They and their businesses are subject to the growing wave of personal assault and robbery. Severely depressed economic conditions have created a strong fear that soon more businesses will fail and others will be forced to lay off more employees, thus contributing further to deterioration of the social situation. They point to the USG as both a cause of the deterioration and a hope for relief. Thus far, the private sector has been very timid both in pronouncements and financial support of the moderate opposition.

11. The Church: The Catholic Church and, in particular, Archbishop Obando y Bravo have been remarkably quiet during this period of escalating violence. This may be due to the influence of a significant number of priests who also have become radicalized. Obando has no problem criticizing violence of the GON, but he has pressure on him to not criticize the FSLN. This may now be changing as seen in the Archbishop becoming actively involved in a "national reflection" movement which some of its participants believe may result in the successor initiative to the dialog movement of late 1977 and the mediation initiative.

12. USG role: The traditional pattern continues to be that all political activists look to the USG as having a major role in achieving the political resolution of the crisis. This may be seen as much in attacks on the USG by the FSLN as the approaches to the USG by the GON and various factions of the democratic opposition. The GON and the FSLN believe the USG is actively involved against their respective interests, while the democratic opposition factions believe the USG is not actively enough involved in removing Somoza and thereby eroding support for the FSLN.

13. Likely future environment: There have been persistent rumors, especially since February, that the FSLN is preparing for another major offensive similar to that of last September. This possibility has taken on increasing specificity based FSLN members being flushed out of Costa Rica into Nicaragua, and the increased level of FSLN hit-and-run activities which some observers interpret as battle seasoning. At the same time, most local observers and Emb believe that in the near-term, the GN is not likely to be defeated militarily despite the FSLN's increasingly sophisticated weaponry and its small-scale victories, such as in El Jicaró in the northern mountains, where the small Guardia post was wiped out. Thus, the prospect is becoming more likely though not certain, that despite a continued high level of violence, Somoza may be able to hold on to power at least until the end of his term absent some unforeseen event such as another heart attack or external direct intervention.

Tucker

204. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 6, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua and Central America (C)

Manolo Reboso, who is formerly Vice Mayor of Miami and remains a very close friend of Somoza, came in to see me on Thursday,² apparently at Somoza's request. Somoza believes that the Soviets have escalated their involvement in Central America directly through their Embassy in Costa Rica and indirectly through the Cubans. Reboso, a Cuban exile, believes that the President will be destroyed politically if a Central American country goes Communist. (C)

I agreed that the consequences would be grave, but said that the important question was how to avoid that. I said that we questioned whether an indefinite continuance of the Somoza dynasty was the way to ensure stability in Central America. Reboso agreed with my point and believes that Somoza understands it as well. (C)

He said that Somoza had asked him to request a meeting with me.³ He repeated the invitation (that he has repeated to me twice before) to go to Managua, but also said that Somoza would meet with me wherever I chose, including Washington.⁴ He said that Somoza does not understand why I would meet with Torrijos, but continually refuse to meet with him. Reboso said that he believes Somoza is looking for an exit, for himself and his son, who wants to go to Harvard Business School. It all depends on how it is put to him. (C)

I said that the situation in Nicaragua is unique because of the 40 year Somoza dynasty. I told Reboso that if I were Somoza I would try to find a way to facilitate a peaceful transition. It would deprive the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 10/78-5/79. Confidential. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it. Inderfurth initialed the top of the page.

² April 5. Reboso also met with Schneider on March 16 and argued that Somoza wished to leave power after elections in 1981. (Memorandum of Conversation, April 2; Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, March 19–May 31)

³ Brzezinski underlined this sentence and placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to it.

⁴ Brzezinski underlined the portion of sentence beginning with "also" and ending with "Washington."

Sandinistas of their most compelling cause, "Somoza." Reboso insisted that is what Somoza wants, and that I should speak to him. (C)

COMMENT: I remain skeptical of Somoza's alleged intentions to find a peaceful exit. I am certain he still yearns for "American legitimacy." I have no desire to play the role of intermediary with him, but at some future point—say six to eight months from now—I think we can turn seriously to him to urge him to make decisions and develop institutions, which will permit genuinely free elections in 1981. (C)

It is true that the Cubans are getting more involved, and this is a cause for great concern. Apparently, Castro is personally and deeply involved himself in bringing together the several Sandinista factions (Tab A), and they have adopted a strategy which will bring more and more violence to Nicaragua.⁵

The Central America PRM is now doubly urgent, and I will try to get a final PRM to you with State's comments by the middle of next week. There are grounds for some encouragement. As a recent intelligence report suggested, the military leaders of Guatemala, Salvador, and Honduras increasingly see the need for Somoza's departure via elections in 1981 as a critical ingredient in stabilizing the situation in Central America. (S)⁶

⁵ Brzezinski underlined the portion of the sentence beginning with "apparently" and ending with "(Tab A)." Tab A, attached but not printed, is an April 3 Intelligence Information Cable, which noted that "it took 48 hours of negotiations in Havana in early March 1979 between Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz and three leaders of the FSLN to convince the latter that they should unite." The cable also noted that Castro advised the FSLN leaders "that they should not stress Marxism in their program" because "at this point in time it would be impossible for a Marxist government to survive" in any Central American country. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 10/78-5/79)

⁶ Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the margin next to this paragraph and wrote: "1. proceed. 2. should anyone else on the NSC meet with him? would that be more 'neutral'? e.g. Thornton? Gates? ZB." In an April 11 note to Brzezinski, Pastor wrote: "I am working with State on a draft PRM on Central America. In response to your question, I do not believe that it would be useful for anyone on the NSC staff to meet with Somoza. Perhaps six months from now we should consider it, but right now, we should remain a cool and collected distance from Somoza, and not let him try to co-opt us. However, if we have a specific message to deliver—for example, 'to get lost'—then I would be very happy to be the bearer of these tidings, and would not mind if someone else on the NSC staff delivered that as well." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 10/78-5/79)

205. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, May 15, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua (U)

David has sent me a couple of items indicating his concern, which I share, about recent developments in Nicaragua.² He asked: "Isn't it time we got acting again?" (S)

The current situation in Nicaragua is one of stalemate. Somoza clearly has the military power to continue punishing the Sandinistas and to continue intimidating the middle. The Sandinistas have been taking a beating from the National Guard, but any weakness which they show will be temporary. Unquestionably, they are attracting the increasing support from the middle. Frankly, I think the situation can remain like this for a fairly long time: violence will increase, Somoza will remain in power, and the Sandinistas will continue fighting. (S)

I would recommend that we wait for two developments to occur before we begin a second round of actively searching for a solution. I believe these two conditions will occur within 3 to 4 months. What are they? (S)

—First, we need to have an Ambassador down there who begins via dialogue to resurrect and support the middle. Since the end of the mediation effort, the middle has been exposed, arrested, or driven out of Nicaragua. You may recall that in a meeting I had three weeks ago with leaders of the Nicaraguan business committee, they strongly recommended we send an Ambassador back so that they would have someone to communicate with and someone to defend them.³ To rebuild the confidence of this group, and to establish wide-ranging contacts will take 3 to 4 months. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46. Secret. Sent for action.

² Items not further identified.

³ Solaun left post on February 26. In telegram 97023 to Managua, April 17, the Department noted that Solaun's resignation as Ambassador was acknowledged publicly at an April 17 press briefing in the Department of State and that a subsequent press statement noted that Solaun had resigned for "personal reasons." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790177-0957)

—Secondly, before an effective solution to the Nicaraguan problem can emerge, it is necessary that both Somoza and the Sandinistas reach the conclusion that they cannot militarily defeat the other.⁴ Once Somoza realizes that the Sandinistas will not go away, and indeed that they are getting stronger, he will become more open to ideas about non-Communist solutions to Nicaragua's crisis. Then, we will be in a much better position to encourage him to develop a genuinely transitional plan towards a moderate solution without Somoza. I believe that Somoza will not reach the conclusion about the Sandinistas for at least 3 or 4 months. (S)

This is the frame of reference that has been guiding my analysis of the current situation in Nicaragua. I have mentioned it to Pete Vaky, and he does not object to it. I plan to speak to him at greater length about this, and perhaps with several of our other Central American ambassadors at the Chiefs of Mission conference in San Jose these next few days. (S)

Please indicate if you disagree with this approach; otherwise I will proceed on this basis.⁵ (U)

⁴ Aaron wrote in the left-hand margin: "Too passive."

⁵ Aaron wrote at the bottom of the page: "Too passive; counts on Somoza + leftists to be rational." Brzezinski wrote in response on May 18: "DA you can review this with Vaky/Pastor—just to make sure we are not missing something important. ZB." In a May 22 memorandum to Aaron, Pastor wrote: "U.S. policy to Nicaragua will be one of the issues addressed in PRM 46 on Central America, which should be sent to NSC in a couple of weeks. Since our new Ambassador will not arrive in Nicaragua before the PRM is completed, I don't think it is necessary to push out a new policy before then, nor do I think we could be able to do it. However, different strategies for approaching the Nicaragua issue will be included in the PRM." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46)

206. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (McMahon) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky), the Director of Intelligence and Research (Bowdler), and Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, May 22, 1979

SUBJECT

Views of Eden Pastora Gomez, Military Leader of the Terciario Faction of the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN/T)

Summary: According to Eden Pastora Gomez, the FSLN/T would like the United States Government to cut off any form of aid and support to President Somoza. Pastora believes the U.S. could use its influence to bring about policy shifts in Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela which would then restore FSLN arms supply channels and facilitate FSLN operations. All three members of the FSLN/T who are on the National Directorate are prepared to talk with an emissary of the United States. Pastora envisions a coalition government whose main function would be to prepare for national elections. An outbreak of large-scale action could begin "at any time." The FSLN/T now has 6000 men under arms and over 4500 rifles compared to 130 rifles in August 1978. End Summary.²

[Omitted here is the body of the report.]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 3/79–5/79. Secret; Wnintel; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon. Pastor added the handwritten notation next to the subject line: "First official contact—CIA & Sandinistas."

² A memorandum for the record drafted by Heavner of the May 22 ARA/CIA/INR weekly meeting noted: "After a discussion of the internal divisions of the FSLN, it was agreed that CIA should continue and deepen its contacts with the non-Marxist elements in the FSLN. It was recognized that such contacts are likely in time to lead to requests for assistance, and that such contacts with CIA may also be surfaced by the FSLN at any time it suits their purposes." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Box 18, ARA–CIA Weekly Meetings, 1979–1981)

207. Telegram From the Defense Intelligence Agency to the Defense Intelligence Agency Current Intelligence, the Agency for International Development, and [addressee not declassified]¹

Washington, May 24, 1979, 0449Z

9892. Subj: DIA Defense Intelligence Notice (DIN). (U)

Nicaragua: Violence Continues. (U)

1. (C/NOFORN) Violence and unrest continue in Nicaragua. The tempo, incidence, and scale of guerrilla action against the Somoza government appear to have reached the highest point since the September 1978 offensive, when five large cities were seized almost simultaneously.

2. (C/NOFORN). Numerous casualties have been incurred in recent action by both sides, but the guerrilla-National Guard contest has not yielded a final victory to either side and casualty counts differ. In the latest and largest scale activity, from 300 to 500 guerrillas moved into the city of Jinotega on the 19th, attacking the guard headquarters, seizing public buildings, interrupting telephone service, and erecting barricades. They later occupied three smaller towns nearby. This action is typical of the most recent larger scale Sandinista operation. The National Guard, also following its recent pattern, has moved in troops and supplies by air and ground and deployed armor, helicopters, and rocket-armed Cessna's to the area. While the guard claimed to have recaptured most of the city by the 21st, heavy fighting is still reported. The guerrillas now claim to have liberated Jinotega and the northern rural section of the country, but this is probably an exaggeration. On the 21st, they also conducted similar operations in the town of Diriamba, where fighting also is believed to be in progress.

3. (C/NOFORN) Despite their claims of success, the guerrillas will probably eventually suffer heavy losses and be routed, as occurred in the onslaught against Esteli last month and at Nueva Guinea in early May. Their most successful tactics are still their highly professional ambushes of the guard, against which they inflict casualties and fade away unscathed before reinforcements arrive.

4. (C/NOFORN) Meanwhile, Somoza's opponents continue to hope for a successful general strike that would set off a countrywide

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Telegrams, May 1979. Confidential; Nofor.

economic collapse.² They would also welcome a National Guard refusal to back Somoza, or a popular uprising against him, either of which they believe would topple the President. In the interim, the guerrillas continue their war of attrition, attempting to stretch the Guard's capabilities beyond the breaking point. However since neither side can eliminate the other, the situation is likely to continue unresolved for the near term. The war of attrition will, however, make it increasingly difficult for the Guard to make up its losses through recruitment, which is already lagging. Should the guerrillas stick to ambushes and concurrently timed short-duration strikes against cities in widely scattered areas, they could eventually win if at least one of the aforementioned hoped-for developments is realized. At present, however, there are only faint and very incipient trends toward one or more of these situations evolving.³

² In telegram 2479 from Managua, June 4, the Embassy reported that the FSLN and the FPN were promoting a general strike and predicted that "the general strike may be partially successful" due to the likelihood of violent confrontations between the National Guard and bystanders. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790253–0935)

³ A June 9 memorandum prepared in INR reported on the status of fighting in Nicaragua between the Sandinista forces and the National Guard, noting that "major clashes" had begun on May 29 and that fighting had "spread across Nicaragua to include the important cities of Leon and Granada; towns which have previously been involved in the conflict, Masaya and Matagalpa, important areas around villages in the south, El Ostional, El Naranjo, and Los Mojones; and in some areas of Managua." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda Jan.–July 1980)

208. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 6, 1979

SUBJECT

Moss-Pastor Mission to Panama

On Monday morning,² after the third urgent plea from Gabriel Lewis for Ambassador Moss and Bob Pastor to go to Panama to speak

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/1–16/79. Confidential.

² June 4.

to General Torrijos, they went.³ They held five hours of discussions with Torrijos and his advisers on Monday night and met with President Royo on Tuesday morning.

Moss and Pastor explained the current precarious status of the implementing legislation and the efforts by Nicaragua and the opponents of the Canal Treaties to try to undermine the implementing legislation by linking Panama to the Sandinistas. Moss and Pastor requested from both Royo and Torrijos their personal assurances that Panama "is not intervening and will not intervene" in the internal affairs of Nicaragua. Royo and Torrijos gave these assurances orally and in letters to you (Tab A).⁴ Moss and Pastor confronted Royo and Torrijos with evidence of DC-6 flights from Cuba to Nicaragua to Costa Rica, but both insisted that these flights were for cultural and sports exchanges. We do not have any firm evidence which contradict their assurances, and we believe it would be very useful for you to convey these assurances to Murphy and key people in the House. If you agree that it would be useful to show these letters to certain Congressmen, we will inform Royo as he will want to release the letters in Panama first.

Torrijos had asked Moss and Pastor to meet with him because he felt that Somoza was nearing his end in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas apparently believe that the general strike in Managua and their all-out offensive will toll the end for Somoza, and Torrijos wanted to give us his assessment of the situation and recommend that we begin to open channels of communication with the more moderate and pragmatic elements of the Sandinista movement. Next Monday, Cy will chair a PRC meeting on Central America, and we will have an opportunity to reexamine our strategy to Nicaragua and all of Central America and make recommendations to you.⁵

Apparently, the Moss/Pastor trip succeeded in calming down Torrijos and the letters could be very helpful in delinking the implementing legislation from the Nicaraguan crisis. In his letter, Royo clearly places his concerns for Nicaragua in a broadly multilateral context (including Costa Rica, Mexico, Andean Pact) and his assurances on non-intervention are unequivocal.

³ In a June 5 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor reported on his trip to Panama and his meetings, along with Moss, with Torrijos and Royo. (Carter Library, Vertical File, Box 94, Folder 2, Robert Pastor)

⁴ Attached but not printed are a Spanish-language letter, June 5, from Royo to Carter and an unsigned and undated letter from Torrijos to Carter.

⁵ See Document 212.

209. Memorandum From the Acting National Intelligence Officer for Latin America (*[name not declassified]*) to the Director of the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency (Bowie)¹

Washington, June 7, 1979

SUBJECT

Forecast of Impending Developments in Nicaragua (C)

1. This memorandum contains my judgement on the likely unfolding of events in Nicaragua over the next 18 months or so. (C)

2. The political ferment and violence in Nicaragua is leading to an overthrow of the government which, unlike palace revolutions in Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina, will be a true revolution in the sense that virtually all social and political structures will be changed radically when the dust settles. (C)

3. While there may be some effort to hold elections in an attempt to establish a representative government after Somoza is ousted, in my judgement, this would fail because of the intensity of popular feelings that all vestiges of the Somoza regime must be abolished. (C)

4. I believe that a revolutionary council would be established headed by “Commandant Zero” or one of the other insurgent leaders. The National Guard would doubtless be disbanded and replaced by a revolutionary army with the responsibility for preventing foreign incursions from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, or elsewhere, and to maintain internal order. (C)

5. I anticipate that all private enterprises would be nationalized, probably without compensation. The Revolutionary Council would then set about establishing a government bearing a strong resemblance to that established by Fidel Castro after the overthrow of Batista. (C)

6. A revolutionary court would go through the motions of trying Somoza and those members of the Somoza regime and the oligarchy who remained in Nicaragua, finding them guilty of crimes against the Nicaraguan people, executing most, and exiling a few. US and other foreign businessmen would be expelled from the country and forced to leave behind all their valuables. Some might be tried and imprisoned for supporting Somoza. (C)

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator for DCI (1977–81), Box 20, Folder 1: PRC Meeting—Central America—DDCI Attended. Confidential. Bowie sent a copy to Carlucci, under a June 8 note, commenting: “I thought you would be interested in the attached forecast on Nicaragua [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. I have also sent a copy to the Director.”

7. Early after its establishment, the new regime would recognize Cuba and probably invite Fidel Castro to visit the country. It would condemn the US for its long history of support to the Somoza regime, but would probably heed Castro's advice not to alienate the US totally. Castro would doubtless offer to send technicians to Nicaragua to assist the new government in getting established and offer advisors to assist in forming the army and the security forces. These offers of Cuban assistance would be accepted with alacrity. (C)

8. Insurgents' success in ousting Somoza and replacing him with a revolutionary/socialist government would stimulate restive forces in El Salvador to take similar action against the Romero government and the so-called "14 families" which control the economy of El Salvador. It would likely also have profound repercussions in Guatemala where the Cuban-backed Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) has harassed the government of President Lucas. While I do not anticipate that the EGP would succeed in overthrowing Lucas, its insurgent activity would add to the malaise of the region. (C)

9. The foreign beneficiary of all this would be Cuba and, indirectly, the Soviet Union, both of which would view the events as an erosion of US influence in the Western Hemisphere. The USSR would stay in the shadows but provide Cuba with any support it needed. (C)

10. Omitted from the above scenario is any action the United States or other nations might take to prevent this eventuality. Without discussing the various options available, which would require a much longer paper than this, it is my considered opinion that none would do more than to slow down or temporarily derail the train of events. (C)

[name not declassified]

210. Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, June 9, 1979

Nicaraguan Scenario

Two recent events give us a significant—but passing—opportunity to mount a major OAS effort to resolve the Nicaraguan crisis:

—The Andean Group (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) issued a declaration June 8 calling for a peaceful democratic solution in Nicaragua (a copy is attached),² The Foreign Ministers of Venezuela and Ecuador are travelling to Costa Rica and Nicaragua on behalf of all five countries to meet June 10–11, with Somoza and Carazo, separately, to probe for a solution.

—Senator Zorinsky has told us he would be willing to marshal support in the Senate, including Senator Lugar (and through him Senator Baker) for decisive measures to end this crisis. He said he believed Somoza should go and/or we should “take over the opposition.” He urged close cooperation with Mexico.

The Andean Group initiative is still vague and unformed. It does provide, however, a perfect opening for reconvening the 17th Meeting of Foreign Ministers (MFM) and using that as a vehicle for a major international effort to end the crisis.

We believe the 17th MFM (which originated last September presided over by the Dominican Foreign Minister and is technically still in session), provides a very suitable format, and one preferable to the OAS Council or a Rio Pact meeting. The 17th MFM was convoked under the Charter, and therefore involves the Caribbean countries whose vote would unquestionably support us. (The Caribbean countries are not members of the Rio Pact.)

As we envisage it, a call to reconvene the MFM would be made by the Andean Pact countries, joined by ourselves, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. The purpose would be to create the opportunity for and to oversee a political transition process in Nicaragua. To be successful and accepted, such a process would have to involve the following elements:

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working File, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, June 1–20, 1979. Drafted by Vaky.

² Attached but not printed is the Andean Pact declaration.

- Somoza's withdrawal from power.
- An immediate transitional government.
- Preservation of existing institutions such as the National Guard.
- Negotiation involving all elements including the Sandinistas for a transition formula leading to democratic elections.

The preconditions for getting such a process off the ground, i.e., having it accepted, would have to be:

—Somoza's conviction that he has no choice but to step down and therefore cooperate in the transition.

—That the arms flow to both sides be stopped so that the parties can negotiate; the Sandinistas tasting victory are not likely to put down their arms if they think they can win.

—The OAS system would have to involve itself in some way in a good offices/mediation effort and in supervision of the process.

The MFM would have to address itself to all these points.

We therefore propose a series of measures as follows:

—Ambassador Bowdler left for Costa Rica this morning (June 9) to talk with the Venezuelan and Ecuadorean Foreign Ministers. He will brief them on his mediation effort, explain the Nicaraguan situation as we see it and seek to find out what they plan; he will consult with them on the idea of an MFM and what that might entail.

—Ambassador Bowdler will go to Mexico June 11 to talk with Castaneda and Lopez Portillo for the same purposes.

—We have already communicated with the Dominican Foreign Minister who has indicated his support for an MFM and his willingness to preside over it.

—Following all of the consultations outlined above we would have another round with the Andean countries, Mexico and the Dominican Republic to work out an MFM strategy. We would, in the course of it, work out the exact language of a resolution to accomplish our objectives.

—Parallel to the above we plan to send Bill Jorden to talk to Somoza with whom we have had no real communication in the past several months. The purpose would be to find out his mood and thinking. A question is whether he should also carry a "message" that the hemisphere countries want to end the situation and he must cooperate with them.

211. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Guatemala and El Salvador¹

Washington, June 9, 1979, 1809Z

148785. Subject: Guatemalan and Salvadoran Policy Toward Nicaragua.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Throughout the Nicaraguan crisis, our objective has been to contain instability and to discourage actions by other countries that fuel the fires and internationalize the violence. Thus we have continuously lobbied the governments, especially Panama, Venezuela and Costa Rica, not to despatch arms and aid to the Sandinista insurgents.

3. There have been reports that El Salvador and Guatemala are sending arms to Somoza, Panamanian authorities have made this charge to our Embassy, and have told us that while they do not want to intervene, neither should Guatemala/El Salvador. Most recently we have received some intelligence reports indicating that the Guatemalan military might consider military intervention, including troops, if Somoza requests. Such action would clearly internationalize the conflict and lead to worse violence.

4. Although we have made similar demarches in the past, we believe it would be desirable once again to express to your host governments our request that they not either intervene or fuel the situation with arms traffic. Accordingly you should make the following points to the highest appropriate authority.

—We are very concerned about events in Nicaragua and are monitoring them closely.

—We do not believe that the solution of the Nicaraguan crisis can come through unilateral actions by neighboring states. The OAS is the proper body in which to consider whatever actions might be appropriate for the international community.

—An internationalization of the conflict would serve no one's interests. Intervention by neighboring states would have untold consequences for the region, and would set off a chain of events whose course no one could predict or control.

—Intervention by another country would be the one excuse that Cuba could use to justify direct intervention.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790262–0512. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information Priority to Caracas, Managua, Panama City, San José, and Tegucigalpa. Drafted by Feinberg and Pfeifle; cleared in ARA/CEN; approved by Vaky.

—Military intervention by any outside power would almost certainly become public knowledge. It would be self-deceptive to imagine that such actions could be kept secret.

—We urge that your government continue to follow its policy of not intervening in the Nicaraguan crisis or extending military assistance to either side. For Guatemala, you may add, that we have noted the report that the Guatemalan Minister of Defense denied that Guatemalan troops are in Nicaragua and that the Ministry stated the Guatemalan Army would not intervene in that country, and we urge continuation of that policy.

—We are interested in your thoughts regarding the Nicaraguan situation, and would like to remain in close contact.²

Vance

² Telegram 3698 from Guatemala City, June 11, reported the delivery of the *démarche* to the Guatemalan Foreign Minister who responded that Guatemala “would never supply arms to Nicaragua.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790265–0431) Telegram 3260 from San Salvador, June 14, reported Romero’s statement that “since the inception of the Nicaraguan crisis, El Salvador’s position has been one of non-intervention,” and that “not one single person had been sent to assist Somoza.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790269–0607) Telegram 2554 from Managua, June 10, noted that the Embassy had “no information or credible reports that either El Salvador or Guatemala are providing arms, troops or even mercenaries to assist the Guardia Nacional.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790263–0943)

212. Editorial Note

A Policy Review Committee (PRC) meeting, chaired by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher on June 11, 1979, surveyed policy options toward Central America and endorsed a revised strategy toward Nicaragua. See Documents 210 and 211. On June 13 President Jimmy Carter reviewed and approved a 6-point strategy on Nicaragua; see Document 470 and Tab B thereto. In telegram 153522 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, June 15, the Department reported that Carter had accepted the PRC’s June 11 recommendation that the United States “should take urgent and immediate action to work with other nations in the Americas to seek an enduring democratic solution to the crisis in Nicaragua.” The Department described the “scenario which we would like to see develop would be to reconvene the 17th MFM ASAP to consider the situation, and pass a resolution calling for a ceasefire,

a halt to the flow of arms to Nicaragua and, if possible, a high-level MFM mission to Somoza designed to urge and to help shape a peaceful transition to a representative government.” The Department instructed posts to solicit host government views and make clear that the U.S. Government was supporting and developing the efforts of the Andean Group toward Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790281–0663) In telegram 152375 to Managua, June 14, the Department included an informal translation of the communiqué given to the press by the Foreign Ministers of Ecuador and Venezuela following their visit to Costa Rica and Nicaragua on behalf of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Andean Group. The communiqué noted: “The object of our trip was not to offer a mediation or a concrete formula to solve the grave problems that affect part of Central America. We went to express to the governments of the countries we visited the preoccupation of the Andean Group over Costa Rica, its conviction (Andean Group) that respect for human rights in Nicaragua constitutes the indispensable basis for adopting the democratic solution to the painful problems through which that country is living and the conviction that the orientations that conduct inter-American life and the permanent principles on which it is based require a decided and rapid attitude which guarantees territorial inviolability and, national sovereignty, respect for human rights and the maintenance and support of peace.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790267–0215)

213. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, June 16, 1979, 1720Z

2653. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Charge. Subject: (S) OAS Action on Nicaragua. Ref: State 153522.²

1. (S)-Entire text
2. Summary: The OAS initiative described reftel appears to be based on the assumption of Somoza’s and/or the FSLN’s willingness

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/1–16/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See Document 212.

to quit fighting. We believe that greatest emphasis of the proposal should be placed on interdicting resupply. Costa Rica is the key and should be pressured to accept an OAS peacekeeping force to include observer forces at all airports which might be used for resupply. End summary.

3. Somoza and the FSLN are in a death grip and unlikely to relax their grasp until one or the other is finished. The diplomatic initiative contemplated reftel is an attempt to stop the fighting by asking both sides to accept such an initiative. The recent visit to Somoza by the Andean reps seemed to confirm this.

4. We do not want to see either Somoza or the FSLN win, but that appears to be the only outcome available except in the unlikely prospect that an OAS force could be constituted and inserted and would be prepared to use sufficient force to militarily neutralize either or both of the contending forces.

5. We believe that the focus of our energies should be on interdicting the flow of weapons and warriors and on facilitating the flow of food-stuffs and medical supplies to the civilian population. From here it appears that the USG is having some success in interdicting openly conducted resupply to the Guardia Nacional, but little or no success in stopping the clandestine flow to the Sandinistas. Hence, we are, in net effect, supporting the FSLN and squeezing the GN. Witness the current FSLN attack at the Costa Rican border, and reports of flights in to Nicaragua to resupply the Sandinistas.

6. A peaceforce would be effective if it were at the border with Costa Rica and present at airports from which supplies and FSLN forces might be sent.

7. ForMin Quintana apparently has called for an OAS force. We are not suggesting a force which will only strengthen Somoza's hold, but rather one that can stop the war, and allow the emergency food and other assistance that will be required, probably urgently.

8. These views are shared by all substantive and intelligence officers at Embassy Managua.³

Tucker

³ In telegram 156558 to Managua, June 17, Vaky noted: "We agree that arms shipments to either party to the fighting should be stopped, and have repeatedly sought every feasible means to do this. If we have been less successful in preventing arms from reaching the FSLN it is not for a lack of persistent effort on our part. Nor is OAS physical interdiction now feasible. We will, however, continue every pressure to achieve this objective. We fully agree that there is a need to provide the kind of humanitarian assistance you describe and will be urging this upon the OAS." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790275-0614) In telegram 156358 to San José, June 16, the Department instructed the Embassy to "point out to him [Carazo] in the strongest constructive terms the need to halt arms supplies to the contending forces in Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790273-0590)

214. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Vienna¹

Washington, June 16, 1979, 1753Z

Tosec 50048/156042. To Jack Perry for Secretary Vance. Subject: Nicaragua.

1. I met today with Vaky, Bowdler and others to review Nicaragua developments. The situation is evolving rapidly and dramatically and I believe that you should know the following.

2. Fighting continues, at least sporadically, in many, perhaps most, of the major cities, including Managua. None of the violence seems to be directed deliberately at Americans or U.S. installations. Food and water are in short supply. Looting increases. The National Guard remains loyal, but intercepts give some indication of anguish and supply problems. Doubts grow in my mind whether Somoza can ride out even the current round.

3. C-130s will evacuate 140 more persons today, 100 Americans, 40 third country nationals. 46 official Americans remain, including Marine guards. Estimates of unofficial Americans vary widely, perhaps 300–400. I have asked the Pentagon to let us know urgently how we can improve our evacuation capacity with Panama assets without creating a front-page story. The best non-Panama option might be to pre-position three jolly green giants from New Mexico to Panama (32 hours). They would have the range to evacuate from Managua without refueling; the Chinooks in Panama would not. This option is complicated however by the need for tankers and 170 support personnel to accompany the helicopters from the U.S. to Panama. If the threats to remaining U.S. personnel increase, I will consult with you on my recommendation concerning further evacuation measures.

4. We intend to ask for an OAS Foreign Ministers meeting for next Thursday, June 21. Although you appear before the Fascell Committee that same day, we might want to consider recommending to you that you deliver our statement at the OAS meeting as well. This meeting might involve almost all the hemisphere's Foreign Ministers and it is likely to be the critical moment in the OAS effort to promote a peaceful transition in Nicaragua. Responses to our telegram to all OAS members indicate that we will have nearly unanimous support for the call.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840167–2147. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. Drafted and approved by Tarnoff. Vance accompanied Carter in Vienna June 14–18 for the U.S.-Soviet Summit and the signing of the SALT II Treaty.

² See Document 212.

We will be preparing a speech and proposed resolution along lines approved by President following June 11 PRC meeting.³

5. We have just learned from the Mexicans that a provisional government of Nicaragua is being formed. Composition is unclear but it will contain elements of FAO as well as Sandanistas. Mexicans and the Andean group may promptly recognize and declare a state of belligerency.⁴ We are getting in touch with these governments immediately and Bowdler will leave for Mexico City tomorrow to urge Mexicans to await OAS Foreign Ministers meeting before recognizing a provisional government although we do not want to exclude the possibility that the provisional government could play a role in a transition period in Nicaragua.

Christopher

³ See Document 212.

⁴ The Andean Pact Foreign Ministers' declaration of a state of belligerency in Nicaragua was released in Lima on June 16. (Telegram 5106 from Lima, June 16; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790273-0683)

215. Telegram From the Department of State to all American Republic Diplomatic Posts, the Embassies in Guyana and The Bahamas, and the United States Interests Section in Cuba¹

Washington, June 17, 1979, 1128Z

156544. Subject: Nicaragua.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Following is latest information on Nicaragua situation which is FYI only and not repeat not for discussion with your host government.

3. "Provisional government" was formed by Sandinistas and some other groups, and announced afternoon June 16. It is composed of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/17-20/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted and approved by Vaky. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790274-0605)

Sergio Ramirez (G–12), Alfonso Robelo (MDN), Moises Hassan (MPU and GPP), Daniel Ortego Saavedra (Terciarios) and Violetta Chamorro (widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro). Only Robelo would appear to qualify as real moderate. We were informed informally by Mexico afternoon of June 16 that it would “support” this government, presumably meaning recognition. We are attempting to ascertain the GOM views more concretely. Panama and Costa Rica may follow suit.

4. Evidence is that movement across Costa Rican border June 15 was aimed at securing “territory” for provisional government. Major effort against Leon may also have been for same purpose.

5. The belligerency status declaration of Andean group complicates matters as explained in State 153522 and 154042 (Notal).² Any recognition of a “provisional government,” should it occur, would be that much more complicating for same reasons. Both threaten to convert the situation into international conflict to remove any chance for a political solution, and to divide the hemisphere.

6. We believe we can no longer wait regarding a MFM. Recognizing that the above steps will affect a MFM’s task, we believe that nevertheless it is the only step that can be taken which has any chance of reconciling the various elements and finding a way out. The alternative is to risk unilateral interventions which will only spread conflict and chaos.

7. Accordingly we plan on June 16 to request reconvening of 17th MFM for no later than June 21 (and we may have to go earlier). We believe Brazil and Venezuela will join us, but time is so urgent in our opinion we will request alone if necessary.

8. We will be providing you with further guidance later as to MFM convocation and what we want to achieve thereby.

Christopher

² See Document 212. In telegram 154042 to Caracas, June 15, the Department instructed the Embassy to point out to Zambrano that the United States would have “serious problems with any declaration of a state of belligerency” regarding Nicaragua on the part of Venezuela. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790271–0020) The Andean Pact Foreign Ministers’ declaration of a state of belligerency in Nicaragua was released on June 16. See footnote 2, Document 210.

216. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Vienna¹

Washington, June 17, 1979, 2232Z

Tosec 50062/156560. For Jack Perry for Secretary Vance from Christopher. Subject: Nicaragua. Vienna for Dr. Brzezinski.

(Secret-Entire text)

1. The situation in Nicaragua continues to deteriorate. While the National Guard has not collapsed, intelligence indicates that it is under heavy pressure and shows signs of fraying. The Sandinistas are being heavily supplied from outside. Fighting is widespread and government control in many areas is tenuous. The military balance, in my view, could shift at any moment. The time is very short if there is to be a transition to a moderate alternative to Somoza.

2. In these circumstances I intend to authorize the following action tomorrow (Monday) morning unless otherwise instructed.

(A) At the meeting of the council of the OAS at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow morning (which was called to consider refugees), the United States (McGee) will go beyond the agenda to call for (1) an immediate ceasefire on humanitarian grounds; (2) cessation of outside support in the strongest terms; and (3) the immediate formation of a government of national unity, as the only available avenue leading to an orderly transition and peaceful elections. With respect to said point (3), the U.S. would make a statement along the following lines: "The U.S. believes that outside humanitarian efforts will be fruitless without a political compromise which satisfies the interests of all significant political groups in Nicaragua. Accordingly, the U.S. urges the immediate formation of a transitional government of national unity consisting of individuals who enjoy the support and the confidence of the widest possible spectrum of Nicaraguans. This government would negotiate a ceasefire and then proceed with free elections and other reform measures. We call upon all Nicaraguan political leaders to recognize this avenue to a lasting peace and take the steps necessary to carry it out."

(B) Following our telegraphic consultations, we are calling for a meeting of the OAS Foreign Ministers on Thursday, June 21. To pursue and elaborate the points made to the Council.² Consultations on a

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840167-2150. Secret; Flash; Cherokee; Nodis. Drafted and approved by Christopher.

² Telegram 156554 to multiple posts, June 17, issued a request for the reconvening of the seventeenth meeting of the consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on June 21, "for the purpose of further considering the critical situation in Central America especially the grave political and human developments in Nicaragua which my government believes constitute a problem of an urgent nature and common interest to the nations of the hemisphere." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/17-20/79)

possible need for a peacekeeping force would take place in the context of the MFM meeting. While the Council is not likely to take any action tomorrow, I believe the United States should not wait until Thursday to make the statement along the lines set forth above. I am mindful of the Wednesday Panama vote, but think we will be in a stronger position for having made the statement.

(C) Ambassador Pezzullo will meet with Luis Pallais (Vice President of Nicaraguan Senate) who is coming to Washington tonight. He would convey a message to be transmitted to Somoza along the lines of the talking points attached to this telegram. Somoza is sending out a variety of signals (calling Jack Murphy, the Pentagon, et al), but I think we should give him our candid appraisal and Pallais is the best channel available.

(D) We will take any feasible additional steps to cut the flow of arms and supplies to the Sandinistas. Torrijos is a key element here. We have frequently (and again June 15) implored Panama not to lend logistical support, and we will ask Ambler Moss to go in again tomorrow.³ (Frankly, we need an overarching plea and straight from the shoulder talk with Torrijos to be effective. Can you advise whether and when this might be possible.)

(E) Four HH-53 Jolly Green Giant helicopters will move from New Mexico to Panama, to pre-position them for possible evacuation in a semi-permissive environment. Up to this point neither the Government of Nicaragua nor the Sandinistas have interfered with U.S. evacuation by C-130's. However, I believe it is prudent for us to be prepared for an evacuation in less favorable circumstances, such as the unavailability of airstrips. The Chinook helicopters now in Panama do not give us a satisfactory evacuation option because of their short range. The movement of HH-53 helicopters will probably become known, but I do not think it has any serious disadvantage since they are so plainly related to the evacuation option. The four helicopters will be accompanied by support aircraft and 170 American support personnel. We will take into account the War Powers Act, and do the necessary briefing on the Hill. (It has also been proposed that a helicopter platform ship steam from San Diego (nine days to station) with up to 1300 Marines, but I do not repeat not recommend that step at this time.)

3. The foregoing recommendations have been discussed with the Vice President.

³ In telegram 4504 from Panama City, June 16, Moss reported his June 16 meeting with Torrijos regarding Nicaragua. Torrijos stressed that "it was important to halt the bloodshed, but at the same time it had to be clear that such a mission would result in a transitional government replacing Somoza." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790273-0470)

Talking points for demarche to Somoza's emissary Luis Pallais—begin text.

—I speak to you under instructions of my government to reflect the profound concern of my government over what is taking place in Nicaragua.

—The loss of life, the human suffering, the material damage are deeply troubling. Such a situation cannot continue.

—Without ignoring or condoning the aggravations which have come from abroad, we conclude that the basic source of the problem remains opposition to President Somoza.

—The situation has clearly reached crisis proportions. Nothing less than a bold political stroke has any prospect of achieving a resolution to the present crisis. The time is running out and on its present course the crisis will end up with the extremists in power.

—The call must be an act of statesmanship. It can succeed only if the President would state that he will step aside and permit a constitutional transitional government of national unity to take over and to begin to negotiate political requirements for a new government.

—Short of this, we fear that a more extreme political solution will be dictated, and the broad base of moderate Nicaraguan forces, including the National Guard, will be isolated and perhaps eliminated from any political or security role.

—The United States would support such a call and seek to mobilize as best it could hemispheric support through the OAS.

—You could, in fact, invite OAS participation and expertise, not only to help negotiate but to create the institutional framework for a satisfactory transition.

—We further would commit ourselves to marshal humanitarian relief efforts to heal the wounds of war.

—To sum up, we ask the President to facilitate a negotiated solution to this situation. This may be the last opportunity for him to do so.⁴ End text.

Christopher

⁴ In telegram Secto 5016 from Vienna, June 18, Secretary Vance's delegation noted: "The Secretary read your cable and discussed it with Brzezinski and Aaron. He asked that two changes be made in your package (and Brzezinski concurred in these): first, the government whose formation we will propose should be called a 'Government of National Reconciliation,' rather than a 'Government of National Unity.' Second, formation of such a government should be coupled with establishment of a peacekeeping or peace-monitoring force. The Secretary said that nothing else could preserve peace, and that the two initiatives would have to go forward together." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/17-20/79)

217. Memorandum From Robert Pastor and Richard Brown of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 18, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaraguan Update (U)

Over the weekend, the FSLN made some impressive military gains by: (a) taking Leon (Nicaragua's second largest city), (b) virtually stopping all highway traffic northward from Managua, (c) consolidating effective possession of Matagalpa, (d) assuming control over certain parts of Managua, and (e) launching of a strong offensive in the south-western border area aimed at Rivas. Somoza has apparently decided not to attempt to retake Leon until Managua has been secured and also is concentrating on turning back the offensive in the South. The National Guard is beginning to suffer from the lack of supplies and mobility as well as from an increasing casualty rate. Somoza's ability to resume control over the areas which he has lost appears increasingly unlikely. (C)

On the diplomatic front, the FSLN benefited from the Andean Pact's formal declaration of a state of belligerency in Nicaragua, since it now is recognized and can receive aid as a legal "belligerent" under international law. In a separate, but nicely coincidental move, the FSLN named a five-member "provisional governmental council," which contains a blend of moderates and Sandinistas. (C)

Responses to our demarche on Nicaragua made over the weekend to hemispheric governments are still tentative, in that the various Foreign Ministers wanted to check with their Presidents before giving definitive answers.² In general, however, the replies seem (a) to favor the urgent reconvening of the 17th MFM of the OAS, (b) to view with less enthusiasm the idea of sending a high-level OAS mission to Nicaragua to help shape a peaceful transition solution, and (c) to be skeptical, if not negative, toward the idea of sending an inter-American peace force to Nicaragua. (C)

We had initially intended to have Ambassador McGee provide a general outline of the US position today at the OAS in a meeting on aid to refugees. However, following our demarche to Pallais, the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79. Confidential. Pastor did not initial the memorandum.

² See footnote 2, Document 211.

Nicaraguan Vice President who flew here Sunday afternoon,³ we decided to delay our public statement to provide Somoza with the chance to make the first move toward his departure and to sell the package of his departure and the formation of a government of "national reconciliation" to the Nicaraguan National Guard.⁴ We should know his decision by tomorrow afternoon. Our current estimate is that the MFM will be reconvened on Wednesday afternoon.⁵ Although the Andean Pact "State of Belligerency" announcement boosted the FSLN, and thus has complicated our effort somewhat, the most serious complication we face is the rapidly deteriorating position of the Nicaraguan National Guard and the steady military successes of the Sandinista forces. (C)

There are three scenarios that are most likely to transpire at this point:

- 1) The Sandinistas could seize power in a few days' time; or,
- 2) The Sandinistas could set up a provisional government in an "occupied" part of Nicaragua and receive formal recognition and support from various countries (including some OAS members) and thus internationalize the situation even further, or
- 3) The situation could continue to disintegrate but with victory eluding either side.

What should we do?

We should aim for gaining the support of the OAS:

- 1) to a plan whereby Somoza would step aside and be replaced by a government of national reconciliation, which would in turn be sustained by an inter-American peace force until elections are held; or
- 2) a plan in which Somoza agrees to depart and an interim government of national reconciliation is formed which could have the option of inviting in an inter-American peace force.

Time is clearly running out. We must move rapidly to avoid the consequences of being confronted with the realities of either of the first two scenarios. (C)

The best way to obtain optimum results is:

³ June 17.

⁴ See Document 216. No memorandum of conversation has been found for Pezzullo's démarche to Pallas. Vaky noted in the Secretary's evening reading for June 18, that Pezzullo had "stated that only the willingness of Somoza to leave and allow a Government of National Reconciliation to be formed could save the situation." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Evening Readings, 1979)

⁵ June 20.

a) to enlist the support of Congressman Charley Wilson to intercede personally with Somoza to convince him to step down and depart Nicaragua;

b) to send high-level emissaries to the major Latin countries to impress upon them the urgency of the situation and the need to get behind a plan to replace Somoza with a non-Sandinista provisional government. More specifically Vaky should go to Colombia and Costa Rica; Pastor and Moss can seek to persuade Torrijos; and Bowdler (who is in Mexico now) could visit Peru, Ecuador and Brazil.

We should do this even though the MFM is scheduled for Wednesday. Since few of the OAS countries are in fact sending their foreign ministers to participate in the meeting, we will have to go to them with our plan. A delegation from Washington is likely to get more attention than our Ambassadors on the scene. The central reason for sending the emissaries is that the Latins' perceptions of the Nicaraguan situation are at odds with our own, and unless we can influence their thinking, we will be unable to move toward the accomplishment of our objectives.

Pastor has spoken at length with Vaky who seems to have given up hope of persuading the Latins to our point of view. Vaky wants to approach this problem through the Sandinistas because he believes that Panama and the democratic governments of the Hemisphere will move to support the Sandinistas and have decided against supporting "Somocismo" without Somoza.⁶ He may be right. But Pastor thinks that this strategy will lead to a disaster and we need to try one more time to achieve an alternate route.

Pastor returns tomorrow by mid-morning and recommends that we hold an SCC meeting on the Nicaraguan problem either Tuesday a.m. or Wednesday. (C)⁷

⁶ In a June 19 memorandum to Vance, Vaky described "our MFM strategy" noting that "we propose to try to persuade the assembled Foreign Ministers to (1) sponsor or push for a political solution; (2) call for a ceasefire and take action to halt the arms flow; and (3) call for and organize massive humanitarian assistance." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/17–20/79)

⁷ See Document 218.

218. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 20, 1979

SUBJECTSCC Meeting on Nicaragua² (U)

I chaired an SCC meeting on Nicaragua Tuesday³ afternoon which Cy, Harold, Stan, David Jones, and others attended. The situation in Nicaragua is deteriorating very rapidly, and the CIA's estimate is that Somoza could be defeated in a week. The central question we faced was: Assuming that we can persuade Somoza to leave peacefully before the Sandinistas seize power, what can we do to ensure the evolution of a democratic, non-Communist government? (S)

All of us agreed on the following strategy: The US will propose at the OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting on Thursday (Cy will represent the US) an immediate ceasefire, an end to external shipment of arms to both sides (and we will explicitly mention Cuba), and the establishment of a broad-based government of National Reconciliation in Nicaragua. We will also propose that a Committee of Foreign Ministers from the OAS go to Nicaragua to try to persuade Somoza to resign and promote a moderate transition government. In order to assure that a transition government will last and that the National Guard will not disintegrate, and in order to facilitate Somoza's decision to leave, we will also urge the creation of an OAS peace-keeping force—or if that's not possible, an inter-American force, involving several Latin countries. We also intend to ask the OAS countries not to recognize the provisional government recently set up by the Sandinistas. We will try to assure that the Nicaragua issue does not spill over into the UN. (S)⁴

The SCC also agreed to set up a working group which would follow-up these points and also prepare talking points for your possible use with General Torrijos. We need to effectively answer questions,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 185, SCC 170 Nicaragua, 01/19/1979. Secret. Sent for information. The date of the document is handwritten. Carter initialed the top of the page. No other substantive record of the June 19 SCC meeting has been found.

² Pastor sent Brzezinski and Aaron a June 19 memorandum outlining the objectives for the SCC meeting. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 30, Meetings-SCC 170, 6/23/1979)

³ June 19.

⁴ Carter wrote "All OK" in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph.

such as: How can we persuade Somoza to depart? How can we persuade the Latin American governments to support an inter-American military presence in Nicaragua when Somoza departs so as to preclude the exploitation by the Sandinistas of the probable political vacuum? The SCC may meet Wednesday afternoon or Thursday to discuss the group's recommendations.⁵ Finally, the SCC suggested I share with you our fear that you may soon face a very difficult decision between two very unattractive alternatives: either a *Castroist Sandinista victory*, which will have very serious implications for the Panama implementing legislation and SALT and also have serious political ramifications, or *US military intervention* to prevent a Sandinista victory and try to permit a moderate political outcome. US intervention would unquestionably destroy the credibility of the policies you have developed to Latin America and the Third World and provoke virtually universal condemnation. (S)

⁵ See Document 223.

219. Editorial Note

On June 20, 1979, American Broadcasting Company (ABC) staff correspondent Bill Stewart, his camera operator Jack Clark, an ABC technician Jim Celafo, a Nicaraguan interpreter, and a Nicaraguan driver entered a section of Managua to photograph "some of the action there." After photographing a scene of heavy violence, the group proceeded past a checkpoint to another area of the neighborhood, whereupon Stewart and interpreter Juan Francisco Espinoza left the vehicle to enter the area on foot. Stewart and Espinoza became separated, while Clark continued to capture the scene on camera. Stewart approached a National Guard member, who forced Stewart to the ground with his arms outstretched, kicked him in the side, and shot him in the head. The remaining three men attempted to flee the scene; the National Guardsman motioned for the truck to move forward closer to Stewart's body. The men then noticed that Espinoza had been killed nearby. Eventually the three men returned to the Intercontinental Hotel with Stewart's body. (Telegram 2725 from Managua, June 20; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790280–0112) On June 24, Somoza provided a message asking that the Embassy: "Accept my deepest condolences on the sad and tragic event," promising, "I have

already ordered a full investigation of this painful and useless incident and I can assure you that the individual or individuals responsible for it, either by action or omission, will receive the full weight of the law." (Telegram 2786 from Managua, June 24; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790286-0242)

220. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

After we talked, I returned to the O.A.S. for a couple of hours of discussions. It's even more depressing than I had thought. Pete² directly asked the Venezuelans and Colombians about cooperating on an inter-American force, and both said: Absolutely not. The Panamanians recognized the Sandinista Front, and the Ecuadorean and Peruvians both believe that the Sandinistas represent a positive force for Nicaragua. We are going through a painful process of educating our "friends" in the hemisphere to see Nicaragua as we see it, but it's not clear we will succeed.

The problem is that we are going around in a circle with them. They don't believe we are serious about getting rid of Somoza and want Somoza to leave before they can even contemplate the future. We are reluctant to take that step unless we have catabolized the situation. They see the Sandinistas very differently than we do.

What to do? I now recommend *against* a Presidential message or the President meeting with Andean Foreign Ministers. They haven't progressed far enough in their thinking for the President to have an impact on them. He would just waste his time or look foolish. *I recommend the President call Torrijos* and almost threaten him to get him to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 1/79-6/79. Secret. Pastor did not initial the memorandum. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it.

² The reference is to Vaky.

stop sending arms to the Sandinistas. *I also recommend that the President meet with Murphy; this is the last chance. If Murphy can convince Somoza to step aside in favor of a broad-based and legitimate government, we would be in a much better position to come to the help of a new government. Last, I recommend that you and Secretary Vance not go to Tokyo.*³ How about Managua for the weekend?

³ Brzezinski and Vance were scheduled to attend the G-7 Economic Summit Meeting June 25–29.

221. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Cuba and Nicaragua (U)

On Tuesday² morning I requested that the CIA provide a short memo on the increasing Cuban involvement with the Sandinistas and also supporting documentation. Today I received the memo at Tab A along with about 2 inches of intelligence reports.³ (S)

Based on this intelligence, it is quite clear that Cuba has significantly increased the level of and the kinds of its assistance to the Sandinistas. Since last Fall, the Cubans have accelerated the rate of training for Sandinista guerrillas and have urged that the various factions unify and pretend a moderate and pluralistic front in order to gain greater acceptance in Nicaragua and internationally. (S)

In recent weeks, Cuba has not only been sending these guerrillas back to Nicaragua to fight, they have been supplying an unbelievable

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: Current Crisis: 1–7/79. Secret. Sent for information. An unknown hand wrote "Aaron" at the top of the page.

² June 19.

³ Tab A, attached but not printed, is a June 21 memorandum prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency entitled "Cuban Support of the Sandinista National Liberation Front."

amount of arms, including anti-aircraft guns, heavy mortars, and recoil-less rifles. There are also reports that Cuban artillery specialists have been sent to fight with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, but these are not confirmed. (S)

At the same time, Cuba has launched a propaganda barrage against the US to put *us* on the defensive. The Secretary of State should make very clear in his remarks at the OAS that the Nations of the Americas will not tolerate Cuban intervention in Nicaragua or anywhere else and will not be deluded by the pretense of pluralism which many of the Sandinista guerrillas have advocated. It is not the US that is intervening, but the Cubans. (S)

222. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Telephone Call to General Torrijos (S)

Cy and I both recommend that you phone General Torrijos and urge him to stop the transfer of arms to the Sandinistas. (Talking Points are at Tab A.)² (S)

We have received word from Somoza that he recognizes that the end is near, and would be prepared to step aside if he can be assured of two things: (1) asylum in the U.S. and a promise that we will not extradite him; and (2) that his departure would not lead to a political vacuum that could be filled by the Sandinistas. He has conveyed the second part of this message to the Andean Pact countries through the Venezuelan Foreign Minister, and their thinking is running parallel to our own. The Andean Pact Foreign Ministers are meeting in Caracas now, and will fly to Washington Thursday morning to press for an OAS resolution calling for a ceasefire, a transitional government of national reconciliation, and a Foreign Ministers' mission to Nicaragua

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21-24/79. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote: "not done. J." in the top right-hand corner of the first page of the memorandum. An unknown hand wrote "Pastor" at the top of the page.

² Attached but not printed are the June 20 taking points.

to work out the details with Somoza. We expect the resolution will be accepted by the OAS and by Somoza. They are not contemplating a peacekeeping force yet, but Venezuelan President Herrera has indicated to us that he is absolutely opposed to a Sandinistas victory. (S)

It is therefore all the more urgent for Torrijos to turn off the faucet of arms to the Sandinistas. We have reports now that the Panamanians are sending at least one airplane a day to the Sandinistas, and landing it outside of Managua. If we can cut that supply, we may gain sufficient time to insure a democratic transition. (S)

Torrijos is coming from a very different direction than we are. He believes the Sandinistas will win, and he is positioning himself alongside the more moderate faction in order to try to assure some influence over the new government. Torrijos wants you to do something “audacious”—like drop bombs on Somoza, and he recommends that you make a symbolic gesture to put the US in a better position to deal with a future Sandinista government.³ (S)

You need to be very blunt and firm with Torrijos. We do not see the Sandinista provisional government as a friendly one; we believe that it will ultimately align with the Cubans. We do believe there is time—if *Torrijos stops shipping arms to the Sandinistas*—to structure a non-Somoza, democratic solution. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you phone General Torrijos. (S)

³ In telegram 158440 to San José, June 20, the Department noted that Moss had met with Torrijos. Torrijos had asked Moss to deliver a “special message to President Carter.” Torrijos “wanted to propose qte a crazy idea unqte which qte will convince President Carter that I’m crazy, but maybe in the middle of the night he will reconsider it and think that I was not so crazy unqte.” The Department elaborated upon the proposal: “Torrijos’s idea was that the U.S. Air Force should launch two strikes against Somoza and drop a few bombs symbolically to rout the Somoza forces in support of Eden Pastora’s forces.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N790005–0241)

223. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 23, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua

This morning, I chaired an SCC meeting on Nicaragua, and Cy, Harold, Stan, Gen. Allen, and others attended. The Sandinistas are getting a lot of arms from the Cubans, and the CIA expects they will launch an offensive from Costa Rica to get some Nicaraguan territory in the Southwest soon. At the OAS, not a single country has supported our resolution, but 14 countries support a resolution drafted by the Andean Pact and Mexico which is designed to prohibit any OAS involvement in the Nicaraguan crisis.² There is a consensus at the OAS that Somoza should go, and many of the democracies clearly favor the Sandinistas.

The SCC agreed that we should take the following steps:

1. *OAS Resolution*. Warren Christopher should continue his negotiations with the Andean countries and Mexico to try to modify their

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 1/79–6/79. Secret. Sent for information. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "OK—cc: V.P., Cy, Zbig." No other substantive record of the meeting has been found. In an unsigned memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, June 23, Pastor provided some suggestions for the SCC meeting that day on Nicaragua. He endorsed a strategy containing four elements: 1) "Stop arms shipments to the Sandinistas;" 2) "Somoza must step down;" 3) "A more legitimate government can invite U.S. and other help;" and 4) "Work through Sandinistas and bolster other Central Americans." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: Current Crisis: 1–7/79)

² At the June 21 OAS Foreign Ministers meeting Vance proposed six actions: "formation of an interim government of national reconciliation acceptable to all major elements of the society; the dispatch by this meeting of a special delegation to Nicaragua; a cessation of arms shipments; a ceasefire; an OAS peacekeeping presence to help establish a climate of peace and security and to assist the interim government in establishing its authority and beginning the task of reconstruction; and a major international relief and reconstruction effort." (Department of State Press Release, June 21; National Archives, RG 59, Policy and Planning Staff, Office of the Director, Records of Anthony Lake, 1977–1981, Lot 82D298, Box 14, TL Secy's MFM Statement on Nicaragua, 6/21/79; Graham Hovey, "Vance Proposes Replacement of Somoza Rule in Nicaragua; Asks for an O.A.S. Peace Force," *New York Times*, June 22, 1979, p. A1) Vance also introduced a resolution embodying these points, the text of which was transmitted in telegram 160356 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, June 21. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790294–0454) In a June 21 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski commented that Vance's references to Cuba, within the context of his statement, needed to be strengthened. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 67, Nicaragua: 10/78–7/79)

resolution so that it could serve as an umbrella for possible follow-on actions by some OAS countries to seek a peaceful and enduring solution to the Nicaraguan crisis. We should bargain hard, and with some modifications we should support the final resolution, although we should also make a statement noting the resolution's weaknesses.³

2. *Presidential Messages.* NSC and State will draft Presidential messages for you to send to Torrijos⁴ and Carazo⁵ urging them to stop the flow of arms to the Sandinistas.

³ Brzezinski wrote in telegram WH 91351 to Carter and Vance, June 24, that the "OAS has just passed a resolution which was modified to take into account most of our concerns." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78–6/79) In telegram 163599 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, June 24, the Department included the text of the compromise draft resolution by the 17th MFM, which declared that "the solution of the serious problem is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the people of Nicaragua;" and that the solution should include the "immediate and definitive replacement of the Somoza regime;" the "installation in Nicaraguan territory of a democratic government;" a "guarantee of the respect for human rights of all Nicaraguans;" and "the holding of free elections as soon as possible." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790327–0050)

⁴ In telegram WH 91354 to Panama City and the Department of State, June 24, the White House instructed Moss to deliver an oral message from Carter to Royo and Torrijos. The message stated: "Somoza must be replaced. But it is essential that we not go from one oppressive regime to another, and I feel that is exactly what will occur if the Sandinistas insist on a military solution." The message requested that Panama "cease the arms flow to the Sandinistas and work together with us to assure that the successor government [to Somoza] will not be dominated by an armed leftist militia." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21–24/79) The message reflected extensive revisions made by Carter to an undated draft. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1–4/79) In telegram 828 from Panama City, June 25, Moss reported that he had delivered Carter's oral message to Torrijos and Royo. Torrijos responded: "The message is understood." Moss noted that Torrijos "admitted (the first time ever) that he and Carazo had let arms go to the Terciario faction because they wanted to build up the moderates in the FSLN." Torrijos also said that "he and Carazo would 'impose moderation' on the Sandinistas and he could 'absolutely guarantee' that neither a radical regime nor a continued armed population would result." Royo offered to arrange for a meeting between a U.S. official and three Nicaraguan "junta provisional" members. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/25/79)

⁵ In telegram WH 91353 to San José and the Department of State, June 24, the White House instructed Weissman to deliver an oral message from Carter to Carazo. The message stated: "I do not believe the provisional government established in San Jose gives full representation to all opposition forces, and it rests on military force constituted in large part by extremists." The message continued: "Without support from you and us, I fear the moderate elements in the provisional government will not be able to hold their own or survive." The message also asked that Carazo "hold off the supply of arms to the Sandinistas" and "stop facilitating Cuban support" to help "assure that the Somoza government will be promptly replaced by democratic, non-Communist government." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21–24/79) The message reflected extensive revisions made by Carter to an undated draft. (Ibid.) In telegram 60 from San José, June 25, the Embassy reported that Weissman had delivered Carter's message orally to Carazo. Carazo "sat in obviously stunned silence for a couple of minutes" and responded that "we have suffered enough already, there is nothing for me to say." (Ibid.) In telegram

3. *Venezuelan Support.* Christopher will seek Venezuelan (and other country) support for a demarche to Somoza urging him to step aside in favor of a government of national conciliation. We will also exchange views on how to structure the next government and provide it some stability.

4. *Demarche to Somoza.* With or without other countries support, Christopher and Bowdler will go to Nicaragua this weekend or as soon as possible to deliver the demarche to Somoza and sketch out in detail the structure of the post-Somoza government.

5. *Reconstituting the Guard.* Secretary Vance will meet with Nicaraguan General Gutierrez, presently Ambassador to Tokyo, when he arrives there, to talk about the beginning of a process of creating an alternative to Somoza.⁶ We will also begin talking with Nicaraguan exiles in Washington and elsewhere for the same purpose.

6. *US Support.* We will indicate to Gutierrez and also to Somoza that if the latter agrees to step down, we will assure sufficient support to the National Guard to guarantee stability during this transitional process.

7. *Murphy.*⁷ Cy or Chris will speak with Murphy to convey our views to him.⁸

62 from San José, June 26, the Embassy reported that, "once he got over his shock" regarding Carter's message, Carazo offered to try to "stem the flow of FSLN supplies." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/25/79)

⁶ In telegram WH 91343 to Tokyo, June 23, Brzezinski instructed Mansfield to arrange for Gutierrez to meet with Vance. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21-24/79) For Vance's discussion with Gutierrez, see Document 225.

⁷ Brzezinski wrote in telegram WH 91351 (see footnote 3 above) that Newsom had phoned Murphy on June 24 and discussed the OAS resolution on Nicaragua, which had upset Murphy.

⁸ Below this point, Carter wrote: "Ok, but before we provide support to the National Guard, the transitional governing group who controls the Guard must be determined by me to be legitimized by adequate support from OAS members or by Nicaraguan people. J.C." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78-6/79)

224. Editorial Note

In telegram 163603 to San José, June 24, the Department instructed Weissman to contact Calero and “as many of FAO leaders as possible” to “explain new opportunities” provided by the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States (MFM) resolution “for renewed effort to persuade Somoza to step down and clear the way for new dialogue on establishment of Government of National Reconciliation.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1562) Calero’s response, as given in telegram 2685 from San José, June 25, indicated “no clear strategy” to “take advantage of opportunity created by MFM resolution;” and his belief that conditions were “sufficient for direct negotiation between Somoza and USG.” (Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, Box 63, Foreign Countries—Nicaragua, 1977–1980)

In telegram 163604 to Managua, June 24, the Department instructed Tucker to contact Cordova Rivas, Jaime Chamorro, and other Broad Opposition Front (FAO) leaders with the same message given to Calero. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1777) FAO leaders met at the Embassy in Managua to discuss their response to the MFM resolution and their independence from the Sandinista National Liberation Front. (Telegram 2787 from Managua, June 24, National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1781) Telegram 2793 from Managua, June 24, included an informal translation of the FAO declaration in response to the MFM resolution, which endorsed Somoza’s departure and sought to ensure sufficient political breadth in the “Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction” to achieve the “democratic and pluralist objectives which the country needs.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21–24/79)

225. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance in Tokyo to the Department of State and the White House¹

Tokyo, June 24, 1979, 1426Z

Secto 6003. For Acting Secretary and Dr. Brzezinski. Subject: Meeting with General Gutierrez.

1. Secret entire text.

2. I have just finished meeting for about one-half hour with General Gutierrez. After reviewing the current situation in some detail, he remarked that he was saddened that our proposal had not carried the day in the OAS because he thought it was sound. I then went directly to the point and asked General Gutierrez whether he would be willing to consider participating in helping to establish a broadly-based provisional government, and to a restructuring of the National Guard so that the latter could be a strong, honest, and democratic force in the country. He said it should be very clear at the outset that he could not return to Nicaragua until President Somoza and his family had left the country. He said that he was a patriot with great affection for his country, even though he had spent the last 15 years out of the country, and that he would be prepared to help and participate if he believed such participation would be useful to his country.

3. He asked how the provisional government would be established and who the members of the provisional government would be. I told him that this would have to be worked out on the ground in Managua, and that there was at this point no consensus as to what individuals or elements would be in a provisional government. I told him that it was our position, as he undoubtedly knew, that the provisional government must be broadly-based and represent the major democratic elements in the country. He asked if it would include any Sandinistas and I replied affirmatively. He said he agreed with the concept of a broadly-based provisional government. He added that he was fearful that unless the provisional government contained strong people the Sandanistas would end up dominating it and, therefore, it was very important to select the right people for such a government.

4. I told him that I expected that efforts would be started very soon to see whether this was possible. I indicated that I anticipated this would be done by a mission from one or more OAS countries who

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/21-24/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis; Eyes Only. Drafted and approved by Vance. Carter initialed the top of the page. Vance was accompanying Carter on a State visit to Japan and to the G-7 Economic Summit Meeting.

would seek to facilitate the process. I further told him that Somoza had reportedly said that he would step down, but only if he were assured that there would not be a vacuum which could lead to a radical take-over. I said I felt time was very short because the fighting would probably continue. Even though we have asked the Panamanians and the Costa Ricans to halt the shipment of arms to the Sandanistas, and that, therefore, time was of the essence.

5. I then told General Gutierrez that he had a reputation for complete integrity and that from all that we had heard he was highly respected by his fellow countrymen. I asked him whether he would be willing to help in the restructuring of the National Guard if asked to do so by the provisional government. He said that he would, that he had given a great deal of thought to this subject over the years. He said he has very definite ideas about how the guard and the police can be cleansed and made more effective, and that he would be prepared to give two or three years of his life to seeing this carried out so that strong, honest, and democratic military and police institutions could be established under civilian control. He emphasized that obviously the Somozas currently in the Guard would have to go before he could take any part. He also emphasized that he had no political ambitions.

6. I told him that I must be totally frank and could not guarantee him that it would be possible to establish a broadly-based and democratic provisional government. I added, however, that such a course seemed to be the only way to prevent a continuing bloodbath and a slide into an increasingly chaotic situation.

7. He repeated again that he was a patriot and that he would be prepared to serve his country and work with us or others along the lines discussed, if he should be asked to do so and it seemed possible to accomplish something.

8. He closed by asking whether or not he would be a member of the provisional government, should he be asked to take over the command of the National Guard. He said he believed this was necessary in order to give him the kind of authority which would be required to cope with the more radical elements of the Sandanistas who might be members of the provisional government. I said I understood his point and the importance he attached to it. I indicated that the US would be following up on the situation in Nicaragua and that we could be back in touch with him within the near future.

9. I recognized General Gutierrez the minute he came in the room, as he was the number three man in the peacekeeping force in the Dominican Republic, where he did an excellent job. He was also in Washington for a considerable period of time, and I also remember him from his days there. He has a deep affection and respect for the United States, having spent 10 years of his life in the US.

Vance

226. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, June 25, 1979, 10–11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President
Mr. John Matheny

State
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Ambassador Viron Vaky
Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo
Mr. William Bowdler

OSD
Secretary Harold Brown
Deputy Secretary Charles Duncan
Mr. David McGiffert

JCS
General David Jones
Lt. General John Pustay

DCI
Admiral Stansfield Turner
[*name not declassified*]

White House
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Mr. David Aaron

NSC
Mr. Robert Pastor

MINUTES

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by describing the agenda (attached).² Since Admiral Turner had not yet arrived, he asked Warren Christopher to begin by discussing the diplomatic situation. (S)

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES

Christopher summarized the debate at the OAS. The Andean countries had negotiated a resolution with Mexico without informing us; they then backed away and accepted many of our suggestions. One

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Nicaragua: 6/25/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² Attached but not printed.

thing he had learned from the debate was that anything the U.S. does with regard to Nicaragua would be viewed with great skepticism by the Latins. (S)

Vaky said that the passage of the resolution had helped our position in the hemisphere and that negotiations may have improved their attitudes of our position. He said that today the Venezuelan Foreign Minister is going to Caracas, and the Venezuela OAS Ambassador will accompany the Peruvian Ambassador to San Jose, probably for discussions with the junta. Then the two Ambassadors will return to the Andean capitals to report to the Foreign Ministers. Venezuelan Ambassador Cardozo told Vaky that he should not doubt the degree of commitment Venezuela had to avoid a Communist victory in Nicaragua. Cardozo reminded Vaky that he was an adviser on Communist insurgency to Foreign Minister Calvani, and for that reason, he was being sent to Nicaragua. (S)

Vaky said that the Andean countries were playing their cards very close to their chest. Apparently, they had no inclination or desire to have us join them, although they will probably make their demarches parallel to our own. He said he does not expect the Venezuelans to recognize the Sandinista junta soon, but he does expect that Peru could break relations soon. At the moment, both Venezuela and Peru have their Ambassadors there. (S)

Christopher summarized by saying that the Sandinista junta is gaining greater international recognition and more authenticity. (S)

Ambassador Pezzullo reviewed his contacts with the many groups of Nicaraguan exiles in Washington. There is one group, which includes large cotton farmers and financiers, whom he met with last night, and also a group from the FAO, whose leader, Javier Zavala, is returning to San Jose soon for a meeting of the FAO. The FAO group recently issued a declaration which suggested that it would keep its door open to the junta.³ Arturo Cruz recently went to San Jose, and Robelo offered him the Central Bank presidency of the new government. Cruz attached three conditions to his acceptance: (1) That the junta be broadened; (2) that the junta commit itself to a democratic process and not rely solely on an armed militia; and (3) that he would have full control over his team at the Central Bank. (S)

Pezzullo summarized by saying that the moderate opposition group had not solidified in any way as of yet. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized the Secretary's meeting with General Gutierrez.⁴ Gutierrez denied any political ambitions, and said he would

³ See Document 224.

⁴ See Document 225.

not do anything until Somoza left the country. He did say, if asked, he would agree to serve on a reconstituted National Guard, but in that case, he also wanted simultaneously to be on the junta. He is not interested in any rapid move, however, and he does not intend to go to Nicaragua until Somoza leaves. (S)

Christopher summarized the responses to the letters which the President sent to Carrazo and Torrijos.⁵ We had anticipated argumentative responses, and that's what we got. He also said that both Pallais and Quintana had indicated to officials in Washington that Somoza might be open to the idea of leaving Nicaragua under certain conditions. (S)

MILITARY SITUATION

Turner then gave a summary of the internal military situation. He said that the FSLN were increasingly concerned about the possibility of US intervention, and were therefore moving toward beginning a major new offensive in the South. The National Guard still is clearing Managua. Fighting is continuing in the city as well as in rural areas. We have contacted through our channels, moderate leaders, and asked if they would be prepared to form a group. They said only under the guarantee of stability, which they viewed as requiring some sort of international presence other than the National Guard. Also, the FSLN would have to participate in such a framework. (S)

Ambassador Vaky said that he had met with former Costa Rican President Oduber, who *Turner's* people know very well. Oduber has a ranch near Liberia in northern Costa Rica, and is well-acquainted and well plugged into the Sandinistas in that area. When Vaky told Oduber that we had received a few reports about the possibility of Cuban personnel in the area, Oduber said: "That cannot be. I have my people out. If Carrazo ever knew about that and ever permitted it, it would be a political bombshell." Oduber said that he knows the area in the north very, very well—even where Pastora spends the night. He feels that he would know if there were any Cubans present. If there were even just one, Oduber said that would be enough. But he doesn't think that even Lopez Portillo knows about that. However, he is going to Mexico over the weekend, and from there to San Jose [*1 line not declassified*] Vaky insisted that we should be very careful and check the reports about Cuban personnel in the area. In addition, we should follow up the demarches to Carrazo and Torrijos with messages providing as much information as possible on this. (S)

In answer to a question from Dr. Brzezinski about whether this could be done, [*name not declassified*] said that virtually all the reports

⁵ See footnotes 4 and 5, Document 223.

on Cuban advisers are coming from a single source. This source is very reliable, but new. Other information he has given has been substantiated. (S)

Vaky interjected by saying that it has not been corroborated yet. Because of *Oduber's* strong views and knowledge of the area, we should be very careful about putting it out. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summed up by saying then we do not want to go ahead with this information at this time. On the equipment, there is no question that they are transferring large amounts to the Sandinistas. Nor is there any question that the Cubans are deeply involved in the training. (S)

Vaky agreed with that. He said that the only question was about Cuban personnel. (S)

Harold Brown said that was the only point in his recent *Issues and Answers* press conference where he said he did not have confirming evidence. (S)

Turner said that the military situation is fairly stable. There are indications that the FSLN feel a great sense of urgency, however, to start an offensive in the southwest. (S)

In answer to a question from the Vice President about whether Somoza is finished, *Turner* said he was. The question really is when. The economic situation is also very bad, with very little food or water available. (S)

With regard to the question of how long Somoza can last, [*name not declassified*] said that he has at least another week. If everything goes against him, then at most a week. If not, perhaps another few weeks. What is less clear is that he will get through this week. However, there is no evidence yet that he is willing to leave except under certain conditions. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski introduced the question of what U.S. policy objectives should be at this time. Do we want to try to widen the junta, or create an alternative to the junta, or seek a fusion between an alternative and the junta? Do we try to forestall recognition of the junta by others? Or do we let others join and recognize the junta? (S)

Vaky said that it is important for everyone to recognize one thing: and that is that no negotiation is possible with Somoza. That time has passed. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed with that statement, as did everyone else. He said that we are now publicly committed to Somoza's departure; the only question is how do we arrange it. If perhaps we cannot put together a pastiche or a negotiated solution, perhaps maybe the best alternative for U.S. policy would be to lay low and concentrate on the northern tier military countries like Honduras and El Salvador. We

could say that it is a Latin American problem, of no consequence to us. This is not an attractive option, but perhaps this is something we should consider. (S)

Harold Brown said that whatever we say, it will still look as if it is a political defeat for us. (S)

Duncan said that if the Sandinistas win, there will be a very small difference in the political implications between walking away from it and trying to find a political solution. (S)

Vaky said that he wouldn't give up in trying to influence the provisional junta. We should work through our friends. Our main card is that we could assure Somoza's departure, and that is not insignificant. (S)

Christopher reinforced that point by saying that what we can bring to this situation at this time is that we can help get Somoza out. But in exchange, we want to assure that there will not be a vacuum so we need to do it in a way that doesn't look like we have chosen up sides with Somoza. We can do this by encouraging the establishment of an Executive Committee along the lines sketched in the political scenario.⁶ However, he recognized that that strategy had less than a 50–50 chance. *Christopher* suggested that we could do this strategy in one of two ways: (1) We could do it quietly without staking all our prestige on this (Executive Committee) strategy; or (2) we could simultaneously get in touch with the provisional junta and try to influence it. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski repeated that Somoza's departure is our biggest point of leverage, and we should use it well. (S)

Harold Brown asked how we should handle the National Guard and the security situation when the Executive Committee is set up. (S)

Christopher said that according to the first strategy—doing it quietly without staking our prestige—we could help establish an executive committee, which would be broadly based, and could transform the National Guard into an effective counter-force. Then we could seek a cease-fire. He asked whether the junta would accept a reformed Guard, and *Vaky* said that he thought they might accept it, and that possibly *Torrijos* would concur. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we should talk to Somoza at this time about the modalities of stepping down. (S)

Christopher said that we should. On Saturday,⁷ he thought that perhaps he should go down to speak to Somoza, but after reflection, he was concerned that this might lead to too much publicity. As an

⁶ Attached but not printed is an unsigned memorandum dated June 25 entitled "Nicaragua, Political Scenario for the Transitional Process." For additional information concerning the course of action, see Document 223.

⁷ June 23.

alternative, he suggested that they send Pezzullo. If Christopher went, it might look like the United States is working with Somoza. There is less risk if we do it with Pezzullo. He will raise this with Foreign Minister Quintana in his meeting that afternoon. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski confirmed that Pezzullo would be delivering the same message to Somoza as Christopher would to Quintana. Also, they would lay out the same scenario. (S)

Christopher agreed, saying that they would make these points bluntly, and they won't negotiate. They won't take "no" for an answer, although they will take suggestions. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that Gutierrez should also be on the Executive Committee, as he expressed some concern about being on the junta as well as in the National Guard. (S)

Vaky said that Somoza hates Gutierrez so much that suggesting Gutierrez should be on the Executive Committee, could possibly wreck the whole idea. (S)

The *Vice President* said that he thought the Sandinistas probably would reject the Executive Committee idea, but perhaps they could negotiate with it. He asked whether the Executive Committee would also call for a cease-fire. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that it would. He said that the Sandinistas are likely to see the Executive Committee as an alternative, especially if we recognize it. The National Guard could be reformed with the obvious purpose of trying to prevent added disruption. The point, of course, is that we need to have a mechanism in place that will assure a stable transition. (S)

Vaky said that we should put parallel pressure on Torrijos and Carrazo at the same time that we call for a cease-fire, and all agreed to that point. The Executive Committee would move immediately on the same day to reorganize the National Guard. (S)

Ambassador Pezzullo said that we ought to bring General Gutierrez back to Washington immediately. (S)

In answer to a question from the Vice President about where Somoza would go, *Dr. Brzezinski* said that we promised him that he could come to the U.S. He suggested perhaps that we send him to Minnesota. (S)

Harold Brown said that in order to insure the integrity of the National Guard, we need to develop some plans for resupplying it. Whether this could be done in 6 months, or 90 days, we will need to develop some plans right away. (S)

In answer to a question from the Vice President about whether the Latin American and Andean countries would get behind this program, *Christopher* said that he didn't think they would. We will have to just

reassure them. We can tell them that we intend to get rid of Somoza, but not how we will do this. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then opened up a discussion of point #3 in the paper—how the U.S. would deal with the question of recognition of the Executive Committee. He said that perhaps we should suspend recognition of the new government, pending reconciliation between that committee and the junta. We could just try to bring both sides together. (S)

Harold Brown asked whether this wouldn't lose us more with the Executive Committee, than it would gain us with the junta. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski focused attention on the importance of getting the new Commander of the National Guard in place. He suggested that when the Executive Committee is set up, the U.S. could announce suspension of relations with the Nicaraguan government pending reconciliation between both sides. He said that the U.S. could maintain a political relationship with both groups, and that we should deal with both groups. (S)

Christopher recommended that we not make any announcement, but work with both sides. He said that there were a lot of advantages of beginning contacts with the Sandinistas. (S)

Pezzullo said that everyone was being drawn to the provisional junta. The minute that we start approaching the junta, this will accelerate. He recommended strongly that we make an open public statement that we are moving to facilitate Somoza's departure, and *Dr. Brzezinski* agreed that would be a good idea. (S)

Mr. Christopher said that we should make clear that we are getting Somoza out, and that we are not in favor of his lackeys moving in his stead, but we are in favor of a provisional government. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we play both sides. (S)

Pastor asked what would be the incentives for the moderate leaders to join the Executive Committee. What are they likely to ask of us? What are they likely to ask of themselves in terms of what's in it for them? Aren't they merely exposing themselves? (S)

Vaky answered that we can at least offer them a stalemate and the possibility of participating in a future government. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he is pessimistic, but he thinks that this route deserves a good try. (S)

The *Vice President* agreed that it was a long shot. (S)

General Jones said the important point is that the National Guard has to hold together and have the morale and the wherewithal during this difficult period. When Somoza leaves, the National Guard is likely to disintegrate. Unless we are committed to make the National Guard work, by supplying logistic support and instilling in them the confidence to succeed, we are not likely to be able to succeed. (S)

The *Vice President* recalled the issue of sending General Huyser to Iran. (S)

Vaky said that there is obviously a great risk in this transition, but he urged that we accept it. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that General Gutierrez should probably come here to talk to Harold Brown and David Jones, and get an idea of what could be expected of us to help him. From here, he should go to Managua or San Jose. (S)

Vaky warned that if Gutierrez came to the U.S. it will look too much as if he is our man, and we are setting up his government. (S)

Christopher said that the Executive Committee must invite him to come to Nicaragua. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he must be in the area soon. He said that McGiffert could go down there and talk to him once he is in the area about what we would be prepared to do for him. (S)

Christopher recommended that perhaps Gutierrez should come back to Honduras, which is relatively neutral in these issues. (S)

Turner repeated what he had said earlier, [1 line not declassified]. He doubted that the moderates will view the National Guard as adequate to restore order. In the crunch, they wanted an international presence or at least some support for the National Guard. Specifically, the National Guard had told [less than 1 line not declassified] that they needed three things: (1) Aircraft; (2) armored vehicles; and (3) medium sized weapons, like rockets, mortars, recoilless rifles. (S)

Christopher said that he did not disagree with that point, but we cannot move too fast in resupplying the National Guard. Perhaps, we should work through Robelo at this time. (S)

Vaky said that after trying this long-shot, we must be prepared to work the other side of the street by trying to co-opt the Sandinistas. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed it was a long-shot, but felt that we should try, and he agreed that we must be prepared to work the other side. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked some questions about the seven people designated to be on the Executive Committee, and Ambassador Bowdler said that he had spoken with most of them, that they were very important leaders with some credibility in the community. (S)

Vaky interjected that no one had as of yet laid out the entire scenario for this group. (S)

Bowdler reported that Newsom had just had a conversation with Representative Murphy, where he outlined in very general terms the kind of scenario that was being discussed. Murphy said that a constitutional formula needs to be maintained. It was important to have some liberal party representation on the transitional junta. However, he found this was helpful. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that Deshon did provide that liberal party representation. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized the discussion:

—First, Christopher will meet with Quintana, and outline the broad approach. (S)

—Next, Pezzullo would go to Managua to make the same pitch to Somoza. (S)

—Next, Bowdler would go to San Jose to meet with the moderate leaders and help put together the Executive Committee. (S)

—Next, Brzezinski, himself, would meet with Gutierrez, and urge him to return to the Western Hemisphere. If asked where he should go, Brzezinski would recommend Costa Rica. *Warren Christopher* said that if necessary, the State Department would pay for it, but it should be on a commercial flight for symbolic reasons. (S)

General Jones wondered whether Colonel Swett, who is an old friend of General Somoza's, and who is about to retire in about five days, shouldn't accompany Pezzullo to Managua. *Warren Christopher* said that it would be a good idea provided that Swett knew what the purpose of his mission was; he is not going down to shore up Somoza, but to tell him to depart. *General Jones* agreed to talk to Colonel Swett, and if everything turned out allright, then Swett would accompany Pezzullo. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether a two-step process was necessary, and Pezzullo and Christopher both agreed that it would help. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that the U.S. should maintain contact with the Executive Committee, while at the same time opening up contact with the junta. (S)

Pezzullo recommended that our position should be very visible and public. We should say that as the first step, two groups have been formed, and we encourage them to get together, and will offer them assistance in that regard. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that perhaps we could issue a statement after the emergence of the Executive Committee and say that the USG publicly welcomes this development and sees this as the first step towards a government of national conciliation. It could then announce its call for a ceasefire, an arms embargo, and prompt negotiations between both groups, as well as humanitarian assistance. We should also go to the Andean group to try to line them up behind us. He asked what we should do with regard to resupplying the National Guard. (S)

Christopher said that a reconstituted Guard under General Gutierrez should be reconsidered for a resupply relationship on their request. (S)

Harold Brown said that would require Congressional consultations, and we should make sure about the diplomatic implications as well—how it would be viewed by other countries. (S)

McGiffert said that the Defense Department should see what is needed, and the State Department should look into the diplomatic implications of a resupply relationship. (S)

General Jones said that if we play a position of neutrality, it will be a high-risk strategy. (S)

Harold Brown asked who would stand up to the Sandinistas without some clear commitment from the United States. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we have got to give them some support. (S)

Harold Brown reminded the group that the people who had negotiated the departure of the Shah were shot. (S)

Robert Pastor said that it was very important that everything be coordinated so that it could occur in the same day. We do not want to see the political scenario go forward unless the Guard was going to be reformed simultaneously. Similarly, we should try at the same time to turn off Torrijos and Carrazo from giving arms to the Sandinistas. (S)

Vaky said that he thought they stood a good chance of turning off the supply of arms to the Sandinistas if this worked. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski raised again the question of supporting the National Guard under Gutierrez. He said that we should indicate support in general terms to maintain security in the event that an embargo would not work. We should try to seek a ceasefire and a standstill, and the talks ought to begin immediately. However, if the civil war goes on, there is very little that we can promise him. (S)

Vaky said that we should be very wary of getting into a Spanish civil war-type dilemma in which we are supporting one side and Latin America and Cuba are on the other. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether this stood a good chance of succeeding after Somoza goes, and *Vaky* said that he thought it did. (S)

Harold Brown expressed concern that the military situation could tilt and end in a week. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that the critical moment would be the two to three days immediately after the transfer of power, when we don't have very much influence. (S)

Harold Brown said it is possible we cannot even deliver equipment in that time. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski acknowledged that it would be hard to do it politically anyway, but we have no choice but to try. (S)

Vaky again suggested that we should do what we can down *this* road, but if we take it, we should be prepared to drop back and support, if possible, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador to help out this new government. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed that the strategy was worth pursuing, that the chances of success were about 50–50, and then we may have to

face some tough decisions down the road. He said we should make these points in the cover memo to the President.⁸ (S)

Vaky said that we should be wary of the slippery slope of supporting this Executive Committee. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether it wouldn't make sense to support Gutierrez if this works. (S)

Vaky said that it would be difficult, since we may have to abandon him. We have to be prepared to pull back on the chain if the Executive Committee strategy doesn't work. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we may have to let these people go over the cliff if necessary. (S)

Pezzullo said that the other choice for us is to play the route of the junta. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that this route of setting up the Executive Committee should not be seen as an anti-junta maneuver. We are just trying to implement the OAS resolution and looking towards a political reconciliation. (S)

Vaky raised the question of the request by Royo⁹ that we begin talks with the junta. (S)

Bowdler said that it would be better to have these talks in San Jose when he is there on Wednesday,¹⁰ and see them on Thursday. (S)

Vaky said that Ambler Moss could talk to the junta. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should talk to them as a major political force. It should be clear that our talks do not constitute recognition of them as a government. As for the people in Managua, they should see this maneuver as an attempt to jell a negotiated exit of Somoza rather than as a way to try to exclude the Sandinistas. What we are trying to do is create a framework in which the Sandinistas will fit. So therefore we should talk to the Sandinistas as a political force rather than to recognize them. (S)

Pastor said that we ought to be careful in our approaches to the Sandinistas that we are not implicitly inviting moderate leaders—for example, those we want to join the Executive Committee—to sign on to the provisional junta rather than the Executive Committee. The maneuver will be a delicate one. We want to keep a channel of communication open to the Sandinistas, but we don't want to do so in a way that legitimizes them because that will defeat the Executive Committee idea even before it is born. (S)

⁸ See Document 227.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ June 27.

Pezzullo said that the people in Managua could be interested in working on the Executive Committee because it could be perceived as giving them a leg up in their negotiations with the provisional junta. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then suggested that we revise the political scenario and send it to the President. We need to suggest parallel talks in Managua, and also with the Sandinista provisional junta. Our purpose needs to be stated clearly; it is not to set up an alternative group to contest power with the Sandinistas, but rather a mechanism that will bring together all the various groups in the country at the same time that it assures the peaceful departure of Somoza. This then will be the U.S. contribution. (S)

In response to a question from David Aaron, *Vaky* said that as soon as this works, we should go back immediately to Torrijos and Carrazo with Presidential messages urging them to cease their support for the Sandinistas. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we should send messages to both soon, stating our strategy in very general terms. Later, we can follow up. (S)

Vaky thought that that would be possible, and also suggested that we may want to do the same thing for other OAS countries. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski stressed that this group of the Executive Committee should not be viewed as one of two groups, but rather as one of two pillars under a new government of national reconciliation. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether or not this represented the unanimous recommendation of the SCC, and all concurred. (S)

Harold Brown concurred, but said that we should also make clear to the President, that we didn't think it would be likely to work. The real question he had is whether by adopting this strategy we will make it more difficult to pursue the other path towards the provisional junta. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he didn't think it would, but agreed we should open up a channel to the Sandinistas now in order to assure that eventuality. (S)

227. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 25, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua—June 25, 1979

I chaired an SCC meeting on Nicaragua today, and the Vice President, Harold, Stan, General Jones, Warren Christopher, and others attended.² Recent reports suggest that the Sandinistas are increasingly concerned about the possibility of US intervention and may be planning a major new offensive in the south within a few days to grab some territory and set up their provisional government there. At the same time, their junta is gaining greater recognition and authenticity, and people such as Royo, Carazo, and former Costa Rican President Oduber are counselling us to open up lines of communication to it. We have received reports that the provisional junta will be received in Panama this Wednesday³ in a major demonstration of support, and the Andean countries might participate in some way.

In keeping with the approach approved by you on Saturday,⁴ the issue the SCC addressed was not just how to assure a peaceful and orderly transition from Somoza to a moderate government but how to do so in a way which will not antagonize the Sandinistas, since we may ultimately have to deal with them. Accordingly, we will try to obtain the acquiescence of Somoza and the support of moderate leaders in Managua to set up an Executive Committee, supported by a reconstituted National Guard. As envisaged, this Executive Committee would represent a clear break with the past. It would negotiate with the Sandinista junta to establish a government of national reconciliation, and would thus provide for a peaceful transition from Somoza.

To implement your guidance, our course of action will be as follows:

1. Pursuant to the OAS resolution, the USG should mount a program to get Somoza to leave without creating a vacuum. We would do this quietly, making every effort to avoid the impression that we are trying to allow Somoza to dictate, or to preserve his regime. We

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 12/78-6/79. Secret. Sent for action.

² See Document 226.

³ June 27.

⁴ June 23. See Document 223.

must also make clear that we are not setting up competing forces but creating a mechanism for removing Somoza peacefully, and starting a dialogue leading to a negotiated settlement that stops the bloodshed.

—Christopher will make a proposal to Foreign Minister Quintana here indicating that Somoza's commitment to leave office offers the only possibility of resolving his personal future and facilitating negotiations to preserve the institutional structure, including elements of the National Guard. Plan outlined in paragraphs 2 and 3 would be described to Somoza.

—Pezzullo would go to Managua and begin conversations with Somoza along same lines. (Depending on General Jones' conversation with Colonel Swett, an old friend of Somoza's, Colonel Swett might accompany Pezzullo to reinforce the point that Somoza must depart.)

—Bowdler would go to San Jose to talk to Robello and other Opposition leaders who are not part of the FSLN Provisional Government (see Point 5) to explain our position and maintain contact during the evolution of the scenario.

—Dr. Brzezinski will outline our approach more fully to General Gutierrez and ask if he is willing to return to the Western Hemisphere to start planning GN reorganization. (If asked where he would go, Dr. Brzezinski would suggest San Jose.)

—Pezzullo contacts persons in Nicaragua who might comprise a transitional government in order to obtain their agreement to serve. This would include persons who would make up a 7-man Executive Committee. In approaching the following possible candidates he will stress the points contained in paragraph 1:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Dr. Francisco FIALLOS— | Rector of National University respected by both left and right |
| Alfonso CALLEJAS Deshon— | former Liberal Party leader who broke with Somoza several years ago; retains personal links with disaffected Party leaders |
| Sr. Jaime CHAMORRO— | Owner-editor of <i>La Prensa</i> ; brother of Pedro Joaquin, FAO leader |
| Sr. Luis SANCHEZ Sancho— | FAO leader and member of National Socialist Party (Moscow-oriented) |
| Ernesto FERNANDEZ Holman— | Manager of Banco de America; progressive, young businessman |
| Lic. Rafael CORDOVA RIVAS— | FAO leader; Conservative Party Member |

Sr. Mariano MENDOZA— Labor leader; head of CUS, an ORIT affiliated labor organization

2. Once Somoza's commitment to leave is obtained and the agreement of representatives to serve on the Executive Committee is achieved, Somoza resigns and he and his entourage leave the country. The Congress meets immediately in joint session to elect a successor from the Liberal Party. (Deputy David Zamora would be a logical candidate.)

3. Almost simultaneously, Zamora dissolves the Congress and appoints a broadly based Executive Committee and then himself resigns. The Executive Committee is installed and immediately announces the following:

—They have achieved the departure of Somoza and family from the country.

—Appeal for ceasefire and cooperation in forming a Government of National Reconciliation composed of all important representation groups.

—Program of government.

—Reformation of the National Guard under new leadership (hopefully under General Gutierrez, who is then brought on the Executive Committee).

—Appeal for international humanitarian assistance.

4. U.S. publicly welcomes this development and sees it as an important first step toward national reconciliation as contemplated in the OAS resolution. We encourage other nations to join us in:

—offering humanitarian assistance;

—fostering a climate within which a new government can prosper by supporting a ceasefire and arms embargo; and

—encouraging all important representative groups to initiate promptly discussions on the establishment of a government of national reconciliation.

(We will avoid addressing the question of recognition until a government of national reconciliation is established, and during the interim, we will maintain contact with all groups.)

5. Simultaneously we will be working with the Andean countries and others to broaden the base of the FSLN Provisional Government and get a commitment from it to: (a) preserve the institutional integrity of the National Guard; (b) call on the OAS to provide resources and experts to reform the electoral machinery; and (c) call for elections in the shortest time possible to form a constituent assembly and general election.

If the above strategy works, our public position will be clear: we would welcome the Committee as a first step toward an enduring solution; and without openly positioning ourselves behind either the Sandinistas or the Executive Committee, we will quietly try to help the Committee survive the difficult days after Somoza's departure. (In the meantime, DOD will quietly review the state of the National Guard, and State will examine the diplomatic and political implications of providing some supplies to the GN under a transitional regime.)

I should add that while the SCC felt this strategy was the correct one at this time, it was also the unanimous view of the SCC that it only stands at best a 50% chance of success. However, if it fails and the Sandinistas prevail, we will still be free to go the route of recognizing the Sandinistas. In the interim, Ambassador Moss (and perhaps Bowdler or Pezzullo) will begin quiet contacts and discussions with the Sandinista junta.

228. Editorial Note

During the early morning of June 26, 1979, Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza called the U.S. Embassy and spoke with Deputy Chief of Mission Frank Tucker. Somoza asked whether Tucker "was informed of 'what was going on in Washington,'" and the "message Luis Pallais is bringing." Tucker replied that he "was not informed of these matters." Somoza then directed Tucker to request that the Department of State provide confirmation regarding Pallais's message: "Tell them," he said, "that I demanded that it (the Pallais message) be said by a U.S. official, and you are the senior one here." (Telegram 2828 from Managua, June 26; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1794)

In telegram 164795 to Managua, June 26, the Department instructed Tucker to "inform President Somoza that the message given to Luis Pallais on June 25 was the same one given earlier in the day by Acting Secretary Christopher to Foreign Minister Quintana." Acting Secretary of State Warren Christopher "urged Quintana at the meeting to transmit the message urgently to President Somoza because of the critical nature of the situation, and emphasized that he was speaking with the full authority of the USG." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1780) No memorandum of conversation of Christopher's June 25th meeting with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Julio Quintana has been found. Assistant to the President for National Security

Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski noted in his June 25 memorandum to President Jimmy Carter that Christopher planned to outline the course of actions the United States planned to take in Nicaragua to Quintana. (See Document 227.) Tucker responded in telegram 2832 from Managua, June 26, noting that he had called Somoza's "bunker" to deliver the message from the Department and was told that Somoza was sleeping and that he should "call back at 11:30 a.m." Tucker also indicated that Pallais had telephoned the Embassy and told Tucker that he would be returning to Washington that night and asked Tucker to inform Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Pete Vaky that "everything is fine." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870036-1785) In telegram 2834 from Managua, June 26, the Embassy reported that Somoza had returned Tucker's call at 11:20 a.m. Tucker confirmed to Somoza that the Pallais message was the same one given by Christopher to Quintana on June 25th. Somoza thanked Tucker for the confirmation. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1786)

229. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher¹

Washington, June 26, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

John Murphy telephoned me shortly after midnight last night to say that Somoza was prepared to accept our proposal, as I had outlined it to him, with one *quid pro quo*: there must be a peacekeeping force in place before Somoza leaves.²

You will recall that I spoke to Murphy earlier, along lines we had agreed, saying that we wanted to end the war and prevent the take

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79. Confidential. Copies were sent to Vaky and Brzezinski. Newsom did not initial the memorandum.

² Christopher wrote to Vance in telegram Tosec 60052/165196 to the Secretary's delegation, June 26, to report that he had met with Murphy, who insisted that Somoza did not want to leave Nicaragua "until the essential safeguards are in place." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850074-1747)

over of Nicaragua by pro-Castro forces.³ We felt it important to preserve the institutions of the Guard and the government. We were prepared to provide asylum to Somoza. In response to a question about the future of the Liberal Party, I said the important thing was that Somoza and his family leave; as far as I knew, there was no intention to disband the party. Murphy asked me whether any members of the Liberal Party would be included in the transition government. I said that I believe the name of one former member, Callejas Deshon figured in our thinking. Murphy asked who might command the Guard when Somoza's son left. I said I did not know; I knew we were thinking about some contact with General Guitterez. (He commented that he was not sure about General Guitterez; he had refused to fire on Latins in Santo Domingo.)

In the later conversation, Murphy said the names I had mentioned to him were satisfactory to Somoza. He was prepared to work within this formula, but he must be sure the members of his party and his government are protected against the possible reprisals from the Sandinistas.

I told him the OAS had already turned down the idea of a peace force. I said that Luis Pallais was on his way back to Managua and that you had spoken to the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister in the afternoon. Ambassador Pezzulo would shortly go to Managua. I suggested that further discussions on this matter be left to these channels, but that I would report his conversation to you.

Murphy then spoke at some length about the nature of the revolutionary forces which were not really Nicaraguans. Nicaraguans he claimed were rallying to Somoza after seeing the atrocities of the invaders. He said most of the dead, from their papers, proved to be Costa Ricans, Panamanians, Mexicans and Cubans.

Murphy wanted me to get back to him this morning with a report on our reaction to the peace force idea.

COMMENT: Unless, for reasons of our other relations with Murphy, we need to keep him directly involved in this matter, I would suggest that, in any further calls, I suggest that the situation is moving rapidly and that the negotiations should be left to those directly involved.

Somoza's concern about retaliation against his people may have some basis. In the absence of a peace keeping force, could we seek, as part of a cease fire, a broad pledge of amnesty?

³ See footnote 7, Document 223.

230. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Panama¹

Washington, June 27, 1979, 0211Z

Tosec 60061/165653. Subject: Pallais' Report on Conversation with Somoza.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. As agreed during discussions in the Department June 25,² Luis Pallais called Grove in ARA on the evening of June 26 to report on his conversation with Somoza.

3. Pallais said "everything is accepted." He said that the Nicaraguan Congress was being convened for a 2:00 pm session on Thursday (June 28), and urged that Ambassador Pezzullo arrive in Nicaragua Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. Grove replied that Pezzullo planned to arrive Wednesday afternoon and would seek an immediate appointment with President Somoza.

4. In response to a question, Pallais said that no public statement was contemplated on the Nicaraguan side. "We are keeping this very tight." He offered the comment that President Somoza "has questions, not on procedure, but concerning the National Guard." He also stated that he would be in Miami for the next couple of days to contact Nicaraguan Congressmen now in the United States in order to secure their attendance at the Thursday session in Managua.

5. Comment: The reference to everything being "accepted" relates to discussions yesterday by the Acting Secretary with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Quintana and Ambassador Pezzullo with Pallais. Pallais' comment on Somoza's concern about the National Guard may reflect the line of thinking expressed by Congressman Murphy to Christopher this afternoon (Septel).³

6. FYI for Secretary: Bowdler and Pezzullo are leaving by military aircraft for Panama to meet on the morning of June 27 with members of the Nicaraguan "provisional government," as well as with Royo, Torrijos and others. Ambassador Luers will be joining this group.

Christopher

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Secretary Vance in Tokyo and to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Grove (ARA); cleared in substance by Vaky; approved by Christopher. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840130-1937)

² See Document 226.

³ See footnote 2, Document 229.

231. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State and the Embassies in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica¹

Panama City, June 27, 1979, 2049Z

4860. For Acting Secretary Christopher From Bowdler. Subj: Meeting with General Torrijos—June 27.

1. Accompanied by Amb Moss, I met with Gen Torrijos for an hour and a quarter at his Panama City residence. Marcel Salamin, at the Gen's request, was also present.

2. I opened the discussion by contrasting the situation we face in Nicaragua today with that at the outset of the mediation last October. I described the two essential differences as: (a) the different military situation; and (b) the changed attitude of the hemisphere as reflected in the OAS resolution. Both of these worked to enhance the possibility of persuading Somoza to leave.

3. Against the backdrop of the resolution, I explained Amb Pezzullo's going to Managua and my plans to proceed to San Jose. I stated that Amb Pezzullo's mission is to achieve the first of the four bases of the OAS resolution. In the process, he might touch on aspects of the second point of the resolution but I wanted to make clear that this did not involve the setting up of a rival group to the provisional government in San Jose. We wanted a clear break with the past and are not considering Somocismo without Somoza. I made clear that Amb Pezzullo would not be presenting credentials to the Somoza govt and that my mission in San Jose would be to maintain contact with the provisional government and other opposition leaders in the Costa Rican capital.

4. I told Gen Torrijos that in the transition process we were concerned with two key aspects. One is to avoid a collapse of the institutional framework which could create a vacuum leading to a blood bath of retribution. Second, we wanted to make sure that the provisional govt which finally emerges is fully consonant with the second paragraph of the bases in the OAS resolution and thereby avoid political extremism.

5. After this initial presentation during which Torrijos listened without interruption, he advanced his own concept of the transition scenario. He strongly advocated using the existing junta and stated emphatically that, in his view, the junta would be willing to broaden its base, including specifically elements of the GN which had clearly

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840150–1968. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

broken with Somoza before his departure. With respect to the latter, he could not be sure whether these could be included at the junta level but was certain they could be incorporated at a reasonably high level in the transition structure. He spoke of recent meetings which had taken place by the ex-GN officers (he mentioned Mendieta and Larios) and FSLN leaders and said that he felt these had been successful. He believed that a fusion could take place between “untainted” National Guard and especially the more numerous *tercerarios*. He said that he, Carazo and Carlos Andres Perez were prepared to assist in this process.

6. In outlining the scenario, he was critical of how we were using our bargaining chips in persuading the FSLN provisional government to accept the balance that he knew we desired. He thought that our support of the “radical” OAS resolution might have been used to better advantage. He also thought that we now had three cards which we should skillfully play with the provisional government:

- The fact that Amb Pezzullo will not be presenting credentials;
- The anticipated departure of Somoza; and
- Our intention not to press reconciliation to the point of including persons closely identified with Somoza, such as Luis Pallais.

He thought that we could use these points to extract from the provisional government an expansion of its membership, a halt to the fighting and a pledge against retributions, points which he was prepared to support in gaining *frente* acceptance.

7. I told him that my role was not one of bargaining with the provisional government over the composition of the new government. We wish to use our influence to obtain the departure of Somoza and his family. At the same time we want to see a climate established in which, to use the language of the OAS resolution, a democratic government comprising the important opposition groups can be installed. In other words, we wished to make the conditions where a Nicaraguan solution arrived at by Nicaraguans could emerge. Torrijos quipped that it was important that the U.S. not stipulate to the transition government what it should do, but what we wanted it not to do.

8. The rest of the conversation centered around this basic difference of approach to the problem. I did not rule out the Torrijos approach but made clear that Amb Pezzullo’s conversations in Managua would have an important bearing on the avenues to be explored for a solution. I repeated the need to find practical ways to avoid further bloodshed and political extremism so that there would be no misunderstanding on this score. From this exchange, there emerged a series of suggestions which might prove useful as we explore possibilities. These can be summarized as follows:

- 1) A ceasefire and standstill could be immediately arranged once the provisional government took over. He, CAP and Carazo would

fully support these measures while the merger is worked out and the pacification process initiated. (In this context, Torrijos volunteered that Panamanian troops might help keep peace during the transition.)

—2) A merger of elements of the National Guard with the FSLN into a restructured military organization could proceed once an expanded junta is established.

—3) In order to reassure against a blood bath, an understanding might be reached on one or more sanctuaries in which people on either side who might consider themselves threatened could go for protection and/or staging for departure from the country. He referred to Montelimar as a natural location for Somocistas who fall into this category.

—4) Regarding the expansion of the junta, it would be best if specific names were suggested by the junta itself.

9. Assessment: The conversation was frank and useful. The atmospherics were good. Torrijos seemed eager to work with us. While making clear our approach to the transitional process, we avoided arousing his fears that we might be in the business of establishing a rival govt. The basic difference in our approach to the transition process remains but at least we have a better understanding of each other's views. He is fully aware of our concerns over a vacuum both in terms of its invitation to a blood bath as well as an opportunity for extremist takeover. In this connection, one of the interesting things to emerge from the conversation was a frank admission on the part of Torrijos that the strongest military leader in the ranks of the frente is Ortega Saavedra. He left no doubt in our minds that he ranks him clearly above Eden Pastora in the power structure.

10. Recommendation: Our ability to proceed with our scenario will, of course, depend upon what Amb Pezzullo finds from his conversations with Somoza, opposition leaders in Managua, and the rate of deterioration in the cohesion of the National Guard. We may find that our approach is no longer viable, in which case we may have to consider the Torrijos approach. The conversation with Torrijos leads us to suggest that we start thinking about a scenario built on these elements:

—1) Negotiate with the provisional government for an expansion of its membership and a clear understanding regarding a ceasefire/standstill, no retributions, and how the merger of the armed forces is to proceed.

—2) Try to keep Somoza in place until we work out an acceptable alternative with the provisional government.

—3) Once that agreement is reached, coordinate Somoza's departure with a transfer of power to the expanded provisional government.

—4) Attempt to have Gutierrez incorporated into the expanded provisional government with a view to his playing a key role in the

restructuring of the armed forces so as to ensure an adequate counter-balance to FSLN elements. (Until I can size up the GN defectors in San Jose, we will have no idea whether any of them have the strength to serve as a counterweight to the Sandinistas.)

Moss

232. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Tokyo¹

Washington, June 27, 1979, 2312Z

Tosec 60081/166142. For the Secretary from Christopher. Subject: Nicaragua.

1. Following is a summary of the principal developments today on Nicaragua:

2. Torrijos told Bowdler that the United States should work with the provisional government and seek to broaden it.² He said that he, Cap, and Carazo would help us, and would help arrange a ceasefire after the departure of Somoza. Bowdler is meeting in Panama tonight to meet with the "provisional" government. I am repeating Bowdler's cable in full.

3. Our Ambassador to Honduras reports that Somoza has asked for military help from Condeca, the Central American defense organization. The Ambassador reports that President Paz of Honduras is unwilling to join such efforts.³ We have instructed her to urge President Paz to try to persuade his colleagues from El Salvador and Guatemala not to fuel the fighting at this stage.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Tarnoff; approved by Christopher. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840126-2414) Vance was accompanying Carter on a state visit to Japan and to the G-7 Economic Summit Meeting.

² See Document 231.

³ Jaramillo reported this information to Vaky in telegram 3438 from Tegucigalpa, June 27. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850040-2425)

⁴ Telegram 166074 to Tegucigalpa, June 27, instructed Jaramillo to inform Paz that "it would be tragic if Condeca countries intervened" in Nicaragua and "merely prolong the civil war." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79)

4. Somoza has been promoting a wide variety of rumors whose common thread is that the United States has agreed to resupply and prop up the guard in return for his willingness to step down. We have corrected this misapprehension in official circles in Managua. Because the rumors had reached the press, it was necessary for us to do some backgrounding to try to avoid the United States suffering a black eye here and in Latin America.

5. In my opinion the chances of our successfully pursuing path no. 1 (i.e. Somoza stepping down in favor of a transitional executive committee, with a reformation of the guard) are increasingly remote. Reports of the identification of the guard with Somoza, from top to bottom, make it unlikely that it would be acceptable even with a major transfusion of leadership. Moreover, the provisional government is gaining increasing acceptance and legitimacy. We need to handle our diplomatic efforts very carefully so as to preserve what chance we have to work with the “provisional” government. In this setting, we have turned down a DOD proposal to move a destroyer, a communications ship, and two aircraft carriers into waters off Nicaragua.

6. We do not yet have a report from Pezzullo on his conversation with Somoza.⁵

7. I briefed the Vice President at mid-day.

8. There will be an SCC meeting at 8:00 a.m. Washington time Thursday morning⁶ and we would appreciate any comments that you may have on the situation by that time.

Christopher

⁵ See Document 235.

⁶ June 28. See Document 236.

233. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, June 28, 1979, 0200Z

Pass to Warren Christopher

1. To avoid possible embarrassment through highly visible contacts, I choose to speak to general Gutierrez by phone this morning, Tokyo time. We had a conversation of approximately twenty or so minutes.

2. He impressed me most favorably. He is sober, serious, thinks in concrete practical terms, and is prepared to be engaged.

3. He expressed the view that the situation is very grave and that it is essential that Nicaragua not go Communist. Somoza has spoken to him once, and will be speaking to him shortly again, but Gutierrez does not wish to be identified with Somoza as such. He told me he would call me back to let me know what transpires if the new conversation with Somoza actually takes place.

4. Gutierrez indicated that he would be willing to proceed to Washington within a day or as necessary. I indicated to him that in my view it would be unwise for him to go to Washington because the symbolism of such a visit might be counterproductive. He asked me whether we could provide assistance for his travel.

5. I responded that we would help him in any way we can, but for politically symbolic reasons it might be better if he travelled under his own auspices, perhaps transiting through the United States but terminating in a neighboring Latin country. He thought that perhaps it would be best for him to go to Panama. You might consider that at your end and give me any advice for him that you deem appropriate.

6. I explained to him in some detail our concept of the Executive Committee, of his cooption into it, and went through the names. He did not comment negatively on any of the names but expressed concern whether a body so collective could act effectively. I pointed out to him that it is almost inevitable that an individual would emerge as a dominant force within such a body, depending particularly on what resources he may have at his command. In this connection, I referred to the importance of the National Guard staying cohesive and under effective control. I think he took the hint because he agreed rather eagerly.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Top Secret; Eyes Only.

7. Immediately thereafter, he inquired about U.S. willingness to resupply the National Guard, and expressed concern that during the critical transitional phase the Sandinistas may launch an all-out attack and the Guard may disintegrate. I did not commit the United States but said that we would seek a cease fire, during which the Executive Committee and the Sandinistas would try to negotiate a joint government of national conciliation, and that our attitude toward the National Guard would be very much guided by the degree to which the new Executive Committee had gained legitimacy and genuine support of the moderate elements.

8. We finally talked about the National Guard itself. He spoke extremely well of General Fernandez, the current Chief of Staff, and expressed the view that he could hold the National Guard together. Moreover, he could work under Gutierrez, having done so in the past and being a personal friend. He then mentioned three other senior officers as individuals that could be helpful in preventing disintegration: Brigadier General Orlando Guerrero; Brigadier General Everto Sanchez, who has important contacts with Condeca; and Major General Cesar Suazo.

9. Please provide me with guidance on how next to proceed with Gutierrez. Should I explicitly urge him to return? Cy has been somewhat non-committal, and I have avoided pressing him directly, though I did convey to him that the situation was becoming more urgent. My feeling is that unless I urge him explicitly to return, he will simply wait for a "call" from the successor regime, and that "call" might not come in time or at all. If we need him to help stabilize things, we should not be shy in so telling him, but I need your judgment on this in the light of the rapidly unfolding circumstances on the spot. Finally, if you do want me to get him to move rapidly, provide me with details regarding his desired itinerary, where he would be met by our people for more thorough debriefing, and what his destination would be. In addition, I may need details regarding logistics and other support.

234. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State¹

Panama City, June 28, 1979, 0749Z

4875. Subject: Conversation with FSLN Provisional Government.

1. Ambassador Moss and I met with four members of the FSLN provisional government tonight at the home of Gabriel Lewis. Only member of the Junta not present was Moises Hassan. Daniel Ortega Saavedra had come from Matagalpa. Also present were Padre Miguel D'Escoto and a female associate of Ortega.

2. Meeting was in many respects a carbon copy of my first session with the FAO Directorate last October. I started the conversation with the same presentation I used with President Torrijos this morning. I then invited them to comment on the situation in Nicaragua and their future plans. They chose to focus primarily on two issues. One was the arrival of Ambassador Pezzullo in Nicaragua today. They thought this was a mistake since it would be viewed by the Nicaraguan public as a return to normal relations no matter what explanation we might give. Somoza would certainly play it in this vein and since he has total control over the media the public would have no way of knowing that he would not be presenting credentials. I pointed out that it was important to the accomplishment of the first point of the OAS resolution to have him speak directly with Somoza and we should not prejudice the results of that meeting. They grudgingly accepted the explanation but obviously were not convinced that he would be successful. The longer he remained in Managua, they argued, the less valid our explanation would be.

3. The second issue focused on how Somoza could be removed from power. Ramirez and Robelo argued that consistency with the first of the bases of the OAS resolution required a break in relations with the Somoza regime as Brazil had done. They argued that the USG should break with the Somoza regime and recognize the provisional government as the best means of undermining GN confidence forcing Somoza to leave and refurbishing the USG image among the Nicaraguan population. Otherwise they could not see how Somoza could be persuaded to leave. They pointed out that persuasion had been tried and proven ineffective. Only by cutting all ties with Somoza could

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Managua, and San José. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Pastor wrote at the top of the first page: "PG Conversation."

the USG achieve its objective. Essentially they were reiterating the argument of last October that it was our responsibility to rid the country of Somoza and turn things over to the Frente and PG.

4. Three times during the conversation I tried to draw them out on their future plans with respect to composition, program and transfer to Nicaraguan territory. On the third try Ramirez produced a document released in San Jose today before their departure for Panama. Text of this document follows in a separate cable.² Contrary to Torrijos predictions, the statement makes no provision for inclusion of GN representation in the council of state although the FSLN would be a major component.

5. Comment: In this initial contact with the PG I did not go into our scenario beyond the effort to obtain Somoza's departure, in the process of which it might be necessary to get into aspects of the second point of the OAS resolution and to provide reassurances that retribution would not follow his exit. All PC members made protestations that the latter would not occur. Ortega referred to the consideration being given captured National Guardsmen. He denied the execution reported in Matagalpa. He did, however, admit that a Myrmidon (Esbirro) GN Captain had been executed in Leon and Col. Arguello had been shot while trying to escape.

6. Ortega emerged as a rough but articulate guerrilla leader. It was evident that he comes from a different social and educational background than Ramirez and Robelo. He seemed to go out of his way to stress the moderate, democratic orientation of the frente and the desire to get rid of Somoza and start the rebuilding process. A special effort had obviously been made to get him to the meeting with us since he had arrived shortly before our session and had not participated in the ceremonies involving the other three PG members.

7. The meeting was cordial throughout and served to establish the contact we sought. One sensed a special effort on the part of all members to reassure us of the moderation of the frente and representative charac-

² Pastor wrote in the margin next to this paragraph: "get refel." In telegram 2793 from San José, June 30, the Embassy noted that *La Nación* reported on June 30 that a communiqué issued on June 29 in San José by the Nicaraguan Provisional Junta had "rejected US mediation in the Nicaragua crisis, a mediation which the Junta characterized as a four point plan contemplating the immediate departure of Somoza from Nicaragua but which 'sets aside' the Junta." The communiqué described the "Washington Plan" as inherently "an inadmissible intervention in the political process of insurrectional character" underway in Nicaragua and stated that Washington's "only role" should be "the breaking of relations with the Somocista regime and the immediate recognition of the Junta 'provisional.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790297–0384) In telegram 2798 from San José, June 30, the Embassy included the full Spanish-language text of the GRN communiqué. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790297–0683)

ter of the PG. They did acknowledge, however, that they were a creation of the FSLN. They seemed to welcome having contact with me but, as one of them remarked as the meeting broke up, they would be much happier having Ambassador Pezzullo talking with them in Penas Blancas.

8. The group returns to San Jose tomorrow afternoon after which I will try to see Robelo alone.³

Moss

³ Pastor wrote at the bottom of the cable: "More on how they related to one another."

235. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, June 28, 1979, 1020Z

2857. Special encryption. Dept also pass to Am Embassy Caracas, Am Embassy Panama, and Am Embassy San Jose. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) Somoza—The First Visit.

1. S-Entire text.

2. I called on Somoza this afternoon. He was accompanied by ForMin Quintana and Congressman Murphy. After pleasantries, I asked if he had any comments to make on the message we passed to ForMin Quintana and Luis Pallais. He asked that I go over the points again.

3. In very dramatic fashion he then said he had to meet with "his associates" and left the room with Quintana and Murphy. When he returned he said he was prepared to resign but that he wanted "guarantees" that the Guardia Nacional (GN) would not be destroyed. He said it was essential that the GN received USG assistance to fight the Communists as soon as he turned power over to a successor regime. I made it clear that a change would be viable only if it was viewed as a clean break with his government. Some cosmetic constitutional

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Pastor wrote at the top of the first page: "Conversation with Somoza."

successor government or military coup would carry the stigma of Somocismo without Somoza and would not change the current balance. I indicated that we were equally concerned that the Guardia not collapse and welcomed his thoughts as to how this could be accomplished. He said he would offer some thoughts.

4. Somoza then asked how the political succession would work. He smiled and said “I recognize that you won’t negotiate on this point but I am interested in your thoughts.” I said we were convinced that his departure and the formation of an independent successor body offered the only opportunity to form a new government of reconciliation, stop bloodshed and begin a political dialog. We recognized the risks but saw no other alternatives. Continuation of the fighting would continue to erode his position and open the door to an extreme leftist takeover. His departure opened up the possibility of putting some moderate forces into play and in the process perhaps breaking the cycle of political confrontation and violence.

5. He said this was poor payment for the loyalty and services he had given to the USG: The Arbenz overthrow and the Bay of Pigs invasion. He could not help feeling he was being victimized. I said the most dignified capstone of a long relationship would be to work together to engineer a graceful exit which gave support to moderate forces. He smiled and said he was a realist and a politician and recognized that he had to go. “I cannot hold out much longer anyway”, he confessed. He promised to cooperate in working out the scenario of his departure. I observed that the final days of departure had to be tailored with great precision to bolster moderate forces, preserve the institutional integrity of the GN and stop the bloodshed. He agreed and said he would offer some suggestions on how the Guardia could be reorganized. We will continue the conversation tomorrow.

6. Comment: We were at it for over three hours. Murphy sat through all of it without making one comment. His presence may prove useful; he was a party to this understanding. Although Somoza promised to plan the final days together, his character and past performance leaves much doubt. At least he got the message that there are no easy ways out. He clearly wants safehaven in the United States. He roared with laughter when he learned that his priority status for an immigrant visa derives from his relationship to his U.S. citizen estranged wife, Hope.

Pezzullo²

² Pastor added the following handwritten notation: “Real issue has changed. Not whether we pushed Somoza out, but did we hand it over to the Sandinistas.”

236. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC-3434-79

Washington, June 28, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 28 June 1979, White House Situation Room

PARTICIPANTS

Walter Mondale, David Aaron, White House; Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, State Department; Frank Carlucci, [*name not declassified*] CIA; Charles Duncan, David McGiffert, Defense Department, Robert Pastor, NSC; John Pustay, JCS

1. DDCI Carlucci briefed those present on the current military and diplomatic picture in Nicaragua, responding to several questions from Vice President Mondale.

2. Assistant Secretary Vaky related recent demarches by the US to Panama's Torrijos, Nicaragua's Somoza, Venezuela's Perez,² and the FSLN's provisional junta. Torrijos recommended the US work with the junta in order to broaden its base, an idea that Ambassadors Bowdler in Panama and Pezzullo in Nicaragua, as well as Vaky, believed merited exploration.

3. Mr. Aaron led lengthy discussion on the advisability and means of propositioning Nicaraguan General Gutierrez to take over and reform the National Guard following Somoza's departure. Deputy Secretary Christopher advocated leaving Gutierrez in Japan for the present to avoid tainting him or discrediting US efforts on the diplomatic front.

4. Mondale was concerned that the group's deliberations were too theoretical and would lead to an unrealistic and hopeless US effort to construct a moderate alternative provisional government, while undermining US bona fides with the FSLN's junta, which stood the best chance of prevailing. He saw wisdom in working through Panama, Venezuela, and others to moderate the junta. Considerable discussion ensued on ramifications of this approach.

5. Aaron expressed concern about the prospect that the Guard will collapse when Somoza departs. This led to discussion of Gutierrez

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret. Drafted on June 29. [*name not declassified*] sent a copy of the memorandum to Turner under a June 29 covering memorandum, [*text not declassified*]. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 5865 from Caracas, June 28, Luers reported that he had met with Perez to discuss the situation in Nicaragua. Perez was "not displeased by the mechanism we planned but doubted it would work." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140-1679)

again and Somoza's hopes for military aid from Central American Defense Council nations. Aaron read the cable from Pezzullo on his first meeting with Somoza in which Somoza said he was prepared to leave on the condition the Guard would be supported.³

6. The meeting concluded with a brief and inconclusive discussion of the advisability of dispatching a signals intelligence collection ship to the area.

³ See Document 235.

237. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 28, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua

The SCC Meeting, attended by the Vice President, Warren Christopher, Charles Duncan, Frank Carlucci, and a JCS representative, revealed basic divergence of views over future options.

State basically believes that the Sandinistas are likely to gain control and that we should work to increase our credibility with them and seek to broaden the junta and increase the relative strength of the moderate forces in the junta. Similarly, State is reluctant and, in some cases, opposed to undertake any action to try to preserve the National Guard (GN) as a continuing instrument after Somoza's departure for fear that this would prolong the civil war and ultimately drag the United States in on the Guard's side.

Defense and I believe that some aspect of the guard must be preserved or the moderate political forces will simply be overrun by the Sandinistas once Somoza leaves, since they will be the only ones with the guns.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26–28/79. Secret; Sensitive; Flash; Eyes Only; Deliver in a Sealed Envelope. Sent through Gates. Pastor initialed for Aaron.

I put this dichotomy in stark terms because you and the President should understand that behind the two options lie fundamental differences. At the meeting, we were able to agree on a course of action that reconciles these differences, but we are rapidly approaching the point where we are going to have to fish or cut bait on one or the other of the approaches. This process is further complicated by the fact that Congressman Murphy is in Managua and has participated in the meeting with Pezzullo in which Somoza said he will step down if we will help preserve the guard as an instrument in the fight against a Communist takeover.² Thus, if we choose to emphasize the route preferred by State, we can depend upon Murphy to do his utmost to portray our policy as one of having, in effect, handed over power to the Sandinistas and washed our hands of possible moderate forces.

We agreed on the following immediate course of action:

(1) We will go back to Torrijos and urge him to begin the process of broadening the junta. In effect, we will tell him that whether we can take his advice in supporting the junta will depend on his success in broadening it.

(2) We will instruct Pezzullo to concentrate his discussions on stitching together the moderate elements in Managua. As for supporting the Guard, we will instruct him to use the President's guidance on the conditions under which that support will be forthcoming.³ He will not get embroiled in a negotiation with Somoza over the future of the Guard.

(3) We will begin discussions with General Paz of Honduras as well as Torrijos and the Venezuelans about how the Guard or some elements of the Guard can be preserved. Torrijos has indicated that some elements of the Guard could be in the new government, and we will press him on how to bring this about. The Venezuelans similarly have expressed concern about the Sandinistas sweeping to power. We will try to get them to focus on this problem. We will also urge Torrijos and the Venezuelans to get the Sandinistas to declare that there will be no reprisals and no revolutionary trials of National Guardsmen. We hope this might help the Guard's morale.

(4) The sharpest split in the meeting was whether Gutierrez should be asked by us to go back to Central America. I argued that we should urge him to do so, that he should return to Costa Rica or Honduras and begin the process of contacting his former colleagues in the Guard. This would potentially give us an option of the Guard or some faction of it withdrawing its support from Somoza and husbanding its

² See Document 235.

³ See footnote 8, Document 223.

resources to support moderate elements in a successive regime. Alternatively, Gutierrez would be on the scene to respond to a call from our proposed Executive Committee should that work out. Christopher was adamantly opposed to our asking Gutierrez to come back. He argued that this would only taint him and offend the junta who would see this as a plot to prolong both Somocismo and the civil war. Chris and Vaky both expressed fear that we would end up backing the Guard in a civil war.

We all recognize that the Guard has become the instrument of oppression as the battle has continued, but my view is that if the moderate forces have no military strength of any kind, they will be swept away by the Sandinistas. Congressman Murphy's presence insures that the Administration will bear the maximum responsibility for a Sandinista takeover if we do nothing to preserve at least some remnant of the Guard. I do not believe Gutierrez's presence or absence is necessarily crucial. But I think the arguments against his going there and starting to try to operate are not persuasive. Gutierrez has become a symbol of a much larger question which has not yet been reconciled by you, Cy and the President.

The best I could get today is agreement that our different views on Gutierrez be presented to you for consideration by the President. If you can resolve the question of whether Gutierrez should go to Central America, you should. In addition, if it can be done discreetly, we will try to get Gutierrez invited by Paz, or perhaps even Torrijos, for consultations. We are asking Bowdler for his advice on whether Torrijos might respond constructively to such a suggestion.

Above all, we are going to need guidance soon on the general route we wish to take. Even if our proposed Executive Committee idea does not work out, it is clear that we will be involved in at least the timing of Somoza's departure. We therefore must have some kind of plan on how we use that to either support our position with the junta, preserve the National Guard, strengthen the moderate elements, or whatever. It is an important point of leverage, and we should not waste it since it is about our only asset in this situation.

We also have to look hard at the issue of support (political or military) for the Guard. I have no quarrel with the President's view that this should be done on the basis of a new and more legitimate government. However, we have a serious timing problem. By the time we have a new, more legitimate government, there may be no Guard to support.

I do not know when these issues will come to a head. By the end of today, I will probably have a further message.

238. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, June 28, 1979, 1636Z

Tosec 60101/166874. For Ambassador Pezzullo. Subject: Talk With Somoza. Ref: Managua 2857.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Reftel's description of your conversation appears to put us exactly where we were with Christopher's talk with Murphy.³ We find it disturbing and not advancing us very far in that sense.

3. Somoza must be perfectly clear that:

—We cannot guarantee or preserve the Guard in its present form.

—We can only consider supporting a Guard which has been reconstituted and which is controlled by a transitional governing group which is legitimized by adequate support of the Nicaraguan people and OAS members.

—In short, the sequence can only be Somoza's departure first, a new government representing a clear break, and then possible support to a restructured guard.

4. We must not create a situation which will allow Somoza (or Murphy) to claim that he resigned in exchange for our promise to support the Guard as is. Nor do we want Somoza or Murphy to be able to claim that the FSLN swept to power because we would not support a moderate alternative. While we are prepared to listen to Somoza's ideas on how the Guard might be reformed, it is essential that he understand the points in 3 above. Therefore, if Somoza returns with his ideas, make the points above and tell him you will have to refer back to Washington.

5. It is urgent that we get an assessment on the feasibility of carrying out the balance of our scenario, i.e. the willingness of moderate opposition elements to form an executive committee. Please proceed urgently with your contacts in that sense and let us know. At an SCC meeting this morning chaired by David Aaron, all were in agreement that you

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/26-28/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, San José, the White House, and to Vance in Tokyo. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Vaky; cleared by Pastor; approved by Christopher. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840130-1925)

² See Document 235.

³ See footnote 2, Document 229.

should not allow prolonged sessions with Somoza prevent you from such contacts.⁴

Christopher

⁴ See Document 247.

239. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, June 28, 1979, 1803Z

2870. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) The Current Scene. Ref: Managua 2857,² Panama 04860.³

1. S-Entire text.

2. After less than one day here, it is apparent that we have little if any chance of putting together an Executive Committee of any size. The opposition figures we identified have either openly supported the provisional junta or are fearful of playing any independent role. The best we can hope to engineer is for Somoza to turn power over to a member of Congress or a member of his Cabinet and that the successor then call for a cease-fire, cooperation in forming a government of reconciliation (GNR) while announcing new GN leadership and appealing for humanitarian assistance.

3. At this afternoon's meeting with Somoza, I would like to establish a departure date so that we can have something specific to point toward. I was thinking of next Tuesday.⁴ I will insist that he abide by the understanding we reached yesterday that he resign and work out precise details of his resignation with us. He should have no doubt after yesterday's conversation that we will not consider material support to the National Guard during his presidency or during the caretaker

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1790. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² See Document 235.

³ See Document 231.

⁴ July 3.

period, but that it is possible if it is requested by a GNR. I will pursue the things he can do on or before his departure to build GN morale and play on their military duty to support any successor government loyally. His appeals to his northern neighbors indicates he will pursue every possible avenue of military support.

4. I think we now have a clearer picture which argues strongly in favor of pursuing with Torrijos and with the provisional junta the points made in paragraph 10 of Panama 04860. We should disabuse Torrijos of any thought of sending Panamanian troops here. Such a move would internationalize the conflict and could trigger a kneejerk response from San Salvador and Guatemala, possibly through Condeca. Attempting to bring Gutierrez into play looks like too much of a long shot at this point. Besides, I learned here that his reputation among opposition groups is not repeat not good. I think a more fruitful course of action would be to encourage the contacts between FSLN elements and Guardia Nacional elements to begin the negotiations of a cease-fire and GN reorganization.

Pezzullo

240. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 28, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

This memo is being sent instead of the one David mentioned to you on the phone. It is prompted by the cable (attached) which Warren Christopher is sending to the Secretary suggesting that we abandon our present strategy and adopt a modified Torrijos strategy.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, Foreign Countries, Box 63, Foreign Countries—Nicaragua, 1977–1980. Secret; Eyes Only. Printed from an uninitialed copy. Pastor wrote at the top of the page: "Sent 10 p.m." The memorandum is unsigned and there is no indication that Brzezinski saw it.

² An undated draft telegram is attached but not printed. Pastor wrote on the draft: "Christopher sent this to the Secretary—late Thursday evening, June 28, 1979." For the final version of the telegram as sent, see Document 243.

We would prefer to wait to see how the situation evolves before giving unwaivering support to Torrijos. We fear that if we move prematurely towards the Torrijos strategy, we would rule out the possibility of setting up a framework which would enhance the bargaining position of the moderates by providing a balance to the military power of the Sandinista Army. We, therefore, recommend that we permit the situation to evolve and see whether a modified-executive committee strategy is possible. We recommend that Ambassador Pezzullo expand his contacts within Managua among potential candidates (both civilian and National Guard) for a modified executive committee, and Ambassador Bowdler should do the same in San Jose, where there are also many Nicaraguan exiles. We think it may take a day or so before the moderate opposition elements realize what we are up to and reach for an alternative to the junta. In addition, we should continue to encourage Torrijos and the Venezuelans to persuade the junta to take the kinds of steps outlined in Christopher's cable.

While we believe that it would be useful for the junta to expand its base, we also believe that the military power that rests under the base will be determining, and, therefore, we are reluctant to rely solely on the Torrijos strategy. We have asked State to cable Ambassador Pezzullo to make the contacts with the military people suggested by General Gutierrez.³ We also believe that the strategy recommended in this cable neatly complements the idea of the President meeting with Torrijos and Royo, and the President could conceivably catalyze the strategy in such a meeting.

³ In telegram 167616 to Managua, June 29, the Department informed Pezzullo of the officers named by Gutierrez and noted: "if you think it advisable, you or your DAO may wish to contact them to get their opinion on how they see things and how they think the Guard might be reconstituted." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-2063)

**241. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the
Department of State¹**

San José, June 29, 1979, 0103Z

2788. From Bowdler. Subj: Conversation with President Carazo.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Together with Ambassador Weissman, I spent an hour and a half with President Carazo discussing the Nicaraguan situation. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Calderon. Carazo was in a reflective mood, relaxed and anxious to talk about helping to fashion a transition that would avoid further bloodshed and achieve a more balanced provisional government.

3. I opened the conversation by making my now standard presentation about the changed situation in Nicaragua and Ambassador Pezullo's and my mission in Central America. My comment that the solution contemplated in the OAS resolution should facilitate Somoza's departure and avoid dangerous vacuums led Carazo to set out his thinking on transitional process. I told him that I was very much interested in his ideas because the time has come to think in terms of hard-headed realities as we address the composition of the provisional government and the specific steps to be taken in the transition process in order to avoid further bloodshed or extremism.

4. Making clear that nothing could be set in train until Somoza decided to leave, Carazo said he would be willing to work "fulltime" to help and outlined the following steps:

—Once the USG obtains Somoza's agreement to leave, we should think of bringing Foreign Minister Zambrano into the act so that the Herrera government is seen to have played a role. He regarded this as important because of Carlos Andres Perez' involvement. CAP must be used to obtain the FSLN/PG's acceptance of the necessary conditions. Herrera accepts this but does not want to be left out. Calderon insisted that Zambrano not act alone. He thought Colombian Foreign Minister Uribe or Garcia Bedoya should work in tandem with him.

—Simultaneously, while the US is obtaining Somoza's commitment, Carazo wants to talk and possibly meet with Torrijos and Carlos Andres Perez about the specific conditions which the FSLN/PG would be asked to accept. I discussed these with him and he agreed they should include amplification of the provisional government, cease fire,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133-2009. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Also sent Immediate to Managua, Panama City, and Caracas.

stand still, arms embargo, no retribution and procedures for achieving a merger of elements of FSLN and National Guard. He thought them achievable because the FSLN would have no choice but to accept them in the face of strong Carazo-Torrijos-Perez insistence. In this connection, Carazo acknowledged that CAP's influence with Torrijos was much greater than his own, and that CAP would be the one who would have to bring Torrijos into line, "so that he doesn't radicalize and screw things up." Carazo noted that unlike his Panamanian friend, he was not a "card-carrying Sandinista."

—The departure of Somoza would lead to the selection of either Rener or Urcuyo as the successor who in turn would pass the baton to the provisional government after an understanding had been reached on the conditions enumerated in the previous tic. He stressed the importance of orchestrating the change over carefully so that the steps would move in rapid succession without dangerous pauses. He thought it would be too much to expect the provisional government to deal directly with the transitional government in Managua but thought that this obstacle could be overcome by using the Zambrano-Uribe team as a bridge.

—Carazo made a strong point of the need to watch the timing of the above steps, doing everything possible to insure that Somoza does not leave before a provisional government takes over in Managua and the FSLN/GP is brought to agreement on essential commitments.

—Carazo appeared to recognize the need for keeping continuity in public security forces to the extent of blending some elements of the FSLN with GN officials and troops that were not acceptable to the former. He discounted the suitability of the three Guard officials who have defected to Costa Rica and asked me for any suggestions as to who could lead the GN during the transition. I declined to offer any specific [garble—names?], but took it under advisement.

5. Carazo asked whether on the basis of my conversation with Torrijos I thought that he was in a sufficiently "tranquil" mood to accept the foregoing conditions and procedures. I replied that I found his thinking very much along the same lines. I asked Carazo how Carlos Andres Perez would respond to the procedure he had outlined. He replied that Perez has the most influence with the FSLN, much more influence than Torrijos; that he has kept in close touch with him; that the current gov has knowledge of this; and that Perez is truly interested in resolving the problem of Nicaragua and not just getting rid of Somoza.

6. Throughout the conversation Carazo kept coming back to his need for specific people to be added to the junta. I told him we might consider the categories not adequately covered that would give it balance. For example, the universities might have a spokesman; the eco-

conomic interests should have a person who could inspire confidence among foreign investors and the international lending institutions; and consideration might be given to the conservative party and the church being represented. Carazo went along with those categories but again stressed that the time had arrived to think in terms of specific candidates that could be put up to the junta. He urged that we recognize the value of the junta as a "cushion" between a radical extreme and our shared interests.

7. I told Carazo that I thought his approach was a constructive one that merited close study. I would inform my government tonight and seek instructions on how I should respond to his ideas. In the meantime we would continue efforts toward the first objective of getting a commitment from Somoza to leave.

8. Comment: Carazo clearly has done much reflecting on how he would like to see things proceed, obviously anxious to see a quick out from the current crisis, since as he puts it, "the peace of Costa Rica is in the balance." He may be more sanguine about his influence with CAP and Torrijos than his track record warrants. Their collective influence on the FSLN/PG may also prove to be less over the medium term than Carazo would like to believe, but that they can influence immediate discussions once Somoza is out is not unlikely. Timing in all this, as Carazo puts it, is crucial. The sense of urgency is evident, and to a lesser extent, awareness on his part that fitting the pieces together will not be easy. This should give us sufficient opportunity to offer guidance and find him receptive, but we need to keep in mind he all too often absorbs influences from other quarters all too readily. Nonetheless, his thinking is running parallel with that of Torrijos. If Department decides to go the expanded FSLN/PG route, it would appear that we would find cooperative allies. Would appreciate instructions on how to proceed in following up with Carazo.

Weissman

242. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, June 29, 1979, 218Z

3485. Subj: Somoza's Meeting with Central American Presidents.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. General Paz tonight (June 20) briefed me on his meetings earlier same day with Presidents Somoza, Lucas and Romero in Guatemala. He stressed confidentiality of information and I ask that this message be appropriately protected and restricted.

3. After meeting privately for two hours and discussing why Somoza must go and why Condeca should not intervene in Nicaragua, Presidents Romero, Lucas and Paz met with Somoza at 11 a.m. Paz said that he had never seen Somoza looking so demoralized, tired and bitter.

4. Somoza gave a military breakdown and said that he could keep fighting for a month but that he could not hold on indefinitely because he is receiving no help. He announced he has decided to go and urged his Central American colleagues to get involved in Nicaragua and to use Condeca after his departure.

5. Lucas told Somoza that Condeca would not intervene, arguing legalistically that Condeca comes under the OAS and it would be illegal to intervene. Lucas warned that the 17 OAS countries which sponsored the last OAS resolution would jump down Condeca's throat.² Moreover, there could be internal repurcussions in Guatemala. El Salvador agreed while Paz did not comment.

6. Somoza kept trying to persuade the three Presidents that they should intervene. Nicaraguan then revealed that he met with U.S. Ambassador (presumably Pezzullo) and that latter told him to go but offered no guarantees concerning the Guardia. According to Somoza, U.S. Ambassador said that Somoza should resign in favor of someone from the Congress who would take over, Congress would then be dissolved, then a new broad government would be formed and this government would negotiate with FSLN provisional government.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29–30/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, San Salvador, Managua, San José, and Panama City. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Pastor wrote at the top of the page: "Afraid of art. attack—so won't get involved." Pastor also wrote at the bottom of the page: "sent to ZB."

² Pastor underlined the portion of the sentence beginning with "17" and ending with "Condeca's."

7. Somoza repeatedly expressed his fears to his colleagues about the Guardia. He was anxious for a way for Guardia's senior officials to get out. El Salvador and Guatemala offered to accept them. (Paz commented to me that the GN officers have money and would not come to Honduras.)

8. Somoza said that he would be meeting with American Ambassador at 3 p.m. and would resign. This prompted Salvador to ask for advance 24 hour notice. Somoza said such notice is impossible because the GN or his bodyguard might kill him. Romero continued to ask for lead time so that Central Americans could recognize a democratic government. Romero said that "we three are very afraid." (Paz expressed fear of Venezuela which could strangle Central American countries by cutting off oil.)

9. Somoza departed, reiterating that he would resign.

10. Remaining three Presidents agreed that they would deny that meeting ever took place.

11. Paz told me that Honduras wanted to follow American lead. He asked how can Nicaraguan Government be stabilized and prevented from falling to Communists. He expressed serious worry about GN.

12. Again I ask that foregoing not rpt not be discussed with foreign governments as Paz appears fearful we will leak something to his Central American colleagues.

Jaramillo

243. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Tokyo¹

Washington, June 29, 1979, 0302Z

Tosec 60134/167615. The Secretary from Christopher. Subject: Revised Scenario—Nicaragua. Info addressees for Ambassadors Luers, Bowdler, Moss, Pezzullo.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Following recommendations represent our (State) views, and have DOD concurrence in substance. They are not, however, cleared as yet with NSC. I am sending them for your guidance and comments.

3. Reports from Ambassadors Pezzullo and Bowdler indicate we have virtually no chance of establishing an independent executive committee of moderates with enough support to bargain effectively with the FSLN-backed provisional government (PG).² We conclude that our best fall-back now is to try to modify the composition of the PG and set forth certain conditions which will give the moderates a fair opportunity to survive in the power struggle that is bound to ensue. Expansion of the PG is essential not only to counter-balance the extremists but also to inspire confidence of those whose support is necessary inside and outside Nicaragua to rebuild the economy. Our best leverage to do this is our apparent capacity to get Somoza to step down in the next several days, as well as the desire of the PG for our ultimate recognition. We may have some additional leverage in the form of the PG's hope for economic recovery help which any new government is going to need badly. We will, however, also require the unqualified and active backing of Torrijos, Carazo, Carlos Andres Perez and Luis Herrera Campins. I therefore propose that we seek to trade our cards for such an expanded PG and for as many of the other conditions set forth in para 4 as feasible.

4. Accordingly, we propose the following:

A. That we agree among ourselves that we would seek to expand the PG along the following lines (accepting Bowdler's suggestions):

—Mariano Fialloa: Rector of the National University, a man respected by both sides for fairness and objectivity.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840126–2398. Secret; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, San José, Panama City, and Managua. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in S/S-O and DOD in substance; approved by Christopher.

² See Documents 234 and 239.

—Ernesto Fernandez Holman: A banker who can inspire the confidence of the international lending institutions and the private sector. He is young and progressive—of the generation as Robelo, Ramirez and most of the FSLN leaders.

—Julio Gutierrez or some other professional soldier who commands respect and has not been involved in any of Somoza's recent repression. We need a tough soldier to put backbone in the civilian moderates and negotiate a merger of the FSLN and GN with the likes of Ortega Saavedra.

—Emilio Alvarez Montalban or Archbishop Obando Y Bravo: Men who stand above the struggle and are respected for their wisdom, fairness and unwillingness to compromise with Somoza.

B. We then approach Torrijos, Carazo, CAP and Herrera Campins immediately to say that we would be prepared to attempt to secure Somoza's departure in the next few days provided we can reach with the PG quick agreement and clear understandings on the following elements: a) an expanded Junta membership (as per above); b) a cease-fire/standstill; c) a clear promise of no reprisals, revolutionary courts and executions, and perhaps some plan similar to the sanctuary proposal of Torrijos; d) some agreement for continued existence side by side of GN units (under different leadership) pending an eventual reconstitution of police and security forces by the new government of national reconciliation. (We may not be able to obtain all of these points, but it is important to try.)

C. We would then approach the PG, preferably jointly with Torrijos, CAP and others, to negotiate the above agreement.

D. If we reach agreement we would then move to coordinate, through Ambassador Pezzulo, Somoza's departure on X date with a transfer of power to an expanded PG, probably through a constitutionally selected successor. (That is, rather than our old plan of the successor passing power to an executive committee which would negotiate a new government of national reconciliation (GNR), he would pass power to the expanded PG which would become the GNR.)

5. Another development is that the PG has announced a new government plan, which we have just received.³ It names a 30-person (but no names mentioned) "council of state" to "share legislative duties" with the 5-man Junta, and which would include representatives of moderate elements—but many Sandinistas as well—and which will greatly expand what the Junta can claim it represents. It provides for

³ Telegram 4891 from Panama City, June 28, included an informal English-language translation of the FSLN provisional government plan received on June 27. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790316-0496)

a new army, police, court system and guarantees. We may be able to work with this plan to achieve some of our goals. There are still a lot of unanswered questions regarding it. We would still want to negotiate an expansion of the effective executive Junta, i.e. the present five, and perhaps we could “thicken” the 30-man council—and the top levels of the bureaucracy—with greater moderate participation, as well.

6. I repeat that the above has not been cleared by NSC. I do not know if they disagree though they may have some differences. We have simply not been able to discuss it and I do not want to delay this message.

Christopher

244. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, June 29, 1979, 1120Z

2886. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) Somoza: Second Visit.

1. (S)-Entire text

2. Taking a leaf from Somoza’s book, I took my associates (Barnebey and Martin) with me for my second meeting with him. Once again Quintana was present but Congressman John Murphy was not; he was replaced by Minister of Finance Genie. Somoza was dressed in combat fatigues in contrast to his pinstripe gray suit of yesterday. Since he said he had just returned from visiting troops in the field, I asked his assessment of the conflict. He confirmed what we had already learned, that the FSLN unit in the El Dorado sector of the city had withdrawn. He said the FSLN group had run out of ammunition. The same was true in Matagalpa. He said they were headed for El Tuma, commenting, “I think we are winning.” He also claimed the GN defeated the FSLN in Rivas.

3. Without a bit of hesitation, he then blurted out, “I am prepared to leave.” Three times he referred to the vote in the OAS as indicative

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29–30/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis; Special Encryption. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Pastor wrote at the top of the page: “Scenario—hands to 1 person—who waits and gives key to FSLN?”

of his isolation in the hemisphere and said at one point, "I can't oppose governments that rule 300 million people." He went on at some length about his loyalty to the Liberal Party and to the majority of the Nicaraguan public which he said elected him and still supports him. He then reiterated that he had decided to resign, but added petulantly that the U.S. should consider carefully the consequences of his leaving.

4. I stressed our interest in preserving some institutional structure and in preventing an extreme leftist solution. This led us to conclude that his resignation was an essential first step. His mere presence in office would continue to fuel the violence and permit leftist extremists to turn the widespread anti-Somoza feelings to their advantage. He said he understood and believed that most Nicaraguans were not extremists. I suggested that we design a scenario for his resignation. He agreed and suggested we meet tomorrow afternoon to review such a scenario.

5. One unanticipated problem arose when Somoza commented that the conservatives had not attended the congressional session called for today. He said a quorum was not possible. Quintana said some were afraid to attend and others had gone to the U.S. when the FSLN offensive began. At first, Somoza was confident they would eventually be able to round up the required number, especially if the Embassy would encourage the conservatives to attend. He then shifted ground and said if it were not possible to gain a quorum, "we can always do it with a golpe." He said, "Your plan calls for a golpe anyway." Quintana agreed, reminding me that he had raised that possibility in Washington.

6. We have come to the crucial phase. I have no doubt that Somoza has decided to resign. The real proof came toward the end of the conversation when he commented gravely that he had one person he wanted to save in this affair; his son, Tachito. I advised him to get him out of the country early. He also asked about the status of his visa. I advised him to send his passport to the Embassy to ensure that all details are in order and not left for the last moment.

7. Tomorrow (Friday) I propose to present the following scenario to Somoza. Department comments should reach me no later than noon Washington time.

—Establish a specific departure date. I suggest Tuesday or Thursday of next week (Wednesday, July 4 seems a bit much). I would argue against extending beyond Thursday for fear that we might see a change of heart.

—Congress should convene early on d-day to accept the resignation, select a Congressman to act as interim President and then take whatever additional action we decide is necessary.

—D-day should also be the date of departure of discredited senior GN Commanders and the announcement of appointment of new com-

manders who pledge themselves to be loyal to country and duty and to serve the successor government loyally.

—D-day—Somoza's Swan song. Suggest he picture his resignation as a patriotic action aimed at calming political passions and ending fratricidal conflict.

—Departure of Somoza and other members of family. Arrival in U.S. should be equally statesmanlike to avoid stimulating critical press reaction and thereby prejudicing press treatment of any request for extradition.

Before d-day:

—If congressional quorum impossible, Somoza will have to select another successor (e.g., FonMin Julio Quintana).

—Administrative arrangements completed—visas, travel, etc.

—Agree on public statements.

Pezzullo

245. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, June 29, 1979, 1125Z

2887. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (C) Meeting With Red Cross President.

1. C-Entire text

2. At the suggestion of Emilio Alvarez, one of the principal advisors who helped during the mediation effort, I met with Ismael Reyes this afternoon to explore his interest in becoming a member of the transitional Executive Committee. Reyes has all the attractive attributes we are seeking, i.e., high prestige, respectability among the GN and the Sandinistas, and is a moderate who is currently the head of the Chamber of Industries. Reyes expressed grave concern about the human suffering his country is experiencing. He has traveled through the country as head of the Red Cross and been witness to human tragedy which he said is ten times as grave as that which existed in the aftermath of the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29–30/79. Confidential; Niact Immediate, Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Pastor wrote at the top of the page: "interested—get hemispheric support."

1972 earthquake. He was very pessimistic about the future and was fearful that public order might break down because of the human wave of despair which could descend on population centers.

3. He said the FSLN treated him well during his visits in recent days to occupied cities such as Leon and Esteli. He estimated their strength in the thousands, though I suspect that is an exaggeration. He feared that the FSLN, through force of arms, will impose an extreme leftist government.

4. I then outlined our strategy for ending the human suffering and bloodshed and hopefully permitting the more numerous moderate political forces to prevent leftist domination. I indicated that it depended on three key ingredients: The early resignation of Somoza; the selection of a highly-prestigious and independent caretaker committee or person who could with credibility make a call for national reconciliation, a ceasefire and humanitarian assistance; and the preservation of elements of the National Guard to prevent an FSLN takeover. Reyes was impressed with our scenario but asked whether it would be acceptable to the FSLN and the provisional Junta. I said that depended on the prestige of the persons involved in the transitional executive authority and public reaction to call for unity and ceasefire. He then asked how we could avoid this appearing to be a USG invention.² He suggested it would benefit from Andean or Central American sponsorship. I said the countries in those areas would probably support a formula which would avoid a vacuum which benefited the extreme left.

5. I added that Archbishop Obando Y Bravo had indicated that he would support a formula which offered a peaceful solution to the current crisis. I then asked Reyes whether he would be interested in being a member of such an executive committee. He said he would have to think about it but there were too many unknowns for his comfort. He said he might be persuaded to participate should the momentum for such a formula develop in the hemispheric. I promised to keep in touch and asked him to call should he become more positively inclined.

6. Comment: We have contacted several potential candidates for an Executive Committee. Although all appeared fascinated by the idea

² Inderfurth underlined the portion of this sentence beginning with "to" and ending with "invention" and the sentence in paragraph five beginning with "he" and ending with "hemispheric" and wrote in the right-hand margin: "Bob—This is a pertinent, *key* point. Anything *we* (USG) insist on creating will suffer from 'a kiss of death'—& those who may be members of it will probably be viewed as U.S. 'puppets'—& become so tainted that their political effectiveness will be highly compromised. Perhaps the 'Torrijos approach' would be best. Rick."

and viewed it as a noble effort, I doubt that we can put together anything resembling a viable Executive Committee quickly. It appears to be a dead letter.³

Pezzullo

³ In telegram 2794 from San José, June 30, Bowdler reported his conversation with Calero about Pezzullo's "difficulty in getting moderate leaders to serve on an Executive Committee following Somoza's departure." Calero: "described the root problem as a lack of confidence of Nicaraguan moderates in the US" due to "our failure to react vigorously against Somoza after he had turned down the reasonable proposals of the mediators last December." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79)

246. Memorandum From John Matheny of the Office of the Vice President to Vice President Mondale¹

Washington, June 29, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, Friday, June 29, 1979, 11:00 a.m. Situation Room

Based on conversations with Robert Pastor and a gleaning of the cables, it appears to me that we are headed for a split within the Administration on whether to support some combination of a revitalized National Guard and accompanying provisional government or whether to back off and try to influence events through the junta.

This split, of course, is based on the difference in perception concerning the ultimate threat of the Sandinista marxist element to the influx of moderate elements into the junta. The Venezuelans to whom we have talked and others who are knowledgeable (Cruz and Carazo) tend to believe that the power goes with the guns and that although we have to move carefully, we can't ignore this fact.² In this respect Torrijos cannot be allowed to run unchecked seeming to carry a US-

¹ Source: Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, Box 63, Foreign Countries—Nicaragua, 1977–1980. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.

² Mondale placed a set of parenthesis around the words "Cruz and Carazo" and placed two vertical lines in the left-hand margin next to the sentence.

backed policy in a direction that could very well result in a marxist dominated government.

I believe Aaron, Pastor and Defense will want to support elements of the Guard that we can co-op to support moderate elements within the provisional government. Vaky and State may wish to back off.³

³ Mondale wrote at the bottom of the page: "The perception of yours notwithstanding—should Somoza leave *before* the President's return would not be beneficial." Mondale's reference is to the fact that Carter was not scheduled to return from the Tokyo G-7 Economic Summit until after June 29.

247. Memorandum for the Record by [name not declassified] of the Central Intelligence Agency¹

NFAC-3491-78

Washington, June 29, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 29 June 1979, White House Situation Room

PARTICIPANTS

David Aaron, White House; Frank Carlucci, [name not declassified] CIA; Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, Brandon Grove, State Department; Charles Duncan, David McGiffert, Defense Department; John Pustay, JCS; Robert Pastor, NSC

1. Mr. Aaron called the meeting to disagree with the position outlined by State—in an outgoing NODIS cable—of shelving the effort to foster a moderate provisional government in Nicaragua in favor of increased efforts to broaden and moderate the FSLN's provisional junta.² He recommended that the US continue to pursue both tracks and to that end indicated that Panama's Torrijos might come to the US next Monday³ or Tuesday to discuss with President Carter the transition in Nicaragua.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by [name not declassified] on July 3. [name not declassified] sent the memorandum to Turner under a July 3 covering memorandum, indicating that [name not declassified] had prepared the memorandum for the record. No other minutes for the June 29 SCC meeting on Nicaragua have been found.

² See Document 243.

³ July 2.

2. Extensive discussion followed with State Department representatives defending the effort to work with the junta, pointing out its future need for financial assistance as a US lever to moderate and broaden it. DDCI Carlucci indicated that the FSLN was already moving to coopt moderate leaders into its provisional government, which would make them less likely to risk joining in a US-sponsored alternative government. Aaron and Defense Department representatives expressed concern that unless a reformed and reconstituted National Guard were supported by the US, the FSLN would seize power.

3. Differences were reconciled, and the cable was redrafted to indicate that both policy tracks would continue to be pursued.⁴

4. Mr. Duncan urged that a signals intelligence ship be dispatched to the area during this crucial time. Carlucci indicated that the DCI had evaluated that the mission would be valuable but not essential. Assistant Secretary Vaky opposed the mission on the grounds that it would jeopardize the diplomatic effort. It was agreed to step up aircraft missions and to dispatch the ship, but to hold it off station until a final decision could be made by the SCC principals.

⁴ See Documents 248 and 249.

248. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, June 30, 1979, 0007Z

168715. For Ambassador Pezzullo; San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Scenario.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Following decisions were taken by SCC today:

—You should not rpt not try to establish a specific departure date at this time. What follows after Somoza's departure is too uncertain as yet. Hence Somoza should stay in place until this is determined.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1815. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, and San José. Drafted and approved by Vaky; cleared in S/S–O and NSC.

—You should continue to press exploration of the follow-on committee to a constitutionally selected successor, or some other successor arrangement which can constitute a credible caretaker. The problem we see is that a Quintana-led regime or other Somoza-appointed regime would probably not constitute one with which the FSLN and other opposition elements would deal. Nor is it likely to constitute a sufficiently legitimate regime to warrant our and other L.A. backing. Please continue to seek some coalescing of opposition elements willing to take up the baton.

—You should urgently explore ways of preserving some kinds of effective but reconstituted Guard presence so as to avoid leaving the FSLN as the only organized military force. The analysis you indicated you were preparing in Managua 2889 will be very important and is urgently required.²

Christopher

² In telegram 2889 from Managua, June 29, Pezzullo reported to Vaky that Gutierrez's "suggestions on reconstituted Guard leadership demonstrate that he is badly out of touch or attempting to create his own power base." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1797) In telegram 167616 to Managua, June 29, the Department informed Pezzullo of Gutierrez's suggestions for officers to who "might be key in any reconstitution of the National Guard." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-2063)

249. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica¹

Washington, June 30, 1979, 0235Z

Tosec 60162/169011. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: U.S. Strategy—Nicaragua. Ref: State 167615 (Notal).²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. David Aaron chaired an SCC meeting today which considered U.S. strategies to Nicaragua, and discussed reftel. The SCC decided to modify that proposal.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840126-2380. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Bogotá, Guatemala City, Lima, Quito, and Tegucigalpa. The President and Vance departed the G-7 Economic Summit in Tokyo and then paid a State visit to South Korea. Drafted by Pastor and Vaky; cleared in S/S-O; approved by Christopher.

² See Document 243.

3. Reports from Ambassadors Pezzullo and Bowdler indicate that we have limited prospects of establishing an independent Executive Committee of moderates with enough support to bargain effectively with the FSLN-backed provisional government (PG).³ Nonetheless, we believe that you should continue to pursue aggressively this goal or some modification of it, which might establish transitional and legitimate group which can assume power when Somoza departs. It should also be supported by a reconstituted National Guard capable of being legitimized by adequate support of Nicaraguan people and OAS members. We regard this as a very important objective. We do not want to find ourselves in a position where the only effective military force in Nicaragua is controlled by the Sandinistas. At the same time, we want to maintain and expand our channels of communication with the FSLN/PG in order to seek to modify the composition of the provisional government and set forth certain conditions which will give the moderates a fair opportunity to survive in the power struggle that is bound to ensue.

4. Ambassadors Pezzullo and Bowdler should expand and intensify their contacts with moderate leaders to assess their interests in serving on an Executive Committee-type group which would oversee negotiations with the PG. You should, of course, reiterate that we have no intention of trying to set up a competing force to the PG. Rather, we are interested in trying to develop a framework and transitional arrangements by which all elements could participate in a government of national reconciliation.

5. Expansion of the PG is essential to counter-balance the extremists and give the moderates a chance to participate. Our best leverage on the PG is our apparent capacity to get Somoza to step down as well as the desire of the PG for our ultimate recognition. We may have some additional leverage in the form of the PG's hope for economic recovery help which any new government is going to need badly.

6. In your continuing conversations with the PG, Torrijos, Carazo, CAP, and Herrera, you should seek an expanded Junta membership (as per below); a ceasefire/standstill; a clear promise of no reprisals, revolutionary courts and executions; agreement for continued existence of GN units (under different leadership) under the ceasefire/standstill arrangement pending an eventual reconstitution of police and security forces by the new government of national reconciliation; and perhaps some plan similar to the sanctuary proposal of Torrijos.

7. Possible additional PG members could be:

—Mariano Fialloa; rector of Theonal University, a man respected by both sides for fairness and objectivity.

³ For Bowdler's report, see Document 234. For Pezzullo's reports, see Documents 239 and 245.

—Ernesto Fernandez Holman: A banker who can inspire the confidence of the international lending institutions and the private sector. He is young and progressive—of the generation as Robelo, Ramirez and most of the FSLN leaders.

—Julio Gutierrez or some other professional soldier who commands respect and has not been involved in any of Somoza's recent repression. We need a tough soldier to put backbone in the civilian moderates and negotiate a merger of the FSLN and GN with the likes of Ortega Saavedra.

—Emilio Alvenez Montalban or Archbishop Obando Y Bravo: Men who stand above the struggle and are respected for their wisdom, fairness and unwillingness to compromise with Somoza.

8. For Ambassador Moss: You should try to get General Torrijos to focus more on the post-Somoza military situation in Nicaragua. We found his idea of sanctuaries interesting, but it also has potential traps, e.g. forcing opposition elements out of the country. You should try to learn more about how he thinks this idea could be developed. How does he visualize the fusion of the GN and the FSLN forces? Does he see the possibility of a breakdown in law and order, or perhaps continued fighting between GN elements and FSLN factions? If so, how does he think we could avoid that? Can the GN be reconstituted? Would he be willing to see an alternative military force to the Sandinista army? At one point, he mentioned the possibility of sending Panamanian troops to maintain law and order. Would he be willing to help us persuade other OAS countries to provide peacekeeping elements? FYI: While we would not rule out Panamanian participation in a multilateral group, we agree with Ambassador Pezzullo that Panamanian troops alone [garble] dangerous tensions (see Managua 2870).⁴ End FYI.

9. To all action and info posts: If head of state or other leader in your countries has some knowledge or influence on Nicaraguan National Guard (GN) or members of GN, you may want to try to solicit ideas on ways to maintain a reconstituted National Guard or perhaps a portion of a GN in a post-Somoza period.

10. For Bogota, Lima, Tegucigalpa, Caracas: You may also want to try to encourage leaders in host country to think more and more about what will happen after Somoza leaves, and what their government would be interested in doing to improve the chances of a moderate, democratic Nicaragua.

Christopher

⁴ See Document 239.

250. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Seoul, undated.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

By the time you meet with Torrijos on Tuesday,² we should have a firm idea of how we will proceed on Nicaragua. My own view is that we should use whatever leverage we have to attempt to moderate and expand the base of the Provisional Government which has been established outside the country. Torrijos can be helpful in this effort. I think the situation has deteriorated in Managua to the point where the moderates are unwilling and unable to assert themselves in the face of what they see as the predominate FSLN position.

I realize there are various views on this issue, however, and believe it would be very useful for you to meet briefly, some time before your meeting with Torrijos, with those in the Executive Branch who have been dealing directly with this problem. I consequently suggest that sometime on Monday you meet with Warren, Zbig, Bill Bowdler, Ambler Moss, Pete Vaky, and Bob Pastor to get an update on the situation on the ground and to have the benefit of their views on the best way to proceed.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79–9/79. Secret. Carter initialed the top of the page. An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the page: “[c/2/79]” The Secretary of State’s delegation in Seoul sent the text of the memorandum for Christopher in Washington in telegram Secto 6081 from Seoul, June 30. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29–30/79)

² July 3.

251. Message From the White House Situation Room to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 30, 1979, 1534Z

Sitto 76/WH 91433. The following is a retransmittal of Managua 2911.² Subject: (S) Somoza: The Third Meeting.

1. S-Entire text.

2. Somoza had expanded his team when I arrived this evening to include Luis Pallais and his son Tachito, in addition to FonMin Quintana and Minister of Finance Genie. I told him Washington was pleased he had finally decided to resign, and was in the process of preparing the stage to ensure that his departure did not leave a vacuum which could be exploited by the extreme left. We sought to preserve segments of the National Guard to maintain public order and were hopeful of ensuring that all opposition factions would be represented in the transitional government. Our aim was to arrange an effective ceasefire, prevent reprisals and begin the process of social and economic recovery. Since we were not prepared yet to specify the timetable within which his resignation should take place, I was instructed to delay presenting a complete scenario. I promised to be in touch with him as soon as we were prepared to go forward.

3. Somoza somewhat melodramatically said that we had made him a prime target for assassination by giving the press all the details of our confidential conversations. He referred specifically to a Miami Herald article which I assume covers the same story the Post and NYTimes printed earlier.)³ This complicated his position with the National Guard, he lamented. Nonetheless, he said, he and his government would be true to his word and he would resign, repeating again that "I would be crazy to think I could ignore the will of governments that lead 300 million people". (Quite clearly, no single act has stung him as sharply as the OAS resolution). I assured him that we had not violated the confidentiality of our discussions. The press reports I had

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29-30/79. Secret. Sent through Gates with a request to deliver at the opening of business.

² Telegram 2911 from Managua, June 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1819)

³ Reference is to Alan Riding, "Nicaraguan Moderates Reject U.S. Plan for Conservative Interim Regime," *New York Times*, June 30, 1979, p. 8. Riding reported that Somoza had "told United States officials that he will step down if the 'institutionality' of the Guard and the Liberal Party is respected." See also, John M. Goshko, "Somoza to Quit, Leave Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, June 28, 1979, p. A1.

seen noted that my mission was to implement our commitment under the OAS resolution, which included seeking his resignation and supporting the development of a broadly-based, democratic transition government. None of the press accounts I had seen confirmed his decision to resign. I suggested he take the line with the press that he is not about to be talked into resigning by anyone. He nodded.

4. We then turned to the post-Somoza period, specifically to the survivability of the National Guard. Young Tachito was their principal spokesman. He said he was hopeful that a truly democratic process following his father's resignation would work to the benefit of all Nicaraguans, even if "I have the most to lose." He professed to be keeping a close eye on the morale of the GN and the attitudes of its officers since the news of his father's resignation became widespread. He found morale excellent and was convinced that the officers at the Lt. Col. level and below were pragmatic and flexible enough to weather a transitional period. He acknowledged that all of the current Guardia leadership would have to leave. The new Guard leadership had to be composed of self-reliant officers capable of acting in a less controlled environment. He was optimistic that with careful selection, an officer leadership corps could be put together which had no taint of Somo-cismo and had the respect of subordinates.

5. Somoza was equally optimistic about the survivability of the guard. He said "they will serve any democratic government with loyalty." He pointed to how well the GN had stood up under the severe current conditions as evidence of its durability. He noted that it had not faltered nor had desertions become a problem. He concluded that the "GN is a better fighting force than most people believed."

6. I acknowledged that the GN had stood up remarkably well, but asked whether it would hold together during the transition period when adaptability would be the chief requirement, not responsiveness to command. Tachito said flexibility and self-reliance were more characteristic of the officers at the Lt. Col. level and below. The senior officers were the more tradition-bound and, consequently, the ones who would have to go when his father left. Tachito was equally certain that morale would not sag. He asserted that the knowledge of his father's imminent resignation is common knowledge throughout the GN.

7. Tachito suggested that the GN could be bolstered during the transition period if: a) the US makes an early show of moral support (both Somozas kept repeating that the GN looks to the USG, because of our close relationship in the past); b) Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador could provide the material needed to replenish drawn-down stocks; and c) as soon as the GN was incorporated within a new government that the USG offer military assistance.

8. Comment: The discussion was calm and dispassionate and largely devoid of the posturing of the first two sessions. Somoza is

tired and ready to step down. We should not delay too long. He is under severe strain, and the assassination possibility cannot be discounted entirely.⁴

Pezzullo

⁴ In telegram 2939 from Managua, July 1, the Embassy reported to Vaky, Pezzullo, and Bowdler an additional point made by Somoza's son during Pezzullo's third meeting with Somoza: "Tachito's point was that the hard-line FSLN adherents (i.e. the GPP and TP factions) are likely to be more intact following this offensive than the tercarios, in whose ranks most of the non-Communists chose to fight. Secondly, if the FSLN did come to power, they still would have an unfinished struggle ahead to determine which faction will be dominant." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1830)

252. Message From the White House Situation Room to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 30, 1979, 1541Z

Sitto 77/WH 91434. This is a retransmittal of Managua 2914.² Subject: (S) National Guard Survival.

1. Secret-Entire text

2. Some national security forces must remain to maintain order after Somoza's departure. Otherwise the vacuum we all wish to avoid will be filled by the FSLN, with all the negative consequences that would bring. What is the reality of the GN and what are the prospects of it holding together after Somoza leaves? Certain factors must be taken into account in our own analysis and planning.

A) Despite the reality that Somoza's prospective departure is widely known within the GN, it has not collapsed as some feared it would.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35: Nicaragua: 6/29-30/79. Secret. Sent through Gates with a request to deliver at the opening of business.

² Telegram 2914 from Managua, June 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1802)

B) We believe a majority of its officers have accommodated to the prospect of serving in a post-Somoza force. They expect a radical change of leaders.

C) The FSLN has not defeated the GN. The GN remains a strong fighting force, though somewhat enfeebled by shortages of essential material.

3. These factors lead me to conclude that we can preserve a reorganized and reconstituted GN security force. We don't have much time, however, or anything to offer on the material side until the GN becomes the security force of a government of national reconciliation. But we can do the following things now:

A) Once identified, we can help the new leader build a staff and provide the logistical support to get himself organized before d-day.

B) Set the stage for negotiations between the GN and the FSLN/JN which optimally should begin before d-day. Torrijos, Carazo and CAP should be asked to help in this.

C) Attempt to identify the potential new leaders, most importantly the new commander.

D) Get the Venezuelans and others (such as Colombia, Peru, etc.) to join us in influencing Torrijos, CAP and Carazo to restrain any FSLN inclination to destroy the GN.

4. With careful orchestration we have a better than even chance of preserving enough of the GN to maintain order and hold the FSLN in check after Somoza resigns. The most difficult variable to weigh is the extent of public repudiation of the GN.

Pezzullo

253. Message From the White House Situation Room to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, June 30, 1979, 2316Z

Sitto 96/WH 91450. The following is a retransmission of Managua 2919.² Subject: (S) Nicaraguan Scenario. Ref: State 168715,³ San Jose 2792.⁴

1. S at entire text.

2. Fear of reprisal by the FSLN and the lack of any assured security and support base are the principal factors inhibiting the individuals we have contacted from becoming part of a caretaker executive committee. They see the Junta in San Jose supported by a FSLN force and such countries as Panama and Costa Rica, while they would have nothing but helpful words from the USG as of the moment. Realistically, we have little prospect of interesting any individuals to play this hero role without greater assurances, here of the most important, would be some tangible evidence that a reconstituted GN would stand firm and support them.

3. I believe we must move with haste to help select a new Guard Commander so that he can begin putting a staff together, assuring that the rank and file of the GN will support him and offering support to a caretaker committee. If Col. Bermudez shows interest and looks as if he has the capacity to bring the GN together and deal in a transitional environment, we should urge him to move quickly. We should explore with him how he plans to proceed and how he can lend assistance. If he shows no interest then we must move to other candidates.

4. Among the issues we should cover with any candidate would be: a) the specific names of his principal subordinates (the illustrative list we sent forward⁵ can be of help b) early contact with prospective candidates for an executive committee to bolster their resolve and to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 35, Nicaragua: 6/29-30/79. Secret; Nodis. Sent through Gates. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "Bring Pezzullo back to brief the P."

² Telegram 2919 from Managua, June 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1809)

³ See Document 248.

⁴ In telegram 2792 from San José, June 29, Bowdler reported on his talks with Calero. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133-1529)

⁵ In telegram 2913 from Managua, June 30, Pezzullo sent Vaky a "list of officers who might be considered for taking command of the GN during the transition period following the departure of Somoza." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790296-0666)

make plans for the transition period; the opening of some liaison—beginning with a confidential feeler through a neutral intermediary with the FSLN command—to begin working out details of a cease-fire.

5. Once it appears that a reconstituted GN can hold, we will have a much better chance of attracting individuals to form part of the caretaker body. I am pleased that Calero will be here early next week. He may be an important catalyst. Meanwhile, I will continue to explore our scenario with others. It is extremely difficult making contact in the midst of a civil war. I have not been able to get to Fiallou, for example, because he is holed up in Leon. I have sent word to him, however, and hope to see him soon.

6. A third essential element in building the confidence of a caretaker group and a reconstituted Guardia Nacional is support by Andean group countries and other LA states. I will be offering some illustrative examples in a separate message of the types of things they can do.⁶ Contact and assurances by these countries and commitments to lend support once a cease-fire is attained and a new government reconstitution is formed should be attainable. I cannot emphasize enough the need for confidence building. We must mobilize the hemisphere to form a consortium in support of a democratic solution here in keeping with the OAS resolution. By internationalizing the search for a peaceful solution to the Nicaraguan tragedy we can attract more resources and spread responsibility around.

Pezzullo

⁶ In telegram 2915 from Managua, June 30, Pezzullo discussed his idea for a “‘consortium’ of the coordinated efforts of several OAS countries,” and the Andean Pact regarding Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1804)

254. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, July 1, 1979, 1228Z

Sitto 100/WH 91455.

We will schedule an SCC, but Christopher and Vaky have reservations about bringing Pezzullo back for it. They ask you to reconsider based on the following reasons;

—Bowdler and Moss are coming back and will be able to give us a first hand account albeit, they are not in Managua.

—They are concerned that Pezzullo's abrupt departure after a couple of days would raise questions in the minds of the moderate groups which he has contacted and would expose us to the criticism that we are unwilling to carry through and thus leave them exposed—this time to the Sandinistas, last time to Somoza.

—Sunday Monday and Tuesday² will be critical days to implement our strategy and he has had only a couple brief days. We are running out of time. If we pull him out now, we may lose the opportunity to construct a moderate solution in Managua.

—There are no flights to bring him out. We would need to send a special plane and that would be very visible.

—If you have any additional questions that you want to ask of Pezzullo we could cable them down today. We will have a secure phone installation by Monday.

(Aaron's opinion)—I don't agree with State. I believe a firsthand assessment is necessary particularly because some of Pezzullo's reports seem contradictory. Therefore, I recommend sending a plane down to bring him out Sunday for the meetings on Monday and Tuesday.

However, we will not be in touch with Pezzullo to bring him out until we have heard from you again.³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79. Secret; Flash. Sent from the Situation Room to Brzezinski aboard Air Force One.

² July 1, 2, and 3.

³ Brzezinski responded from Air Force One in a message to Aaron, July 1, confirming that Carter planned to hold a strategy review meeting on Nicaragua on July 2 and a meeting about Panama on July 3. Carter also directed that both meetings be "completely off the record." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79)

255. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State¹

Panama City, July 1, 1979, 1452Z

4963. From Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaragua.

1. (Secret-Entire text).

2. Marv Weissman and I had a wide ranging, tough but friendly exchange with the FSLN–PG tonight. No converts emerged but the discussion got things on the table and fully discussed. The meeting took place in the rented home of Dona Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. She was there together with Ramirez, Robelo, Father Descoto and one of Mrs. Chamorro's daughters. This time Ramirez emerged clearly as the spokesman, although all participated. Robelo looked uncomfortable and fidgetted a good deal. Descoto was pontifical, particularly on the scope and meaning of the OAS resolution.

3. I led off the conversation by saying that I wanted the opportunity to have a further exchange of views with them. When I had asked for the appointment, I had not been aware that I would be returning to Washington on consultation. The exchange therefore would be additionally useful because of this coincidence.

4. Wrapping myself again in the OAS resolution, I explained that the talks in Managua between Ambassador Pezzullo and Somoza were proceeding at an encouraging pace. I was hopeful that the first step of the OAS resolution could be achieved soon. This would open the way to proceed with the others. I repeated that we sought a "durable and peaceful resolution" and to achieve this a broad based provisional government is necessary and a clear understanding reached on the mechanics of the transition in order to avoid further strife and suffering. Among the issues that needed to be resolved by representative Nicaraguans are: cease fire, stand still, no reprisals, merger of FSLN and GN forces into a new military establishment and composition of the PG. I would welcome their views on these points.

5. Ramirez, echoed by the others, took the stand initially that all that is required under the OAS resolution is for OAS countries to break with Somoza and the solution would be at hand. The GN, particularly with a USG break, would crumble, the FSLN forces would take over, and they would proceed to Managua to form the government. Any

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–2664. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Niact Immediate to Caracas, Managua, and San José. On another copy of the telegram Pastor wrote: "Only FSLN military victory is possible." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1–4/79)

other action was interventionist, contrary to the spirit and letter of the OAS resolution, and would contribute to the prolongation of the Somoza regime with a lot more blood shed.

6. I asked them to join me in examining these conclusions. I said our action was not interventionist because we were operating under declarative para one of the OAS resolution. This called on OAS member governments to take steps within their reach to bring about a solution that is peaceful and durable. What we are doing in trying to persuade Somoza to leave is fully consistent with the resolution. In fact to break relations, as they wanted, would not repeat not contribute to a peaceful and durable solution since there is a good possibility Somoza under those circumstances might not leave. The fighting would continue with the danger that it might increase, with internationalization of the conflict. Robelo retorted that the logic of the resolution in declaring Somoza inhumane and calling for the replacement of the Somoza regime was that all states should break with Somoza and accept the FSLN-PG which represents all the important opposition groups. I told him one could not stop reading the resolution at the end of the first of the four bases but had to go on to the operative part. Descoto chimed in to say that operative para one did not contemplate what we were doing in Managua. I replied that is simply not so. We must be realistic and practical. We all want Somoza to go, but how could this be accomplished peacefully without talking to him. Descoto interrupted to say that the "steps" contemplated were to break relations and not to bargain. I reminded him of the legislative history of the paragraph in which the U.S. had suggested adding the illustrative phrase about good offices which had been dropped because of general agreement that the concept was already included in "steps". He nodded that was the case.

7. They then shifted arguments and accused the USG of trying to set up a rival group in Managua. They knew of our conversations with the FAO and COSEP and our efforts to get them to form a transitional government. They regarded this as unfriendly and unhelpful. They referred to the FAO and COSEP declarations as evidence of the solid support they enjoyed. I again assured them we were not seeking to establish a rival government in order to keep them out of the settlement. Again we must be realistic and practical. The departure of Somoza needed to be done in an orderly fashion. Authority had to flow to avoid dangerous vacuums. Furthermore, tough issues had to be addressed to facilitate as peaceful a transition as possible. I invited them to give me their views on these issues. The ensuing discussion produced these views:

—Cease fire: This would be possible following Somoza's departure but cannot be a substitute for an FSLN victory. It is to be achieved either by the GN laying down their arms or as a result of the GN

disintegration which is the more likely after their chief departs. I told them that neither assumption is necessarily correct. The FSLN has not defeated the GN which remains a perhaps weakened but nevertheless effective fighting force. There is no convincing evidence I have seen yet that the GN has suffered any serious defections or is about to collapse. There is a possibility if not probability that neither side can defeat the other militarily. Thus a cease fire will be necessary to avoid further bloodshed. They held to their view that only a FSLN military victory is acceptable but I thought their arguments lacked conviction. During this discussion Ramirez said the FSLN had been offered surface-to-air missiles but had declined because it would have represented an escalation in the fighting that could well internationalize the conflict. He indicated that he had personally opposed this, showing how closely associated he is to the FSLN. I congratulated him on the decision.

—Stand still: here again they advanced their theories on total victory and GN disintegration, hence they did not see stand still as a practical problem. They as the new government would handle any confrontations arising from force dispositions. I stressed that this is a serious problem and as an example referred to the GN in the Fortin outside Leon. Ramirez, looking at his watch, said that the Fortin was at that moment under FSLN attack and he expected it to fall shortly. I commented that loss of the Fortin would not resolve problem since it was a countrywide problem.

—No reprisals: They agreed this needed to be avoided but was really not a problem. While isolated cases of retribution could not be avoided, the PG was prepared to make an international commitment in the form of a communication to the OAS that there would be no indiscriminate shootings or executions. They referred to their good record. I said I recalled their assurances on this score at our first meeting, but I had also heard from a well placed church source who merits my full confidence that there had been numerous summary executions in Matagalpa and this was very disturbing.

—Merger of forces: They did not rule out the merger of “clean” GN forces in a restructured military establishment but they saw the reorganization and new command as falling to the FSLN leadership. They clearly did not look upon this question as one to be negotiated between FSLN and GN representatives. Rather the FSLN would determine what was “clean” and how it was to be incorporated with the revolutionary armed forces. Ramirez thought that many GN officers and men who had other skills would want out.

8. As the meeting came to a close, I observed that all these issues need further examination. I looked forward to seeing them on my return from Washington on Tuesday or Wednesday.² I would get in

² July 3 and 4.

touch with them. They expressed a willingness to continue the dialogue. Ramirez asked me how optimistic I was about Somoza's departure. I told him I thought it was feasible and I was encouraged. He did not think Somoza would leave by persuasion. I told him not to be so confident. It was the possibility of that departure that made it so important to think and plan in terms of a peaceful transition in which all representative groups could participate. As a parting shot they said his departure would be on conditions set by him. I reassured them that there would be no conditions. They obviously were not convinced.

Moss

256. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, July 1, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: Planning for the SCC and for the Torrijos Meeting (S)

Rather than suggest a strategy for the three meetings (although I have drafted an agenda at Tab A for the SCC meeting),² let me focus this memo on three subjects: (1) the optimal political scenario in Nicaragua and what it will take by the US to make it work; (2) what Torrijos could contribute to this strategy; and (3) how the President should structure his meeting with Torrijos to accomplish (1) and (2). (S)

1. The Optimal Political Scenario

There is a fundamental difference between Vaky and Christopher on the one hand and NSC on the other on how we should approach the transitional problem. David and I have described that difference in great detail, and I therefore won't repeat the arguments again; but it is imperative that the SCC address this issue head-on, and the President

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 30, Meetings—SCC 175: 7/10/1979. Secret. Sent for information. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it. Brackets are in the original.

² Tab A is attached but not printed.

needs to resolve this split early on Monday.³ If we approach the meeting with Torrijos and the next few days unfocused without having reached a clear decision on this issue, we will have thrown away our last opportunity to influence events. (S)

The scenario described below presumes that the NSC strategy has prevailed. Every piece of this scenario should be in place before D-Day (departure day for the Somozas), and to accomplish that, we will have to risk describing all of these pieces to all of the actors. Timing must be precise. (S)

On D-Day, events should transpire according to the following sequence:

1. Somoza and his entourage should depart. (S)
2. Simultaneously, the National Assembly should elect David Zamora or someone else as Provisional President. (To obtain a quorum, we will need to actively encourage many members to attend. We should inform them that a meeting is necessary to plan for the transitional phase. We should inform as few as possible that Somoza will depart simultaneously.) (S)
3. The Provisional President should then appoint a Committee to Oversee Negotiations for a New Government (CONNG) and transfer formal responsibilities over the government and the National Guard (GN) to this committee. (The Committee should be composed of moderate leaders who opposed Somoza.) (S)
4. The CONNG should announce the departure of Somoza and the appointment of a new Guard Commander and the immediate reconstitution of the GN (including the purge of those involved in flagrant corruption and repression). It should call for a ceasefire, request international humanitarian assistance, and call for immediate negotiations with the FSLN/Provisional Government (PG) to establish a new government with early, free, and fair elections. (S)
5. A massive international humanitarian assistance effort should begin, including as many Latin American countries we can find to support it. Simultaneously, Panama and Costa Rica have to stop the arms flow to the Sandinistas and seal the border. (S)
6. Torrijos, CAP, Herrera, and Carazo should encourage the moderate elements of the FSLN to begin negotiations with the CONNG. (The FSLN will find itself in a very difficult position at this moment. The leadership knows that the base of its support will melt with the departure of Somoza, provided that the departure and the establishment of the CONNG is credibly a break with the past. The FSLN/PG will try

³ July 2.

to argue that nothing has changed; it is just "Somocizmo without Somoza," but if the new leadership of the GN and the CONNG are credibly independent of Somoza and if they fill the National Radio with appropriate anti-Somoza propaganda (stealing the lines of the FSLN), the FSLN/PG will find itself on the defensive. The FSLN/PG will probably announce its total unwillingness to negotiate with this new "Yankee convention." The following two weeks will be critical. Our objective should be to bring maximum pressure on Torrijos and others to get parts of the FSLN to negotiate. If we can succeed, the FSLN will split between the moderates and the extremists, and the moderates can then join the CONNG and, if necessary, fight the extremists.) (S)

7. The US should coordinate its statement with selected Latin American countries, welcoming the CONNG as a first step to a free government in Nicaragua. We should say that we have permitted Somoza to come to the US in order to contribute to an enduring democratic solution in Nicaragua, and we will not permit him to [plot his] return to Nicaragua. (S)

8. It is possible that the CONNG can begin to evolve into a government, but we should make clear at the beginning that is not our intention. Our ability to make this scenario work will rest at least in part on our ability to persuade the moderates and other Latin Americans that we are not trying to set up a competing force to the FSLN/PG. My guess is that if the CONNG lasts two weeks and the process gains some international support as we hope, that the CONNG will become the pivot if not the nucleus for a new government. (S)

The question which you need to get the SCC to focus on is *not whether this can work, but how can we make it work*. What do we need to do between now and D-Day (which should be Thursday⁴ at the latest) to make this scenario happen? (S)

As Pezzullo points out in his scenario (attached at Tab B),⁵ the only way we will get anyone to stick their necks out at this time is to give firm, unequivocal assurances of US and international support. That means political statements, a humanitarian aid airlift, assistance for economic reconstruction, and perhaps military aid as well. These are the decisions that need to be made tomorrow. (S)

⁴ July 5.

⁵ Tab B, attached but not printed, is telegram 2930 from Managua, July 1, in which Pezzullo endorsed selecting as quickly as possible a "senior GN officer to take over the GN upon Somoza's departure," and stressed that international support would be "a sine qua non for the successful creation and survival" of a "caretaker regime."

2. *Torrijos' Contribution*

Torrijos is not only orchestrating the supply of arms to the Sandinistas, he is also putting a lot of pressure on Carazo to allow the Sandinistas continued use of Costa Rica as their principal staging area for the war in Nicaragua. If Torrijos were to stop the flow of arms, the Sandinistas would probably be hard pressed to continue the war for very long. If Torrijos were to bless the CONNG, and join with us to provide humanitarian assistance and perhaps contribute troops to a peace-keeping force, that would probably assure the success of our strategy. Since he is the most radical of our "friends," Torrijos' commitment to our strategy would probably assure the commitment of the Venezuelans, the Costa Ricans, and the Andean Pact countries. (S)

3. *A Strategy for the President's Meeting with Torrijos*

Torrijos is approaching this issue from such a different direction than we are, that Ambler for one does not believe it is possible for the President to persuade Torrijos to make the contributions listed above to our plan. He may be right, but we also acknowledge this is a long shot. Here is my suggestion on how the President should proceed. First of all, it is vitally important for the President to know exactly where Torrijos is coming from on this issue. Torrijos hates Somoza with a passion, and sees the Sandinistas as "his kids." He has worked with them for a long time, and he sees them as nationalists and populists, possibly not very different from the way he sees himself. He believes that our information on the Communist tendencies of the Sandinistas reflects our historical obsession with Cuba and Communism, and is simply inaccurate. He acknowledges that there are differences within the Sandinistas, but he thinks that "his" Sandinistas will ultimately prevail. He has come to Washington to try to convince Carter to trust him and support "his" Sandinistas. With Carter's support, Torrijos probably believes he can influence the Sandinistas in a way which will serve both of our interests. (S)

The President should play to Torrijos' penchant for conspiracy, and ask Torrijos to come into the Oval Office for a one-on-one.⁶ He should begin by telling Torrijos that he has always opposed Somoza and Somocizmo, and is willing to bring his power to bear to see Somoza's departure soon. The problem is how to assure that democracy will prevail in a post-Somoza period. Then he should restate his understanding of Torrijos' attitudes (paragraph above), but then bluntly say that Torrijos should be the first one to know that while Torrijos has a lot of influence over the Sandinistas now, this will change as soon as

⁶ See Document 258.

they seize power. Torrijos will have to acknowledge this, and then the President should proceed to a more detailed description of our plan and how Torrijos should work with us to implement it. If this is acceptable to you, I will prepare detailed talking points, with the thrust being to try to get Torrijos to lead the moderates of the FSLN into a new governmental structure. (S)

257. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 2, 1979

SUBJECT

Meeting with General Torrijos on Nicaragua

The purpose of your meeting is to enlist General Torrijos' help in putting into effect the Transition Formula for Nicaragua, described at Tab A.² If you can persuade General Torrijos to agree to the formula, you should encourage him to go immediately to San Jose, meet with Carazo and Carlos Andres Perez. The three of them would then negotiate the formula with the Provisional Government. Ambassador Bowdler would be pleased to accompany him.

The underlying idea is that Torrijos, Carazo and Perez would become our partners in working out a peaceful, democratic solution for Nicaragua in keeping with the spirit of the OAS Resolution. At the same time, it should be made clear that the United States is not dealing itself out of the Nicaragua problem, that we have clear interests in Central America and cannot remain indifferent to events there.

It is important that you understand where Torrijos is coming from. Torrijos hates Somoza with a passion, and sees the Sandinistas as "his kids." He has worked with them for a long time, and he sees them as nationalists and populists, possibly not very different from the way

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: Current Crisis: 1-7/79. Secret. Carter initialed the top of the document.

² Tab A, attached but not printed, is a July 2 paper entitled "Nicaragua: Transition Formula." An undated memorandum entitled "Nicaragua: Political Scenario for the Transitional Process," includes a handwritten note which reads: "Discussed with the President on July 2 before July 3, 1979 meeting with Torrijos." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79)

he sees himself. He believes that our information on the Communist tendencies of the Sandinistas is simply inaccurate. He acknowledges that there are differences within the Sandinistas, but he thinks that “his” Sandinistas will ultimately prevail. He has come to Washington at your invitation, but he probably intends to seek your support for the Provisional Government or for some plan built around it.

I recommend that you make the following points and then ask Christopher and I³ to negotiate the details of an agreement. After a suitable period, I recommend that you return and seal the agreement.

—We are both vitally concerned that a peaceful and democratic solution emerge from the tragic Nicaraguan crisis, and that solution should be consistent with the spirit of the OAS Resolution.

—We are convinced we can get Somoza to resign.

—We clearly share the same interests and should logically work together as partners, together with President Carazo and ex-President Perez in bringing about a desirable solution.

—I want to describe in some detail to you what we believe would be a durable formula which would bring peace to Nicaragua through a transition government leading eventually to free elections.

—In our view you, Carazo and Perez are uniquely qualified to work out this solution with the Provisional Government in San Jose.

—There is also need for international support for such a solution within the Hemisphere and we would look to you to help obtain it.

—At the same time, however, I must stress that the United States has vital interests in this part of the world. You should not confuse our adherence to non-intervention with passivity or an indifference to political outcomes, or an unwillingness to take concrete actions to protect our vital interests.

—Let me describe the general points of the transitional plan which I think will save Nicaragua further bloodshed and provide for a democratic and enduring solution.

- First, Somoza will resign, and the Congress will appoint an interim President who will then immediately appoint a new Director of the National Guard. We should try to reach agreement among ourselves on who that person would be.

- Secondly, the interim President will proclaim a ceasefire and standstill and will transfer power to a Junta. I know that you and President Carazo share my belief that the current Junta is too narrowly based. What is needed is additional members, and these should include moderates and also the new Director of the National Guard. This can

³ Carter deleted the word “I” and replaced it with the word “me.”

be done in several ways. An expanded Junta could be the Executive Body, or a smaller three-man group (composed of Ramirez; the National Guard Director, and a moderate like Fiallos), or by selecting one man as the executive, preferably a neutral figure such as the Rector of the University in Leon (Fiallos) or the head of the Red Cross (Reyes).

- This Junta would be the executive body of a new government of national reconciliation, which would enforce the ceasefire, prevent reprisals and begin the task of reconstruction.

- I will rely on you to enforce the total cessation of all military assistance to the FSLN.

—I would like Warren Christopher and Dr. Brzezinski to discuss the proposal in detail and try to reach an agreement with you. I hope that when you leave today, we are proceeding down the same track.

In the background of this discussion, there looms the larger question: who decides the future of Central America? It is essential that our new policy of non-intervention not be interpreted as a political vacuum, which can be filled by forces hostile to us. The United States would be seen as genuinely impotent if events in Central America were to be shaped by a Castro or even a Torrijos—and the domestic political consequences of such a perception could be extraordinarily costly.

This is why it is essential to impress upon Torrijos that the United States is absolutely firm in its determination to create in a *post-Somoza* Nicaragua the preconditions for a genuinely democratic political process, and that we expect Torrijos to cooperate with us. Moreover, if Torrijos is not prepared to cooperate with us or intends to deceive us, we should make it clear to him that we are prepared to use our resources to create conditions more to our own liking—and our support for the National Guard is a central source of leverage in that respect.

The above should not be conveyed in a threatening fashion; in fact, you should try to enlist Torrijos as a partner, and he has great faith and trust in you. The point is that he should understand that he is your *junior* partner, and that the United States has very definite notions as to the outcome that we desire.

258. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 3, 1979, 9 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

General Omar Torrijos, Panama
 The President
 Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant for National Security Affairs
 Warren Christopher, Acting Secretary of State
 Viron P. Vaky, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
 Robert Pastor, Staff Member, NSC
 Mrs. van Reigersberg, Interpreter

The President: (after a warm embrace and exchange of greetings) Your new President is doing a very good job. He was a very good choice. (U)

Torrijos: Yes, he is a fine fellow. (U)

The President: How is your daughter? (U)

Torrijos: She went to Walter Reed for a checkup yesterday afternoon—she is fine and is on her way home. (U)

The President: I think you know everybody here. I would like to talk to you about Nicaragua. Our nation, both our nations, are greatly interested in having stability in Central America and in the enhancement of democratic principles there. I am aware that you have taken a great interest in Nicaragua (laughter from Torrijos), and we share your conviction that Somoza must leave and that the people should choose their own leader. I am also aware that you have been working and consulting with former President Perez of Venezuela and President Carazo. We have recently heard that Perez and Carazo have suggested additional names for the interim government.² I assume you are familiar with this process, are you not? (S)

Torrijos: Please go on, I will comment later. (U)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 37, Memcons: President: 7/79–9/79. Secret; Outside the System. The meeting took place in the White House Oval Office. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place from 9:02 to 9:53 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials) Drafted by Pastor on August 15.

² In telegram 2812 from San José, July 2, the Embassy reported that Carazo had spoken with Perez by telephone on July 2 and Perez had proposed Mariano Fiallos, Julio Gutierrez, Ernest Fernandez Holman, Jaime Chamorro, and Alvarez Montenegro as "candidates for possible expansion of the Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–2002) In telegram 6050 from Caracas, July 3, Luers noted "with some pleasure and amusement," that he had provided Perez with the suggested names aside from Jaime Chamorro. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–1660)

The President: The names suggested are: Mariano Fiallos, Ernesto Fernandez Holman, Emilio Alvarez Montalban, and Julio Gutierrez. (U)

Torrijos: I only know Fiallos. Which Gutierrez is that? (U)

The President: He is a General who is Nicaragua's Ambassador to Tokyo. He has been out of the country for 15 years. Another name is Ismael Reyes who is head of the Red Cross. (S)

Torrijos: He is a good man. I think he is the one whose sister is married to Colonel Mendieta. He has national prestige. (U)

The President: Fiallos is the Rector of the University. Now two or three other names have been put forward as possible leaders of the military—perhaps the National Guard. The Costa Ricans and the Venezuelans favor Gutierrez—he has been in exile for 15 years and enjoys the respect of the other leaders. (S)

The reason I wanted to talk to you is that I know you better than I do the other leaders. For us, the names suggested by Carazo and Perez are satisfactory as additions to the present members of the Provisional Government. Now let me outline to you what we would see as a satisfactory procedure for the future. Please respond and give me your views, then perhaps you could meet with Mr. Brzezinski, Mr. Christopher and Mr. Vaky, and give them your advice on what we should do from here on. Please speak frankly if you have any differing opinions—our time is short and I want to be sure that I understand your views fully. (S)

—First, I would hope that there could be an agreement between the U.S., Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and perhaps others, that the present interim government should be expanded by adding the names suggested by Carazo and Perez which are satisfactory to us. (S)

—Second, I would hope that there could be general agreement on who would head the military forces during the transitional period. Two names have been suggested, those of General Gutierrez and General Guerrero.

—Third, if Gutierrez is satisfactory, then he should be made a member of the governing body, perhaps as Secretary of Defense or as head of the military. (S)

—Fourth, if there is general agreement, then the Provisional Government should commit itself to establishing a ceasefire, to a maintenance of the status quo as far as military actions is concerned, to a promise of no reprisals against any of the combatants, and, later, to a merger of the military forces to protect Nicaragua in time of peace. (S)

—Fifth, I also want your full support, in addition to that of Carazo and the Venezuelans, to stop any military assistance to the FSLN during this period. On our side, we will prevent any aid from reaching Somoza and his forces. (S)

—We will take the responsibility for Somoza's leaving Nicaragua, and we will help organize humanitarian and economic assistance to support the country during the transition. (S)

—The Congress would then be convoked to name a President who would serve very briefly, perhaps only a day or two or even less. This President would be someone who is respected by all, such as Reyes or Fiallo. The President would call for a ceasefire, and proceed to name the persons who would be in charge of the military—Gutierrez or Guerrero, or, perhaps one of three colonels whose names have been mentioned: Miguel Blessing, Nicolas Valle, or Isaias Cuadra. (S)

Torrijos: Do you mean Valle Salinas? He is a good man. He is Chief of Police in Managua, but has talked with the Sandinistas. (S)

The President: Yes, perhaps he could be commander of the military and Gutierrez, Secretary of Defense. Carazo and Perez seem to favor Gutierrez on the grounds that he has always been anti-Somoza, has spent the last 15 years in exile, and is a respected senior general. I do not know him myself. (S)

The President would then convoke this larger group of 10 men who would go to Managua. The President would proceed to resign, leaving that group as the recognized Provisional Government responsible for Nicaragua's affairs. It would arrange for elections, confirm the actions already taken, and establish a democratic government with the complete exclusion of Somoza and his people. (S)

I would like to have your opinion of these general arrangements, on the understanding that these names suggested by Carazo and Perez are fine with us—if there is any possibility of a change in these names, we would like to be involved in their approval—but let me ask you, how do you feel about this process as a way of getting rid of Somoza, ending the bloodshed and bringing about a new stable government? I presume it is satisfactory with you if Somoza leaves Nicaragua. (S)

Torrijos: Well, getting rid of Somoza is the best thing that could happen to America, to the whole world for that matter. (S)

The plan is good. But it is also important that *a* plan exists, that we *have* a plan. I must say that the names don't mean much to me, but what is very meaningful is the attitude of the Sandinistas and the Government of Reconciliation, and their attitude is a very forthcoming (amplio) one. (S)

If we start to work well together, in coordination, with Carazo and Perez, we can establish a government which has the capacity to respond to unforeseen events. That is what worries me the most. (S)

The intention is good. The direction is great. Everything is fine that far, but it is very, very important that the plan not fail. If we take these things which you suggest and suggest them as a possible solution,

we will try to sell them, to see how acceptable they are. Now the U.S. should take a back seat—if it is in the front row there will not be much of an inclination to accept the plan. The U.S. should not be the first face they see. (S)

The course of action to be followed should also be planned in advance. Somoza is like the screw in the DC-10—when he goes everything is going to blow—he operates on the “*apres moi le deluge*” theory. There is also the possibility of a collective popular euphoria following his departure. This euphoria can be in our favor but might also be bad. There is likewise a good chance that there will be one or several attempts by the military to organize counter-coups. (S)

In all this there is one thing of which I am very, very certain—that is, that when all is said and done, when the clouds have cleared, when there is less distrust than now, we will all be surprised, amazed, at how close we are together. Here I am talking about the Sandinistas, the U.S., Venezuela, and Panama. (S)

The U.S. has got to do something spectacular—well, we are doing it now, even though it is rather a deterrent—because at the present time the Nicaraguans have a worse image of the U.S. than anyone else in the entire world. We are all Latins, though. Today, we hate you; tomorrow, we love you. That is the way I am too—you scold me quite frequently and sometimes I even think you are right, and in the end I am not as bad as I look! (S)

President Carter, it is very important also for you to continue contacts with these governments and that you praise their role. We, ourselves, do not seek honors; we prefer results. But such distinctions are very important to Latin Americans. You should refer to the “miraculous formula” put forward by the Andean Pact, and give the impression that the solution is theirs. Otherwise, I am afraid that others will become jealous of me. (S)

Also, let us not stand on principle as far as names are concerned. Someone from the U.S. asked me for a statement calling for moderation on the part of the Sandinistas. Well, such a statement has no substance, means nothing. What is much more important and substantive is that the Sandinistas have accepted the idea of establishing a sanctuary of 500 hectares at Montelimar so that everyone who wishes to do so can leave. They have also agreed to joint patrols of the road from Managua to the Montelimar Airport which is 50 km. long. This would allow any criminal who wants to leave to go. The Sandinistas told me that this was a brilliant idea and would eliminate the need for so many military trials. This is more important than a statement. (S)

Now, let me summarize my main points:

- 1) I agree with the plan.

2) The need to provide for a capacity for the Provisional Government to respond to unforeseen events.

3) The importance of the U.S. speaking emphatically and favorably about the “extremely valuable cooperation of these countries in seeking a solution.”

4) The need for the United States not to appear to be linked to the plan in any way. Let us take it and see how acceptable it is. (S)

The President: First, this meeting is being kept confidential. Second, in our public statements we will endorse the proposal made by the Andean States, Costa Rica, and perhaps by you. (S)

Third, we have a great interest in Nicaragua being a stable country, in an end to the bloodshed, and in a democratic government being freely chosen by the people of Nicaragua. Although we acknowledge the leadership of Carazo, Perez, and of you, yourself, we must be involved in determining what happens in Nicaragua. All the names I mentioned were suggested by Carazo and Perez with the exception of Reyes. We will act, not as leaders, but in support of the solution, and can give military aid to the future government once stability returns, and can supply economic and humanitarian aid as well. (S)

Let me ask you two questions: First of all, if you, Carazo, and Perez—and the U.S. also—publicly support this list of names for the Provisional Government, do you think the Sandinistas can be induced to agree? (S)

Torrijos: Yes, but I will need a few hours—a few hours to speak to them and to sell them the list. (S)

The President: Secondly, during the transitional period, can you assure that military weapons will not be sent into Nicaragua? (S)

Torrijos: To the Sandinistas? I can give assurances with a high percentage of certainty, to the extent that the Salvadoreans and Guatemalans do not send arms either and that the black market is brought under some kind of control. (S)

The President: We will use our influence on Guatemala and El Salvador. I think it is important for us to act quickly. (S)

Torrijos: Very important. (U)

The President: I would like to ask you to stay in contact with me, perhaps through Ambassador Vaky, in case any question arises or if you have any suggestions as to what we should do. For example, I would like to have your advice, together with that of President Carazo, on the timing and context of any public statement from Washington. I would also like to have information on the attitude of the Sandinistas and news of the approval by them of the names proposed by Carazo. If you would like to take some time to discuss the entire process with

Pete Vaky, he is available, now,³ and if you need our communications facilities, perhaps to call Costa Rica, Ambassador Vaky can make the necessary arrangements. Thank you very much for coming. (All rise.) (S)

Even if we sometimes disagree on the details, we still agree on principles, on achievements—you are a good partner and a good friend. (S)

Torrijos: We each have our part to do.⁴ (U)

The President: Yes, we have the responsibility for getting rid of Somoza. (S)

Torrijos: Not the responsibility, the honor!⁵

³ According to a July 3 memorandum of conversation, Torrijos, Lewis, Gonzalez, and Salamin met with Christopher, Brzezinski, Vaky, Moss, Bowdler, Pastor, and Hervas from 9:45 to 10:40 a.m. in the Old Executive Office Building. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 34, Memcons: Brzezinski: 7-8/79)

⁴ In telegram 173633 to multiple posts, July 4, the Department noted that Torrijos had telephoned Pastor to report that he was "attempting to bring Junta of PG together with its military leadership to Panama" for a secret discussion on July 4. The Department also commented that Torrijos was "trying to impress us that he [is] moving actively and rapidly." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79)

⁵ Pastor sent the memorandum of conversation to Brzezinski under an August 20 covering memorandum explaining that he had reviewed his notes and the interpreter's in order to produce a "combined Memcon." Pastor also commented: "As I read through the Memcon, I was struck by how long ago that conversation seemed. Despite innumerable high level meetings to agree on a 'plan' for the transition in Nicaragua, and despite Torrijos's virtually complete acceptance of that plan, not a single element of that plan was ever put into effect. That is really a sobering thought. Essentially what occurred was that we facilitated the inevitable—the departure of Somoza, the arrival of the Sandinistas. All attempts to fine-tune that transition were for naught." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/1-4/79)

259. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassies in Venezuela and Costa Rica¹

Managua, July 5, 1979, 0040Z

2990. Am Embassy Caracas for Assistant Secretary Vaky; San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) Somoza/ The Fourth Meeting.

1. S-Entire text.

2. The Somoza group was the same as at our last meeting: Somoza, his son Tachito, ForMin Quintana, MinFin Genie and Luis Pallais. I began by asking Somoza for his assessment of the situation on the ground. He said the military situation was deteriorating because the Sandinistas had an open supply line while he has been cut off. He said this solemnly but with no evidence of panic. His son Tachito added that the morale of the middle-grade Guard officers was still good but they were becoming more anxious every day. He said they face continuous pressure from the FSLN with no evidence that conditions will improve for the GN. What bothers them most is the lack of any apparent solution to the problem. He said they were prepared to face the transition period and the removal of the Somozas and the top generals, but urged that any gap in command between the time the old commanders were relieved and the new took over would lead to fractionalization within the officer corps.

3. Somoza was very anxious about the delay in the timing of his departure from power. At one point in his review of the military he said an early political solution was necessary or the guard would not be able to defend itself, and that he would be driven to act on his own to save the people closest to him. I assured him that we were very conscious of how time-sensitive the situation was and were hopeful the conditions would jell within the next few days to permit us to set a departure date and begin precise planning. Luis Pallais interjected that he was having difficulty keeping a quorum because the Congressmen feared for their lives and saw little purpose in remaining in session. He said it would be hard to hold them beyond Saturday. (Comment: We have heard from some conservatives who have boycotted the sessions that they would be delighted to attend the session which accepts Somoza's resignation.) Pallais complained that I was not very illuminating as to how things will work out. He said, "I heard that President Carter met with Torrijos² to work out a democratic solution and that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1841. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Panama City.

² See Document 258.

Ambassador Bowdler was meeting with representatives of the Andean countries and with the Junta, but you give us no details, and you ask us to wait." I said I realized these were trying times but that I could say only that we were hopeful that we would be able to move forward in a few days. Somoza interjected "I hope so."

4. Somoza said, "I realize I am a captive and am willing to go along with your plans, but I want the opportunity to express my views." I said I was willing to listen and pass them along to my government. He then asked me to meet with him privately tomorrow at 3:00 p.m.³

5. Comment: Our estimation of the fighting and the stains within the GN [*less than 1 line not declassified*] account in large part for the growing anxiety within the Somoza inner circle. It is an important factor to contend with and will grow every day we are unable to set a date and agree on a countdown plan. The TCP formula must become operational very quickly.

6. The earlier we can get agreement on a new GN Commander the better. Once that occurs, he can set in motion certain essential confidence-building actions which will help allay the fears of the middle and lower grade Guard officers, who are the ones who command the troops and will form the nucleus of the GN after Somoza. I am more concerned about their anxiety than that of the Somoza inner circle at this point. We can live with the latter's uneasiness; indeed, it probably is essential to ensure that we can dictate the timing of his departure, whereas the GN officers will have to remain to prevent an FSLN sweep.⁴

Pezzullo

³ Pezzullo reported to Bowdler and Vaky about his July 5 meeting with Somoza in telegram 3009 from Managua, July 6. Somoza pressed for details about the plan for his departure and his possible status as a resident of the United States. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1848)

⁴ In telegram 3032 from Managua, July 6, Pezzullo wrote to Vaky noting the "danger that the FSLN may drag out the negotiations in the knowledge that time is on their side," and he endorsed a new scenario based on the "one move we can take on our own: get Somoza to resign" in the case that "we see the negotiations drag on and threaten to erode whatever GN strength remains." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1853)

260. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State and the Embassies in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic¹

Panama City, July 6, 1979, 0118Z

5118. For Deputy Secretary from Moss; Santo Domingo for Assistant Vaky only. Subj: Problem in Negotiations with FSLN. Ref: Panama 5094.²

1. Bowdler and I met with Torrijos, Escobar and Salamin from 3:15 to about 4:15 this afternoon.³ Bowdler left and I returned immediately to continue the discussion with Escobar, then joined by Salamin, occasionally Torrijos, and at last by a whole roomful of participants, including all the above-mentioned, Gabriel Lewis, PRD SecGen Nicolas Gonzalez-Revilla, long-time crony Rory Gonzalez (who had been present at our most recent meetings) and Costa Rican Interior Minister Johnny Echevarria. Meeting went until 6:30 pm.

2. The upshot of all these conversations was that Torrijos et al claim simple inability to get the Junta to increase its membership, and they state that it would be virtually unthinkable to include a military officer in the Junta. Salamin recalled that Panama had, in fact, counseled the Junta at the time of its formation to include a GN officer who had

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/5–8/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 5094 from Panama City, July 5, Bowdler and Moss reported that Salamin had telephoned them during his second meeting that morning with FSLN military leaders. Salamin said that “the transition plan as worked out in Washington was acceptable to the group with the exception that the Panamanians were not able to achieve agreement on the broadening of the Junta of the provisional government.” He also noted a “sense of ‘victoriousness’ which increasingly affected the thinking of the FSLN.” Moss and Bowdler recommended that the United States Government “should go back to the Panamanians with a forceful position” regarding the expansion of the Junta. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–2656) In telegram 3002 from Managua, July 5, Pezzullo commented: “We should make clear to the Panamanians that the FSLN sense of ‘victoriousness’ results from the continued flow of arms to them while the GN has had its supply line cut off. Unless the Panamanians are willing to threaten the cut off of the pipeline the FSLN can continue to negotiate in Panama with the knowledge that the situation on the ground here is working in their favor.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/5–8/79)

³ In telegram 174365 to Caracas, July 5, the Department endorsed the recommendation given by Moss and Bowdler in telegram 5094 (see footnote 2, above) noting: “We agree you should take strongest possible position that it imperative to broaden Junta.” The Department also reported that Christopher had informed Torrijos that “the Junta must be acceptably broadened, or reformulated in an acceptable manner.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–1647)

defected, Mendieta Chavez, but the Junta had refused because of the bad image of the GN.

3. The same reasoning expressed in reftel was reiterated to us in various different ways with the additional political explanation that the Junta was the product of a very difficult compromise among different FSLN factions and that it was just politically impossible to reopen that whole negotiation at this stage in the game. Torrijos became somewhat angry and upset during the latter portion of the meeting that the United States did not place confidence in him to steer the FSLN/GP in a direction of moderation, which he said he had the ability to do unless they lost confidence in him, which he said would happen if he forced something on them which they could not accept.

4. Urgent query for San Jose and Caracas: Torrijos claims that Carazo and CAP agree with him, and I think he was in touch with them by phone during my talk with Escobar and Salamin. Is he being accurate?

5. Bowdler and I recommend at this point that we fall back to a formula whereby the Junta is broadened by two acceptable civilians (Bowdler suggests Reyes and Calero) and the FSLN/GP accept a new GN director (outside of the Junta) who would meet our approval.⁴ Comment: The degree of strength we have in this negotiation will depend very much on answers from Caracas and San Jose.

6. On the question of a cut-off of arms to FSLN, we were met with the same old story that arms continued to flow to the GN from El Salvador and Guatemala, and that it would be unrealistic to think of allowing the GN to gain an advantage. In other words, although delicately stated, we should not count on them to cut off the arms supply. Nevertheless, Salamin stated that he found himself in the ironic position of hoping the FSLN did not gain too much military advantage, even though he had spent many months wanting them to achieve a military victory. He now realized, however, he said, that a military victory would not be conducive to a durable peace.

⁴ Pastor underlined this sentence and wrote the word "fair" in the right-hand margin. In telegram 5121 from Panama City, July 6, Moss reported that Escobar had informed him about the Panamanian negotiations with the FSLN. Regarding the expansion of the Junta, Escobar "queried whether or not the inclusion of one military man would be sufficient by way of broadening the Junta." Moss replied that "the understanding was that there should be two new members, a military man and a civilian." Escobar also noted that Mojica "might not be the satisfactory addition to the Junta and queried whether Lt. Col. Bernardo Larios would meet with our approval." Brzezinski wrote at the top of the first page of the telegram: "RP. Larios doubtful—an effort to split the GN command. *Gutierrez* and *Mojica* = our position." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/5-8/79)

7. Torrijos emphasized that all other elements of our plan were acceptable, and he stuck to this view under specific questioning.

8. Am attempting to put the problem into a holding pattern until receipt of further instructions. We must move quickly, however, as FSLN leaders (who include Borge) are anxious to return to front.⁵

Moss

⁵ In telegram 5139 from Panama City, July 6, the Embassy reported that Escobar had endured a “stormy and violent” debate with the FSLN leadership, who “agreed to broaden the Junta of the provisional government, but subject to confirmation after further consultations which they must have with other commanders in the field.” They also noted that a suspension of the aerial bombardments would “facilitate the process of bringing the commanders together to reach agreement.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/5–8/79) In telegram 3033 from Managua, July 6, Pezzullo advised against asking Somoza to halt bombing because “air power is the only effective force the GN has to combat the FSLN force which is capturing more towns daily and clearly has the momentum.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1851)

261. Editorial Note

In telegram 6143 from Caracas, July 9, 1979, U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela William Luers reported that Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez had “spent much of Sunday [July 8] talking to Torrijos and to the Junta in San Jose by phone.” Perez informed Luers that Junta members were gathered “in San Jose convincing themselves they should not accept conditions dictated from Washington,” although they had “agreed in principle to expanding the Junta by two to including a ‘clean’ GN officer as one of the two and to a restructuring of the GN.” Perez also noted that Junta member Sergio Ramírez “said the group wanted to explain its objective and its concerns directly to President Carter.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–1634)

In a July 9 letter from Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) to President Jimmy Carter, Kennedy noted that Foreign Minister of the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction Father Miguel d’Escoto had called him during the evening of July 8 to relay an “urgent message” to Carter cosigned by D’Escoto and members of the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction, including Violeta de Chamorro, Sergio Ramírez, Moises Hassan, Alfonso Robello, and

Daniel Ortega. The opening of the message read: "We have asked our friend Senator Edward Kennedy to convey to you this message expressing our desire to have some members of our Government of National Reconstruction meet with you as soon as possible in Washington." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, July 1979) Kennedy copied Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on the letter. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher sent a version of the letter to Vance under a handwritten note, written at 4:30 p.m. on July 9, recommending against the proposed meeting, noting: "Better to have Torrijos et. al. dealing with them." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 9, Memoranda to the Secretary—1979)

262. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State and the Embassies in Panama, Venezuela, and Nicaragua¹

San José, July 10, 1979, 2012Z

2972. From Bowdler. Subj: Negotiations with Junta.

1. (Secret-Entire text)

2. Met with GNR members Sergio Ramirez, Alfonso Robelo, Violeta de Chamorro for an hour and a half at the latter's house the morning of July 10. Marv Weissman accompanied me. Father D'Escoto and Mrs. Chamorro's daughter, Claudia Barcenas, also were present.

3. The atmosphere was more cordial and relaxed than in either of prior two meetings. I lead off with an expression of regret that my illness had interfered with an earlier resumption of discussions. I said it was important that we now get down to specifics to bring about the departure of Somoza, an orderly transition, and the retention of domestic and foreign confidence in the GNR.

4. D'Escoto at this point launched into a four-part explanation of what the Junta is dedicated to achieving as rapidly as possible:

—Somoza and entourage leaving Nicaragua, to the U.S. or wherever;

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 12, Costa Rica: 1/77-5/80. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

—An immediate stop to fighting and destruction;

—A very rapid transition to the government of national reconstruction, with full emphasis on creating the environment necessary to launch reconstruction quickly;

—Confidence within and without Nicaragua in their objectives and capacity, so that a free Nicaragua can get back on its feet.

5. Accepting his presentation as a point of departure for our discussion, I returned to the need for dealing in an atmosphere of mutual confidence with the practical, carefully phased steps necessary to reaching those objectives. I suggested we get down to basic issues, starting with expansion of the GNR. I mentioned reports we had from our Panama interlocutor that they have agreed to an expanded Junta, adding two members whose names I mentioned. I said we were prepared to accept these.²

6. This was greeted by a look of bewilderment on the part of all, with the exception of D'Escoto. The GNR members asserted unanimously that no such understanding was reached with Escobar, rather that they only had promised to consider the feasibility, never had mentioned names, but had promised to give the Panamanians an answer in 48 hours, the time period expiring this evening. D'Escoto chimed in to say that all this must have been an honest misunderstanding, because he had personally talked to Escobar merely proposing hypothetically that if two people were added, they might be people like Amador or Baltorano.

7. At this point, Ramirez took over the conversation, with occasional inputs by Robelo and Mrs. Chamorro, making it very clear that their answer was that the Junta could not be expanded quickly, not because it was necessarily a bad idea, but simply because it would not be feasible ("factible") to accomplish in the time available. They argued that extensive consultations would be necessary. Ramirez added that the results might not be as confidence-building as might appear as once the process is reopened it might well produce something less desirable than the present composition. Repeated efforts using various lines of argument to get them to consider expansion were unavailing.

² In telegram 5184 from Panama City, July 9, Moss noted that Salamin had reported that Escobar's discussions with the GNR Junta members had reached an impasse on the question of adding a GN military officer to the Junta. However, Salamin went on to say that "although the Junta had not definitely agreed to expansion, the names of two civilians had emerged in the conversation, suggested by the Junta [Cesar Amador Khiel and Emilio Baltorano Pallais]." Moss concluded the telegram by commenting: "Apparently the Junta has still been expressing doubts about U.S. ability to effect Somoza's departure, while at the same time giving indications that they feel military victory is near and there is no need to make compromises." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840150–2028)

8. D'Escoto here interjected, with Mrs Chamorro's reinforcement, that the government they were ready to name upon entering Managua would serve to reassure us and the international community of the breadth of the representation. It would come to be recognized, they maintained, not only as a model for Nicaragua, but for all of Latin America. Ramirez promised that they would shortly be able to give us the names of key officials and also advised that the sectors and organizations to be represented in the Council of State had been amplified to include the church, national university, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and the Confederation of Professionals of Nicaragua.

9. I next turned the discussion to what steps they considered essential for an orderly transition, once Somoza and entourage go. They referred to a paper given them by the Panamanians and asked what I had in mind. I reviewed the elements of our scenario. They responded that they saw no significant difference between the steps I outlined and what they have decided to do. Some doubt was expressed regarding whether a functioning Congress would be in place in Managua to accept Somoza's resignation and name a replacement but they thought if this developed there were other ways to provide for the short transition. This time they expressed no doubt as to our ability to persuade Somoza to leave, attributing this to the military situation more than to any other factor.

10. I raised the need to have a clear understanding on the new head of the Guard. They agreed on the importance of this aspect. In response to my request for their views on candidates, they half-heartedly mentioned Mendieta. I surfaced Mojica's name as a possibility among others. None of them knew him personally but Robelo and Dona Violetta said they had good reports on him. Since they had no direct channel to Mojica, they asked if I could convey their desire to speak with him if he could come to San Jose. I said I wanted to be clear that I would extend the invitation on their behalf. They replied affirmatively.³ I said I would urge him to come right away so that they could meet tomorrow morning. Ramirez pointed out that the GNR will have a civilian Minister of Defense, who following the reorganization of the armed forces will have under him a general staff heading both military and police forces. We discussed the advisability of a military mission to help in the reorganization. They liked the idea but preferred a mixed group rather than of one nationality.

³ Bowdler reported in telegram 2991 from San José, July 11, that Mojica had arrived from Guatemala to meet secretly with the GNR Junta. Mojica informed Bowdler that "the meeting did not represent any kind of commitment on anyone's part" and that he would look to the U.S. Government "for the green light" regarding his acceptance of the Directorship of the GN. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/9-11/79)

11. Toward the end of the meeting I asked for a copy of their letter to the President sent via Senator Kennedy.⁴ In giving me one, D'Escoto explained this course had been decided upon last Sunday⁵ when they felt discussion with the Panamanians was leading nowhere. I was not available, and they wanted a direct channel to the USG. At this point I used the points in para 5 of State 177516.⁶ They did not press the meeting with the President. They thought it more important to focus on the transition scenario using this channel. I was not able to find out how the idea originated. I think it came from D'Escoto but it also reflects their frustration over how the Panamanians conducted the negotiations.

12. In conclusion I stressed the urgency of moving quickly to avoid a situation developing that might get beyond control. We agreed as follows:

A. I would contact Mojica in their name;

B. They would give us copies of their program of government and law of guarantees tonight.⁷

C. Tomorrow we would meet at 1000 hrs at which time they would give us the list of Cabinet officers with their scenario for the transition.⁸

⁴ See Document 261.

⁵ July 8.

⁶ In telegram 177516 to San José, Caracas, Managua, and Panama City, July 10, the Department instructed Bowdler to continue to seek agreement with Escobar and the PG regarding the expansion of the Junta with "the names we originally suggested or persons of similar caliber." However, if this was "truly going to be impossible," the Department authorized Bowdler to use a "fall-back" position that included the acceptance of Amador and Baltorano, dependent on "rapid agreement" within 48 hours concerning a new GN Director, especially Mojica, and a ceasefire upon Somoza's departure. Paragraph five reaffirmed that the President had received the Junta's letter and had authorized Bowdler as his representative to the PG. While the possibility existed that the Junta members might engage in discussions in Washington following the ceasefire, the Department reiterated that the Junta members should address urgent issues with Bowdler in San José. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850011–1423)

⁷ In telegram 3003 from San José, July 11, the Embassy included the Spanish-language text of the proposed basic statute of the Republic of Nicaragua, prepared by the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1548) In telegram 3005 from San José, July 11, the Embassy transmitted the Spanish-language text of the July 9 "program of the Junta of the GRN Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1924)

⁸ In telegram 3013 from San José, July 11, Bowdler transmitted the text of a GNR document received that afternoon, which included the proposed list of Cabinet officers. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/9–11/79) Telegram 179668 to San José, July 12, instructed Bowdler to continue to push the GNR to enlarge the Junta, to affirm the concept of sanctuary, and to respect human rights. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12–14/79) In telegram 3038 from San José, July 12, Bowdler described the GNR's continuing resistance to expanding the Junta. (Ibid.) See Document 266.

13. As I left I told Ramirez that in view of the delicacy of our talks I wanted a clear understanding on how we would handle the press. We agreed that the only comment would be to confirm that we had met and reviewed the situation.

14. Comment: I think we may be able to reach an understanding tomorrow on Mojica and the transition scenario. Amplification of the GNR remains a serious problem. We might try using CAP specifically on this issue, but I sense they will not be budged. An approach we might try is to have a clear understanding on expansion (with names) now to be put into effect once the GNR reaches Managua. In any event we need to look at the Cabinet to see what reassurance that list provides. The amplification of the Council of State is a move in the right direction provided the new groups appoint strong representatives with democratic convictions.

Weissman

263. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC-3682-79

Washington, July 10, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 10 July 1979, White House Situation Room²

PARTICIPANTS

Zbigniew Brzezinski, David Aaron, White House; Frank Carlucci, [*name not declassified*] CIA; Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, Brandon Grove, State Department; Robert Pastor, NSC; John Pustay, JCS; Charles Duncan, David McGiffert, Department of Defense

1. Ambassador Vaky said Ambassador Bowdler had reported that the provisional junta refused this morning to expand its membership. The junta members insisted they had not proposed the names of Cesar Amador and Emilio Baltodano; Father D'Escoto, the junta's roving ambassador, said he had only thrown out the names hypothetically. The junta had no other problems with the US scenario, new Guard commander (though they wanted Mojica to come to San Jose for a

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted on July 12. [*name not declassified*] sent a copy of the memorandum to Turner under a July 12 covering memorandum, indicating that [*name not declassified*] had drafted the memorandum.

² See Document 264.

meeting and Bowdler agreed), cease fire, and the junta related that they would soon finish formulating their plan of government.

2. Given the failure so far to broaden the junta, the committee discussed the merits and drawbacks of preemptively urging Somoza to depart and bringing the transition issues to a head. Mr. Aaron opposed such action on the grounds that the US would be seen as the “midwife” of a radical regime in Central America. Mr. Christopher countered that the US would be blamed for leaving Somoza in power and prolonging the bloodshed, while some credit could be won by precipitating his departure.

3. Dr. Brzezinski proposed and, after discussion, the group accepted the following proposals to be confirmed with Secretaries Vance and Brown and presented to the President:

a) The US will tell the FSLN’s provisional government that Washington continues to insist on broadening representation on the junta.

b) The US will privately inform Somoza it sees no reason why he should not leave Nicaragua immediately.

c) The US will ask the junta and Torrijos-Carazo-Perez to call for a cease fire when Somoza departs, to identify a new Guard commander, and to declare publicly the junta’s support for such principles as no reprisals, free elections, etc.

d) The US will provide relief through existing Red Cross and relief channels and committees, perhaps suggesting that certain moderate leaders join in the effort.

4. An additional proposal that the US withhold recognition of the junta until it had added additional members was not approved.

5. Vaky urged, and the committee concurred, that before these steps were implemented, Bowdler should be instructed to make one last attempt to secure the junta’s acceptance of the original scenario. In addition, Perez had proposed that he pursue the same end with Torrijos and Carazo in Panama immediately. Failing this, the US would take the above 4 steps.

264. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 10, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC on Nicaragua (U)

I chaired an SCC meeting on Nicaragua today, and Christopher, Duncan, Gen Pustay of JCS, Frank Carlucci, and others attended.² We discussed the Junta's response to our proposal.³ Facing the prospect of indefinite delays negotiating that plan, we fear that our influence can only be diminished while others will increasingly blame us for the continued bloodshed. We understand that President Perez is planning to meet with Carazo, Torrijos, and the Junta in Costa Rica to try one last time to reach agreement on the plan. We will encourage him to make that effort. Ambassador Bowdler has also been dealing with the Junta bilaterally at their request, and he has been instructed to press for agreement urgently tonight and tomorrow. Nevertheless, we believe it is necessary to set a deadline in order to catalyze the negotiations and to bring an end to the bloodshed. (S)

Therefore, the SCC unanimously recommends, and these recommendations have been approved by Secretaries Vance and Brown, that within 24 hours if it looks like the Torrijos, Carazo, Perez (TCP) negotiations are not succeeding, that we implement the following plan:

1. *To the Junta*, we should indicate that we believe it is in their interest and in the interest of the people of Nicaragua to enlarge the Junta and make it genuinely representative of the Nicaraguan people. It should include people of the kind of prestige we have recommended. This reiteration of our sincere view should not be viewed as antagonistic toward the Junta, but rather as a logical continuation of their struggle for democracy. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 7-12/79. Secret. Sent for action. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. Carter initialed the top of the first page of the memorandum. According to a covering note attached to a copy of the memorandum, Brzezinski authorized Pastor on July 10 to transmit the memorandum to Camp David for delivery to the President at the opening of business on July 11. Brzezinski wrote "OBE" on this copy of the memorandum. An unknown hand wrote "7-19-79" below Brzezinski's comment. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 30, Meetings—SCC 175, 7/10/1979)

² See Document 263.

³ See Document 262.

2. *To Somoza*, we should *quietly* inform him that he should begin to implement the plans already made for his departure because we fear that polarization and radicalization can only increase if he remains. He should therefore permit the Congress to select his successor, who in turn will appoint an interim Commander of the National Guard until such time as Col. Mojica, or someone acceptable to the PG and the US, can come and take charge. (S)

3. *To TCP*, we should inform them that we have reason to believe that Somoza will depart imminently, and they should bring all their influence to bear to get all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire, standstill, no reprisals, an enlarged Junta, a cessation of all arms flow, a declaration of principles, and the designation of a new National Guard Commander. We should urge TCP to make a public call for a ceasefire and request the Junta to issue a declaration of principles. (S)

4. *To the Junta*, we should ask them to proclaim their principles on human rights, free elections, no reprisals, etc. (S)

5. *As soon as Somoza leaves* and there is a ceasefire, the US should inform all parties that the US is prepared to deliver substantial humanitarian assistance to relief organizations in areas under both National Guard and FSLN control. We would encourage the establishment of a Nicaraguan Relief Committee to take charge of this effort. It should include people like the head of the Red Cross, the Rector of the University in Leon, the Archbishop, the acting Commander of the National Guard, and other prominent people, thereby coalescing some of the moderates. (S)

In this approach, we would continue to rely on TCP and other Latin Americans, trying to encourage the US public and others to view their role as key to future subsequent developments in Nicaragua, and view ourselves as more in the background. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the approach suggested above.⁴ (U)

⁴ Carter initialed his approval. In telegram 178797 to Caracas, Managua, Panama City, and San José, July 11, the Department transmitted the results of the July 10 SCC meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 36, Nicaragua, 7/9–11/79)

265. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassy in Costa Rica¹

Managua, July 10, 1979, 2210Z

3089. Subject: (S) The Urgency of Decision. Ref: Vaky-Pezzullo TelCon July 10.²

1. S-Entire text.

2. It is heartening that Bowdler's conversations indicate that the Junta agrees in general with the transition formula raised with Torrijos. The invitation to Col. Mojica to come to San Jose is excellent news. But we have very little time.

3. The TCP process began a week ago. Since then the FSLN has made gains and GN has been debilitated further. Our latest information is that FSLN units are being infiltrated into Managua in increasing numbers. If the action in Leon is any model, they will move on signal and exert maximum pressure in a concerted manner. I estimated yesterday that the GN could only hold out three days or more under such an attack.

4. Our contacts in the GN reveal a mood change toward U.S. Two weeks ago, on my arrival, the middle guard officers in the GN quickly acclimated to the idea of serving in a post-Somoza security force and saw some future therein. Our latest information indicates they are frustrated by our inaction and by the continuing military pressure from the FSLN. They saw the removal of Somoza as a key element in relieving the pressure on the GN and also offering the GN an opportunity to separate itself from Somocismo. They now see themselves slowly being reduced to their last redoubt in Managua, with Somoza still in place, low on supplies and the prospect of being destroyed as an institution. What little faith they had in the USG has been seriously eroded these past two weeks. We may be close to the break point for any remnants of the GN to survive.

5. Our contacts with GN officers have been difficult. Overt contacts by the DAO officers result in requests for immediate material assistance or in suspicion or charges that we are coup-plotting. (Recall Congressman Murphy charge that Datt Col. McCoy was plotting a coup.)³ To

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information to Panama City and Caracas.

² A memorandum of conversation for the July 10 Vaky-Pezzullo telephone conversation has not been found.

³ In telegram 169040 to Managua, June 30, Vaky reported to Pezzullo that Murphy had called Christopher on June 29 and "alleged that DAO McCoy was talking to Guard officers and seeking to instigate a coup," an action which "could result in Somoza's assassination." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1817)

avoid both problems, I have asked Col. McCoy to restrict his contacts during this sensitive period. We have concentrated our efforts and information gathering on SRF sources. Our message to the GN via these sources has been to encourage GN officers to think in terms of adapting and surviving as a viable institution; that the U.S., and other LA countries are interested in seeing a disciplined security force preserved to prevent a breakdown in order leading to a takeover by the left; that during the transition period, the remaining GN officers have to be flexible and receptive to negotiations with the Sandinistas to keep the peace and eventually to a new armed forces structure in Nicaragua. That message was getting positive responses until very recently. Now with the delay in getting Somoza out, coupled with the continued FSLN advance, the GN officer corps is getting very depressed and their confidence in U.S. is seriously eroded.

6. If the negotiations can be wrapped up in 24 hours, perhaps we still can preserve the salvageable elements in the GN. The Mojica card would be an excellent one in bucking up GN morale, but only if it is played quickly. But time is running out, while we go from TCP negotiations with the FSLN commanders to direct negotiations with the Junta.

7. The history of the period will show that Somoza has already stated publicly, that he was prepared to step down at our request two weeks ago. The fact has already hurt us with the GN and with a large segment of the Nicaraguan people who believe we allowed the bloodshed to continue while seeking a “diplomatic solution”. If we allow the negotiations to delay reaching d-day in a day or two, we will soon lose the ability to extract any advantage from the only action we ever had fully in our hands—the resignation of Somoza. Once the attack begins on Managua, even that is gone.

Pezzullo

266. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to Department of State and the Embassies in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic¹

San José, July 12, 1979, 0128Z

3018. Subj: Meeting with the GNR Junta on Transition Scenario.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. The session with the GNR at 4:30 this afternoon was relatively short. In addition to the three civilian members of the Junta, Daniel Ortega Saavedra was also present. Marv Weissman accompanied me.

3. Before getting into substantive matters the Junta representatives reviewed the "fundamental statute" to indicate certain amendments which had been made.² These were all stylistic. I took the opportunity of this review to ask for clarification of two points. One had to do with the composition of the Council of State (Article 17), and the other with dissolution of the National Guard (Article 24). On the first point they gave us the following breakdown:

FSLN	—Six members
National Patriotic Front	—Twelve members
Broad Opposition Front	—Seven members
COSEP	—Six members
National University	—One member
Church	—One member

(Note: From this breakdown it is apparent that the Sandinistas would start off with an 18 to 15 advantage which could be expected to increase given the views of some of the component groups of the FAO and depending on whom the University names.) On the status of the Guard, they confirmed that the National Guard would be abolished forthwith as an institution. They argued that the Guard was a personal gendarmerie which had no national status and which had been repudiated by the people of Nicaragua for actions in the recent past. I inquired whether they contemplated the naming of a successor director of the Guard to which they replied that this was not necessary although they allowed that the new Minister of Defense could decide.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12-14/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 7, Document 262.

4. Ramirez then distributed the transition scenario and the names of the Cabinet members of the new government. Both documents are being sent in separate messages.³ Father D'Escoto read the scenario after which I observed that there were important differences between what we had discussed yesterday—and on which I understood there had been general concurrence—and this document. I noted that no provision was made for an interim president and the steps that he would take to launch an orderly transition process. No reference was made to the naming of a new director of the National Guard. Nothing was stated about the practical problems of discussions between the two forces on the establishment of a new military structure. The document made no provision for establishment of a sanctuary or for participation of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission in observance of guarantees. I tried to determine whether there was any willingness to consider inclusion of these points in the scenario and the answer I received was that there was really no need to do so although the Junta once in power could consider them. I also made another try at the question of expansion of the Junta and ran into a stone wall. At this point I said to them that I thought that the differences between our approach to transition and theirs were so different that I saw little possibility of our being able to make a positive contribution to an orderly transition based on the prior departure of Somoza as we had hoped. I wished to report back to my government before giving them any definitive response which I hope to be able to do during the course of the night.

5. Father D'Escoto interpreted my remarks as an expression of non-cooperation with the GNR. In the ensuing conversation I made clear twice that my remarks were addressed solely and exclusively to the transition process and I was making no observation whatsoever about our cooperation with the GNR and its program in the phase beyond the transition.

6. Toward the end of the conversation both Ortega and Father D'Escoto complained about American pressure on Costa Rica to block further assistance to the Frente. I told them that we were not involved in the recent actions of the Costa Rican Government in this regard although a halt to the flow of arms to both sides once Somoza had left was an important element of the cease fire/stand-still contemplated in our scenario. They obviously were not convinced and I anticipate that they may well distort my reply in order to suit their purposes.

7. The meeting was a polite but somber one. Ramirez practically did not participate leaving it to D'Escoto, Ortega and Robelo to carry

³ In telegram 3031 from San José, July 12, the Embassy reported the GRN communiqué on its "scenario for a transition of power in Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790316–0249) In telegram 3013 from San José, July 11, Bowdler sent a list of the GNR's proposed Cabinet members. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1918)

the ball. As we left the meeting room and descended the stairs we could hear laughter in the background which I believe reflects their confidence that total victory is theirs and all they have to do is to wait for that outcome without making any concessions. D'Escoto in effect summed up their attitude when he said that it was for the GNR to decide on the political solution and this had been embodied in the documents handed to us.

8. Comment: In the light of the foregoing I see no alternative but to proceed with the next steps outlined in State 178797.⁴ There is no way of knowing at this stage whether the revolutionary glue will hold the component parts of the Frente together once Somoza is gone. We might begin examining how we could take advantage of schisms which might develop with a view to helping the moderates rally around one of the factions and support this component. In this connection the idea of a national Nicaraguan relief committee contained in para 4(D) of State 178797 is a good one.

Weissman

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 264.

267. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, July 12, 1979, 0447Z

179651. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Nicaraguan Scenario.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. You are authorized to see President Somoza as soon as possible and relay the following points:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1910. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua, Caracas, Panama City, San José, and Santo Domingo. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in S/S-O and by Pastor (in substance); approved by Christopher. In telegram 3101 from Managua, July 11, Pezzullo recommended: "If the negotiations fail to bear fruit within 24 hours, I should be authorized to go to Somoza and suggest his early departure." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1910)

—Our efforts to work out conditions that will facilitate an orderly transition have made only very limited progress.

—Several Latin American countries continue to discuss these items with the provisional government and are continuing to try to broaden assurances and conditions. But the PG has shown little interest so far in negotiating an expansion of the Junta or agreement on a new Guard head.

—This is a difficult situation and the decision is yours to make, but we think your prompt departure will help minimize bloodshed and the further loss of life. We do not think it prudent to wait any longer, and if you were looking to us as wanting you to stay you should not.

—We are also concerned that the longer you stay and the longer the war is fought, the more difficult it will be for the GN or anyone else to play a constructive role in the peace.

—We are prepared to accept you in the U.S. and you may therefore wish to make plans to depart quickly.

—If you wish to discuss modalities for a change-over which would have some [garble—chance?] perhaps of leading to an orderly transition I would [be] willing to do so, but you should be under no illusion that we can guarantee anything. FYI: You may wish to suggest some ideas that he might want to consider, but make clear that they are not official recommendations. You may want to suggest that he might wish to follow the formula of having the Congress name a transitional successor; to name a new Commander for the Guard to assume command and immediately restructure the Guard; to issue calls for a ceasefire and standstill. You might also suggest that appropriate announcements by the new head of state and Guard Commander regarding peace, human rights, and binding up the wounds could help. All of this might help establish a base for talking to the provisional government but no one could of course guarantee the PG or FSLN reaction. End FYI.

3. You should also seek to do what you can with regard to promoting a relief committee (para 4D of State 178797),² and encouraging moderate elements to remain and scramble to be heard in the post-Somoza period.

Vance

² See footnote 4, Document 264. In telegram 3123 from Managua, July 12, Pezzullo reported that he had delivered the *démarche* to Somoza. Somoza was “very resigned and asked no questions about the transition process.” Pezzullo concluded: “As I was leaving, more in sadness than in anger, he said ‘it is too bad your negotiations did not succeed.’” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12–14/79)

268. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State and the Embassies in Panama, Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Columbia¹

San José, July 13, 1979, 0106Z

3049. From Bowdler. Subj: Visit with Carazo, Carlos Andres Perez and Torrijos Representative.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Marv Weissman and I have just returned from a quick trip to Puntarenas where we met with President Carazo, Carlos Andres Perez, Ex-President Jose Figueres and Dr. Ascanio Villaluz, Assistant Secretary General of the PRD Party representing General Torrijos.² The trip to Puntarenas was at Carazo's initiative.

3. The group wished to know how my conversation with the GRN junta had gone this morning. I gave them the general flavor along the lines of San Jose 3038.³ The discussion then centered on two aspects: (a) amplification of the Junta, and (b) additional measures to strengthen an orderly transition.

4. On amplification CAP led off with a long statement as to why expansion would be desirable, but at this stage not realistic. He argued that a week or ten days ago it might have been possible to accomplish. Now the proposition had become so publicly identified with the U.S. that it was difficult for TCP to push, and for the Junta to accept, because it would appear as an open surrender to U.S. pressure. CAP views were strongly echoed by Carazo and Villaluz. Don Pepe Figueres tended to agree with the CAP analysis but spoke more about his deep-seated distrust of what Fidel Castro was up to in Nicaragua. I told them that we still regarded expansion as a valuable ingredient to buttress the position of moderates in Nicaragua, to gain greater acceptability of the GNR at home and abroad, and to assist in obtaining the necessary support for its economic recovery programs. I said that all of us who

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133-1901. Secret; Flash; Nodis. In telegram 179669 to Panama City and San José, July 12, the Department instructed Moss and Bowdler to request that Torrijos, Perez, and Carazo "immediately use all of their influence to achieve such modifications and broadening as they can with respect to respecting ceasefire and standstill, no reprisals, respect for remaining reformed units of GN, enlarged Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-2221)

² In telegram 5289 from Panama City, July 12, Moss reported that he informed Torrijos of the Department's message delivered in telegram 179669 (see footnote 1 above). (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-2216)

³ See footnote 8, Document 262.

want to see democracy prevail in Nicaragua have a great responsibility to work toward the establishment of an equilibrium of forces in Nicaragua which would deny dominance by either extreme. Therefore, while I had not insisted on amplification in my conversation with the Junta this morning, it was made clear that we regard it as being in their interests to take this step and urged them to consider the matter further. It seemed to me that TCP, given the concerns expressed about the orientation of the new government based on the Cabinet list and transition scenario, likewise had a responsibility to use their best efforts to gain acceptance of this point.

5. Following a general discussion of differences between our scenario and the document released by the Junta last night, the group agreed that they would make a major effort to persuade the Junta to issue a new public declaration to cover the missing points. We agreed that such a declaration might include the following:

—The reaffirmation of their intention to respect human rights and in this connection to send a letter to the OAS making such a pledge and asking for the IAHRC to come to Nicaragua to observe its compliance.⁴

—Reiteration of their desire for an orderly transition in which they would invite Foreign Ministers of other countries to come to Managua to observe the transition process.

—Confirmation of their desire to heal the wounds of the Nicaraguan people by calling for no reprisals, stating their intention to follow the judicial process to protect the right of individuals, and making provision for sanctuaries for exit or subsequent reincorporation into Nicaraguan society.

—Statement of intention to hold free elections.

In a separate conversation with President Carazo I mentioned the lack of precision in the Junta's description of force standstill and in the procedure for fusion of forces as points which I had raised with the junta this morning and needed to be covered in some fashion.

6. At the end of our discussion, Carazo supported the CAP and Villaluz tried to get me to agree to close a deal with the GRN Junta today on the basis of their accepting the foregoing points in exchange for Somoza's departure. In this connection they informed me that they had summoned the GNR Junta to Puntarenas and that the group would be arriving shortly after we left. I told them that I was not in a position to strike such a deal and again referred to my belief that we all have

⁴ In telegram 3058 from San José, July 13, Bowdler provided the text of the GRN Junta's letter to the OAS and commented that the letter made no specific reference to sanctuaries, force standstill, fusion of forces, and failed to resolve the issue of "Junta amplification." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–2017)

a responsibility to make another try at expansion of the junta. I said I would transmit their views to Washington but I hoped very much that they would take advantage of their group meeting with the junta to try to achieve amplification as well as the additions to the transition scenario. I took the line that I was not in a position to approve what they requested not only because it lacked such authority but also as a way of keeping the pressure on them to make an effort to persuade the junta to expand its numbers. I am not sure that this will have any effect on the junta but I believe it important for TCP to make this joint appeal at this critical juncture, as a follow-up to my urging to reconsider this morning.

7. Addendum: Since completion of this report Carazo called from Puntarenas to report of their meeting with the junta. He said that CAP gave the amplification issue a good whirl but could not budge them except in a very limited way. The junta argued that they are not opposed in principle to increasing their number to seven but to do so now would look like USG imposition. Ortega said they were not closing the door to expansion but would leave it open for action at a later date. Carazo said they found full acceptance of the points mentioned [garble—in] the previous paragraph. Rather than make a new declaration, they preferred to include the ideas in a letter to the OAS which would subsequently be made public. Sergio Ramirez agreed to prepare a draft overnight and check it with Carazo in the morning before despatching the communication to the OAS.

Weissman

269. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 13, 1979, 1700Z

3141. For Asst Secy Vaky. Subject: (S) The Urgency of Somoza Leaving Quickly.

1. (S)-Entire text.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1913. Secret; Flash; Nodis; Stadis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Panama City, San José, Santo Domingo, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, and Guatemala City.

2. I received a call late last evening from Somoza inviting me to lunch on Saturday² to “discuss your proposal.” I said we saw urgency in fast movement and wondered if he couldn’t telescope the time frame, and asked to meet with him tomorrow (July 13). He suggested 5 p.m. In response to my suggestion that we meet in the morning, he said he could not. (I learned this morning that his trip to Guatemala was the reason.)³

3. Somoza also said he had information that TCP were meeting in Costa Rica and feared they were planning another “invasion of Nicaragua.”⁴ I assured him that this was a positive development aimed at bringing about the peaceful transition with no reprisals we all sought. He seemed relieved.

4. When I meet with Somoza this afternoon, I believe it essential that I be authorized to get his agreement to leave on Sunday or Monday, at the latest. I realize that our posture now is to lay this decision in his lap, but we run the risk of having events overtake us if he does not leave soon. The FSLN has infiltrated units into the city and can begin the assault on short notice. I learned today that the FSLN is handing out arms to local youths, which is the prelude to an assault. Once that attack begins in Managua, the departure of Somoza will appear to have been the result of a military defeat rather than a negotiated agreement. The benefits we derive from orchestrating his departure will slip from our hands, and the survivability of any elements of the GN will be unlikely. Indeed, we will be placed in a very vulnerable position if we are seen offering safehaven to a Somoza fleeing from Nicaragua under military attack. We will be viewed as having saved his neck rather than as having negotiated his departure to bring the peaceful and orderly political transition contemplated in the OAS resolution.

5. Though there is an inconsistency in taking the position on the one hand that it is his decision as to when to leave and what to leave

² July 14.

³ In telegram 3790 from Tegucigalpa, July 14, the Embassy reported that Paz had informed Jaramillo about his July 13 meeting with Somoza, Romero, and Lucas. Somoza told the others that “he was ready to step down, but was not yet assured there would not be a massacre of the Guardia.” Romero, Lucas, and Paz declined Somoza’s request that Condeca “‘speak’ out for him on developments in Nicaragua, raising spectre of all Central America falling to Communism.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840125–1665) In telegram 180647 to multiple posts, July 13, the Department instructed Jaramillo to urgently inform Paz prior to the meeting that “any military involvement of Condeca countries in the conflict will only spread and prolong the war and loss of life, and create a very serious international situation.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12–14/79)

⁴ See Document 268.

behind and, at the same time, to urge a specific deadline, I suggest that we approach the issue by indicating that, unless he leaves in the next day or so, any of the benefits that would be derived from a departure at his own choice will fall away. We would then all be acting under duress and be victims of all the negative consequences which would follow. I think he would understand from that approach, without it being stated, that his safehaven in the U.S. might be jeopardized if he doesn't act quickly.⁵

Pezzullo

⁵ Telegram 181058 to Managua, July 13, instructed Pezzullo to inform Somoza that "his departure should occur quickly, i.e. in the next 48 to 72 hours," and asked Pezzullo if Somoza would indicate: "his plans, date, and transition arrangements." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1919)

270. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC-3712-79

Washington, July 13, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 13 July 1979, White House Situation Room

PARTICIPANTS

Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, John Bushnell, State Department; Zbigniew Brzezinski, White House; Robert Pastor, NSC; Charles Duncan, Gordon Schuller, Defense Department; David Jones, John Pustay, JCS; Robert Bowie, [name not declassified] CIA

1. Ambassador Vaky said Ambassador Pezzullo would try to pin down Somoza on a departure date. General Jones expressed concern about collapse of the Guard when Somoza leaves, but Dr. Brzezinski indicated that the US could not intervene at this stage unilaterally and Latin American nations would not join in a multilateral initiative.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by [name not declassified] on July 16. [name not declassified] sent the memorandum to Turner under a July 16 covering memorandum. For more information about the July 13 SCC meeting, see Document 271.

2. Vaky argued for a US policy of covert action to promote the non-Marxist elements of the FSLN in the power struggle that is expected to follow its victory. He asked that CIA look at the possibility of approaching guerrilla leader Eden Pastora, and Dr. Bowie said this would be done.

3. It was agreed the US would weigh in with the Andean nations this weekend when their foreign ministers meet to ask them to urge the provisional junta to adopt moderate and humane policies.

4. There was brief discussion of the likely Cuban involvement once the new Nicaraguan Government comes to power. Brzezinski believed Havana would send numerous technical and security advisers—in gradually increasing numbers to test the US reaction—but would see nothing to gain by sending combat troops.

271. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 13, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua (U)

I chaired an SCC meeting today and Christopher, Duncan, Dave Jones, Bowie from CIA and others attended. We agreed to give more detailed instructions to Ambassador Pezzullo for his meeting with Somoza this afternoon—specifically, to ask the names of Somoza's successor and the new National Guard Commander so that we could begin to plan ways to relate to them (e.g., delivering humanitarian assistance). We agreed to draft letters for Cy to send to the Andean Pact Foreign Ministers before their meeting next week, urging them to encourage the junta toward moderation and a democratic outcome; and letters from Cy to Foreign Ministers of other nations that signed the OAS resolution, asking them to weigh in with the Andean countries with the same message. CIA is examining the possibility of our contact-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12–14/79. Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the page: "revised and sent." The final version of the memorandum has not been found. For more information on the July 13 SCC meeting, see Document 270.

ing the more moderate military elements in the Sandinistas² (like Pastora, who quit my staff two weeks ago to fight Somoza) in order to strengthen their hand in the likely struggle that will follow the transfer of power. We will decide on new instructions for Bowdler to use with Torrijos, Perez, and Carazo after we hear from Somoza this evening. I must add that I feel a considerable degree of unease that we may be witnessing at this moment the passing of the baton of influence over the future of Central America from the US to Cuba, but the above is the best we can do. (S)

² Following the word "Sandinistas," an unknown hand crossed out the phrase: "(like Pastora, who quit my staff two weeks ago to fight Somoza)."

272. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 14, 1979, 0220Z

3178. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) Meeting with Somoza—July 13. Ref: State 181058.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Somoza delayed our meeting until 6 p.m. He told me he had been advised by Cong. Murphy to call President Carter, which he did. Warren Christopher had taken the call and assured him he would pass his request to the President.³ Somoza said he was explaining this to me because he didn't want me to think he was going around me, rather he wanted to be sure that President Carter understood the reality of the situation here.

3. I then drew from talking points in reftel giving special emphasis to the urgency that he depart in next 48 to 72 hours. He listened attentively, then said he was still concerned that there were no guaran-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1921. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Also sent Immediate to San José, Panama City, Caracas, Santo Domingo, Guatemala City, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² See footnote 5, Document 269.

³ In his July 14 evening report to Carter, which Carter initialed, Christopher described the information contained in this telegram. (Carter Library, Plains File, Subject File, Box 39, State Department Evening Reports, 7/79)

tees that the GN or the Liberal Party would survive. He said he did not trust the Junta nor the Sandinistas and looked to the USG to provide such guarantees.

4. I responded by indicating that we and many LA nations have been engaged in a major effort to assure that a democratic transitional government will assume power following his departure and that a ceasefire and commitment to avoid reprisals will permit institutions, such as the GN, to survive. Everyone involved, I added, was conscious of the pitfalls and dangers, but were convinced that a negotiated political solution which included his resignation was the only way to avoid more bloodshed and further deterioration of the fabric of Nicaraguan society. Further, each day that he remained diminished our capacity to influence that peaceful transition scenario. I ended by observing that he should realize that the best guarantee for the GN and the Liberal Party was the creation of an open democratic environment closely monitored and nurtured by interested hemispheric states.

5. Somoza appeared to accept this argumentation and dropped the “guarantee” issue. Instead he said he welcomed the position we now place him in, namely one in which he makes the decision to resign rather than be told to do so. I said we were pleased, that we had always felt that the final decision to resign should be his. We were offering him our best advice on timing. He said he appreciated our position and frankness.

6. We then briefly covered the T-28’s and press censorship.⁴ On the former, I advised him to keep the planes out of Costa Rican territory, because any action of that type could enflame what was already a very tense situation. The negotiations currently going on, which were laying the basis for a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority, could be severely prejudicial or even aborted. He said he understood. On the latter, I suggested he reconsider censoring the international press. He said he would look into it.

7. At the end of the conversation he again raised his interest in speaking with the President. He has the impression that he has a commitment that President Carter will return his call. If that is the case, the President should be prepared to hear a recounting of Somoza’s long and close ties to the USG. He believes the President has been unfairly prejudiced against him (I told him that was not the case, that President Carter was a astute politician who viewed the Nicaraguan situation dispassionately.) He is also most likely to raise his concerns

⁴ In telegram 181523 to multiple posts, July 14, the Department reported that the U.S. Customs Agency was investigating the unlicensed transfer of T-28s to Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 27, Nicaragua: 5/77–10/80)

about the future of “his country”, about the fortunes of the GN and the Liberal Party and the lack of “guarantees” for their survival. He also will state that he is prepared to go.

8. On the last point, I emphasized before departing that we were extremely serious about the urgency of his departing in 48 to 72 hours. He said he understood and again raised the hope that the President would return his call tomorrow.⁵ I would appreciate being informed whether the President intends to call Somoza.⁶

Pezzullo

⁵ In telegram 3179 from Managua, July 14, Pezzullo wrote: “We have reached the moment of truth with Somoza” and commented that Somoza was “clearly trying to extract as much as he can from us in exchange for his resignation.” Pezzullo also noted that “if Somoza becomes difficult we must be prepared to pressure our credibility by taking some decisive actions,” including his recall to Washington, the reduction of the U.S. Mission, and the release of a “comprehensive statement of our efforts to attain the objectives of the OAS resolution and of the reasons for our recent actions.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1930)

⁶ In telegram 183193 to Managua, July 14, the Department informed Pezzullo that Carter was “totally and urgently immersed in the energy problem,” and could not telephone Somoza. However, the Department was “currently seeking an alternative way of conveying the President’s message, recognizing the urgency.” The telegram also noted that Murphy had involved Congressman Jim Wright “in seeking to have the President talk to Somoza.” In response, Brzezinski informed Wright that Carter would not call Somoza and asked that Wright inform Somoza that he should “depart promptly.” Finally, the telegram informed Pezzullo that the SCC decided that Pezzullo should “determine ASAP what persons Somoza would designate as successor and in other posts, and who might be named as GN Commander.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1935) A memorandum of conversation of the July 14 telephone conversation between Brzezinski and Wright, which Pastor drafted on July 20, is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 7/79–12/79.

273. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, July 14, 1979, 0552Z

3079. From Bowdler. Subj: Meeting with GRN Junta.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Marv Weissman and I met with the GRN Junta tonight for an hour. The four titular members plus Padre D'Escoto were present. Despite the thunderbolts thrown during the GRN noon briefing, we had a good session and are very much in business.²

3. The greetings on arrival at Dona Violeta's house were a little stiff, but the state of my health served as a good icebreaker. Suspicion of US motives runs very deep, but ten months of association generates a certain amount of empathy—even for an adversary.

4. The mood at the start of my presentation is best described as one of calculated boredom. Dona Violeta put her head back and closed her eyes. Ramirez slouched forward and did likewise. Robelo looked out the window, and the good Padre stared at the ceiling. The always-alert Ortega and his girl friend, who turns out to be a secretary who works at the Frente's operations center in San Jose, remained attentive. I deliberately made no reference to the noon press conference. I led off by thanking them for the opportunity to continue yesterday's discussion.³ I regretted the misunderstanding over the letter to the OAS, commenting that it took care of several of the points I raised yesterday, and represents a significant advance in establishing the conditions for an orderly transition. I brushed by the language on sanctuaries and zeroed in on the missing military items: new director for the GN, greater precision on the standstill, and more specifics on the procedure for fusion. I concluded my remarks reiterating what I said yesterday about Somoza's departure not being a push-button operation, but one in which we all need to work together to establish conditions which facilitate his exit.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1539. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, San Salvador, Santo Domingo, and Tegucigalpa. Christopher summarized these events in a July 14 evening report to Carter; see footnote 3, Document 272.

² In telegram 3075 from San José, July 13, the Embassy described the GRN's noon press conference, during which the GRN announced the establishment of a "coordinating commission for Nicaraguan relief," as well as its "final and definitive rejection of US proposal to expand Junta." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12–14/79)

³ See footnote 8, Document 262.

5. A suspenseful pause followed, during which Dona Violeta's daughter passed Father D'Escoto a sheet of paper and I began to suspect that he had been assigned the task of formally informing me the conversations were over. (Earlier in the afternoon he petulantly told me he did not think the Junta would receive me.) At this point Ortega broke the silence in his practical, down-to-earth way by saying let's examine the three points. Tension relaxed and the inattention of the others quickly changed.

6. I started off with a new head for the GN. I understood in their scenarios they wished to avoid describing what the interim government would do, but it is at this stage that the new director would be named, which would relieve them of that formal responsibility. But there would have to be a clear understanding, of course, on who the person would be, and on the GRN allowing him to remain in his post during the process of establishing a new military organization. The negotiations would involve the GN director as well as the Frente military leaders, presumably under the aegis of the Junta or the Minister of Defense. The person chosen to fill the directorship needs to have the confidence of the GN and at the same time be acceptable to the Junta. Col. Mojica could fill the bill. Robelo intervened to say that the country cannot have two recognized military forces—that is why the basic statute calls for termination of the GN forthwith. I said that with the creation of a new military establishment the Guard would terminate, but in the interim with the ceasefire and standstill in place there was no reason why the GN could not temporarily continue under the jurisdiction of the new government. Ortega said he thought this might be worked out on a practical basis but suggested having the Congress to whom Somoza presents his resignation name the new Director rather than an interim President. I said the method of designation could be worked out; the important thing is that agreement be reached soon on a mutually acceptable candidate, and that the Guard be allowed to remain under the standfast order in the areas they control under their own command structure until the new military establishment is set up. At this point, Ortega volunteered that the Frente directorate is meeting tomorrow, and he would discuss this issue with them to see what might be worked out. The civilian members kept silence—the first indication in our conversations that the “*manda mas*”, at least on military matters, are the field commanders rather than the Junta.

7. We next turned to clarification of standstill arrangements. I noted that in their scenario the GN must withdraw to their barracks, while the Frente forces take over the country. I said this is not realistic in terms of the areas they still hold and our common objective of creating a climate of confidence for the Guard, so that Somoza will leave. Ramirez entered the discussion for the first time at this juncture by producing

from among his papers a map showing the areas now under FSLN control. I used the map to underscore my point that each side should be allowed to remain in the areas under its control until the negotiations on fusion are completed. In the meantime, the Minister of Defense would presumably be working with the FSLN commanders and the GN director and his staff coordinating their respective roles during the interim period. Ortega commented that some thing might be worked out here as well, and he would discuss the problem at the directorate meeting.

8. Finally, I presented the need for more precision on the procedure to be used in achieving fusion of forces. Ortega and Robelo observed that the Junta and Ministry of Defense would handle this task. Ramirez thought advisors from Costa Rica and Panama might be considered. I suggested they might wish to look at more neutral advisors, keeping in mind the need to have people who would command the confidence of the GN as well. The Andean countries or the Dominican Republic could be helpful. Ortega agreed to discuss this point also with the directorate.

9. I told them that I thought this had been a very useful session, and asked when we might meet again. I was at their disposal. I stressed the urgency. We agreed they would call me after the directorate session.

10. Comment. Had I not been through the FAO temper tantrums last year, I would have despaired after today's press conference. They made no reference to it during our session. I have no good explanation for the noon, as against the evening, performance. They may have been playing to the Latin American grandstand, as suggested in State 180932,⁴ and this needs to be carefully watched. The problem of reconciliation of attitudes is theirs; and we should not complicate it for them by too much emphasis that the talks are continuing. I assume department will be doing some quiet diplomacy with the Andean group so that we minimize unpleasant surprises at their meeting on Sunday.⁵

11. We are inching forward in obtaining acceptance of our scenario. The letter to the OAS is not an insignificant commitment, despite its flaws and cosmetic quality. Tonight's session is at least a constructive move toward better understanding of our requirements on the military

⁴ In telegram 180932 to San José and Panama City, July 13, the Department instructed Bowdler to focus on convincing the Junta to agree to "real conditions that will permit a broad based transition to occur, and an equilibrium of forces which would prevent dominance by either extreme." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1545)

⁵ In telegram 183068 to multiple posts, July 14, the Department issued a message from Vance to Zambrano and Herrera, in advance of the Andean Group's July 15 meeting in Caracas about Nicaragua, noting the U.S. Government's "conversations with the Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850004–1743)

aspects. Ortega is the man with authority in this area. He, rather than the civilians, is more likely to be flexible and obtain agreement from his military colleagues who really call the shots on these matters.

12. We are still left with the power-equation issue of expansion of the Junta. I did not make another pass on this neuralgic point because the purpose of the session was to pull the Junta back from the brink of ending the talks. It remains the key point in protecting the moderates from being swallowed up by FSLN majorities in the Junta and Council of State.

13. After the meeting, they asked me how the talks in Managua are going and how soon we expect Somoza to leave. I said talks are continuing. They are not easy, and we need your help in creating conditions that will facilitate his departure. They did not press me further. They did ask what I knew about the summit in Guatemala which, they said, Hodding Carter had confirmed. I looked surprised and begged the question by saying I had seen nothing by Hodding on the subject.⁶

Weissman

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 269.

274. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, July 14, 1979, 2209Z

183243. For Ambassador Pezzullo; San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Somoza's Departure.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Please deliver ASAP the following letter to Somoza from Secretary Vance on behalf of the President. You may do it in writing.

Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of President Carter, I wish to convey to you the following message with respect to the tragic circumstances in your country.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1926. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information to San José. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in S/S-O and by Brzezinski in substance; approved by Christopher.

Just over a year ago, the President wrote you to register our hope that you would succeed in implementing a series of internal reforms you had yourself announced to remedy what was already a highly disturbing situation.² It was our hope that in moving toward amnesty and electoral reform, you were laying the foundation for a peaceful and democratic evolution in your country.

After the bloody outbreak of violence and insurrection in September, we decided to join with other friendly governments to lend our good offices to help achieve such a peaceful evolution. The suffering endured by Nicaraguans and the abuses documented by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission made clear that the alternative to a negotiated settlement could only be further violence.³

The international mediating group worked indefatigably to enable you and all Nicaraguans to settle the crisis amicably. The mediators succeeded in engaging your moderate opponents in a way that left those prone to violence with no choice but to go along with the mediation.

After two months, the mediators obtained the agreement of your opponents to a proposal you yourself had initially advanced—to place your differences before the citizens of your country through an internationally guaranteed election. As I am sure you remember, the U.S. representative urged you to agree, and told you it was our judgment that if you did not, you could soon face a situation beyond your complete control. You rejected the proposed plebiscite which had been carefully designed by the mediators for the unique situation in Nicaragua.

Mr. President, events since then have been unkind to all. The polarization and violence we feared has reached a point that calls for the most courageous and far-reaching response. It is absolutely clear that the situation cannot be resolved militarily in a satisfactory manner. Prolonged conflict will only result in further suffering and loss of life, and in deeper radicalization of the situation.

The only chance that remains to achieve an enduring and democratic solution is to establish a transition process that follows the precepts of the OAS resolution. The U.S. and several other nations have been working hard to obtain commitments and to create conditions which will permit moderate elements to survive and compete with extremists, which will avoid reprisals, and which will provide a chance for an eventual freely elected regime to emerge. There has, in fact, been progress on these matters. We and other Latin American nations believe

² See footnote 2, Document 76.

³ See footnote 8, Document 137.

there is an opportunity to protect moderate elements, to prevent reprisals against the guard, and to establish a political process in which a democratic system can prevail. However, that opportunity will exist only if we move quickly to end the war and begin to effect the transition. With each day that passes, our capacity to influence the situation and the transition diminishes.

A continuation of the status quo beyond the next day or two will radicalize the situation even further, and is likely to result in the renewal of the offensive. The best chance for preservation of the moderate sectors of your society lies in commencing the transition through your prompt departure, and the designation of a successor and a new Guard Commander. The hemisphere is virtually unanimous that such a transition process is absolutely essential. The OAS members will be attendant on this process, and the hemisphere's attention will focus in ways which I believe will reduce the possibility of reprisals and vengeance.

I therefore urge you to arrange your departure without delay. We will receive you in the U.S., as Ambassador Pezzullo has indicated. Your continued delay will only prolong the conflict and bloodshed and compromise our ability to try to achieve a moderate outcome.

Sincerely,

Cyrus Vance

End text.

3. (FYI. There is still a possibility for a telcon. End FYI.)

Christopher

275. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassy in Costa Rica¹

Managua, July 14, 1979, 2245Z

3204. For Assistant Secretary Vaky. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: (S) New Guard Commander.

1. (S-Entire text)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/12-14/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

2. My early afternoon meeting with Somoza went well. I will be sending a separate cable later today on arrival plans and passengers in his party.² He did not even raise the question of guarantees. We moved quickly to substantive issues in the scenario.

3. He has selected liberal Congressman Francisco Urcuyo as the interim President. I will meet with Urcuyo late this afternoon to go over his role during his short interim stewardship.

4. Based on our early demarche to Somoza which left in his hands the details of interim measures including the organization of the Guard, he presented me with a new reorganization formula, including the new GN Chief of Staff. I observed that the officer that filled that important position would be the principal instrument in assuring the survivability of elements of the GN. His role would be enhanced if he had creditability among GN officers as well as in the international community involved and the Junta. We thought that Col. Inocente Mojica was such a person. Somoza frowned and observed that Mojica was retired and might not be well known enough to the active officer corps to command their respect and support. He suggested either an old Somoza war-horse (General Humberto Sanchez) or a good soldier (LtCol Alberto Moreno) who lacks the prestige and policy of Mojica.

5. I broke the conversation at the point to consult further with my staff at the Embassy. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] DATT agree that Sanchez is a corrupt General who would seriously prejudice the survivability of the Guard. Moreno is a good soldier, but just that. We conclude that Mojica is the best choice, even more so given Somoza's hesitation.

6. I plan to convince Somoza this afternoon that Mojica is the best candidate to protect the GN's interests, and that he (Somoza) can help by preparing the ground with the GN officer corps to accept and support Mojica during this very sensitive transition.

7. Assuming I get Somoza's concurrence, I plan to arrange for the DATT's plane in Tegucigalpa to fly Mojica down from Guatemala tomorrow so that he can begin putting a supporting staff together. We will cable him some names through our DATT in Guatemala, Col. Fletcher. I will also make the plane availability to Mojica to fly to San Jose, if he desires. The more he can put into place in terms of building a new GN staff and in developing contacts with the FSLN leadership before Tuesday³ the better.

² In telegram 3207 from Managua, July 16, the Embassy included information about Somoza and his entourage's plans for arrival in the United States during the morning of July 17. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79)

³ July 17.

8. On that score, I question para 2h in State 183735.⁴ Early contact between the GN Chief of State and the FSLN is essential. Otherwise, we risk having some minor incident grow into a major confrontation. The Mojica/FSLN relationship would facilitate more rapid reaction in such an eventuality, even with the best of intentions on all sides, we can expect minor clashes or accidents. Dealing quickly to control such sporadic outbreaks will be almost impossible without early liaison.

Pezzullo

⁴ See Document 276.

276. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Nicaragua and Costa Rica¹

Washington, July 15, 1979, 1714Z

183735. San Jose for Ambassador Bowdler. Subject: Transition Scenario. Ref: A. San Jose 3081,² B. Managua 3190.³

1. (S-Entire text)

2. For Ambassador Bowdler: You should tell the GNR:

—We find the additional clarifications and commitments very positive.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Bogotá, Guatemala City, Panama City, San Salvador, Santo Domingo, Tegucigalpa, and the White House.

² In telegram 3081 from San José, July 15, Bowdler noted that during his July 14 meeting with the Junta, he had not addressed the issue "of/if when, and how" to make public the GRN scenario. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15-17/79) Bowdler described his July 14 meeting and the GRN transition scenario in telegram 3080 from San José, July 14. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 8, Central America: SCC 7/20/79 Meeting: 6-8/79)

³ In telegram 3190 from Managua, July 15, Pezzullo reported that Somoza had agreed to resign during the morning of July 17 and asked Bowdler when the GRN transition scenario, especially regarding the creation of a new Nicaraguan army and a ceasefire, would be made public. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15-17/79)

—Based on our present understanding these, together with the OAS letter⁴ and previous “plan of government,”⁵ appears to constitute a workable basis for implementing a transition.

—We are prepared to contribute as we can to this implementation, and we would like to continue in contact with the GNR as the implementation moves along.

We have provided Ambassador Pezzullo the outlines of the total scenario and proposals as submitted to date, and he will immediately explore implementation from that side.⁶ We believe that a transition process could begin within the next 48 hours.

—In the meantime we would like to reiterate a few points to be sure we are both clear on them:

A) It will be up to the Nicaraguan Congress to designate the successor. We take the point of trying to persuade them to designate someone not closely associated with Somoza, but that decision as a practical matter is going to be made there.

B) We understand that the interim President would immediately name a new GN Commander (or Chief of Staff); will call for a ceasefire and standstill; announce or set up sanctuaries; and call for no reprisals.

C) We believe that a ceasefire and standstill should be put into effect immediately upon Somoza’s departure. We suggest that the GNR parallel the interim President’s call with one of their own. Thus both sides would put forward the orders to its combatants at the same time. We assume that GNR can take responsibility for their troops in this period.

D) We understand that within the 72-hour period the interim President would contact the GNR to arrange for the transfer of power. How do they see the procedural scenario? We assume that they would travel to Managua on an agreed upon given time and date, and a ceremony would transfer power.

E) We assume that both the GNR and the interim President would and could extend invitations to the Foreign Ministers and IAHRC to witness and follow the transition. We understand that Ministers may go to Managua at the time of Somoza’s departure to observe and witness that first step.

F) We understand the GNR clarifications to you to mean also that the Foreign Ministers could observe the military standstill and restructuring.

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 268.

⁵ See footnote 7, Document 262.

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 269.

G) We reiterate the recommendation that outside experts should be invited to assist and advise in the restructuring of military forces; this will inevitably be a tense task and such experts could have a softening effect. We also believe it should give others besides Costa Rica and Panama a role. Perhaps two or three other countries such as Mexico and some of the Andean group could be invited.

H) The procedure and ground rules for the joint GN-Sandinista committee are not fully clear. How do they contemplate this would be developed? We would suggest that the Chiefs of Staff contact each other immediately upon Somoza's departure to plan, even before the transfer of power fully takes place. (FYI: We would prefer that the "fusion" not be rushed to give the GN time to get its feet set. End FYI.)

I) We believe that GNR should take initiative with Archbishop to establish sanctuaries. Ambassador Pezzullo can follow up with him.

3. Sergio Ramirez has, as you know, publicly said we would recognize the GNR. You should explain to the GNR that recognition as such does not arise in our international practice. U.S. practice now (in a kind of Estrada doctrine) is to recognize nations, not governments. We simply continue relations when a new government comes in. Septel will provide you and Ambassador Pezzullo with a fuller legal explanation of this point.⁷

4. (FYI: In responding to the GNR as above we want a fairly precise nuance. We want to hold them to commitments but we do not want to create the impression we have formalized an agreement or "treaty." We want to convey the idea that their ideas are a basis on which we are prepared to cooperate to implement, but again not an "agreement." We also do not want to be perceived as the main or sole "midwife" of this. Therefore the Andean group's role is important in that sense. End FYI.)

5. For Ambassador Pezzullo: You should outline to Somoza the scenario and begin to flesh out the specifics including names. We have asked Embassy Guatemala to fill in Colonel Mojica in the event he is chosen so he can begin to plan. Please confirm details to us as your scenario is worked out. We do not expect that Somoza will be happy with every detail. You should point out that this is a workable, if not ideal, basis especially given international participation by OAS members.

⁷ Telegram 183742 to Managua, July 15, provided guidance regarding the "U.S. practice to recognize nations, not governments." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1948)

6. We agree with San Jose 3081 that we should not push the GNR to “go public” at least on all the understandings. Please explain this to Somoza.

7. You should immediately move also to contact moderates and explain that transition scenario is working out, that they should recognize the dynamics of the first week and move to reach out to the moderates in the Cabinet and the new GN Commander. You should also continue to explore the relief committee idea.

8. Please keep in close coordination with us and Bill Bowdler.

9. (FYI: For Ambassador Bowdler: Can we try to keep 72-hour limit a little flexible rather than a rigid maximum? End FYI.)

Christopher

277. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassy in Costa Rica¹

Managua, July 16, 1979, 1035Z

3209. Dept for Vaky. San Jose for Bowdler. Subject: New GN Commander. Ref: San Jose 3088.²

1. We must recognize that many of the officers such as Blessing and others on the list we earlier considered have been retired by Somoza

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² Bowdler reported in telegram 3088 from San José, July 16, that he would test the GRN's reaction to Sanchez as soon as he could and that the Junta “showed no particular interest” in Guerrero, “focusing instead on Mojica as acceptable.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1502) In telegram 3206 from Managua, July 16, Pezzullo reported that he had not been able to convince Somoza “that Col. Mojica would have the kind of acceptability as GN Chief of Staff to best safeguard the long term interest of the GN.” Somoza proposed General Heberto Sanchez as a possible Chief of Staff of the National Guard. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79) In telegram 183759 to Managua and San José, July 16, the Department instructed Pezzullo that he should not proceed with endorsing Sanchez without specific instruction from the Department. He should instead “urgently try out the name of Guerrero.” Bowdler received instructions to test Pezzullo's proposal with the GRN Junta: “We must have some reasonable acceptability on both sides to avoid continued conflict.” (Ibid.) Pezzullo responded in telegram 3208 from Managua, July 16, that “Guerrero's name has never come up” and that it would be “unwise to introduce another name” at “this late date.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

in his measure to rid the Guard of old leadership. Though I did not raise name of Guerrero, I am convinced his name is on that list.

2. We are in the quandry of having the one man acceptable to the Junta (Mojica) be a man who probably does not have the capacity to hold a traumatized National Guard officer corps together following the departure of Somoza, and the names we have considered are Guard officers most likely unacceptable to the Junta. The choice becomes one of selecting a man who holds the Guard or a man who is acceptable to the Junta and cannot hold the Guard.

3. I believe Somoza is sincere in attempting to help select a man that can hold the Guard. Whatever else he is, Somoza is a military commander who has spent a great deal of his life building a National Guard which is disciplined and has maintained its discipline even under difficult conditions and facing a very determined foe.

4. We began this venture aware of our limited knowledge of the Guard. Even the individuals we selected, Mojica included, are not people we know that much about. That includes General Sanchez, as well. Sanchez is an air force officer who, to our knowledge, has had no association with either the Guard's recent activities or any of its notorious actions in the past. That is something Bowdler should raise with the Junta.

5. We should also recall that, under instructions from the Department, two days ago I gave Somoza the option of leaving within 72 hours, and leaving behind a successor President and anyone he chose for a Guard Commander.³ The actions he took were consistent with that, retiring officer with over 30 years service and selecting Sanchez as Commander. So we cannot accuse him of having gone contrary to what we expected of him. At this late stage I am very concerned about changing signals. The Guard must survive, or all is lost. Somoza has spent the last two days working very diligently with them. I suggest we accept Sanchez, and live with the fact that the Junta may have some problem with him.

6. Somoza, his son and his advisors have become adamant that Sanchez is the man to take over the National Guard and we now risk losing Somoza's cooperation in this matter if we delay further. His cooperation is essential if we hope to maintain any portion of the National Guard as an institution. While we recognize that Somoza is trying to continue his influence in the Guard with the selection of

³ See footnote 5, Document 269.

Sanchez, we must also recognize that the Guard is an instrument of Somoza and we are not going to remake it in the next 24 hours.⁴

Pezzullo

⁴ Bowdler reported in telegram 3090 from San José, July 16, that he and Weissman had met with the GRN Junta, whose members were “very firm in opposing General Sanchez.” Bowdler quoted the Junta’s comment that Sanchez “is a very bad candidate—the worst that we could have thought of—his appointment would break the understanding,” regarding the transition of power in Nicaragua. Bowdler wondered: “If Somoza is adamant on Sanchez what are the chances of ignoring Somoza and getting Urcuyo to name Mojica?” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1503)

**278. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the
Department of State and Multiple Central American
Diplomatic Posts¹**

San José, July 16, 1979, 1801Z

3101. From Bowdler. Subj: Nicaraguan Transition Scenario.

1. (S-Entire text)
2. At meeting with GRN Junta this morning they went along with the naming of Urcuyo as the interim President.
3. As indicated in San Jose 3090² they expressed strongest reservation about General Heberto Sanchez.
4. On the issues of ceremony formula and parallel call for cease fire, they expressed strong preference for the following scenario:
 - A. Early morning hours—Somoza and his group depart.
 - B. 0800 hrs—Congress convenes and elects Urcuyo, who turn names the new Chief of Staff of the National Guard.
 - C. 0800 hrs—Archbishop Obane y Bravo using radio on national hookup calls for: cease fire, standfast, no reprisals, halt to armed shipments, and explains system of sanctuaries.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Also sent Flash to Managua, Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Panama City, Santo Domingo, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa.

² See footnote 4, Document 277.

D. Urcuyo and Junta statements ratifying Archbishop's call follow immediately upon completion of Archbishop's words. The Junta in its statement announces time of arrival in Managua.

E. All radio stations will continue in national hook-up from 0800 hrs through arrival of Junta in order to reiterate these messages and urge people to remain calm.

F. 1300 hrs—Junta arrives at Las Mercedes airport and is met by Archbishop and Urcuyo. Brief ceremony is held at the airport during which Archbishop makes opening statement; Urcuyo makes statement dissolving Congress and turning over power; Junta takes oath before Nicaraguan flag and makes statement to the nation.

5. Ramirez indicated that the rest of the points of the scenario (State 183735)³ which I gave him yesterday are satisfactory as stated. With respect to point "H", Ramirez observed that since the time-span between Somoza's departure and the Junta takeover is going to be so short, there may not be all that much of an opportunity for the Chiefs of Staff of the Frente and Guardia Nacional to contact one another although there would be no objection.

6. Given shortness of time Ramirez said that the Junta may designate some representatives now in Managua to serve as advance team in working out details with Urcuyo and Embassy Managua. For example, the Junta would like to have the airport made into neutral ground by not having national guardsmen present. They suggested that the Red Cross to [be] used to establish a large presence at the airport to maintain discipline. They also lamented that key people like the Archbishop and Red Cross Director are this morning in Caracas. They are taking immediate steps to urge these two players plus the Andean Foreign Ministers to come to San Jose immediately. Ramirez asked that we use our influence in Caracas to buttress this request. The Junta agreed to contact FonMin Jimenez to ask him to invite OAS Foreign Ministers to come to Managua for transition. They will also request IAHRG committee to be on hand.⁴

³ See Document 276.

⁴ In telegram 3103 from San José, July 16, Bowdler reported that Robelo had telephoned twice with modifications to the transition scenario. Noel Rivas Gasteasoro was now to be the Junta's "advance man" for "specific planning on the arrival of the Junta" in Managua. The GRN also demanded additional security arrangements, asking that the GN confine itself to barracks in only two locations; Air Force installations be turned over to the Red Cross and all flights grounded; and there be an advance party of one hundred "men in uniform with long arms." Additionally, the Junta "had also changed their mind" about Urcuyo taking "any part in the arrival ceremony." Bowdler suggested to Robelo that Noel Rivas should raise these issues with Urcuyo. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15-17/79)

7. I raised issue of relief supplies as per telecon this morning with Deputy Secretary Christopher. Response on this aspect is covered in San Jose 3092.⁵

Weissman

⁵ In telegram 3092 from San José, July 16, the Embassy reported that during a meeting with the GRN Junta, questions regarding the military transport of relief supplies were raised. The Junta was “pleased” that the United States was “making arrangements to expand food aid,” but, “at the same time, the Junta members did not make any response to proposal to use US military aircraft and personnel other than to say they would consider its advisability.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790321–0597) No record of the telephone conversation between Bowdler and Christopher was found.

279. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 16, 1979

SUBJECT

Nicaraguan Transition

Unless there is a hitch, Somoza will resign at 10:00 P.M. tonight Managua time (midnight our time). He will depart first thing early next morning.

The interim President, Urcuyo, will make the announcement and will name the new Chief-of-Staff of the National Guard.

Tomorrow morning the Archbishop will make a national address, calling for a ceasefire, no reprisals, halt to arms shipments, sanctuaries, etc. Urcuyo and the junta will immediately approve the foregoing.

Unless there are further complications, the junta plans to arrive in Managua at 1300 hours tomorrow. They are anxious to have the Archbishop and the Andean Foreign Ministers present (and I don’t blame them!), and they also plan to invite the OAS Foreign Ministers as well.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79–9/79. Secret. Carter initialed the first page of the memorandum.

We have, in the meantime, sent down a very able officer² to work with the junta on aid problems, and another prospect for managing the program in Nicaragua is being recalled from his vacations. Christopher assures me that he is very good (and Pastor confirms this). Our aid is ready to roll, and it should be rolling within a day or two.

The junta rejected Somoza's candidate for Chief-of-Staff, and we will probably go with a lower ranking officer who might act on an interim basis, until the man proposed by us to the junta and accepted by the junta, Colonel Mojica, arrives in Managua.

² Brzezinski inserted "FSO" after the word "officer."

280. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State and the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

San José, July 17, 1979, 0007Z

3115. From Bowdler. Subj: Conversations With Robelo and Carazo on Tomorrow's Scenario.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. I have spoken to Junta member Robelo about the need to move with care in developing the scenario for tomorrow and avoiding pressing positions as set forth in San Jose 3103 that could upset attainment of the first major phase of Somoza's departure.² I specifically suggested that they allow the first stage of the process to play out and then have their representatives in Managua meet with Urcuyo's to work out modalities on security and ceremony. He immediately jumped to the conclusion that I was pressing for long delays in the transition process of which I had to disabuse him. In the end, however, he said he understood and would pass my advice along to Ramirez and Mrs. Chamorro.

3. I then sought President Carazo's assistance in using his influence with the Junta to take a more deliberate and flexible approach as

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15-17/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 4, Document 278.

outlined in previous paragraph. He agreed to do this after questioning me at length to satisfy himself that some truck is not involved.

4. As I have reported in previous messages, our efforts here, even at this late stage, are surrounded by a profound suspicion that we may be engaging in delaying tactics designed to extend Somoza in power. The other obstacle we face is the posturing of the Junta either to pressure us into greater commitment to the Junta by false press statements about what I have said in the negotiations or by taking doctrinaire stands of not wanting to have anything to do with Somoza or his successors because it would compromise their revolutionary credentials. As we move closer to the decisive moment, the more insecure the Junta appears and the more inclined to magnify its suspicions and efforts at pressure.

Weissman

281. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and Multiple Central American Diplomatic Posts¹

Managua, July 17, 1979, 1020Z

3230. Subject: (S) Transition Planning.

1. S-Entire text.

2. I met with Junta representatives Noel Rivas Gasteazoro, and Edmundo Jarquin early afternoon July 16 and later in the day. Meanwhile Tom O'Donnell and PolOff were meeting with the President-designate to the Congress Francisco Urcuyo.² I believe I succeeded in convincing Rivas and Jarquin that the scenario spelled out in San Jose 3103³ was unworkable and would create unnecessary strains during the first day of transition. They recognize that Urcuyo did not have the authority yet to put a plan in motion and recognized the advisability of not doing anything which might upset the Somoza departure plan.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1990. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Also sent Flash to San José, Caracas, Guatemala City, San Salvador, Panama City, and Tegucigalpa.

² Pezzullo reported in telegram 3226 from Managua, July 17, that Mejia had been installed as Commander of the National Guard and that Urcuyo “appeared willing to cooperate, sincere in his desire for smooth transition, but at a loss as to what was expected of him and how to provide it.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–1958)

³ See footnote 4, Document 278.

We then turned to the specific of their scenario. The 8:00 a.m. call to Archbishop for a ceasefire, steadfast, etc seemed a good idea, if the Archbishop returned on time. The idea of having the Junta play a tape and Urcuyo speak in support of a peaceful transition sounded good. Their scenario plan was unnecessarily insulting to the GN and not in keeping with the earlier agreement regarding the role it was to play in the transition period. I suggested that a Jerry-built plan for securing entry of the Junta was dangerous and unnecessary, rather what was needed was a meeting between the new Guard Commander and FSLN leaders to work out security arrangements for the capital not only for tomorrow but for the days and weeks ahead. This would be the first substantive meeting on the subject at the cease-fire arrangement, which could then lead to a standing committee to work out cease-fire arrangements throughout the country.

3. Rivas and Jarquin liked the idea and said they would forward their endorsement to the Junta in San Jose.

4. I called Urcuyo to see if he could agree with the 8:00 a.m. session and arrange for radio and TV broadcasting from either the airport or the Camino Real Hotel. Urcuyo agreed in principal but clearly was overwhelmed by the logistical aspects especially when I suggested that he and Col. Mojica should greet the Archbishop at the airport and accompany him, perhaps with the FSLN leaders, to the site selected for the radio/TV address and the negotiations. He separately told Tom O'Donnell that he had no staff and no authority yet. I mentioned this to Rivas and Jarquin and urged that they inform the Junta of the real situation, including the status of Urcuyo.

5. The DATT will meet with Mojica tonight and counsel patience, discipline and steadfastness. There will be hard days ahead for the GN and we do not want to see GN units provoke an incident.

6. At one point, Rivas asked whether an "interim Chief of Staff" had been designated. I responded that I expect a non-controversial military commander to be designated this afternoon, adding Mojica and Sanchez had been rejected. I stressed that, at this point, the departure of Somoza was far more important than to quibble about a new Guard Commander. They appeared to agree.

7. The meetings with Rivas and Jarquin was business-like and friendly and I made clear that the USG had no desire to broker the transition but was willing to establish lines of communications between the GNR and the transitional government.

Pezzullo

282. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC–3713–79

Washington, July 16, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Nicaragua, 16 July 1979, White House Situation Room

PARTICIPANTS

Warren Christopher, Viron Vaky, John Bushnell, State Department; Zbigniew Brzezinski, White House; Frank Carlucci, [*name not declassified*] CIA; David Jones, John Pustay, JCS; Robert Pastor, NSC; Harold Brown, Gordon Schuller, Defense Department; John White, OMB

1. Ambassador Vaky said Somoza has agreed to resign and leave Nicaragua before dawn, 17 July. He wants to name Heberto Sanchez—a very corrupt retired Minister of Defense—to be new Guard commander. The provisional junta rejected this outright. Ambassador Pezzullo will tell Somoza today that the US prefers Col. Mojica. If Somoza insists on Sanchez, Pezzullo will express doubt that the junta will retain Sanchez, but that it is Somoza's decision. Ambassador Bowdler will tell the junta that this is Somoza's idea and it can be rectified once Somoza is gone.

2. Vaky said it appears that efforts to get Andean foreign ministers to Managua to observe and perhaps pacify the transition appear likely to fail. The Andeans are confused and unable to act quickly.

3. There was considerable discussion on relief and humanitarian assistance, the modalities in Nicaragua, and the US contribution. General Jones urged involving the Latin American militaries through Torrijos in a joint effort with the Nicaraguan military to implement longer term reconstruction. US concern that early relief flights be by chartered civilian aircraft—and not military airlift—will initially hold down the volume of aid.

4. Recognition of the new government was considered to be natural, but the recognition statement will make reference to the provisional government's pledges. A statement may be issued tonight before Somoza's departure, to avoid a beating in the press.²

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted on July 16. [*name not declassified*] sent a copy of the memorandum to Turner under a July 16 covering memorandum, indicating that [*name not declassified*] had drafted the memorandum. For another account of the meeting see Document 283.

² See footnote 5, Document 283.

5. Following the meeting DDCI Carlucci, *[name not declassified]*, Robert Pastor, and Vaky briefly discussed the possible role of covert action.

283. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 17, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC on Nicaragua, July 16, 1979 (U)

Attached is a Summary of Conclusions on the SCC Meeting yesterday on Nicaragua. Since that meeting the following additional events have occurred:

—Somoza changed his decision to appoint Sanchez, and in turn, has decided to appoint Gen. Mejia. The Junta learned about that on Tuesday.²

—The Andean Pact countries are going to San Jose and from there to Managua for the change in government. We have tried to locate the members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and encourage them to respond to the Junta's invitation. The Archbishop of Managua and other prestigious officials are also returning.

—We have instructed our Ambassador in Managua to urge the Director of the Red Cross to expand his Board to include prestigious moderate leaders.³ We have sent a high AID official to San Jose to begin liaison with the Junta's relief committee. We have instructions to Gen. McAuliffe informally to suggest to Somoza that he begin considering a multilateral effort at reconstruction, which could involve military representatives from different Latin American countries.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 185, SCC-182, Nicaragua 07/16/79. Secret. Brzezinski handwrote the date on the memorandum. Carter initialed the memorandum. *[text not declassified]* provided another account of the meeting; see Document 282.

² July 17. See footnote 2, Document 281.

³ Not found.

⁴ Not found.

—We are preparing a statement which will be issued tomorrow morning.⁵ (S)

Attachment

Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting⁶

Washington, July 16, 1979, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher

Ambassador Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

Mr. John Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown

ADM Gordon Schuller, Director Inter-American Region

JCS

General David Jones

Lt General John Pustay

DCI

Mr. Frank Carlucci

[name not declassified] Office of Political Analysis

[name and office not declassified]

OMB

Deputy Director John White

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

Robert Pastor

Summary of Conclusions

1. *National Guard (GN) Commander.* Somoza said he wanted to appoint General Sanchez as GN Commander and the SCC decided to pass that name to the Provisional Government (PG) without any

⁵ In telegram 184798 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, July 17, the Department sent the text of the statement released during the July 17 noon press briefing. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790323–0885)

⁶ Secret. Carter wrote “ok J” at the top of the page. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

comment. If they accept it, fine; if they don't, we will try to get Somoza to accept Mojica. If he balks or threatens to stay longer, we should let him do what he wants, and seek a change if necessary, after he departs.⁷ (S)

2. *International Presence.* The SCC agreed to try to ensure as large an international presence as possible during the transition period and beyond in order to reinforce the moderate political sectors. We will try to get the Inter-American Commission or Human Rights Commission invited, and the Foreign Ministers or their representatives from Venezuela and the Andean Pact countries should go there as well.⁸ (S)

3. *Humanitarian Assistance.* The SCC agreed that the US would begin disbursing larger amounts of relief assistance through the Red Cross in Managua and through the PG's Relief Committee in areas under FSLN control. We will urge the Director of the Red Cross to try to expand his Committee to include other moderate leaders. The first planes to go into Managua will be civilian, and gradually as the need becomes greater and Nicaraguans become accustomed to US flights, we will send in much bigger military flights. General McAuliffe will also approach Torrijos to explore the latter's interest in initiating a multilateral humanitarian assistance effort involving the US, Panama, and Andean Pact countries. This effort would work in cooperation with the National Guard in Nicaragua and other military elements in order to supplement and expedite distributional capabilities. The idea would be that Latin Americans would take the lead, and we would be supportive of the effort which could incidentally help improve the image of the GN and give added support to moderate elements. (S)

4. *US Policy to new Government.* Recognition will not be an issue. We will just relate to the government in place. When the new government sends a formal letter, we will accept it. We will work on a statement that will be issued tomorrow that re-capitulates the history of the last five months, that explains the US interest in mediating the crisis in a way that makes the Latin Americans look as if they have led, that reiterates the assurances made by the junta, and that discusses the Nicaragua case as a test of the ability of Nicaragua and its neighbors to forge a new democracy in Central America. State will begin back-grounding this evening. (S)

⁷ Carter placed a checkmark in the right-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁸ Carter changed the word "or" to "on" in the phrase, "Inter-American Commission or Human Rights Commission," and placed a checkmark in the right-hand margin next to this sentence.

284. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State and the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

San José, July 17, 1979, 1930Z

3136. From Bowdler. Subj: Nicaragua: Frustration of Transition Program.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. In the last few minutes I have received telephone calls from President Carazo, Junta member Robelo, Venezuelan OAS Ambassador Cardozo and Dominican FonMin Jimenez expressing mounting concern over the foot-dragging in Managua on implementation of the transition scenario. The frustration here started with the cancellation of the meeting at Puntarenas. It reached its peak when Nicaraguan Acting Foreign Minister Bodan reportedly told Junta advance man Rivas Gasteasoro the following: Quote. This is not a simple transmission of power that will take place when the GRN Junta arrives on Nicaraguan soil; rather what is involved is a government of transition through which a solution to the crisis is to be sought and that as a result of these talks there could emerge another Junta and not necessarily this one. Unquote.

3. As Robelo pointed out to me, the foregoing position is at sharp variance—if not in direct violation—of the understanding which the Junta thought it had reached with the USG.

4. The drama—and the seriousness—of the situation is underscored by the fact that all the persons listed in San Jose 3133 are in the airport awaiting a green light to fly to Managua to begin the conversations.² Fortunately Dominican Foreign Minister Jimenez—who knows this situation so well—is with the group counselling patience until we have a chance to overcome the obstacle. The five Andean Foreign Ministers, from what Ambassador Cardoso tells me, are huddled in the Venezuelan Embassy awaiting a similar resolution. President Carazo for the domestic reasons which Ambassador Weissman has already reported

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850133–1889. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

² In telegram 3133 from San José, July 17, Bowdler reported that Robelo had provided a list of names of GRN Junta members planning to fly to Managua that afternoon. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1500)

(San Jose 3073)³ is highly exercised by the failure to follow through with at least the talks that would lead to implementation of the transition plan.

5. In my judgement we face a very serious situation here unless we can get Urcuyo and Mejia to give the green light for the party now at the airport to proceed to Managua this afternoon to start the talks.

Weissman

³ In telegram 3073 from San José, July 13, Weissman noted: "Within the past twenty-four hours, a festering internal crisis in Carazo's government came very close to popping, but my current reading is that a wide-open split in ranks may be postponed some days or weeks, but no more. The substance and style of Carazo's dealings with Cabinet, Congress and cohorts over recent weeks, his public inaccessibility in recent days, growing realization of the scope of GOCR support to the Sandinistas, frustration over continued fighting in Nicaragua, greater concern over the complexion of a post-Somoza government in some circles here, and finally the twin blows of the congressional fiasco on U.S. helicopters and the latest bombing of Costa Rican border areas all have contributed to widespread malaise." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790317-0595)

285. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, July 17, 1979, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher

Mr. Viron Vaky (Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs)

Mr. John Bushnell (Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 7/79–12/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Pastor sent the summary to Brzezinski under cover of a July 18 memorandum, noting: "It is not necessary for the President to see it as much of the decisions were overtaken by the end of yesterday." Brzezinski wrote "Ok ZB" on the covering memorandum. (Ibid.)

OSD

ADM Daniel Murphy (Deputy Under Secretary for Policy)

JCS

General David Jones

Lt General John Pustay

DCI

Deputy Director Frank Carlucci

[*name not declassified*] (Acting Chief of Latin American Division)

OMB

Deputy Director John White

Justice

Attorney General Griffin Bell

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

Mr. Robert Pastor

Mr. Donald Gregg

(The Attorney General did not attend the first half of the meeting which was an update of the situation in Nicaragua, and Bushnell and Pustay did not attend the second half, which was an SCC–I meeting.)²

Summary of Conclusions

1. *US Policy in the Transition.* The SCC agreed that Ambassador Pezzullo should see the Interim President Urcuyo and the new GN Commander Mejia and remind them of their understandings with us on the proposed scenario. If they don't accept the scenario, we would turn to the Latin Americans (TCP and Andean countries) to persuade Urcuyo. (As of COB, July 17, 1979, Urcuyo said he did not share our understanding of the scenario, and the Latin Americans were not enthusiastic about encouraging them.) (S)

2. *Humanitarian Assistance.* General Torrijos suggested to General McAuliffe that the US should play a highly visible and military role in transporting food and medicines to Nicaragua to show the new government that we are willing to be as helpful to them as we had been to Somoza.³ The SCC agreed we should not speed up our humanitarian assistance until the political situation clarifies. (S)

² See Documents 282 and 283.

³ In a telegram from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights, July 17, Jones instructed McAuliffe to meet with Torrijos and discuss the "possibilities for democracy in Nicaragua" and "the best way to handle reconstruction assistance." (Telegram from JCS, July 17; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79) McAuliffe reported to Jones in a telegram from USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights Canal Zone to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 17. (Telegram from USSOUTHCOM, July 17; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/15–17/79.)

3. *US Strategy to Central America*. State was tasked to prepare a longer term strategy paper on US policy to Central America.⁴ (S)

4. *Public Posture*. We agreed to take the line that Urcuyo's statement about remaining in power and fighting represent transitional difficulties.⁵ We are consulting with the Latin Americans on this, and we hope it will be worked out. (S)

⁴ See Document 377.

⁵ See Document 287.

286. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, July 17, 1979, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State
 Warren Christopher, Dep
 Secretary
 Viron Vaky, Asst Sec/ARA
OSD
 ADM Daniel Murphy, Dep Under
 Secretary for Policy
JCS
 General David Jones
DCI
 Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director
 [name not declassified] Act Ch/LA/
 DDO

OMB
 Dr. John White, Dep Director
Justice
 Griffin Bell
White House
 Zbigniew Brzezinski, Chairman
NSC
 Robert Pastor
 Donald Gregg, Notetaker

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I020, Minutes—SCC 1978. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Gregg sent the summary to Brzezinski under a July 17 covering memorandum requesting that Brzezinski approve the summary and forward a Presidential Finding to Carter for his approval. For additional information about the finding, see footnote 3 below. Brzezinski approved the summary and indicated that it should be distributed to the CIA.

Summary of Conclusions

CIA presented a three-fold covert action plan for Nicaragua² involving:

- Expansion of propaganda;
- Giving support to non-Marxist groups and creation of a covert internal organization; and
- Transferring assets with leftist credentials from other countries to support the first two options. (S)

CIA stated that it would be virtually starting from scratch in implementing this program. Mr. Carlucci, drawing on past experience in Portugal and elsewhere, predicted that the Marxists would move quickly to gain control over the press, labor unions, interior ministry and military groups. He felt they could count upon money from Cuba and additional aid in whatever form they desired it, including military. The moderates on the other hand, are disorganized, lacking in resources and to a great extent, unknown. CIA, if authorized, would plan to identify non-Marxist individuals, to get in touch with other friendly groups and to do what it could to promote splits within the FSLN. Mr. Carlucci said a finding was necessary to cover all phases of the operation. CIA will orchestrate its effort with the objectives of having free elections held, to work against any form of violent retribution, and to support any moderate elements in the National Guard. (S)

A discussion followed as to whether the CIA plan was specific enough to seek a Presidential Finding. A consensus emerged to support the presentation of a finding for the CIA plan.³ The pivotal factors were the extreme fluidity of the current situation, the rapidity with which the Cuban-supported elements will move, and the need to give

² Carlucci's July 11 memorandum to Aaron forwarded a "broad outline of CA [covert action] possibilities in Nicaragua" to help "initiate the discussion." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1977–1979), Box 13, Folder 28: C–352 Latin America)

³ Under a July 19 memorandum Brzezinski sent Carter a Presidential Finding "authorizing a limited CIA covert action plan for Nicaragua." Brzezinski noted that "CIA states its assets are limited and that moderate elements in Nicaragua are scattered and lacking in support. The extreme fluidity of the current situation and the rapidity with which the Cuban-supported elements will move indicate the need to give CIA authority to operate as quickly as possible." Carter initialed the memorandum. (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1026, Nicaragua Revolution 1 July 1979–22 Oct. 1979) The Presidential Finding, which Carter signed on July 19, authorized the CIA to "assist democratic elements in Nicaragua to resist efforts of Cuban supported and other Marxist groups to consolidate power including providing such democratic elements with funds and guidance; and also by disseminating nonattributable propaganda worldwide and in Nicaragua in their support and in opposition to Cuban involvement." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 81M01032R: Subject Committee Files (1943–1980), Box 9, Folder 20: Covert Action Pres Find Nicaragua) For status reports on the ongoing covert action in Nicaragua, see Documents 325 and 489.

CIA the proper authority to move as quickly as possible. The total cost of CIA's plan was \$750,000, [1 line not declassified]. (S)

287. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassies in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras¹

Managua, July 17, 1979, 2200Z

3250. Dept pass USSOUTHCOM Action Flash. Subject: (S) GON Backs Off from Agreement.

1. S-Entire text.

2. I just came back from a meeting with President Urcuyo and new Guard Commander General Mejia. I told them that I was disturbed by recent statements which indicated that they were parting from the agreement we had reached with Somoza.² I recounted the long negotiating sessions with Somoza and some of their departed colleagues which included the commitment on his part to resign; put in place an interim constitutional successor who then would turn over power to a GNR. (The specific steps in the process had been repeated by me to Urcuyo as late as two days ago. I stated then that after assuming power he should dissolve Congress and resign himself when the GNR came to Managua. He nodded and made no comment.) I said they were aware of our conversations with other countries and the Junta which provided a scenario and structure to bring about a cease-fire, no reprisals, sanctuaries and the conditions under which a representative democratic government could develop and prosper.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1983. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

² In telegram 3231 from Managua, July 17, Pezzullo reported that Urcuyo was "already showing signs of being a problem" during the transition phase. Urcuyo had "frustrated a meeting on the military side," and Pezzullo described him as "a plodding unimaginative man, overwhelmed by his current position and seemingly confused by the role he should play." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1988) Pezzullo noted in telegram 3232 from Managua, July 17, that Urcuyo had "thrown monkey wrench" in the military meeting among Mejia and the Sandinista representatives to discuss a ceasefire. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P900105-0882) Pezzullo sent a further update in telegram 3235 from Managua, July 17, that the proposed meeting among Urcuyo and Junta representatives Rivas and Jarquin had been cancelled by "the latter two because the military talks were aborted by the interim regime." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1986)

3. Urcuyo said that was not repeat not his understanding, that he was a constitutional President and would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with other groups but that he was not repeat not prepared to surrender power to the Junta. I asked if that were his firm position. He said it was. I said I would have to advise my government immediately. I told him further that the historical record of this period would show that he was violating an understanding reached with representatives of his government. I emphasized that the consequences of his attitude could be grave: it would prolong the conflict, further deteriorate the GN, and reduce the possibility of a peaceful negotiated solution.

5. He appeared unmoved.³ Mejia did not comment.

Pezzullo

³ In telegram 3252 from Managua, July 17, the Embassy reported that *Novedades*' July 17 edition carried a "front page photograph of President Urcuyo" with a caption reading: "The new President Urcuyo will complete the constitutional period of ex-President Somoza Debayle until May 1981." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790323–1045)

288. Editorial Note

According to a July 17, 1979, memorandum for the files, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher telephoned Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Julio Quintana the evening of July 17 to express concern that interim Nicaraguan President Francisco Urcuyo was not following the transition plan. Quintana replied that he had told Urcuyo to "enter into discussions for the transition" and that he would call former Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 1, Cuba)

Christopher telephoned Somoza the next morning at 9:55 a.m. According to Christopher's prepared notes, he planned to inform Somoza that he was "calling at the direction of the highest levels of the USG;" that "we arranged for your arrival and we received you here in the United States as part of a Transitional Plan that you agreed to;" now "that Plan is being grossly violated;" and "because the Plan is not being followed, bloodshed is likely to continue and increase" and the Nicaraguan National Guard was "collapsing." The notes also

stated: "Unless you promptly move to carry out the arrangement, in full, I have to tell you on the highest authority that you will not be welcome here." Christopher's handwritten comments on the notes read: "Reached Somoza at 9:55 a.m.; He says he will call Urcuyo immediately; Do not pretend to argue with you; resigned from Nicaragua; brought Urcuyo to discussion w/ Pezzullo; can't control him; when will his/my responsibility finish?" Christopher's notes made at 10:35 a.m. indicate: "Somoza says he will call Urcuyo and urge (1) military to military talks (2) political level talks; military might turn over to PG military; Urcuyo not willing to turn over to Communists." (Ibid.)

289. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassies in Venezuela, Panama, Santo Domingo, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala¹

Managua, July 18, 1979, 0050Z

3255. Subject: (S) Intransigence of New President.

1. S-Entire text

2. I tried for two hours to budge President Urcuyo from his dogged unwillingness to resign and permit the GNR to take power. He persisted in saying he was prepared to dialogue with all sectors. I told him that he was betraying Somoza's and his commitment to us and that his intransigence was going to lead this country to further tragedy.

3. I tried to appeal to General Mejia, who is a honorable man who has been deceived by Somoza and Urcuyo. Ironically, he is a prisoner of his training and commitment to serve the constitutional order. In answer to one of his questions, I observed that there was no feasible option other than to turn power over to the Junta, that any other course would lead to the destruction of the Guard.

4. Urcuyo is a loss, clearly set in place and being manipulated by Somoza.² Somoza is orchestrating calls of support from the Nicaraguan

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1979. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

² In telegram 5458 from Panama City, July 18, the Embassy reported that Royo had told Moss that he had heard "from a very confidential source close to Urcuyo that Urcuyo and his closest advisers thought they could succeed because the 'Cabinet crisis' in Washington proved that the USG was going through a period of extreme weakness and would have no choice but to support his govt." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148-2203)

Financial Committee in Miami and the North Tier CA countries. Urcuyo was called twice by President Paz of Honduras during our conversation and referred to calls from private sector figures outside the country urging him to “not permit the Communists to take over.”

5. I will spend the morning trying to influence Mejia. He is the only hope now.³

Pezzullo

³ In telegram 3259 from Managua, July 18, Pezzullo reported that both Urcuyo and Mejia remained opposed to transferring power to the provisional Junta. Pezzullo commented: “We have run into a stone wall. Meanwhile, the GN is collapsing.” He also recommended his recall. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/18–23/79) In telegram 3256 from Managua, July 18, Pezzullo requested flash reaction and approval of press guidance for release in Washington at noon and in Managua at 10 a.m. The guidance included notice of Pezzullo’s recall to Washington and the reduction of Embassy staff by the U.S. Government “to demonstrate its strong displeasure with the intransigence shown by the new GON and its refusal to enter immediately into discussions with the provisional government for a ceasefire and peaceful transition of power.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/18–23/79)

290. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State and Multiple Central American Diplomatic Posts¹

San José, July 18, 1979, 0226Z

3148. From Bowdler. Subj: Meeting with Carazo and Latin American Foreign Ministers.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. This afternoon after it became clear that Urcuyo was trying to change the rules of the game, President Carazo asked Marv Weissman and me to come to his office to discuss the situation. I reviewed Larry Pezzullo’s unsuccessful efforts to get Acting Foreign Minister Bodan and interim President Urcuyo to follow the agreed transition program.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1874. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent Flash to Managua. Sent Niact Immediate to Panama City, Santo Domingo, Caracas, Bogotá, Quito, Lima, and La Paz.

During this exchange Carazo again surfaced his lingering doubt as to what the real U.S. motive in this exercise is. He insisted that he believed us but that more and more he was encountering grave doubts on the part of most of the GRN Junta and the visiting Foreign Ministers with whom he has been in contact today. I took sharp issue with this questioning of our intention.

3. I told him that behind Urcuyo's stand there was probably an effort to parlay Somoza's departure into a new negotiation where the position of the GN and Liberal Party would emerge reinforced. I also mentioned that the cause of the GNR was not advanced by the FSLN attack last night on Lapazcentro and the hard stand taken on security arrangements and the transfer ceremony. Leaving these mistakes to one side, the important thing now is how to mobilize USG and La Persuasion to influence Urcuyo to change. One step which had occurred to us was to have several of the Foreign Ministers now in town make a quick trip to Managua today to lean on Urcuyo. President Carazo and his Foreign Minister were very receptive to the idea and immediately asked the two Foreign Ministers waiting at the airport and the Andean Group Foreign Ministers to come to the Presidential Palace right away.²

4. Once assembled, President Carazo made a strong presentation in favor of the trip to Managua and asked me to reinforce it. The response was disappointing. Uribe, Colombian FonMin, was worried how the Ministers would look if the demarche failed. The Bolivian FonMin said he could express no opinion until the Andean Group had met and decided on a common stand. Garcia Bedoya found difficulties in the Andean Group speaking on behalf of the seventeen supporters of the OAS resolution. Jimenez said domestic opinion would not understand involvement in what would appear as another effort to negotiate with a Somocista regime after the failure of the mediation last year. The Venezuelan, Panamanian and Ecuadorian distinguished themselves by their silence. The meeting broke up with the Andean Group saying that they are going to gather at 1800 hrs local time to discuss the proposition and reach a decision.

5. After they left, Marv and I remained behind with President Carazo, Vice President Alyero, and Foreign Minister Calderon. Alfaro

² Telegram 3150 from San José, July 18, included the text of a communiqué on Nicaragua issued during the evening of July 17 by the Foreign Ministers of the five Andean Pact countries and received by the Embassy the next day. The Embassy noted that the communiqué "hails Somoza's departure, calls on Francisco Urcuyo to carry out his obligation to transfer power, expresses concern about the interests that might be behind Urcuyo's action, states that the five will return to their countries to carry out an intensive campaign 'to free the Nicaraguan people,' and calls for a new MFM to deal with the situation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133-1884)

summed up the FonMinisters' reaction best when he said they want to be in on the victory celebration but don't want to work toward achieving it. Carazo said that he would make a last ditch effort to try to bring them around when they got together for their confab.

6. During the course of this latter rump session, Alfaro, who has been the principal negotiator for the GOCR with the GRN Junta, briefed the President on the GRN Junta plans. He said that the Junta had decided that they had no choice in the face of Urcuyo's obstinacy but to transfer this very night to Nicaraguan territory to carry on the struggle. Their reasoning went something like this: as in the case of the mediation last year, they had negotiated in good faith with the US only to find that Somoza had frustrated the effort to find a peaceful solution; if they continued efforts to work the peaceful track they stood to lose all credibility with the rank and file within Nicaragua; therefore in order to maintain standing as the GRN they had to act dramatically in a way that would retain public confidence. Alfaro reported that they greatly feared a shift toward more radical elements within the FSLN were they not to act in this manner. He also stated that they could not bear the thought of Managua awakening tomorrow to a dawn under Urcuyo that was peaceful.

7. I assured Carazo that we were as disturbed as he over the turn of events in Managua and that we were doing our best to change Urcuyo's position. In this respect Pezzullo had been instructed to make a strong demarche.³ I urged Carazo to try to discourage the GRN Junta from proceeding to Nicaraguan territory since this might well close off all hope for a peaceful settlement. He said he would make the effort, but was not sure how long he could get them to hold off departing.

8. Comment: In response to Deputy Secretary Christopher's query about our evaluation of the impact of events on the safety of our people in Managua, I must conclude that if the Junta tonight takes up residence in Nicaraguan territory the chances of getting peaceful negotiations back on the track are drastically reduced.⁴ Indeed such action will polarize the situation to such a degree that there would be little chance for us to make a third effort at a negotiated solution; fighting would renew and increase, and radical elements would be greatly strengthened. Our failure to turn Urcuyo around would be widely interpreted not so much as lack of ability as a lack of will to do so. To the degree

³ See Document 289.

⁴ In telegram 3151 from San José, July 18, Weissman reported that he and Bowdler had spoken with Alfaro who stated that three GRN Junta members had flown to Leon, Nicaragua, and that Costa Rica planned to recognize the GRN Junta "as soon as their presence in Leon is confirmed." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–1879)

that this interpretation gains currency, the safety of our personnel in Managua is increasingly jeopardized.

Weissman

291. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State and the Embassies in Costa Rica and Panama¹

Managua, July 18, 1979, 1925Z

3264. Dept pass info Immediate USCINCSO Quarry Hts. Subject: Meeting with Guard Commander July 18 (S).

1. (S)-Entire text

2. Shortly after departure of Amb Pezzullo to Panama, Charge and PolOff called on GN Commander Mejia at his request in the Bunker. Charge opened conversation by confirming Pezzullo's departure and providing Mejia with informal Spanish translation of press statement released today by Washington and Managua.² Mejia read statement carefully. His main comment was to ask whether the reference to the transfer of power to the "Government of National Reconstruction" meant the Junta in San Jose. The Charge confirmed that it did.

3. Gen. Mejia was joined by Col. Sanchez, the new G-1 of the GN. Sanchez inquired as to whether the U.S. would be prepared to support the GN in arranging an immediate ceasefire and the opening of talks between the GN and the military commanders of the Sandinistas. Sanchez asked if the U.S. could provide material support to the GN. The Charge replied no. Sanchez then stated that if the U.S. could provide moral support for a ceasefire and some indication that the other side

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036-1999. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, Caracas, Guatemala City, and Santo Domingo.

² In telegram 3262 from Managua, July 18, O'Donnell reported that he had assumed charge of the Embassy following Pezzullo's 10:16 a.m. departure from Managua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790327-0810) In telegram 185481 to all American Republic diplomatic posts, July 18, the Department transmitted the text of the statement scheduled for release at the Department's noon briefing. The statement noted that Pezzullo had been recalled and the Embassy staff in Managua had been substantially reduced due to Urcuyo's "continuing refusal" to abide by the transition plan. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/18-23/79)

would honor it, Mejia would give immediate orders to all Guard Commanders to cease fire and stand in place.

4. The Charge responded that he would do what he could, but the time was very late and we were not in direct contact with the Sandinista military leaders. Charge also suggested that it would be useful to arrange the prompt return to Managua of Archbishop Obando y Bravo who could lend moral support to any call for a ceasefire. Both Mejia and Sanchez agreed the Archbishop's return would be a positive development.

5. Col. Sanchez stressed that the GN was willing to live up to the terms of the negotiations referred to in the press statement including a ceasefire and the prompt initiation of discussions with Sandinista military commanders. He said the GN was willing to honor the military commitments but did not want to become involved in the political negotiations. He indicated confidentially that he understood President Urcuyo is thinking of turning over political power to the military and fleeing the country. He said, however, that troops loyal to the GN command now have the airport under total control and would not permit Urcuyo to leave.

6. Charge indicated that he would be in touch with both Washington and Amb Bowdler in San Jose to determine what might be done to end the fighting and bloodshed. He stressed that the hour was late and suggested, given developments of the past 24 hours, it might be too late.³ Both Mejia and Sanchez emphasized repeatedly throughout the conversation and their desire to preserve "what is left" of the GN as an apolitical institution.⁴

O'Donnell

³ A telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 18, included a situation report from Managua that morning. It reported that the National Guard in Managua was "beginning to break apart" as "many GN personnel" had "already deserted and others are in the process of deserting," which signaled "the end of effective GN resistance" against the FSLN. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Intelligence Reports, July–December, 1979)

⁴ Bowdler reported in telegram 3178 from San José, July 18, that a "snag" had occurred regarding the flight carrying GRN Junta members to Managua because Mejia did not want D'Escoto to join the talks. Bowdler believed that "Mejia wants to restrict the conversations to a cease fire and the future of the Guard, while D'Escoto, who seems to be in charge of GRN operations here, wants to negotiate the full turnover of power." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840133–2026)

292. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 19, 1979, 1615Z

3274. Panama for Amb Pezzullo. Dept pass Action Flash to USSOUTHCOM. Subject: (S) SITREP: 10:00 am July 19.

1. (S)-Entire text

2. As of 0900 situation as follows: Local radio station ABC apparently under control of FSLN and broadcasting Red Cross communique announcing establishment of safehavens in churches, hospitals, and Embassies of Latin American countries. Station also broadcasting appeals to both GN & FSLN to avoid confrontations and urging all citizens to remain off the streets until situation fully resolved. Earlier this morning, radio station also broadcast message from Archbishop calling for ceasefire.²

3. Embassy has monitored police frequency broadcasts (source of which still uncertain) requesting GN troops to ceasefire and avoid confrontations.

4. Situation in Managua appears basically calm although frequent exchanges of fire have been occurring, including the area around the Embassy. Situation at Embassy is as follows: all U.S. employees are remaining off the streets at Embassy or Residence. FSN employees are being reduced to absolute minimum. Crowds outside of Embassy extremely light. Five Amcits (TV crew from Texas) are currently on Embassy grounds and refuse to leave premises because they feel insecure off.

5. Two of the five GN guards at the Embassy remain, however, they have shed their webgear and are not carrying their weapons. The Amb's local body guards will be taken to safehaven. At the residence, the GN Guards are reportedly preparing to laydown their arms as well. Shooting intensified in the immediate area of the residence and the Embassy this morning. There did not seem to be active fighting and no shooting was directed toward the Embassy or residence.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N790006-0409. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, Caracas, Panama City, San José, and Santo Domingo.

² An information report from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 19, noted that Obando y Bravo had read a statement on Radio ABC "urging an end to the hostilities" in Nicaragua and recommending that the Government of Nicaragua meet with the FSLN to "settle their differences." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Intelligence Reports, July–Dec 1979)

6. As of 0900, EmbOffs have had no, repeat no, contact with Urcuyo, FonMin Bodan or General Mejia. (We have received numerous reports that Urcuyo has left the country and is in Guatemala).³ Telephones apparently are out of order or not being monitored at Foreign Ministry, bunker, or the Intercontinental Hotel (where many of remaining government officials are living). Late reports indicate the TelCor office near National Palace (headquarters of international operations) has been taken over by FSLN who are permitting international operators to place phone calls. We are attempting to verify current status of airport, but latest word indicates that it remains in GN hands and closed to all traffic. Few GN patrols appear in evidence except along the north way leading to the airport.

7. At 9:45 ABC radio broadcast FSLN military communique calling on Managua residents to prevent outbreaks of violence and to remain calm, stay home and out of streets until FSLN guarantee safety of city.

8. All signs point to complete disintegration of National Guard.

O'Donnell

³ In a July 18 memorandum to Vaky and Bushnell, Starrs noted that John Ford had relayed a message that Urcuyo sent to Orfila through Sevilla-Sacasa. This message reads: "1) Urcuyo: does not want to remain in power. 2) He does not want to carry out the agreement to deliver power to the GRN. 3) Urcuyo wants a 'Government of National Reconciliation', to be formed by the liberal party, the conservative party, the National Guard and the Sandinistas. 4) If a government as described in (3) above could be formed, he would immediately transfer power to it." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, July 1979) An information report from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 19, reported that Urcuyo had "expressed his intent to resign his position on the morning of 18 July 1979 but was not allowed to do so" by Mejia who said "it would appear that the GN was attempting a coup d'état and would thus remove the government's claim to be the legitimate constitutional successor to the previous government." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Intelligence Reports, July–Dec 1979) An information report from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 19, relayed reports that Urcuyo had departed Managua for Guatemala during the evening of July 18. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Intelligence Reports, July–Dec 1979)

293. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State and the Embassies in Nicaragua and Costa Rica¹

Panama City, July 19, 1979, 1805Z

5501. Subj: Salamin Reports Status in Managua.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Marcel Salamin told me at 12:30 p.m. that Col. Mejia and most of his staff had simply abandoned their posts and had gone to Las Mercedes Airport trying to find some way to get out of the country.² He said that one Lt. Col., Fulgencio Larga Espada, who had a sense of responsibility, had remained behind in order to smooth the way for transition. Salamin said that he had just heard a broadcast of a joint declaration between Larga Espada and Humberto Ortega from Managua calling for a ceasefire, calling for all forces to respect the lives of people, inviting stranded units of the GN to raise a white flag and get in touch with the Red Cross, announcing that churches and Embassies were open to soldiers or others who felt threatened, and for dispersed GN soldiers to return to their units.

3. Salamin said that the first FSLN patrols from Leon were entering Managua, that there was some fighting because the GN was not being led or informed and therefore there were some pockets of resistance in the city. He also said that, due to the sudden collapse of the Managua govt, the battles were continuing on the Southern front.

4. Salamin said that the Junta was still very much the official govt of Nicaragua and would be entering Managua shortly, as soon as the city was secured. He said they had also issued a bulletin calling for calm and urging citizens not to pillage and cause destruction.

5. Salamin said that Torrijos felt it was important as soon as Las Mercedes Airport was secured for the USG to start sending in humanitarian relief. He said that the first country to be sending in relief planes would obviously gain great credit and that we should be making plans now and "warming up engines" in anticipation of being able to go in.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua, 7/18-23/79. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² A telegram from Managua to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 18, noted that the Nicaraguan National Guard "appears to be on verge of collapse and may cease to exist as an institutional armed force in a number of hours." (Ibid.) An information report from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Director of the National Security Agency, July 19, noted that Larga Espada had "announced the surrender of the National Guard" to the FSLN at 11:50 that morning. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Intelligence Reports, July-Dec 1979)

Torrijos has also requested that a C-130 be made available from Howard AFB to take Salamin and about 10 members of the Panamanian Embassy staff, to stop by San Jose and pick up the rest of the GNR Cabinet members and working committees, and proceed to take this group to Managua.

6. I told Salamin that the latter request would require a political decision on our part because we have been adopting the policy all along of letting events in Nicaragua be a Latin America solution and not to take the lead ourselves. Salamin said he understood that but as a realistic matter we had been instrumental in effecting the departure from the scene of Somoza and then Urcuyo and should not shrink back from taking strong action now which would help stabilize the country and assure a favorable orientation of the new GNR toward the United States.

7. I said that I would be in touch with Amb Vaky immediately on these points.

Moss

294. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, July 20, 1979

SUBJECT

The US Response to Nicaragua (U)

I strongly recommend that you use the first few minutes of the SCC on Central America to gain agreement on a US policy response to the new government in Nicaragua. This response should contain the following elements:

—We should first immediately consult with our Latin American friends (Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Andean countries) on an agreed strategy to the new government. We should withhold recogni-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79–9/79. Secret. Sent for information. For the summary of conclusions of the SCC meeting and additional documentation, see Documents 472 and 473.

tion until a number of other Latin American countries have recognized it. (S)

—We should begin immediately Congressional consultations with the purpose of seeking support for “responsive and forthcoming” US approach to the new government in Nicaragua.² (S)

—We should immediately give instructions to Bowdler to tell the Junta that we are prepared to deliver on an urgent and massive basis sufficient food, medicines and humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of the people of Nicaragua at this difficult time. We should also indicate to them that we are prepared to be very helpful in the area of reconstruction assistance.³ (S)

—Soon after Bowdler meets with the Junta, we should issue a public statement indicating that we intend to be as helpful as possible in meeting the needs of the war-torn country of Nicaragua—both in terms of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. (S)

² An unknown hand inserted an “a” between “for” and “responsive.”

³ An unknown hand drew a vertical line in the margin next to this paragraph and underlined the phrase “reconstruction assistance.”

295. Memorandum of Conversations¹

Washington, July 20, 1979

PARTICIPANTS

Anastasio Somoza Debayle, President of the Republic of Nicaragua
Lawrence H. Pezzullo, American Ambassador in Nicaragua

I had at least nine conversations with Somoza, each lasting between one and three hours. At the first session (June 27), with Congressman Murphy present, I reviewed our position along the lines earlier described to Foreign Minister Quintana by Christopher and by me to Luis Pallais. The crux of our position was that the longer he stayed in

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, July 1979. Secret. Drafted by Pezzullo.

power the more the situation would polarize and perpetuate the violence (see attachment).²

Somoza was noncommittal the first day, content to go on at great length about how the United States, and specifically the Carter Administration, had been out to get him. He played the role of the martyr who was being sacrificed because of U.S. loss of resolve and misunderstanding of the Communist threat.

The next day Somoza said he was prepared to leave and expressed concern that the GN and the Liberal Party be protected. We spent a great deal of time discussing both institutions. I argued that his departure and the establishment of a democratic regime offered those institutions opportunities for survival. The GN would have to go through a difficult transition period with new leadership and be flexible enough to accept change and restructure. The Liberal Party, if it had the broad-base strength Somoza alleged, would have an opportunity to show its strength when elections were held. At this early stage, Somoza was more interested in his own fortunes. We talked about his status in the United States and about extradition. I said the extradition issue would hinge on the attitude of the new government in Nicaragua and the climate of opinion in the United States at the time of an extradition request. I urged him to be mindful that his public statements following his departure would influence U.S. press and public opinion, which in turn would affect the Administration's position on extradition.

The third meeting (June 29) was very much a repeat of the second. I told him on that occasion that we were not prepared to set a specific date for his departure as yet because we were hoping that the talks in progress would give us a better feel soon for the conditions which would exist following his departure. I emphasized our interest in a peaceful transition without retribution and one in which some elements of the GN would survive.

Foreign Minister Quintana was in attendance at these first three meetings and at all the subsequent meetings. On countless occasions we went over the two-step departure scenario, which Quintana had originally suggested to Pete Vaky as a possible transition formula. There was never any question in anybody's mind as to what the process entailed. The first step was the constitutional transfer from Somoza to a member of Congress; the second—the caretaker one—was to be brief (we always spoke of hours with 72 being the outside limit) and to end with the resignation of the Interim President and the dissolution of the Congress. Indeed, at one point Somoza told Quintana that, since the second stage was a coup d'état, if need be the transfer could even jump

² Attached but not printed are talking points for Christopher to use with Quintana.

over the first stage. This is very important, because Somoza has alleged in the press that he was unaware of any specific discussions on this point.

There was then a pause in my meetings with Somoza as we began the TCP gambit. I did meet with Somoza on July 4 to indicate that we were hopeful that we would soon have agreement on the conditions following his departure (ceasefire, no retributions, etc.) and would then work toward a specific D-Day. He again said he was ready to leave. Midway through the TCP period, when it appeared their efforts were coming to naught, I proposed that we ask Somoza to leave without any assurances as to the post-period. It was on the basis of that second option that I was instructed to ask him to leave within 48 to 72 hours, and to name a congressional successor and a new commander of the GN. I did so on July 14. Within 24 hours we obtained his commitment to leave. The only question became whether it would be Monday³ or slip a bit.

At the same time, Bowdler's conversation with the Junta began to bear fruit on the key issues of a ceasefire, reprisals, sanctuaries and most importantly, the role (and survival) of the GN. When I saw Somoza on July 15, I told him that a framework of assurances was being structured within which the GN would survive as an institution. I told him that the new GN commander would be a member of a commission with the FSLN which would work out the modalities of the ceasefire and later restructure the Nicaraguan armed forces. I urged him to select a GN commander who had the flexibility to deal in a transitional environment, and that his skill as a negotiator and as a respected officer within the GN would determine the fate of the GN. His final choice of Colonel Francisco Mejia (one of five candidates I suggested to Somoza) was made on those grounds.

I met Urcuyo for the first time on the afternoon of July 15. At the morning meeting with Somoza, the latter had announced that Urcuyo was his choice as successor. The meeting covered two issues: the selection of the new GN commander (Mejia was chosen) and the congressional succession scenario. I reviewed with Urcuyo his role in the two-step process. When I finished, I asked Julio Quintana if he had anything to add, noting that it was his brainchild. Quintana said I had covered all the essential details. I emphasized to Urcuyo that he would hold office for a very brief time (we were thinking of 72 hours at that time) and that he would have a historical role to play in being the transitional figure between Somoza and the new GNR. I told him he should

³ July 16.

announce early that he was prepared to resign, dissolve the Congress and turn over power to the Provisional Junta.

I never did have the opportunity to speak with Mejia in Somoza's presence or in the detail I did with Urcuyo. This was unfortunate because he clearly was misinformed and misled by Somoza. The morning of July 16 I met again with Somoza. Urcuyo was present. We reviewed many details of the scenario. I told Urcuyo we would meet with him privately to go over the details of his role. He agreed to meet that afternoon at the hotel. Tom O'Donnell visited Urcuyo that afternoon, reviewed his role during the brief transition and went over specific points Urcuyo should make in his address to the nation. Concurrently, I was meeting with the Junta's advance team. I called Urcuyo in their presence to arrange for an early meeting between them and to seek Urcuyo's agreement to arrange for the radio/TV hookup the next morning at which the Archbishop, he and the Junta would make statement to the nation. I asked Urcuyo to be prepared with General Mejia to then meet with the Junta members who would arrive and their military commanders to work out the modalities of the ceasefire and transfer of power. He told me he would try to arrange things. He complained to Tom that he had no staff, indeed he was not even President yet, and might find it difficult to move quickly until after Somoza left. I passed that to the Junta's advance team and advised that they continue to deal directly with Urcuyo but avoid any actions which might upset Somoza's departure plans. They agreed and arranged separately to meet with Urcuyo on Tuesday morning, after Somoza's exit.

The first indication of Somoza's meddling came later that evening. I received a call from him at about 9:00 p.m. He warned me that "If you are not careful you will start a war here." I reminded him that a war was going on. He laughed and said it would be impossible for members of the FSLN to come into Managua the next morning. I asked him why. He said it would be too inflammatory, and suggested that the FSLN leaders and Mejia meet near the border.

I called Bowdler and asked if the FSLN commanders would be prepared to meet with Mejia near the border rather than in Managua. He said he would ask them and call me back. He called within the hour and said the Southcom plane would be in Managua at seven in the morning to take Mejia and his party to Penas Blancas, Costa Rica, for ceasefire/military discussions. I called Mejia immediately (it was the first time we had spoken) and informed him of the FSLN willingness to meet at Penas Blancas and that we would have a plane at the airport at 7 a.m. to take him there. I explained that we had made this arrangement to satisfy Somoza's concern about FSLN leaders coming to Managua. He asked about security. I said we were confident that

he would run no risk and offered to send Lt. Colonel McCoy along on the flight. He said he would have to talk to the President and would be back to me. I indicated that unless he had difficulty I would assume that he would take the plane at 7 a.m. I then called Lt. Colonel McCoy and asked him to keep me advised if any difficulties arose. These conversations ended about one o'clock the morning of July 17.

At 5:30 a.m., McCoy called to inform me that Mejia was not going. I called Mejia, then Urcuyo, and urged them both not to abort this very important first meeting. Mejia simply stated that the President had made the decision that he should not go. Urcuyo, who had been a silent mouse of a man, suddenly became presidential in tone and indicated that a meeting in Costa Rica was out of the question. I pushed very hard and told him he was jeopardizing everything by aborting an essential meeting at this crucial time. He refused to budge.

A series of events followed. Urcuyo refused to meet with the Junta's advance team. He told the press that he was going to complete the term of the constitutional President and indicated that he was willing to dialogue with the Junta but not to turn over power. In light of these developments, I called on Mejia and Urcuyo at 1 p.m. July 17 and discovered immediately that Urcuyo was following a new script. I told him he was endangering a carefully designed agreement, emphasized that history would hold him responsible for the failure to bring about an orderly transition and, speaking through him to Mejia, I lamented that the GN would be the principal victim of his intransigence. I said it was inconceivable to the USG why he was deliberately frustrating the process of working out a ceasefire and the modalities of a transfer of power. Urcuyo insisted that he had never been told that he would be a caretaker President. I reminded him of our earlier conversations, but he insisted that he had never had that understanding.

We met again for two hours later in the afternoon. To ensure that both Mejia and Urcuyo were fully aware of the events of the past several weeks, I summarized my conversations with Somoza and the understandings we had reached, placing specific emphasis on the two-step arrangement and the provisions worked out with the Junta to permit the GN commander to be a principal figure in the ceasefire arrangements and the restructuring of the Nicaraguan armed forces. Urcuyo again insisted he would not turn over power "to a Communist Junta."

I tried another appeal the morning of July 18 with the same negative response from Urcuyo. I left on a C-130 at 10:15 a.m.

It is hard to believe that Urcuyo acted on his own though this is what Somoza would like us to swallow. There is no question that Urcuyo understood the scenario called for him to step down and turn power over to the GNR. Mejia, I believe, was misled. Somoza probably

told him that the USG and the northern tier Central American countries would come to the assistance of the GN once he had left the scene. That would explain the anguished calls we received from various Guard officers after Somoza left, when they discovered that the USG was not prepared to supply materiel support. I think Somoza also orchestrated a series of contacts and calls from the northern tier Central American states and from influential private sector figures in Miami. These calls to Urcuyo offered support and urged him to stand fast and not yield “to the Communists.” I believe Urcuyo was fool enough to believe this.

Somoza taped all of my conversations with him. They cover a wide range of subjects. Naturally he can make public those excerpts which best serve his interests. Since our own position evolved during this time he may be able to support his argument that we did not provide the “guarantees” he had sought. I told him on more than one occasion that there were no guarantees, that the GN and the Liberal Party would have the greatest prospects for survival if they could be separated from the Somoza legacy and be offered the opportunity to work in a democratic atmosphere. The most telling point is that Somoza was scrupulous in following the part of the scenario which dealt with his personal welfare. The failure occurred on what was left behind. The GN and the Liberal Party were victimized by his cynical political maneuvering. History must record that message.

296. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 21, 1979, 2030Z

3288. Subject: (U) Government of National Reconstruction Installed July 20. Ref: O'Donnell/Working Group Telecon of July 20.²

1. (C)-Entire text

2. Summary: The Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction was installed Friday, July 20, in a festive ceremony in downtown

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790333–0171. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information to San José, Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Panama City, Caracas, Santo Domingo, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² No memorandum of the July 20 O'Donnell telephone conversation with the Nicaragua Working Group has been found.

Managua attended by hemispheric representatives (including U.S. Ambassador William Bowdler), led by Dominican Republic Foreign Minister Jimenez, Nicaraguan Church Leaders, FSLN Military Commanders, and a jubilant crowd of roughly 75,000 people. The ceremony was peaceful and orderly. No disturbances were noted. U.S. representatives were conspicuous and well-received by officials of the new government as well as enthusiastic spectators. By far the most popular figures with the crowd were Eden Pastora, FSLN/T Military Commander and Archbishop Obando y Bravo. Chronological account follows. End summary.

3. Despite an announced 11:00 am start of ceremonies, the caravan of foreign dignitaries and government officials did not form until well after noon. Among the foreign dignitaries present were: two Costa Rican Vice Presidents, two ForMins (Dominican Republic and Panama), Mexican Amb Andres Rosenthal, Amb Bowdler (accompanied by Charge and PolOff), Dominican Republic Amb to Costa Rica, Dominican Republic Charge here. (Note: No Andean countries were represented. End note)

4. Led by a Red Cross vehicle and FSLN Security, the Caravan arrived at the National Palace at 12:30. The crowd there was huge (our best estimate is around 75,000 despite intense heat) and the Caravan was forced to halt approximately 75 meters from Palace entrance. The crowd's mood was festive, but controlled. As we made our way through crush of the crowd to the Palace, many persons reached out to shake hands and Amb Bowdler was repeatedly congratulated on the U.S. role in Somoza's ouster.

5. The Junta arrived late, about 1:30. Once they arrived, all members of the GRN, FSLN leaders and Archbishop made appearances before the crowd. Pastora received much greater ovation than any other figure. In second place was the Archbishop. During the ceremonies, Amb Bowdler, the Charge and PolOff were able to speak with all Junta members, Pastora and various GRN Cabinet members. No hostility toward USG was evident and a desire to work together on the reconstruction was repeatedly mentioned by GRN officials.

6. At approximately 1:45 pm, the Junta was sworn in before a Nicaraguan flag. The Archbishop said a prayer and an oath appeared to be administered (we were not close enough to hear well). Afterwards, Daniel Ortega spoke on behalf of the Junta and ForMin Jimenez spoke on behalf of the diplomatic corps.

7. After the ceremonies, the caravan returned to the hotel where the GRN began working meetings while the foreign diplomats departed. We understand that at 8:00 pm, a second ceremony was televised in which the Junta was sworn into office.

8. Comments: It is apparent to us that Pastora's charisma gives him the potential to become a key actor on the new Nicaraguan stage.

It also appeared that the FSLN commanders dominated the ceremony. Each of the principal FSLN leaders arrived with his own bodyguards and appeared to have little contact with the others. Pastora greeted Amb Bowdler warmly and was comfortable posing with him repeatedly for press photographers. Pastora indicated to Marine NCOIC who accompanied us that he plans to remain active in Nicaragua although he will return from time to time to his Finca in Costa Rica. Other FSLN commanders were more reserved in their contacts with U.S. officials.

9. In his remarks for the Junta, Daniel Ortega made repeated references to the United States. We were not in a position to hear clearly his remarks, and thus far, they have not been broadcast. However, we understand from others who were able to hear him that the substance was that the U.S. had installed the Somozas, supported them for decades and, finally, forced them to leave office. He added that U.S. intervention in Nicaragua must now be ended and Nicaragua left to govern itself. We will continue our efforts to obtain a full account of his statement. A summary of the statement by D.R. Foreign Minister Jimenez on behalf of the visiting hemispheric diplomats will be sent septel.³

O'Donnell

³ Telegram 3290 from Managua, July 21, included a summary of Jimenez's speech on behalf of the foreign dignitaries in attendance at the GRN inaugural ceremonies. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790335–0625)

297. Editorial Note

On July 23, 1979, Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Robert Gates sent National Security Council Staff member Robert Pastor a copy of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's evening report to President Jimmy Carter for July 21, which noted the installation of the Government of National Reconstruction in Nicaragua and stated that "no anti-American sentiment was expressed during the ceremonies." Carter wrote in the margin: "We must discourage a bloodbath—as occurred in Iran." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/18–23/79) In a July 23 handwritten note to Vance and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew

Brzezinski, Carter stressed: "We should have a good plan re Nicaragua to strengthen moderate forces. Humanitarian aid will be a major factor *if* we handle it decently and wisely. This is important." On his copy of the note, Brzezinski added an instruction for Pastor: "I need a report on this." (Ibid.) Pastor responded in a July 23 memorandum to Brzezinski, agreeing with Carter's view, noting: "We are currently sending by plane 100 tons of food a day, and will continue that until July 31st, when a US ship arrives with 1,000 tons of food." Pastor also endorsed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs John Bushnell and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Pete Vaky's idea for "raising our visibility and prestige in Nicaragua," by sending a presidential plane to deliver food to Managua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79-9/79)

In a July 23 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski noted that Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher would be reporting directly to Carter concerning aid to Nicaragua. He also indicated that at a July 21 Office of Management and Budget, Department of State, and National Security Council meeting, officials decided that: "\$3 million is being reprogrammed for humanitarian relief now; \$3-5 million will be reprogrammed for reconstruction immediately; a mission should go to Nicaragua now to appraise further aid needs, which might be covered through an FY 1980 supplemental." Brzezinski concluded: "We will consult with the Congress immediately about the above." (See Documents 484 and 485) Carter indicated his approval. (Ibid.) In a July 24 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski expressed concern that "the US is not getting credit for the amount of humanitarian aid we are delivering to Nicaragua (100 tons of food a day)," and noted that he had suggested to the Department that the administration release a statement highlighting its efforts. He also suggested the sending of a presidential plane with food, medicine, and Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo to Managua as a "dramatic way to show our concern and to demonstrate our involvement." Brzezinski added a handwritten notation that the Department had concurred in this proposal. Carter approved and added that his son, "Chip may wish to go and come right back—if Cy wishes. J." (Ibid.)

On July 25, Gates sent Pastor a copy of Vance's July 24 evening report to Carter, which noted that the Department had received a formal note from the new Government of Nicaragua "expressing the hope" that it could maintain relations with the United States on a basis of "mutual respect" and "friendship." The report indicated that the U.S. Government had responded affirmatively on July 24 that Pezzullo would return to Managua by July 27 and that the humanitarian food shipments to Nicaragua would soon be increased to 150 tons per day.

Carter wrote in the margin: “Good.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/18–23/79) The White House announced on July 27 that Carter would send a special flight to Nicaragua on July 28 “to deliver emergency food and medical supplies,” and to carry Pezzullo so that he could present his credentials to the new Nicaraguan Government. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pages 1317–1318) Vance’s July 27 evening report to Carter noted that GRN Junta member Moises Hasan Morales had delivered a speech in Havana alongside Cuban Leader Fidel Castro. Carter wrote at the end of the report: “Cy—We should explore technician’s aid to Nicaragua—electrical power, communications, etc.—for a month or two.” (Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, 1977–1981 Cuban Files (Peter Tarnoff S/S), Lot 88D100, Alpha Channel, 1979)

298. Paper Prepared in the White House¹

Washington, July 30, 1979

1. *Pezzullo’s Return to Nicaragua*: Ambassador Pezzullo reports that Tomas Borge welcomed him in the name of the government of national reconstruction (GNR) upon his arrival in Managua on Saturday.² While critical of some of our actions in the past during the Somoza era, Borge told the ambassador and the attending press that the GNR shared the democratic principles valued by the U.S. and applauded the Carter administration’s championing of human rights. Later in Pezzullo’s office during a discussion of the security situation, Borg surprisingly stated that he would like to see the U.S. send a military mission to help train their armed forces. Pezzullo comments that sending Borge to greet him at the airport was a significant gesture by the new government. They selected the individual they knew would be most suspect to us and had him carry the olive branch. Ambassador Pezzullo met again on Sunday with Borge who reiterated his request for U.S. military and economic assistance. On the military side he said the government needs helicopters, planes, tanks and artillery and that they had the expertise to operate and maintain such equipment. Pezzullo cautioned Borge against any expectation of receiving the high-profile types of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/24–31/79. Secret. Carter initialed the top of the page and wrote: “Zbig.”

² July 21.

weapons he was seeking and stated that a careful survey of the needs of the armed forces they contemplate was a necessary first step. Borge replied that it would be difficult for any American military to enter Nicaragua at this time but would discuss it with his colleagues. Pezzullo observes that Borge is clearly one of the principal movers in the GRN and is comfortable speaking for the GRN on a broad range of issues. He is decisive, frank and gives every appearance of wanting to develop a close personal relationship with us. (Managua 3388, PSN 46616: Managua 3382, PSN 44788)³ (S)

2. *Recommended U.S. Economic Assistance to GRN:* Ambassador Pezzullo asks to be authorized by COB today to discuss a \$10 million emergency grant when he presents his credentials to the GRN tomorrow or Wednesday.⁴ Pezzullo thinks it important that our first reconstruction assistance package not lay behind other donors and feels it particularly desirable to have our aid agreement be the first signed by the GRN. He also recommends that a Title I PL-48 program for 15,000 tons of wheat for the balance of this first year be approved as soon as possible.⁵ Pezzullo is also recommending a \$500,000 operational program grant, or more, to help meet emergency needs of Funde cooperatives throughout the country which are a symbol of the private sector. (Managua 3379, PSN 44703, 44698)⁶ (C)

3. *Consultations with Colombia on Central America:* Assistant Secretary Vaky termed his discussions with Colombian President Turbay and Foreign Minister Urbie as being the most significant and impressive of his current trip. Turbay's basic theme was that a new cooperative relationship between Latin America and us needed to be developed; that the U.S. had to demonstrate more tangibly our interest in the region; that Colombia was prepared to work with us and that what

³ Pezzullo described his meeting with Borge in telegram 3388 from Managua, July 30. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/24-31/79) Pezzullo described Borge's greeting at the airport in telegram 3382 from Managua, July 28. (Ibid.) Telegram 197806 to Managua, July 30, noted the Department's "general sense" that "Borge is not a long-term friend of the US and our objectives" and instructed Pezzullo to give "primary attention to contacts with the Junta and Cabinet members who more clearly wish an open society" and to "tread carefully" regarding the request for military assistance. (Ibid.)

⁴ August 1. Brzezinski wrote in the margin next to this sentence: "We have \$8 mill; if you direct it, we can go up to \$10 m."

⁵ Carter drew arrows in the margin pointing to these last two sentences and wrote: "ok." Brzezinski wrote underneath Carter's comment and beside the final sentence of the paragraph: "If directed, can be done." The reference to "PL-48" is an apparent typo for P.L.-480.

⁶ In telegram 3379 from Managua, July 28, the Embassy included an economic assessment of post-revolutionary Nicaragua and aid recommendations. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 7/24-31/79)

ought to be developed is a “new dimension.” Turbay specifically asked that the White House be sounded out as to the President’s receptivity to receiving a joint letter from a significant group of Latin American chiefs of state inviting him to join them in a dialogue to give “new dimensions” to our relations.⁷ Foreign Minister Urbie outlined a number of imaginative initiatives Colombia would be willing to undertake with regard to El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Commenting on Nicaragua, Turbay noted that the communist powers are behaving as though they have a major strategic interest in Central America; they have their friends and are supporting them. The best bet to counter the Cuban-Soviet strategy is to copy it and support the moderates. Humanitarian assistance, Turbay continued, provides a rationale for intervention that cannot be denounced as intervention. U.S. assistance must be substantial enough to be visibly the most important and larger than that provided by Cuba or the Soviet Union. (Bogota 7902, PSN 44551, 44553, 44555)⁸ (S)

⁷ Brzezinski underlined the portion of this sentence beginning with “to” and ending with “letter” and wrote in margin: “Explore with Cy.”

⁸ Vaky described his consultations with Colombia on Central America in telegram 7902 from Bogotá, July 28. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 6/79–7/79)

299. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, July 31, 1979, 1930Z

3420. Subject: Military Assistance. Ref: State 197806.²

1. (S-Entire text.)

2. I believe we have to consider a more imaginative approach on military assistance than projected in reftel. I appreciate the constraints we face and recognize that we are not in a position to provide any major materiel. I already disabused Borge on that score. But we should examine possible options so we will be prepared to address the issue

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790348–1213. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Panama City, San José, Santo Domingo, Tegucigalpa, Guatemala City, and Caracas.

² See footnote 3, Document 298.

with more substance the next time it is raised from the GRN side. At the moment, I do not think it advisable to raise the subject with anyone in the GRN until we have a clearer view of what we are and are not prepared to do. Approaching moderates, such as Robelo, with issues of principal concern to the military members of this new government would be the surest way to burn him. Besides, in trying to establish his revolutionary credentials, Robelo is currently playing the hard line. Borge doesn't have to defend his credentials.

3. Whatever the "general sense" is in Washington about Borge, we should resist forming mindsets about the new figures and currents we have to deal with here. We suffer a paucity of information and little or no personal contact with Borge and most of the other new actors on the Nicaragua scene. We must keep in mind that Borge was sent by the GRN to receive me at the airport and to request military assistance. He later repeated the request at a press conference that same evening. I have already received queries from the US press here on the subject.

4. We are dealing with the following sequence of events. Borge requested military assistance with specific interest in aircraft, helicopters, etc. He made clear that US military advisors or survey team were taboo under present conditions and he indicated that Panama and Venezuela might play a role in the military area.

5. Why the request. There are a number of possible explanations. The GRN/FSLN:

A) May be overexaggerating the Somoza counter-revolutionary threat and seeking our involvement as insurance against Somoza;

B) May believe the US military arsenal is an automat; press the right button and out tumble airplanes, and other military goodies;

C) May have been advised by Cuba to make the approach to allay our concerns about Cuban involvement and thus lull us into a sense of security;

D) May have made the request expecting a negative response and then turn to the Soviets who may be willing to supply some obsolete high profile equipment and follow on Soviets re Cuban military advisers.

6. Whatever the motivation, the GRN made a request. I have left it with Borge that he should consult with others in the GRN and come back to us. We have some time, and should use it constructively.

7. I believe we should consult immediately with the Panamians and the Venezuelans to see if they are willing to enter into a three-cornered military assistance arrangement along the following lines:³

³ Brzezinski noted on an August 1 memorandum prepared in the White House that summarized Pezzullo's reporting that he agreed with Pezzullo's proposal. He instructed Pastor to pursue it. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 8/1-10/79)

—The Venezuelans would offer to provide a military assistance advisory team to help in the reorganization of the Sandinista Army, Air Force, and Navy Units.

—Panama would make a similar offer to develop and train an independent police force.

—We would coordinate closely with Panama and Venezuela to identify the specific areas in which we could provide training and a modest level of non-lethal equipment. We should be thinking in terms of a 3 to 5 million dollar grant package for communications gear, vehicles or similar equipment of priority need and a \$300,000 to 500,000 IMET fund for technical and command-staff training.

8. FMS credit alone will not do. This country is near bankruptcy. An offer to simply extend FMS credit would be an extremely lame contribution. We should keep the FY 79 FMS \$2.5 million in reserve, however. Indeed, if we are at all serious we may have to consider painful cuts from other programs or a supplemental. Otherwise we have no cards to play and will be dealt out of this game.

9. I believe Torrijos could be induced to support such an approach. If Venezuela shows some hesitation, we might go to the Brazilians or the Mexicans. I believe Torrijos should be our first port of call on this idea, but I leave it to the judgement of the other addressees as to whether another approach would be preferable. We should move fast.⁴

Pezzullo

⁴ In telegram 5016 from Guatemala City, August 1, Ortiz commented that he could “think of few things the US could do that would more definitively enrage large sectors of Guatemalan public opinion particularly in the key military, official and private sectors than to have the US embark directly or indirectly on a grant military assistance program to the new Government of Nicaragua.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 19, Guatemala: 3/77–11/80) In telegram 4220 from Tegucigalpa, August 2, Jaramillo informed Vaky that “any USG decision to give military assistance to Nicaragua will be most upsetting to Honduran Government no matter how we explain such assistance.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790352–0039) In telegram 4359 from San Salvador, August 2, Devine referred to the concerns expressed about providing military assistance to Nicaragua by Ortiz and Jaramillo and indicated that such concerns “are equally applicable in the case of El Salvador.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 27, Nicaragua: 5/77–10/80) In telegram 204231 to Guatemala City, Tegucigalpa, and San Salvador, August 6, the Department responded to Ortiz, Jaramillo, and Devine’s concerns and instructed them to explain to their host governments that the U.S. did not want the GRN to turn to Cuba for military assistance; no major offensive arms would be provided, as the GRN had a major need for military training; Latin American countries would be taking the lead on any assistance program; and the donation of modest amounts of communication and transportation equipment might help the United States to influence “nation building.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 8/1–10/79)

300. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, August 1, 1979, 1800Z

3437. Subject: (C) Presentation of Credentials.

1. C-Entire text.

2. I presented credentials to the Junta late afternoon July 31. The public part of the ceremony, attended by the press will be reported separately² as will assistance/economic topics discussed.³ This report will cover political and military items and the general atmosphere.

3. Four Junta members were in attendance (Ramirez, Chamorro, Ortega and Hassan—Robelo was in Caracas for SELA meeting, FonMin D'Escoto and Junta Secretary Cesar. The principal spokesmen during private session were Ramirez and Ortega, with the latter taking the lead on military and political items and the former on economic issues. The mood was cordial and cooperative. The severity of the economic crisis is of priority concern to them as is the continued violence in the city and the perceived threat from GN/Somoza elements. Mrs. Chamorro asked one question (on food distribution); Hassan didn't utter word. Mrs. Chamorro was most interested when I discussed the importance of US public opinion and the free press in shaping US foreign policy. There appeared to be a consensus in the group on all the issues raised. No one ever took issue with, or even qualified, a statement by another member. D'Escoto was helpful throughout and made a very forthcoming public statement of appreciation for USG assistance and the interest of the GRN in developing cordial and "profound" relations with the USG.

4. Ortega described the difficulties they faced in keeping "Trotskyist, Maoist" and other radicals from completely "socializing" the revolution. He said the Junta already was being accused of "betraying the revolution". He did not identify the radicals. I said it was recognized that they were passing through the most crucial phase of their revolution and their own ability to control extremism and excesses will be

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790348-0429. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Panama City, Caracas, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, Guatemala City, San José, Santo Domingo, and Mexico City.

² In telegram 3444 from Managua, August 1, the Embassy reported about Pezzullo's presentation of his credentials to the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction on July 31. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790348-0646)

³ In telegram 3443 from Managua, August 1, the Embassy reported on Pezzullo's July 31 conversations with the Junta about economic topics including "the hoped-for early availability of an emergency package of \$8 to \$10 million." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790348-0654)

crucial, both internally and externally. Their international image in turn will have a profound effect on other countries' attitudes. I emphasized that our ability to be helpful, which is our sincere desire as clearly evidenced by our humanitarian assistance and willingness to play a role in reconstruction, could be seriously frustrated if the situation radicalized. Ortega and Ramirez, in particular, appeared very sensitive to this point, which I dwelt on at some length.

5. Both Ramirez and Ortega mentioned the continuing internal security threat and the rumors of intriguing by Somoza in the northern tier LA countries and the US. They asked if the USG could be helpful. I said we would do our utmost, but as of the moment have seen no evidence which substantiates the rumors.⁴ I suggest that war jitters and some interested parties might be deliberately exaggerating the threat. I suggested, as I had earlier to Borge⁵ and D'Escoto⁶ that they make a major effort to build bridges to their northern neighbors. Ortega reiterated what I had heard earlier, that they had opened talks with Honduras and were confident that relations would be friendly with that country. They were less certain that it would be possible to work closely with the Salvadoran and Guatemalan Governments. I said they had to make a major effort to quell the suspicion that they were interested in exporting their revolution northward. Despite their denials and assertions that "we have enough problems to deal with here," they made no secret of the political incompatibility which separated them and the fact that opposition movements in Guatemala and El Salvador were using the Nicaraguan revolution as a rallying call for revolution in their countries.

⁴ In telegram 198755 to Guatemala City, July 31, Vaky informed Ortiz, Devine, and Jaramillo: "We can expect continued charges that National Guard refugees are being formed into a counter-revolutionary force." He instructed them to make it a "top priority" to gather relevant information, requesting that they remain alert "particularly to any indication that Somoza or former officers like Comandante Bravo have contact with either local military or the GN elements." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) Under an August 2 memorandum to Turner, Bowdler forwarded a copy of telegram 198755 and requested that Turner "ask the intelligence community generally to give priority attention" to the issue. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1977–1979), Box 13, Folder 28: C-352 Latin America)

⁵ In telegram 3388 from Managua, July 30, Pezzullo reported on his July 30 conversation with Borge during which Pezzullo encouraged Borge to "open a dialogue with the leadership" of El Salvador and Guatemala "to quell their apprehension about FSLN involvement in their internal affairs." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790346–0558)

⁶ In telegram 3409 from Managua, July 31, Pezzullo reported on his July 30 conversation with D'Escoto. Pezzullo wrote: "When he indicated preoccupation over possible attacks from Guatemala or Salvador, he jumped at my suggestion that he make a goodwill visit to those countries as 'a good idea.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790347–0869)

6. Ortega then raised the issue of US military technical and advisory assistance. His approach was closer to the original demarche by Borge. I recounted my discussion with Borge on the subject and suggested that we meet with interested members of their group to discuss the subject further. I suggested that, given the sensitivity about direct involvement by US military personnel, perhaps we would consider some multi-country program within which the USG could play a role, but not a major one. Ortega volunteered the Panamanians and some GN personnel, in the country. (I would appreciate if AmEmbassy Panama could confirm. Salamin is very illusive despite my repeated attempts to contact him.) He also reported that the military members of the Venezuelan delegation that visited here July 30, expressed an interest in some military advisory rule. Ramirez suggested the Mexicans as possibly also being interested. We left the discussion at that stage with the promise that we would join it again when we had collected our thoughts a bit more.

7. Comment. It was a productive first meeting free of polemics and posturing. Despite the financial and political crises they were composed and analytical in their approach to all the problems we discussed. The only hint that "the errors of the past" will cloud our relations came from Ortega. I suggested that we avoid being prisoners of the past, that the Carter administration had been very critical of the Somoza regime because of its violations of human rights and that we had cut off all military support to him well before the recent hostilities began. I said I hope that they would be sensitive to those who would like to provoke differences between US through distorted intelligence reports and misinformation. The USG had an earnest interest in helping in the humanitarian and reconstruction effort and in seeing the GRN prosper as a viable democratic government which served the needs of all Nicaraguans.

Pezzullo

301. Editorial Note

U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Lawrence Pezzullo reported in telegram 3538 from Managua, August 5, 1979, that Nicaragua required 300 tons of food aid a day and that daily U.S. deliveries were averaging less than 100 tons. Furthermore, Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) Junta members had either implied or stated to the press that the “US may be manipulating food supplies for political reasons.” Pezzullo expressed concern that the issue could undermine his credibility with the new government and requested the speedy establishment of an air bridge to increase the amount of food aid delivered. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) On an undated excerpt of a memorandum prepared in the White House that summarized telegram 3538, President Jimmy Carter wrote: “An ‘air-bridge’ is very expensive—Why not ships?” Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote below: “I will push this.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 36, Nicaragua: 8/1/79–8/10/79)

In telegram 3644 from Managua, August 9, the Embassy reported that several members of the GRN Junta had criticized the United States Government for channeling the emergency food aid through the International Committee of the Red Cross and voluntary agencies rather than the Nicaraguan Government. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790361–1136) Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and First Lady Rosalynn Carter met with GRN Junta members in Quito on August 10 during a visit to attend the inauguration of Ecuadoran President Jaime Roldós Aguilera. In telegram 211423 to Managua, August 14, the Department noted that during the meeting “GRN representatives pressed the Secretary very hard on the food distribution question, and the Secretary has decided that we should begin distributing at least some of our relief assistance through the GRN as soon as possible.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790368–0514) The Embassy reported in telegram 3765 from Managua, August 15, that the International Communications Agency in Managua “continually faces the fact that the GRN media is quick to highlight assistance from all donors except that received from the USG,” and that “USG efforts, when mentioned at all, are accompanied by protestations of paucity in comparison with the donations of other governments.” National Security Council Staff Member Robert Pastor underlined these sentences on a copy of the telegram and added a message for Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Pete Vaky: “Pete—This is deplorable. We should ask them straight-out: Are they trying to encourage their people to continue to view the U.S. with

suspicion and hostility, or are they going to try to break that down by telling the true story?" (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 8/11-31/79)

In a September 7 memorandum to Brzezinski, Executive Secretary of the Department of State Peter Tarnoff reported that the interagency Nicaraguan Relief and Reconstruction Coordination Committee held a final meeting on September 6 and determined that the food aid sent to Nicaragua was "adequate to meet relief needs for the immediate future." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Relief Coordination July–September, 1979)

302. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, August 14, 1979, 0100Z

3709. Subject: (C) Military Assistance. Ref: Panama 6313.²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. During my recent trip to Panama, I held extensive discussions with USSOUTHCOM, Ambassador Moss, and General Torrijos on military matters and USG-Panamanian cooperation. Ambassador Moss will be reporting on the substance of our discussions with Torrijos. I will focus in this message on USG military assistance. (reftel covers IMET)

3. The arrival of a small military advisory team late this week or early next week will stimulate requests from the FSLN leadership.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790368-0847. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information Priority to Caracas, Bogotá, Guatemala City, San José, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Santo Domingo, Panama City, the Secretary of Defense, and USSOUTHCOM Quarry Heights.

² In telegram 6313 from Panama City, August 12, Pezzullo endorsed the sending of a U.S. International Military Education and Training team to Nicaragua from Panama and requested U.S. assurances of financial military aid for Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 8/11-31/79) In telegram 202619 to Panama City, August 4, the Department requested that Moss meet with Torrijos and make the point that the United States was willing to coordinate combined efforts with Panama to provide some military assistance to Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790352-0996) Moss's report is in telegram 6320 from Panama City, August 13. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790367-0894)

The IMET funds requested in reftel should help satisfy training and technical assistance requests on a timely basis. We can also expect requests for military items ranging from uniforms to equipment. We should be in a position to be responsive to the more realistic requests. Some items may be available in surplus programs. Other equipment (such as vehicles, communications gear, etc) would have to be purchased. We will need a modest fund to draw on.

4. I would appreciate action on the following two items:

A. Provide a selected list of available military surplus including uniforms, rations and like items. Also include items which will be declared surplus in the short term.

B. Provide 750 thousand to one million dollars in grant funds to satisfy some priority needs, which we will identify once engaged in more intimate discussions with the FSLN leadership. I have in mind the purchase of items such as jeeps, trucks, road-grade equipment and perhaps communications gear.

5. I require enough operating flexibility to take advantage of opportunities which will demonstrate our willingness to meet GRN priority needs. It will not repeat not satisfy any interest in high profile equipment, but it will keep us in the ball game, help us in developing close relations and offer opportunities to influence key military figures. This early trial and error period will affect the climate of our relationship. We will have an opportunity to gain a better appreciation of their needs and organizational plans and, hopefully, they will recognize our willingness to be of assistance.

6. I realize that there is very limited grant assistance available, but Nicaragua must be viewed as an exceptional case which requires urgent and imaginative responses. A small investment now is essential.³

Pezzullo

³ In telegram 214178 to Managua, August 16, the Department provided general guidance on the question of security assistance and approved the sending of a small team of U.S. security personnel to Nicaragua from Panama "to initiate conversations with GON military." However, due to a number of reasons, it was not be possible to "establish generic 'funds' ahead of time" as requested. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 27, Nicaragua: 5/77–10/80)

303. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Nicaragua¹

Washington, August 16, 1979, 1609Z

214108. For Ambassador Pezzullo. Subject: Reports of FSLN Brigade to Fight in El Salvador.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Reference is made to report [*report number not declassified*] that a 250-man military brigade is in training in Nicaragua for eventual dispatch to El Salvador to foment insurrection.²

3. If true, this kind of activity is obviously adverse to our interests and objectives and would seriously affect our willingness or ability to work constructively with Nicaragua or to achieve our policy goals there. Such activity must therefore be discouraged and prevented if at all possible. We are also concerned about reports of increased contact and assistance between Nicaraguans and groups which are promoting revolution in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. We believe it essential that our concerns be conveyed clearly and strongly early on.

4. You should ASAP raise with those members of the Junta you believe it effective to do so, and with Borge and D'Escoto the following points:

—We have received information from sources in El Salvador of intense concern by El Salvador over reports that groups of Salvadorans are being trained by Sandinistas for eventual insurrection in northern tier countries, especially El Salvador. (FYI: Your reference here should be general and vague enough to protect source, but clear enough to make the point. End FYI.) We have also heard other general stories of alleged contact between Nicaraguans and groups seeking the violent overthrow of established governments in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

—We hope these are just rumors. Any strategy or tactic of “exporting revolution” or promoting violence by preparing and staging armed insurgents or by assisting subversion against other governments would create the most serious situation in Central America.

—Worse, it would stain the image of the GNR and destroy the reconstruction task it has set about. It would provide other governments an excuse to support those who may seek to subvert the GNR.

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Managua 1961–1979. Secret; Immediate; Roger Channel. Drafted by Vaky; cleared by Pastor, and in ARA and the CIA; approved by Bowdler.

² Not further identified.

—Evidence of this kind of activity would, as you well know, make it impossible for the U.S. to cooperate with the GNR as it would like to do. Not only would it give ammunition to those in the U.S. and elsewhere who want to paint the GNR as subversive and Castroist, it would in fact raise questions in the minds of friends who are well disposed toward the GNR as to what the true nature of the regime and its intentions are.

—This activity would also antagonize most of the rest of Latin America which is already apprehensive as to what direction events in Nicaragua will take.

—In short, activity of this kind would create a changed and most serious situation which the USG would have to take into account. We believe in democratic development, freedom and social justice; but we cannot tolerate the export of armed revolution nor can any civilized international order exist with this kind of behavior.³

Christopher

³ Pezzullo's response to Vaky in telegram 3830 from Managua, August 17, expressed doubt regarding the existence of the 250-man brigade but endorsed further investigation and Borge and D'Escoto's notification of the "delicate situation in which they find themselves and the impossible position in which we would be placed if there was any substance to the 'exporting of revolution' thesis." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Managua 1961–1979)

304. Editorial Note

Under an August 17, 1979, memorandum, Deputy Director for Central Intelligence Frank Carlucci sent Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski a July 30 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) paper entitled "Cuban Covert Action in Central America and the Caribbean." Carlucci commented: "As we were wrestling with our own CA program on Nicaragua, I asked our people to explore the extent of Cuba's CA program. I think you will find the result interesting." (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1026, Nicaragua Revolution 1 July 1979–22 Oct. 1979)

National Security Council Staff member Paul Henze sent the CIA paper to Brzezinski under an August 21 memorandum. Henze noted:

"We have just received from CIA a crisp, fact-filled paper on how the Cubans master-minded and supported the Sandinista take-over in Nicaragua, starting in the summer of 1978. Fidel Castro obviously took a close personal interest in the operation. It was a masterpiece of successful covert action. This paper is worth your reading in its entirety. It is also worth the President's reading in its entirety. *I recommend* you hold it to give to him at an opportune time." The paper noted that "over the past year Cuba has carefully orchestrated an extensive and complicated covert action operation designed to bring down the Somoza government and put the FSLN in power." (Ibid.)

Notations in an unknown hand on Henze's memorandum indicate that a copy of it was sent to Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs David Aaron. On a copy of the memorandum Aaron received and returned to Henze, he, in reference to Henze's suggestion that President Jimmy Carter receive a copy of the CIA paper, wrote: "I will, please prepare a note to CIA suggesting that they inform the House and Senate Intel committees. DA." Henze forwarded a copy of the memorandum to Carlucci from Aaron under an August 22 note. (Ibid.)

On another copy of Henze's August 21 memorandum to Brzezinski, a handwritten notation suggests that Brzezinski hand-carried a copy of the July 30 CIA paper to Carter on September 4. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79-9/79)

305. Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, undated

1. On July 19, 1979, President Carter signed a general finding on Nicaragua which directed the Central Intelligence agency "to assist democratic elements in Nicaragua to resist efforts of Cuban-supported and other Marxist groups to consolidate power by disseminating non-attributable propaganda worldwide and in Nicaragua in their support and in opposition to Cuban involvement."² In order to implement

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 81M01032R: Subject Committee Files (1943-1980), Box 9, Folder 20: Covert Action Pres Find Nicaragua. Secret. An unknown hand wrote: "Rec. 29 Aug 79" at the top of the page.

² See footnote 3, Document 286.

this finding by tasking the covert action infrastructure the following perspectives was coordinated with the state department and was approved on 17 August 1979.

2. The U.S. Government hopes that the end of the Somoza dictatorship marks the beginning of a process of democratization in Nicaragua and that the Government of National Reconstruction (GNR) will move quickly to hold free elections and guarantee human rights. To ensure the survival of pluralistic democracy in Nicaragua, the USG supports the initiatives by the Andean Pact countries and the OAS to provide humanitarian aid to Nicaragua, support moderate political groups, and oppose the consolidation of power by pro-Cuban Marxist Factions of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

3. As a result of the military success of the FSLN, a five-person Junta appointed by the Sandinistas assumed power on 20 July. The Junta includes one avowed radical Marxist, Daniel Ortega Saavedra; two leftists; and two moderates. Lines of authority between the Junta and the Sandinista military commanders remain confused. Although there are indications that the military commanders—headquarters in former President Somoza's "bunker"—are becoming the incipient central authority, they reportedly continue to wrangle among themselves to achieve factional or individual ascendancy. Tomas Borge Martinez, former guerrilla leader with extensive Cuban ties, who is an effective and practical leader, appears to be fast becoming one of the real powers of government by having placed himself in a position of organizational control of the police, the army, and local government. As minister of interior, he is responsible for all police functions and his ministry is the liaison between the National Government and the leaders of Nicaragua's municipalities. Borge is also one of the three commanders of the new FSLN Army.

4. While the FSLN received support from a number of countries, particularly Panama, Costa Rica and Venezuela, who worked in cooperation with Cuba in support of the FSLN, Cuba has been training members of the FSLN since the 1960's. Besides training, Cuba supplied documentation advisors and some weapons and mobilized other Latin American communist parties and guerrilla groups in support of the FSLN.

5. In foreign policy the GNR has stated its intention to join the non-aligned movement at the summit conference in Havana in September 1979. Eden Pastora, Sandinista leader and Borge's deputy at the interior ministry, denies any alliances, saying that the Sandinistas would "only move close to Russia, Chinese or Cuban communism if, at the end of their struggle, they do not receive from the so-called democratic nations the help needed to reconstruct Nicaragua, as was the case with Fidel Castro." Nonetheless, in view of the heavy debt

owed by the FSLN to Cuba, it is expected that Nicaragua will join Cuba as a member of the pro-Soviet bloc of the NAM.

6. The FSLN leadership is also indebted to the radical groups in neighboring countries for their help in overthrowing Somoza, but will probably try to consolidate its own power before exporting the Nicaraguan Revolution. Borge has set what is likely to be the government's consistent public line—denying that there will be any export of the revolution but taking satisfaction in setting an example.

7. In support of the U.S. goal of a democratic and pluralistic government in Nicaragua, the following guidelines are provided for tasking the covert action infrastructure:

A. Encourage moderate groups in the GNR by publicizing both in Nicaragua and in the International Community, their programs and actions.

B. Expose the Marxist elements in the GNR and their links with Cuba; condemn Cuban subversive activities.

C. Support continued strong involvement of other Latin American countries as a moderating influence on FSLN elements in the GNR.

D. Support efforts through international organizations to guarantee human rights.

E. Encourage the development and maintenance of democratic institutions in particular a free press and political parties; advocate early free elections.

F. Publicize efforts by Western nations to provide aid and technical assistance to help rebuild Nicaragua; compare this with assistance provided by communist countries.

306. Editorial Note

In telegram 230159 to Managua, August 31, 1979, the Department of State requested that the Embassy advise regarding the feasibility of using International Military Education and Training (IMET) program funds in Nicaragua during the remainder of fiscal year 1979, considering that the earliest the funds (not to exceed \$23,600) could be programmed would be September 20. The Department required an Embassy response no later than September 4. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmit, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 27, Nicaragua: 5/77-10/80) U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Lawrence Pezzullo responded in tele-

gram 4193 from Managua, September 1, that the Embassy was aware of the funding restrictions and delay in the availability of IMET funds but still wished to utilize funds during the current fiscal year. As a part of a larger program, he proposed a brief visit by two or three Sandinista National Liberation Front military officials to selected U.S. training bases. (Ibid.) In telegram 4252 from Managua, September 6, the Embassy reported on a September 5 meeting between United States and Nicaraguan military representatives, indicating that the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction had accepted the “idea of sending a small number of junior leaders to the Canal Zone for training.” (Ibid.) In telegram 2866 from Managua, September 22, the Embassy reported that Sandinista Army commander Humberto Ortega had notified the Embassy by letter that the training visit was cancelled due to “political difficulties with using a facility which previously provided training to the Nicaraguan National Guard.” The telegram noted that the cancellation “obviously represents a political decision overriding pragmatic considerations.” (Ibid.)

307. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 23, 1979

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with the Nicaraguan Junta (U)

There are people in the Sandinista movement who want Nicaragua to become a Marxist state; there are those who want it to become a pluralist democracy; and there are those who are focusing on immediate problems and haven’t yet made up their mind about Nicaragua’s political future. I believe the people you will meet on Monday² all fall into this third category, and a major factor influencing their decision on Nicaragua’s future will be how they sort out Nicaragua’s relationship with the U.S. At this time, their attitudes toward the U.S. are complex—a mixture of resentment, suspicion, fear, but also admiration. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79–9/79. Secret. Sent for information. For the memorandum of conversation of Carter’s meeting with the Junta, see Document 308.

² September 24.

The basic message you will want to convey is that we are sympathetic and we want to be helpful, but mutual respect means that they must be sensitive to our concerns if they expect us to be sensitive to theirs. It will be difficult to be helpful if they are criticizing us or exporting their revolution. You should seek a firm statement from them that they will concentrate on their internal problems and not aid revolutionaries in other countries. They may think that the U.S. can be blackmailed into giving more aid if they lean to the left; they should be disabused of that idea. (S)

You should not hesitate to point out that we withdrew support from Somoza because of our concern for human rights, and we are still committed to that ideal. Their statements on human rights and pluralist democracy reflect our own commitment, and on that basis, we can develop a close friendship. Finally, you may wish to point out that because of our "complex" history, misunderstandings and misperceptions are likely to occur, and for that reason, we will need to make an extra effort to be patient and work together to overcome temporary problems. (S)

308. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 24, 1979, 8:45–10:10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Members of the Nicaraguan Junta (S)

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Warren Christopher, Acting Secretary of State
Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Henry Owen, Special Representative of the President for Economic Summits
Robert Pastor, Staff Member, National Security Council
Lawrence Pezzullo, American Ambassador to Nicaragua
Viron P. Vaky, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 37, Memcons: President: 7/79–9/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Vaky drafted another version of the memorandum, which is in the Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, Etc., September 1979. Carter's handwritten notes, indicating the points he made in the conversation, are in the Carter Library, Plains File, President's Personal Foreign Affairs File, Box 3, Nicaragua, 6/78–9/79.

Daniel Ortega, Member of the Junta, Government of National Reconstruction
Alfonso Robelo, Member of the Junta, Government of National Reconstruction
Sergio Ramirez, Member of the Junta, Government of National Reconstruction
Miguel d'Escoto, Foreign Minister, Government of National Reconstruction
Rafael Solis, Ambassador-designate of Nicaragua
Danilo Baltadano, Secretary to the Junta, Government of National Reconstruction

Vice President Mondale opened the meeting by welcoming the Junta to the White House. He noted the Junta's desire for an open society that permits diversity of views, and said that the US looks forward to working with them toward that objective. He then invited the Junta members to comment on how they saw the current situation. (S)

Alfonso Robelo responded, noting that the Junta took office in a country that had been systematically looted by the Somoza regime over the last forty years. They had fought a war against tyranny, and on July 19 when they took office they found a country virtually destroyed. But the revolution had a mystique and goals: to eradicate a corrupt dictatorship and establish an independent country. (S)

The immediate critical problem is the nation's economy.² The nation's indebtedness is equal to three years of exports; there is almost 60 percent unemployment. 65 percent of the cotton acreage has been lost this year. Normally the first six months of a year are used to export the nation's crops—cotton, coffee, meat—and to earn the foreign exchange to import needed goods in the second six months. The Somoza government had the advantage of reaping the income from the first six months of 1979, and the Junta is left with no income this year and the need to import. At present the Government is reviewing the problem of the external debt, and at the same time, trying to adjust to problems, especially unemployment, and trying to improve the country's production in agriculture and meat. (S)

At this point, *President Carter* joined the meeting, and met each of the members of the Nicaraguan delegation. (To Daniel Ortega, he mentioned that he had read his speech in Havana.)³ The President welcomed the Junta members to the US. He stated that the US wanted to

² During the afternoon of September 24, the Junta members met with U.S. officials to discuss Nicaraguan debt rescheduling and an economic reconstruction strategy. The memorandum of conversation of the meeting is in the Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, Etc., September 1979.

³ Ortega's September 6 speech, delivered at the Non-Aligned Movement's sixth summit conference in Havana, was highly critical of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua throughout the twentieth century. ("Nicaraguan Junta Member Ortega Addresses Conference," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, September 11, 1979, pp. AA7–12) Carter wrote in his September 24 notes: "Nicaragua Junta. Want to be friends, helpful. *Ortega's* condemnation don't help." (Carter Library, Plains File, President's Personal Foreign Affairs File, Box 3, Nicaragua, 6/78–9/79)

help Nicaragua, and to strengthen ties. We wanted to learn specifically about Nicaraguan needs—in the business, banking, agricultural areas and the like. American people share his feelings of friendship for the new government. We earnestly hope that Nicaragua will truly be non-aligned. Public condemnation of our country and fear of Nicaraguan intervention in its neighbors' affairs naturally concerned us. (S)

The President went on to note that in addition to government support, the US could offer many other things. Not only could help be offered in the business and banking spheres, but the university system, for example, could provide assistance. Academic leaders would be willing to provide help if the Nicaraguans wished it. He noted that some in the Nicaraguan government had attended US universities—the University of Kansas, Rensselaer, Georgetown University. Similarly in the humanitarian—health, food—and other fields help could be provided that would relate directly to the well-being of the Nicaraguan people. (S)

His overall feeling, the President said, was one of hope that if difficulties were to arise we could discuss and resolve them frankly and in friendly fashion. As the Junta members knew, the US worked during the transition period with Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and others. We will continue to consult with them and more directly with the Junta in the future. (S)

Commander Ortega responded by saying that he wanted to thank President Carter for this opportunity to speak with him, and to begin the first frank dialogue between this small sovereign nation and a big one. Nicaragua wants to receive frank and unconditioned US support. They realize the US can help greatly in this period of reconstruction. They would be developing details regarding their needs. (S)

Ortega noted that in defining a foreign policy of non-alignment they exercised a sovereign decision long denied the nation by the Somoza dictatorship. They did so as well with the history of Nicaragua in mind. They did not do so to “make politics.” It is rather an elemental principle of the Sandinista revolution. His speech at the Non-Aligned Summit reflected this principle. It was not intended to be confrontational with the US, nor was he making this point as an apology (“to look good in your eyes”), but rather because it represented an elemental position of the government of Nicaragua. (S)

They understood, Ortega went on, that the American people and different Administrations may have looked at Central America in different ways. We know, he said, that there are sectors of the US people, Congress, and the Administration that may not understand the depth of what Central America is living through today. As a result, their understanding of what is happening may not correspond to realities. Nicaragua, Ortega said, is not a factor in the radicalization of El Salva-

dor; it was not in the past, nor the present, and will not be in the future, nor in Guatemala. He mentioned these two countries, he said, because they have the most serious social problems. To some degree, this is the result of relationships of the past. We now have to react to the consequences of problems created by past administrations. (S)

In President Carter's Administration, Ortega said, we have noted the beginning of concerns about the area and the taking of measures which, if they have not gone to the heart of the problems, have nevertheless been of some help. (S)

Ortega wanted to make one point very clear: Nicaragua faced an immediate and fundamental task of reconstruction. It would be irresponsible and adventuristic to involve itself in the problems of other countries. Nicaragua, he said, is focused on reconstruction. It will not intervene elsewhere. What worries them, however, is that this charge may be used by those in El Salvador or Guatemala to justify their present policies. (S)

President Carter responded by observing that what Commander Ortega said was encouraging and could provide a basis for a good relationship. "If you don't hold me responsible for everything that occurred under my predecessors," he said, "I won't hold you responsible for your predecessors' actions." We are in a new era, the President added. We are eager to understand your problems and to be helpful, recognizing your independence and sovereignty. We have a clear opportunity for new friendship between our people, and I am eager to encourage this trend with your help. (S)

The President mentioned that he had received a good report from Senator Zorinsky after his trip.⁴ He then invited the Junta members to step outside for a photograph, and subsequently excused himself. (9:20 a.m.) (S)

When the meeting resumed, the Vice President asked Acting Secretary Christopher to review the assistance we have so far extended—humanitarian aid, reprogramming, the AID pipeline. Christopher explained the various kind of aid we are providing in some detail, and he noted we are studying additional requests to the Congress for supplemental funds. We knew the balance of payments gap was considerable. We hoped to be helpful not only bilaterally but through multilateral institutions as well. Sometimes when other countries look at our resources, they see them as unlimited. But those who know the US understand the limits. (S)

Commander Ortega stated that they were aware of this aid, in particular of the AID pipeline. The major problem, however, was the external

⁴ Senator Edward Zorinsky (D-Nebraska).

debt, especially for this year, which may exceed \$600 million. He said he did not see how Nicaragua could repay it this year. He noted that much of this external debt was contracted for and used by Somoza for personal gain and to engage in repressive measures. Ortega said that perhaps the US could help to restructure this debt, particularly with private banks in the US and also in Europe. He suggested an international assumption of the debt because Nicaragua will not be able to pay it off either in the short or medium-term. (S)

Mr. Ramirez observed that this was truly an acute problem. They do not want to resolve the problem by adding new debts. If there could be rescheduling and a moratorium to allow domestic production to begin again without this asphyxiating pressure on top of them, this would be most helpful. (S)

Mr. Christopher stated that we understood this problem and would help all we could. He was glad to hear that Nicaragua was working with the IMF. The IMF is important. It could be hardheaded and tough, but the IMF was also practical. Nevertheless, understandings with the IMF would be important. He assured them of US support in rescheduling the debt, which is owed to the US and to European banks. (S)

Mr. Owen added that he wanted to stress the important role of the multilateral institutions. One of the best ways to involve other creditors was through these institutions. In rescheduling, in reconstruction aid, and in long range development aid, working with the IFI's to create a coherent whole would be most valuable. They might find it useful to designate a centerpiece—as for example the World Bank with regard to development aid—which could help them form a coherent assistance effort. (S)

Mr. Christopher then said he wanted to refer to the matter of human rights. He said that he admired the commitment of the government of Nicaragua to human rights and the steps it is taking to carry out that commitment. He stressed that no other factor is likely to be more significant in our long-term relationship than this commitment. (S)

Human rights can be thought of in three categories, he said, integrity of the person, economic rights and political rights. As to the first, as he had said publicly, he admired the way the government had carried out its commitments to avoid reprisals. He could not recall another case of a violent triumphant revolution in which the conquered were treated with as much carefulness as in this case. (S)

On economic rights, equitable distribution of income was an important goal. History might show that mixed economies are perhaps the best way to handle these requirements in a situation such as Nicaragua's. As regards political and social rights, we were pleased to observe such things as freedom of the media. We looked forward to the day

when the people's participation in the political process could be full; we knew this was a basic aim. (S)

Human rights was perhaps the principal engine that brought about the downfall of Somoza. It could be the principal force that propels the new Nicaragua. There was no fixed formula or ideas that anyone would impose. What was important was the overall configuration of human rights. (S)

Ramirez responded that they agreed with these comments on human rights. It is precisely the desire for human rights that caused the revolution, and the new government is working ceaselessly to see that this is carried out. He referred to the Bill of Rights which was recently issued. He pointed out that nevertheless, many who were responsible for crimes—both against people and in the sacking of the national patrimony—had fled. The government had engaged a law firm in the US to seek not only extradition but the recovery of assets wrongfully stolen. He wanted to point out that the balance of payments problem could be resolved without new credits if the nation could recover such assets that were taken and are now in the US. (S)⁵

Commander Ortega added one last point. They had, he said, information that former National Guard officers were plotting in Honduras and El Salvador. Instrumental in this were Comandante Bravo and Somoza's son. Some former Guard officers had crossed back into Nicaragua apparently attempting to contact former Guardsmen now in hiding in Nicaragua. They had captured some of them, Ortega said, and that is how they received this information. CIA sources, he said, have reported that political and economic chaos in Nicaragua would facilitate intervention, and this concerns them. (S)

In addition, Ortega said, soundings were being made among the populace in Nicaragua as to the popularity of Comandante Bravo. Ortega noted that Bravo travels regularly to the US and has contact with US Congressmen. (S)

Honduras has so far refused to return the aircraft that was flown to that country after the collapse of the Guard despite its statements that it would do so. (S)

All of these things worried them. He hoped that the US could help avoid a conspiracy which they were sure was being hatched and which would start another crisis in Central America. (S)

Mr. Christopher said we are concerned about such reports. We would oppose that kind of endeavor, and we will work with neighbor-

⁵ Pezzullo wrote to Christopher and Vaky in telegram 3483 from Managua, August 3, that William Rogers was leading Arnold and Porter's assumption of the GRN case against Somoza. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148–2066)

ing countries to prevent such an exercise from taking life. Our information is somewhat more encouraging. Guardsmen in Honduras and Guatemala were, according to our information, demoralized and simply looking for a way to earn a living in those countries or back in Nicaragua. Nevertheless, he wished to assure the Junta members that we have no different interest than theirs in preventing tension and crises, and we would do what we could to avoid such problems. (S)

309. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, November 5, 1979, 2359Z

5401. Subject: U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua. Ref: State 281786.²

1. C-Entire text.

2. We face in Nicaragua today what six months ago had been considered the worst case situation: complete victory and domination by the Sandinista forces, the elimination of the National Guard and, with it, the loss of counter-balancing military force to assure moderates an opportunity to play a political role. Yet, the Sandinistas have been restrained and we are able to maintain a position of influence despite our long and close association with the Somoza dynasty. From this experience it is clear that the worst case scenario (bloodbath, etc) was overdrawn, and that the influence of the United States, especially in Central America, is more pervasive than we often estimate.

3. Having said this, we also recognize that there are disconcerting signs. Despite their professed commitments to a pluralistic, democratic society, the Sandinistas have during their first four months in power here:

—Retained over 7,000 political prisoners, most of them former members of the Guardia Nacional;

—Prolonged the state of emergency, delaying the return of due process of law;

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790511-0587. Confidential; Immediate; Stadis; Exdis.

² In telegram 281786 to Managua, October 27, the Department requested that Pezullo draft a cable to "set forth your perception of key policy elements and implementation measures" for Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790492-0989)

—Established a network of Sandinista mass organizations which could serve as the foundation for a controlled, one party state;

—Shown a high degree of sensitivity to press criticism and activity by non-FSLN political groups which has inhibited free expression; and

—Adopted an anti-imperialistic rhetoric.

4. Nonetheless, the Sandinistas appear to recognize the predominant political, economic and military role we play in the region. They credit withdrawal of U.S. support as a major cause of Somoza's downfall. They acknowledge and probably inflate our influence with their neighbors. They realize the U.S. provides the natural market for most of their agricultural exports (meat, sugar, bananas, coffee); that the U.S. Government and U.S. private banks hold the bulk of their public and private debt; that the U.S. Government or agencies in which the U.S. exerts substantial influence are most likely to prove the major donors of concessional lending for the reconstruction of the economy and that U.S. security policies in the region affect their own security. The Sandinistas are actively engaged in working out a new relationship with us in these key areas.

5. The revolutionary leaders are also attempting to work out a new relationship with the rest of the world. The new government's "non-aligned" foreign policy parrots Cuban positions on issues remote to Nicaragua's interests such as Southern Africa and Kampuchea, but the GRN is more pragmatic and nationalistic on issues closer to home such as the recent coup in neighboring El Salvador.

6. Most of the Sandinista leadership trained in Cuba have been—and continue to be—cultivated by Fidel Castro and are wed to the Marxist-Leninist theory which permeates the LA revolutionary mystique. Executive authority in the new Government of National Reconstruction nominally is exercised by a five-member Junta. In practice, however, the Junta shares leadership with and in some cases is dominated by the nine-man Sandinista Directorate. This collegiate leadership, loyal to Sandinista tradition, is the antithesis of Caudillismo. It avoids the concentration of power which has plagued Nicaraguan history under the Somozas, but it has the effect of diffusing executive authority and slowing decision making.

7. Despite a rapid settling-in process, public order still remains a problem and arbitrary actions are more the norm than the exception. As a consequence, there has been an erosion of the government's prestige and the near bankrupt private sector is hanging on by pure grit. The big question is whether the GRN can manage the myriad of problems facing the country. The economy is in a state of collapse, unemployment is near 60 percent and revolutionary zeal and expectation is out-racing the government's capacity to deliver. What sustains the

current state of affairs is the capacity of the Nicaraguan people to carry on under difficult circumstances.

8. The political perspective is cloudy. On the positive side, moderate forces in the private sector, Catholic Church, the media and political parties, hardened under years of opposition to Somoza, remain on the scene and speak out courageously. Their long-standing opposition to Somoza give them the credibility to claim a part in the overthrow of Somoza and a stake in governing the new Nicaragua. On the negative side, the GRN is demonstrating an intolerance toward dissent of any sort, labeling it "anti-revolutionary" or "Somosista". In the process, they are intimidating the people and driving the timid to silence or out of the country.

9. Although Cuban influence and political radicalization are significant factors, in the short term administrative failure is the greatest danger. If the government is unable to manage a recovery and reconstruction program, radicalization is almost inevitable. If that were to occur, Cuba can be expected to help the "real" revolutionaries clear away the "counter-revolutionaries" who will be held responsible for the earlier failures.

10. Individually, many members of the Junta and FSLN Directorate are talented and dedicated. [garble] OMIC team in the Cabinet probably is the most illustrious in Nicaraguan history. The greatest weaknesses are found among middle level administrators and technicians many of whom have fled or have been dismissed. A fractionalized bureaucracy lacking institutionalized discipline, clear lines of authority and firm direction further complicate policy implementation. On top of this is a layer of doctrinaire Marxism-Leninism which confuses rather than helps. It makes good propaganda copy but does little to solve the grave economic and social problems the country faces.

11. U.S. objectives

What we are dealing with in essence, is a situation where continued U.S. presence in Nicaragua can have a constructive, if not decisive, effect in keeping moderate elements alive and active and in preventing a radicalizing slide into an oppressive regime. Our specific objectives should be the following:

A. To help the Nicaraguan revolution succeed in reaching its own stated objectives: pluralistic democracy, a free and open society which brings development and a more equitable distribution of income and opportunity to all Nicaraguans;

B. To develop cordial relations with the GRN based on mutual respect;

C. To help build a Nicaraguan [garble—order?] for social change in Central America which would have a moderating and liberalizing effect on its northern neighbors; and

D. To demonstrate that the USG can work constructively in a revolutionary environment and help in the development of stability and prosperity within a democratic framework.

12. To meet the above objectives, we must pursue the following courses of action:

A. Contribute liberally to the Nicaraguan reconstruction effort through loans and grants and technical assistance. Our contribution thus far, includes:

—Emergency assistance (food, money, medicines) of approximately \$13 million;

—Reconstruction/financial assistance totaling about \$14 million thus far;

—Pipeline loan and grant projects (agriculture, health, nutrition, education, earthquake reconstruction) of about \$30 million;

—\$10 million approved for Title I PL-480, hopefully another \$10 million late this year, plus about \$5 million for Title II;

—The pending \$75 million supplemental.

B. Offer modest military assistance in the form of IMET training, and the grant and sale of military equipment.

C. Support the private sector using non-governmental U.S. private sector resources as well as AID programming;

D. Maintain a close and supportive relationship with key moderate elements in the society to include the media, democratic labor movement and the Catholic church; and especially those working contrary to our interests and seeking to subject moderate forces to radicalize the revolution, or to conspire against other governments in the area.

E. Expose the young and provincial Sandinista leadership to the U.S. by means of official and non-official visits, thereby hopefully destroying some of the myth they hold about our society and replacing them with greater realism.

Pezzullo

310. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 9, 1980

SUBJECT

Report on Nicaragua (U)

Cy has prepared a brief status report on the situation in Nicaragua, which is simply not as bad as many feared. There are many built-in constraints which are impeding those who would want to radicalize Nicaragua rapidly. Among these constraints is the financial support of the US and the West. That is why rapid passage by Congress of the Nicaraguan supplemental is so important: to help them reconstruct and to demonstrate that we care, but also to show implicitly what they could lose if they pursued a different path. (C)

Cy's assessment of Nicaraguan foreign policy is quite good, but perhaps a bit optimistic. Nicaragua has seemed to follow the Cuban lead on most UN issues, but I am asking State to do a systematic analysis.² If my preliminary observation is proven correct, I will suggest to Cy that we ask Ambassador Pezzullo to provide a briefing on a wide range of foreign policy issues and express our concern that their policies appear to tilt toward Cuba and the Soviet Union.³ That would also be an opportunity to raise the issue of the size of the Soviet mission in Managua. We have one report suggesting that the Soviets may be considering staffing the embassy with about 100 people which would make it their largest in Latin America, except for Cuba.⁴ (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 10/79-7/80. Confidential. Sent for information. Carter initialed the memorandum. Drafted by Pastor who sent it and Vance's memorandum to Brzezinski under a January 9 covering memorandum requesting that Brzezinski sign the memorandum to Carter.

² In the January 9 covering memorandum (see footnote 1, above), Pastor indicated that he had drafted a memorandum from Brzezinski to Tarnoff with this request. (Ibid.) A handwritten notation on Pastor's covering memorandum indicates that Brzezinski signed the memorandum to Carter on January 9. Aaron added the following notation to the covering memorandum: "of interest. DA." Tarnoff responded in a January 21 memorandum to Brzezinski that described the "foreign policies of Nicaragua and Grenada as shown in multilateral fora." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 1-3/80)

³ Carter wrote "ok" in the margin next to this sentence.

⁴ Not further identified.

Attachment

Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter⁵

Washington, January 7, 1980

SUBJECT

Nicaragua: A Status Report

The new Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua (GNR) has consolidated power and remains popular, but still faces major political and economic uncertainties.

Reflecting its composition, which is a mixture of center-left and Marxist forces, the GNR's behavior oscillates between pragmatism and radicalism. Lines of authority remain confused. Internal diversity and a desire to maintain Nicaragua's independence have inhibited those Sandinistas who would press for rapid socialization.

The critical need for Western economic support has strengthened more moderate tendencies, and helped preserve a degree of political openness and a free press. However, the economy remains a shambles, and recovery is hampered by political uncertainty as well as administrative confusion.

In foreign affairs, Nicaragua's orientation and rhetoric are militantly Third World, but its actual behavior is quite pragmatic. Though Cuban influence is strong and possibly growing, the GNR has nonetheless officially denounced Iran for seizing our Embassy in Tehran, and sought normal relations with the Salvadoran Junta.

There is evidence of some gunrunning and return of guerrillas to other Central American countries, but the available evidence does not support a conclusion that Nicaragua deliberately supports intervention in neighboring countries.

Our principal objectives are to strengthen Nicaragua's ties to us and to other Western governments and institutions and offset Nicaragua's dependence on Cuba. Support for moderate forces of pluralism within Nicaragua such as the private sector, free labor unions, the church, and the press, is also vital to this objective.

In working toward these goals, we have extended some \$48 million in emergency humanitarian assistance and revitalized aid projects, and have requested a \$75 million supplemental aid appropriation due to

⁵ Secret.

be voted on shortly in Congress.⁶ With our active encouragement, other Western nations have provided or pledged some \$255 million in aid and the international institutions some \$315 million. Cuba cannot compete with financial resources of this magnitude.⁷

To strengthen direct personal ties, our Embassy is encouraging stepped-up people-to-people activities through private voluntary organizations. We are also increasing government-to-government cultural, educational, and military contacts.

The GNR's future policies, actions, and experiments are likely to be influenced by whether the Sandinistas perceive the United States as sympathetic or hostile. In particular, our ability to exert influence during this formative period is contingent on their believing that our policies are not aimed against them (hence, the importance of the good communication which Ambassador Pezzullo and his staff have established with the Sandinista leadership and of our willingness to provide assistance as represented in the Central American supplemental).

A more detailed analysis has been made available to the NSC.⁸

⁶ See Documents 484 and 485.

⁷ Carter underlined this sentence and wrote in the left-hand margin: "But Cuba will surely reap more benefits vs. their aid level."

⁸ Reference is to an unsigned and undated memorandum entitled "Nicaragua, A Status Report." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 10/79-7/80)

311. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, March 27, 1980, 0130Z

1466. Subject: (C) Meeting With GRN/FSLN Leaders.

1. C-Entire text.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800155-0513. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Caracas. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, Mexico City, Moscow, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Havana, USSOUTHCOM, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretary of Defense.

2. I called on Junta member Sergio Ramirez on March 25 to discuss the current state of our relations. I had talked to FonMin D'Escoto earlier in the week (reftel on the subject)² and I thought it wise to also discuss general themes with Sergio Ramirez as well. Jaime Wheelock, who had spoken to AID Director Harrison earlier in the day, decided to sit in on the meeting and apparently induced Victor Tirado and Daniel Ortega to attend as well.

3. I opened by indicating that we had always spoken frankly to one another and I had come to see them to share some of my concerns on the state of our relations. I noted that, since my return following the House debate on the authorization bill, I sensed a new mood in the country.³ It could be best categorized as an orchestrated anti-American campaign which was poisoning the minds of Nicaraguans against the U.S. It was indiscriminate, lumping critics on the Hill with charges of CIA destabilization plots and was creating a climate in which I feared our bi-lateral relations were bound to suffer.

4. I recalled the excellent answer Victor Tirado had given to Senator Hollings in Washington when the latter had asked what the consequences would be of congressional rejection of the 75 million dollar assistance package. Tirado told Hollings that our bi-lateral relationship, in his mind, was more important than any assistance package. I said I agreed. What bothered me now was that the anti-U.S. sentiment being fanned throughout the society could seriously impair the building of a long-term relationship, quite apart from any assistance effort. I did not identify any person making intemperate statements, Daniel Ortega—by far the worst offender—sat stonefaced.

5. I then reviewed the policy the Carter administration had followed; one of support for the GRN and of generous assistance to help in rebuilding the Nicaraguan economy. I emphasized that this was U.S. policy and that individual agencies, such as the CIA, were not conducting an independent policy running at cross-purposes. The heated debate in Congress and the close vote in the House of the authorization bill demonstrated that: (a) the opposition in Congress is strong and makes effective use of ammunition offered to it by gratuitous

² Telegram 1424 from Managua, March 24, described the meeting with D'Escoto. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800151-0740)

³ The House of Representatives debated Carter's November 9, 1979, request for aid to Central America for 4 days before passing the bill with amendments on February 27 by a margin of five votes. The debate on February 25 included a secret session to discuss intelligence about Communist influence in Nicaragua. The Senate passed a similar bill on January 29. (Graham Hovey, "House Has Secret Nicaragua Debate," *New York Times*, February 26, 1980, p. A4; "House, by 5-Vote Margin, Passes Bill on Assistance for Nicaragua," *New York Times*, February 28, 1980, p. A4; and "House Approves Nicaragua Aid," *Washington Post*, February 28, 1980, p. A16)

statements from GRN/FSLN spokesmen; and (b) the administration and our supporters in Congress are fighting hard and taking political risks in order to build a basis for relations of mutual respect and cooperation with Nicaragua.

6. Finally, I observed that intemperate and insulting attacks on the U.S. damage our efforts to gain broad support for our policy within the U.S., and the sowing of hatred toward the U.S. in Nicaragua can only result in ugly incidents that may undermine all of our best efforts. I cited specific recent examples of harassment of Americans (including last weekend's incident with a group of yachtsmen) as the natural results of hate campaign.

7. Ramirez and Ortega said there was no concerted policy of anti-Americanism on the part of the GRN, but explained that they must contend with an unsophisticated but highly incensed public that is irritated at what it perceives as mistreatment by the U.S. The Nicaraguan public does not understand the complicated U.S. political and legislative processes. The secret session in the House of Representatives and reports that the CIA was consulted about events in Nicaragua, leads the Nicaraguan public to suspect secret destabilization plans and to draw parallels with Chile under Allende. They also cited statements that had appeared in the Congressional Record alleging that Tomas Borge and Daniel had personally ordered summary executions in Nicaragua.⁴ These false accusations demand response and they asserted that their statements have been directed against elements in the U.S. that are attacking them, and not against members of the Carter administration. I indicated that, if that was their objective, they were missing the mark. Ortega said that they would make an effort to control attacks on the U.S. Ramirez reiterated that there is no concerted policy of animosity toward the U.S. and that the GRN/FSLN wants to develop good relations with us.

8. Referring to Ramirez's statement that the anti-American campaign does not represent an intentional GRN policy I observed that it would be a greater tragedy if we fall into an antagonistic relationship by accident. Ramirez, Ortega, and Tirado all made the point that the GRN and FSLN are still in a poor state of internal organization and cannot always control the actions of the many groups that want to be part of the revolutionary process. Many ultra-leftists who have joined the revolution are trying to push them into radical directions in which they do not want to move. Ortega said GRN has been obliged to repress these groups.

⁴ See *Congressional Record*, vol. 126, February 26, 1980, p. 3843.

9. I then raised with them the issue of the joint communique which the GRN delegation had signed with the Soviets in Moscow, noting that the section on Afghanistan is a statement of the Soviet position and asked if this represents a change in Nicaragua's policy.⁵ Ramirez said he had not yet seen the text and thought there was some misunderstanding because of faulty press accounts. I gave him the FBIS transcript of the TASS account of the communique. Ramirez said TASS distorts the news too. After he had read the section on Afghanistan, he said the GRN's official policy on Afghanistan remains as stated during its abstention on the UN resolution. Ortega and Wheelock agreed. Ortega emphasized that Nicaragua fully intends to be a non-aligned country opposed [to] the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They all cast about for explanations as to why their delegation had come to sign this communique but they were clearly perplexed over what had happened. (In this connection, I discussed the Moscow communique with Foreign Minister D'Escoto on March 24. He professed total ignorance of the new language on Afghanistan and said GRN policy remains as stated after the UN abstention.)

10. My demarche may get key figures in the GRN/FSLN to recognize the dangers inherent in a scatter shot antigringo campaign. Some, like Ortega, have been more guilty in personal terms, but all share some culpability in allowing the campaign to build. They promised to temper the indiscriminate attacks on the U.S. with the fabric of this society unraveling in their hands. I do not expect that they will be able to effect a dramatic turn-around. A convenient foreign scapegoat to cover failings is very attractive, but leaders in this government who genuinely want good relations with us have an obligation to work for this goal as hard as we are.

Pezzullo

⁵ See "Communique Issued on Delegation's Visit to USSR," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, March 24, 1980, p. 7.

312. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, May 8, 1980

SUBJECT

Cuban-Nicaraguan Defense Agreement (U)

David asked that I immediately check with the CIA on whether a report we have received about a Nicaraguan-Cuban defense agreement is accurate.² The CIA informed me that we have received only one report, and that was from a middle-level official in the Foreign Ministry. The report suggested that the agreement involved a Cuban promise to send arms and troops to Nicaragua if the Sandinistas were faced with a genuine threat.³ There are also other reports of arms shipments by both the Soviets and the Cubans. (S)

Both the CIA officer and I question the existence of such an agreement for the simple reason that it does not make any sense, and could only invite our wrath and the suspicions of other Central American countries. On the other hand, there is no question that the Sandinistas may feel threatened by external as well as internal forces, and indeed, we ourselves have received an increasing number of reports of former National Guard officers, who are organizing to fight the Sandinistas. If the agreement exists, another possible explanation is that one faction of the FSLN close to the Cubans wants to firm up its relationship with Cuba. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 1980. Secret: Sensitive. A copy was sent to Brement. A stamped notation indicates that Aaron saw it.

² On an unsigned copy of the May 6 Daily Report from Brzezinski to Carter, Aaron responded to the possible Nicaraguan-Cuban defense pact: "Brement/Pastor this is very important if true. It extends Soviet security guarantees to Central America. We must find out the truth A.S.A.P. DA." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 4/80-8/80)

³ Reference is to a CIA Intelligence Information Cable, May 1, regarding the alleged defense pact between Cuba and Nicaragua. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 4-8/80) In telegram 2069 from Managua, April 3, the Embassy relayed the intelligence reporting about the possible Nicaraguan-Cuban defense pact, noting that the report "comes at a particularly critical period for Nicaragua," and that "the private sector and other democratic elements have drawn a line against further radicalization of the revolutionary process and have induced the FSLN to engage in a serious discussion of the current situation and a negotiation over a possible domestic settlement." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 10/79-7/80)

Overall, I am skeptical of the report. However, there is no question that if the report is true, it could have serious political and international ramifications. I therefore asked Bowdler to task one person in his Bureau to do a paper on steps we should take to try to turn this issue to our advantage. I believe that if we handle this information well, we could not only get the Nicaraguans to deny or reject any pact, but also to put those who are closest to the Cubans on the defensive. (S)

Unfortunately, Rollie Evans called me, and he has the same report. I tried to put him off by saying that there are thousands of rumors from both extremes, but he probably will continue to probe this story, and so we are dealing with a short fuse. I also learned that Carlucci highlighted this report in a briefing he gave to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday.⁴ So the issue will come out, probably at the most delicate time to get Congress to pass the supplemental, of \$75 million. The only consolation if we lose the \$75 million is that we can blame Congress for “losing” Nicaragua. But that’s no consolation. We need the funding desperately to get in the game. (S)

I will meet with Luigi Einaudi, who is doing the paper for Bowdler, today to develop our strategy on this.⁵ (S)

⁴ May 7. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the margin next to this sentence, drew a line from it to the bottom margin, and wrote on May 12: “he should tell them it was wrong. ZB.”

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 313.

313. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, May 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Cuban-Nicaraguan Defense Agreement (S)

As I noted to you in my memorandum of May 8,² I asked State to prepare a paper on the Cuban-Nicaraguan Defense Pact, and for CIA to try to confirm or reject the report. State is skeptical about it, as I am, and regrets, as I do, that the CIA has been briefing the Congress about a single sub-source report as if it is a fact.³ Nonetheless, we need to develop a policy response because it is virtually certain that the report will be leaked, and I believe that it is inadequate merely to say, as State would prefer, that "we have no confirmation." (S)

State's paper is at Tab A, and it is not bad, although clearly does not go far enough.⁴ I urged State to go out with instructions to our Ambassadors in neighboring countries, indicating that we do have such a report, and expressing great concern about the implications of the report and its inconsistency with Nicaragua's supposed interest in a "zone of peace." The idea would be to raise the region's consciousness and the possibility of isolating Nicaragua if the report becomes true. State, however, preferred to go out with a different cable (Tab B) which asked our Ambassador to try to firm up the information, and warned him that a leak may be imminent.⁵ State agreed, however, to send

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80-1/81. Secret. Brzezinski wrote "ok" and his initials at the top of the page.

² See Document 312.

³ An unknown hand replaced the word "is" with "were."

⁴ Attached but not printed is a paper drafted by Einaudi and dated May 8 entitled "A Cuba-Nicaragua Defense Pact? Preliminary Observations."

⁵ Not attached. Telegram 123160 to Managua, May 9, informed Bowdler that the Department had asked the intelligence community to seek confirmation of the possible Cuba-Nicaragua defensive pact. The telegram also noted that the CIA had briefed members of Congress on the issue and that the "temptation to inject this issue into forthcoming congressional debate on aid to Nicaragua may prove irresistible." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) In telegram 2245 from Managua, May 13, Pezzullo reported that he had questioned FSLN Directorate members about the Cuban/Nicaraguan defense pact without conclusive results: "I conclude that some form of military agreement exists, probably in writing, between the GRN and the Cubans. It may be something less than a mutual defense agreement, but might include that likelihood as well." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80-1/81)

Pezzullo in once the report is leaked. At that time, we should be quite blunt. (S)

State, CIA, and I agree that the most effective leak on this subject would be by a democratic newspaper from the area. Evans and Novak would be the worst possible sources, since their report will be discounted as CIA-inspired in the area while at the same time enraging our “home front.” Nonetheless, after speaking with Al Friendly, I agreed that it would be hopeless to try to turn Evans and Novak off long enough for the CIA to turn a Latin American newspaper on.⁶ (S)

Therefore, unless you object, our strategy is to wait for the leak, then go to the Nicaraguans for confirmation or denial, and then backstop that with a strong demarche to all friendly governments in the area. We should take a strong approach in our confidential demarches, but a concerned and questioning approach publicly. For example, the State Department spokesman should pose his statement as a question, of whether such a Pact means that the Nicaraguans have thrown in their lot with the Cubans, or whether it means that the Nicaraguans will be pursuing the same aggressive, interventionist strategy as the Cubans. The longer we ask questions publicly, rather than make demands, the more likely we will weaken the hands of the pro-Cubans in the Sandinista junta and strengthen the others. That is the strategy that I recommend. (S)

⁶ On May 16, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak reported on a “possible Nicaragua-Cuban military accord.” (“A Sandinista Mission to Moscow,” *Washington Post*, p. A15) Telegram 130064 to Managua, May 17, included the press statement issued by the Department in response to Evans and Novak’s article. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80–1/81)

314. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 28, 1980

1. Last week David called me and asked for a paper setting forth our assessment of the extent to which Nicaragua is involved in exporting revolution.² The attached paper gives our best judgment on the extent to which Nicaragua is aiding the Salvadoran revolutionaries. Please note the extreme sensitivity of this information as its disclosure could jeopardize a key source. (S/NF)

2. As this is a subject of some concern, especially with regard to the pending aid legislation for Nicaragua, perhaps it would be advisable to have an SCC/PRC meeting in order to air all views. (C/NF)

Stansfield Turner³

Attachment

Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁴

Washington, August 27, 1980

Nicaragua: Aid to Salvadoran Revolutionaries

There has been a volume and consistency of human intelligence reporting over the past year, much of it from reliable sources with good access, that the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has adopted a policy of providing assistance to Salvadoran insurgents in the form of training, transit, materiel, and arms. Seven separate clandestine sources have either directly implicated members of the FSLN Directorate in specific actions in support of Salvadoran leftists or reported FSLN policy decisions implementing the effort. Additional sources report Nicaraguan involvement in training Salvadoran insurgents and in providing Sandinista advisers and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 79, Sensitive X: 8/16-31/80. Secret: Noform.

² No other record of the telephone conversation between Aaron and Turner has been found.

³ Turner wrote "Stan" above his typed signature.

⁴ Secret; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon.

other support to El Salvador's leftists. This reporting has been in five general categories, some of which overlap. (S)

—Information concerning a Sandinista organization in Costa Rica for training and funneling support to revolutionaries in El Salvador has been reported since early this year. Both a fairly reliable Costa Rican source and a generally reliable Nicaraguan source have provided initial and followup reporting on planning, and a separate generally reliable Nicaraguan asset has corroborated implementation. The effort is linked directly to the FSLN Directorate, and the existence of an FSLN apparatus partially supported by circumstantial evidence. We believe it highly likely that this officially approved activity is being carried on. (See Annex A)⁵ (S)

—In addition to these linkages, five other sources—two fairly or generally reliable, two of undetermined reliability and one informant—have also either implicated National Directorate members directly in assistance to Salvadoran revolutionaries or provided information that strongly implies high level FSLN approval for these efforts. Three other reliable sources in different countries have reported on advice on revolutionary strategy given to the insurgents by individual members of the National Directorate. Given the degree of unanimity displayed by the Directorate on other issues, and the importance of this particular issue, we strongly doubt such members would have acted as individuals or in the absence of official policy. Taken together with the reports of actions suggesting policy approval, the likelihood of official Sandinista involvement in these activities is quite high. (See Annex B) (S)

—Five generally reliable sources from both Nicaragua and El Salvador have reported the training of Salvadoran insurgents in Nicaragua, dating back to last year. In addition, an untested source reported similar activities and a defector from the Salvadoran insurgent forces publicly stated that the Nicaraguan government was collaborating in such training. We have been unable to penetrate any permanent training site for insurgents in Nicaragua, but the numerous individual reports of instruction at various locations in the country leave us reasonably convinced that it is occurring. (See Annex C) (S)

⁵ Annexes A–E are attached but not printed. In a September 15 memorandum to Aaron, Pastor noted that CIA officials had testified that day before the House Select Committee on Intelligence and that the Committee requested a copy of the August 27 CIA memorandum. Aaron recommended against submitting the report to the Committee, writing a note to Brzezinski on the memorandum: "The report is advice to the President. I think it should be covered by privilege. They got the basic poop." Brzezinski wrote: "Agree." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, For President or Brzezinski Only, Box 88, Presidential Advisory (PA)—Very Sensitive: 7–9/80)

—Our reporting on arms trafficking is fragmentary, partly reflecting the extremely well compartmented nature and relatively moderate level of arms shipments to El Salvador's radicals. Although the information fits the general pattern of Sandinista support for the Salvadoran guerrillas, our evidence is not conclusive. (See Annex D) (S)

—The presence of Sandinista advisers in El Salvador has been reported by several sources of varying reliability. Although some of the information in the reporting is highly plausible, there are clear exaggerations and some inconsistencies that make it difficult to reach any firm conclusions. The Nicaraguan government's public admission that some individuals have gone to El Salvador to fight provides the Sandinistas with deniability under most circumstances. (See Annex E) (S)

Our overall intelligence *judgment*, based on the multiple and often corroborative sources from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama, is that there is a very high likelihood that such support activities are occurring and that they represent official FSLN policy. (S)

315. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, August 29, 1980, 0039Z

4111. Subj: (U) The August 23 Hangover. Ref A. Managua 4015² B. Managua 4093.³

1. C-Entire text

2. As expected, 23 Aug announcement on elections (see ref A) has prompted all non-FSLN sectors of Nicaraguan society and international representatives here to reflect and reassess. (Political party and *La Prensa*'s reaction is covered in ref B).

3. COSEP has been engaged in a continuous round of internal discussions to analyze the current situation and determine courses of action. After getting over the initial shock during which many thought the solution was a one-way ticket to Miami, COSEP members have attempted to chart an activist course while preserving unity. They have come to realize their lack of activity and coordination during the month long absence of COSEP President Enrique Dreyfus has permitted the GRN/FSLN to intimidate individual members through harassment. The events of Aug 23 have shocked them into the realization that they either stick together or hang separately.

4. The Council of State will be the immediate forum in which some of the debate will take place. Some proposed that COSEP reps should withdraw from the Council, but cooler heads prevailed by arguing that COSEP should make use of the forum for its purposes. Retirement from the Council, if and when they choose to take that step, will be planned to extract maximum political effect.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800412–0070. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information Priority to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, San Salvador, and Tegucigalpa. Sent for information to Santo Domingo, USINT Havana, and USCINSO Quarry Heights.

² In telegram 4015 from Managua, August 24, the Embassy reported that at the August 23 “mass rally in Managua to celebrate the conclusion of the literacy campaign Defense Min Humberto Ortega announced that elections would not be held until 1985.” Ortega also “attacked foreign and domestic enemies of the revolution, chief among which he placed ‘North American imperialism.’” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 4–8/80)

³ In telegram 4093 from Managua, August 27, the Embassy reported that the FSLN “pronouncement on elections has evoked sharp reactions from the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Nicaragua Democratic Movement (MDN), and the Conservative Democratic Party (PCD).” The Embassy also noted an August 25 article in *La Prensa* entitled “Without Elections There is No Democracy” and commented: “The gloves are off in the Nicaraguan ideological and civic struggle.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800411–0246)

5. The members of the Chamorro family running *La Prensa* are battering down the hatches in preparation for an assault on the newspaper. The bills Sergio Ramirez said would be sent to the Council of State regulating "disinformation" (ref A) were made public on Aug 27 and passed by the Council of State the same day over private sector and independent political party opposition. One prohibits electoral activity . . . although apparently not political activity . . . in the period before 1984. The other two limit press freedom with respect to information on scarcities of popular consumer products and matters of security and national defense.

6. The Ambassadors of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Peru, Spain and Ecuador generally agree with our assessment that Aug 23 represented a FSLN coup d'état, in that the Junta was cavalierly pushed aside by an FSLN Directorate that made clear that it had the guns and would rule. In the face of this reality, all come to the conclusion that they must keep their cool and program inputs must continue. Venezuelan Amb Yepez, whose govt was particularly stunned by some of the recent gratuitous swipes at Venezuelan aid, brought his displeasure to the attention of several members of the govt. He received assurances that they appreciated Venezuelan assistance and apologized for statements which may have offended Venezuelan dignity.

7. The question universally asked is why the FSLN felt compelled to take this dramatic step (which all see as self-destructive) at a time when its dependence on international assistance and on the support of the private sector is critical to see it through the economic crunch expected before year end.

8. There is no simple explanation, but we believe that pressure on the govt to hold elections was the catalyst. Ever since their entry into power in July of last year, FSLN leaders have spoken in the most vague terms about elections, repeatedly emphasizing that economic and social problems had to be attended to before the elections were held. The April crisis, precipitated by the resignation of Alfonso Robelo,⁴ forced the FSLN into discussions with COSEP and led to agreements on a wide range of political and economic issues including elections. The dialogue with COSEP may have appeared to be working toward a series of fundamental threats to FSLN dominance, the discredited (by Somoza and Marx) concept of elections foremost among them. (It is

⁴ In telegram 1893 from Managua, April 22, the Embassy reported that Robelo and Cruz had resigned from the GRN. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800200-0352) In telegram 1929 from Managua, April 23, the Embassy noted that Robelo had "made a clear statement of his reasons for leaving the government which puts the issue in context of political pluralism, respect for the fundamental statute of the GRN, and arbitrary actions of FSLN." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800202-0468)

quite possible that the most zealous FSLN ideologues argued that the FSLN negotiators were driven to accept a revisionist path). The Aug 23 pronouncements may thus be viewed as the FSLN assuring itself a degree and duration of control necessary to consolidate the revolution.

9. The FSLN must have realized that the pronouncements would run the risk of sharpening their authoritarian image at home (which may not have troubled them) and in the rest of the world (which would be costly to them). The FSLN has been pumped up in the past six weeks by the July 19 celebrations, Castro visit,⁵ and the completion of the largely successful literacy campaign (which may have convinced them they have won over the youth). We think they may have seriously underestimated the negative impact, at least externally, of the Aug 23 pronouncements.

10. Comment: After being stunned by the events of Aug 23, the democratic and moderate forces are thinking carefully about their next moves. On reflection, most are convinced that the FSLN Directorate was driven to respond to pressure to hold elections in the only way it knows how; namely to strike out against those national and international forces that want to “destroy the revolution”. By setting a date for elections so far in the future and making clear that its version of “revolutionary democracy” limits participation by those forces critical of its leadership, the FSLN has created a pressure cooker without an effective escape valve. The political parties, La Prensa and the private sector can be counted on to try every means to bring this reality to the attention of the FSLN leadership.

Pezzullo

⁵ In telegram 3655 from Managua, August 1, the Embassy provided an overview of Castro’s “eight day visit on the occasion of the 19 of July anniversary of the FSLN victory.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800371–0917)

316. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 9, 1980

SUBJECT

Certifying Nicaragua's Eligibility for Aid (S)

The Congress finally authorized \$75 million in aid to Nicaragua, but before releasing the funds, you are required by the law to certify that the Government of Nicaragua has "not cooperated with or harbors any international terrorist organization, or is aiding, abetting, or supporting acts of violence or terrorism in other countries."² State, OSD and I have reviewed all of the evidence provided by the Intelligence Community and our ambassadors in the field and we find there is no conclusive proof that the Nicaraguan Government (GRN) has been directly involved in such activities. (S)

However, there are reports which lead the CIA to conclude that the Sandinista Directorate "has adopted a policy of providing assistance to Salvadoran insurgents in the form of training, transit, materiel, and arms." CIA's overall intelligence *judgment* is "that there is a very *high likelihood* that such support activities are occurring and that they represent official *FSLN* policy. Similarly, the DIA believes "there is sufficient evidence to suspect some official acknowledgment, if not support, of such activities. Yet there is room for doubt." That is the point: there is no conclusive evidence of Nicaraguan government involvement in promoting revolutionary violence, and indeed the government has denied it. (S)

Our Ambassador to El Salvador makes the excellent point that the Salvadoran Junta has a tremendous incentive to demonstrate Cuban involvement, and since they haven't, nor has anyone for that matter, there is obviously no conclusive proof that it is taking place. Second- and third-hand reports, even by reliable sources, are not conclusive, nor proof. Moreover, Congress had a secret session on this very issue with virtually all of the evidence available to all of us, and they approved the \$75 million (although at the same time, shoving responsi-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua (Terrorism): 12/79-1/81. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig: Go over with Jody." Pastor sent Brzezinski a draft of the memorandum under a September 8 covering memorandum requesting that Brzezinski "move as rapidly as possible on it." (Ibid.)

² An unknown hand underlined the word "Government" and the portion of the sentence beginning with "not" and ending with "countries."

bility back to you to confirm their judgment).³ This is a controversial decision, which the Republicans may attack.⁴ You do have the option to postpone a decision for a couple of months, but I think that would be a mistake. We are already committed to the \$75 million and to the policy. We have a good case—we want to challenge the Cubans, and we need the money to do that. We postpone the decision only at the risk of hurting the Nicaraguan moderates at a critical moment when they are fighting for free elections and, indeed, for their survival; these leaders have urgently asked us to go ahead. Moreover, since this issue has already attracted so much Congressional and press interest, postponement itself would be interpreted as a political decision and an effort by you to dodge a difficult decision. Therefore, I recommend you go ahead.

Christopher's memo is at Tab A.⁵ The finding which he and I recommend that you sign is at Tab 1 along with the justification which we will send up to the Hill.⁶ INR's intelligence assessment is at Tab 2⁷ and the assessments of our Ambassadors in the field are at Tab 3.⁸ (C)

Although there is no conclusive evidence of Nicaraguan Government involvement in terrorist activities in other countries, there are many disturbing reports, and we will therefore instruct Ambassador Pezzullo to go in with a firm demarche and urge them to take prompt action to stop any such activities which are taking place from Nicaraguan territory and not to engage in any such activities.⁹ (S)

³ See footnote 3, Document 311.

⁴ Brzezinski underlined the phrase "Republicans may attack." He also placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to this and the following two sentences and added an arrow pointing inward in the margin.

⁵ Attached but not printed is Christopher's August 25 memorandum to Carter.

⁶ Tab 1, attached but not printed, is a Presidential Determination addressed to Vance and a "Justification for Presidential Determination to Authorize the Furnishing of Immediate Assistance to Nicaragua." The determination certified, on the basis of available evidence, that the Government of Nicaragua had not cooperated with or harbored any international terrorist organization or aided acts of terrorism and violence in other countries. Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the administration determined that the \$45 million earmarked for Nicaragua in FY 1980 from funds appropriated from Egypt was important to U.S. security.

⁷ Tab 2, attached but not printed, is an undated "Assessment of Possible Involvement of the Nicaraguan Government in Terrorist Activities in Other Countries," which noted that "the intelligence currently available, while circumstantial, reveals a persuasive pattern of significant collaboration with Salvadoran insurgents by individual Sandinistas." The report also stated: "There is no conclusive evidence, however, that the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) Directorate—and by extension, the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN)—has been directly involved in, or authorized such activities."

⁸ Tab 3, attached but not printed, is telegram 5613 from San Salvador, August 15; telegram 3840 from Managua, August 13; and telegram 4846 from San José, August 19.

⁹ Carter replaced "stop" with "prevent" and replaced "are taking" with "may take," and then reversed his decision, writing in the margin: "Leave as was."

State also recommends that we begin disbursing aid to Nicaragua immediately rather than wait until October 1 when the money is available. Therefore, with your approval, we will reprogram \$45 million ESF from Egypt now and reimburse that account after October 1. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the finding at Tab 1.¹⁰ (U)

¹⁰ Carter signed the determination on September 11.

317. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 21, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Coup in Nicaragua (S)

We have been receiving reports for over two months of plans by a group of Sandinistas to overthrow the Marxists in the FSLN Directorate. I have not brought this to your attention because I didn't think there was anything to it—an assessment shared by Pezzullo and Bowdler. Pezzullo, in particular, felt that the Cubans were probably responsible for spreading the word about a coup in order to flush out dissidents, and then at the appropriate moment, their allies in the FSLN would get rid of the coup plotters and tighten their control over the government. This interpretation struck me as much more plausible than the CIA report.² (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 10/80. Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page on October 22: "Important."

² In an August 15 memorandum to Bowdler, Spiers, Tighe, and Pastor, McMahon reported on the "alleged plan of middle level Sandinista Armed Forces officers to overthrow" the FSLN National Directorate. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 86, Sensitive XX: 10/16/80–10/31/80)

CIA has just sent me a report, which caused me to reassess my earlier interpretation (Tab A).³ This report names names of those involved in the coup plans, and these people are credible coup plotters, i.e., they are moderate nationalists and possess a fair amount of support in the Sandinista army. An interesting aside is that they plan to get in touch with General Gutierrez. (He and his counterpart, General Jam, seem to be flowering simultaneously.) The most important point in this report is that they are planning to launch the coup between October 25 and November 5. (S)

Though I still think the possibility of such a coup is remote, if it does come off, that will unquestionably be everyone's October surprise. It could also present us with the most serious challenge that we have faced in Latin America. The President is on record as reaffirming JFK's declaration in 1963: "That we would not permit any troops from Cuba to move off the Island of Cuba in any offensive action against any neighboring country." The chances of Cuban involvement in assisting the Directorate to resist a coup is probably about 90 percent not only because of the number of security advisers there today, but because Castro will not let Nicaragua veer from his sphere of influence. Therefore, a confrontation of some sort would be inevitable. (S)

I have asked CIA to continue to monitor this issue closely and to keep me fully informed. I would appreciate it if you would also share any information you receive on this.⁴ I understand Newsom will meet with Bowdler on this tomorrow, and I will try to insert myself in that meeting to brainstorm a little on what we ought to be thinking about doing if the reports become more and more credible.⁵ (S)

³ Tab A, attached but not printed, is an October 21 memorandum from McMahon to Bowdler, Spiers, Tighe, and Pastor reporting on the "preparations by a group of Sandinista armed forces officers to overthrow the Sandinista National Liberation Front."

⁴ Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left hand margin next to the first two sentences of this paragraph and wrote in the margin: "Let me know."

⁵ In an October 23 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor wrote: "The chances of a coup occurring in Nicaragua soon are very small." He also noted: "There are already 5,000 Cubans in Nicaragua, and many in controlling positions in the Interior Ministry. These Cubans will unquestionably fight to preserve the Sandinista Directorate." Brzezinski indicated that he agreed with Pastor's suggestion that, upon receipt of more information from the Central Intelligence Agency, Aaron should chair a "small meeting" with Carlucci, Davis, Newsom, Bowdler, Cheek, and Pastor. Brzezinski also added the following on the first page of the memorandum: "DA mini-SCC. ZB." An unknown hand indicated that an "ad hoc" meeting took place on October 27. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 80, Sensitive X: 10/9/80–10/31/80) Under an October 27 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor transmitted a summary of the "small meeting." According to the summary, the group felt that a coup might begin as soon as November 2 and agreed that, after receiving information from the CIA, Aaron would convene another meeting to "discuss Cuba's capability to intervene, the message we ought to send to Castro if a coup begins, and whether we want to alter our current neutral position is asked by the coup plotters." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 10/80)

318. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Coup in Nicaragua

1. You ought to know that a coup may be taking place in Nicaragua as early as November 16. I attach a paper from Stan Turner, which provides more detail.²

2. The key issue that will face us is how to react in the event of an armed intervention by Cuba to suppress the coup.

3. There are three possible scenarios:

(1) Cuban intervention to forestall or mop up the coup on behalf of the government in Managua.

(2) Intervention to restore the government if the coup succeeds.

(3) Intervention to suppress the coup while it is in progress, with fighting in various parts of the country.

4. The strategic issue that we will confront is how to respond to such Cuban intervention, especially if it were to occur in the circumstances outlined under 3/2 or 3/3. Far-reaching strategic consequences would be involved if our policy of non-intervention in Central America was now to be exploited by a policy of armed Cuban intervention (which would be de facto also a form of Soviet intervention).

5. You may want to give this matter some advance thought and Harold Brown and Muskie urged me to bring it to your attention. We will convene an SCC if circumstances direct it.³ In the meantime, the USS FORRESTAL is in the area and will stay in the area so that the U.S. will have the necessary means for interdiction of any Cuban airlift.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80-1/81. Secret. Carter initialed the first page of the memorandum.

² Not attached. The attachment was a paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency entitled "Nicaragua: Update on the Coup Plotting," November 11. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 12, Folder 9: Latin America)

³ For the minutes of the November 13 SCC meeting, see Document 319. In a November 12 note to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor noted that the coup attempt might be on November 16. He indicated that he had a "long talk" with Tarnoff during which they "disagreed rather fundamentally on the ways the USG should respond if a coup began and Cuban involvement was possible." Pastor concluded that "unless we work out any differences before the coup, we will probably be unable to act quickly enough to stem possible Cuban involvement." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4/80-8/80)

319. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 13, 1980, 3–4 p.m.

SUBJECT

Nicaragua (C)

PARTICIPANTS*State*

Edmund Muskie, Secretary

*Defense*W. Graham Claytor, Jr., Deputy
Secretary*Joint Chiefs of Staff*

General E.C. Meyer

Central Intelligence

Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director

*White House*Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Mr. David Aaron*National Security Council*

Mr. Robert Pastor

Dr. Brzezinski said that the meeting had a three-fold purpose. First, to obtain the latest update on the possibility of a coup in Nicaragua. Second, the President asked the Secretary of State to develop a series of demarches that we would use with Cuba, selected third countries, and with Moscow, if and when the coup begins. Third, the President asked the Secretary of Defense to prepare military options which would be available to us should we need to respond to Cuban involvement.

Dr. Brzezinski said that at the Secretary of State's suggestion, he sent a memorandum to the President the previous night.² He then read the memorandum to the group. In the memo, *Dr. Brzezinski* informed the President about the possibility of a coup, which could occur as soon as this Sunday,³ or perhaps even sooner. The key issue is armed involvement on the part of Cuba. There are a variety of scenarios that could take place, but the strategic issue relates to how we should respond if the Cubans get involved. There are far-reaching consequences if the U.S. policy of non-intervention proves to be an invitation to Cuban involvement. Finally, *Dr. Brzezinski* recommended that this subject needed further thought at an NSC meeting. He informed the President that U.S. forces will be in the area, providing us the possible means to respond. The President agreed that it would be useful to have a meeting.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 33, Meetings—SCC 349A, 11/13/1980. Secret. Sent for information. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Drafted on November 18.

² See Document 318.

³ November 16.

Dr. Brzezinski then asked for an update. What should we say to the Cubans? What military action are we capable of taking if Cubans get involved? How quickly will that take? What we don't want is for the Cubans to deliver a *fait accompli*. Therefore, there are two specific objectives for this meeting: first, diplomatic, to develop ways to forestall the possibility of Cuban intervention; and second, militarily, what we should do if they ignore our warning.

Mr. Carlucci said that the situation in Nicaragua is deteriorating rapidly, and the position of the FSLN is also deteriorating. The moderate elements have recently walked out of the Council of State, and our reporting suggests additional credence to the possibility of a coup. We have also now learned that Eden Pastora, who is not overly bright but may be somewhat charismatic, has recently approached Honduran high officials for support if he should choose to launch a coup on his own. After giving some background on the various coup plotters, *Carlucci* concluded that a coup is very plausible now. He said that they are meeting on a daily basis with Sunday as a target date. They have decided to hold off for the time being because of border problems with Honduras. In summary, the additional reporting has lent credence to a coup, and enhanced the chances of success.

In answer to a question from *Dr. Brzezinski* about the purpose of such a coup, *Mr. Carlucci* said that the motives are primarily to get rid of the Marxist Junta and to establish a democracy. However, *Moncada*, the Deputy Chief of Security Services, is aware of the coup, and he could very well be an agent provocateur.

In answer to a question from *Dr. Brzezinski* about the prospects of Cuban involvement, *Carlucci* said that he expects the Cubans would be involved if they didn't expect us to be involved. He said that an unusual meeting was held yesterday at the Cuban Embassy in Managua with high Sandinista officials. He said that he would be surprised if the Cubans did not know about the coup planning. Indeed, it is a reasonable assumption that the Cubans do know.

David Aaron said that everyone knows something is going to happen, but the question is what?

Pastor said that there could very well be more than one coup plot at this time. Indeed, there are several groups, which are plotting, which may not even have contact with each other. A recent intelligence report suggests that a coup is currently being planned by a group of Nicaraguan exiles, including former National Guardsmen. It is quite likely that this group has no contact with the other group that we have been watching. Indeed, both groups may have limited contact with the moderate democratic elements who have just walked out of the Junta.

Carlucci agreed with that statement.

General Meyer asked what is the complexion and make-up of these various groups.

Carlucci said that they are people of substance, who are relatively moderate.

Secretary Muskie, reading from a memo from him to the President which had recently been prepared, said that State's analysis says that the background of the coup plotters is not that clear.⁴ He repeated that there seems to be three different movements: (1) The most likely group to launch a coup consists of high-level military officers, who are in the midst of an internal power struggle in the military, but who have some support from the private sector. (2) The private sector, labor, and democratic political parties make up the second group. They have recently walked out of the Council of State, and their strategy is to force the government to either meet their demands, or unmask the repressive face of the FSLN. (3) The third group is made up of Nicaraguan exiles, perhaps ex-Somoza types, under the banner of the Nicaraguan Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

Continuing, *Secretary Muskie* said that these three movements share a common goal to replace the Marxist leadership with a more democratic system, but the prospects of any of these groups succeeding is slim. The most serious group is the first one. If this gets off the ground, and is crushed, we will have to deal with the very difficult question of foreknowledge and why we didn't help. If it takes hold, then there is a real threat of Cuban intervention, since the Sandinistas could invoke their military agreement with Cuba. Castro would certainly try to limit his support, perhaps just to military advisers, at the request of the government. If the Sandinistas are losing, Castro may be forced to send troops, but Secretary Muskie's advisers are divided about whether he would do that. Certainly, the possibility raises important questions. What should we do to stop the Cubans? One thing would be to send a message to the conspirators that they wouldn't receive any of our support, but there are obvious domestic drawbacks to such a strategy. Secondly, we could try to discourage Castro, and we have drafted a message which would do that. Secretary Muskie said that he could strengthen the message by alluding to the President's October 1 speech.⁵ In addition, we could send messages to selected governments,

⁴ Reference is to an undated memorandum from Muskie to Carter entitled "Possible Coup in Nicaragua." A copy of the memorandum is attached to Brzezinski's November 13 memorandum to Carter printed as Document 320.

⁵ Carter addressed the nation concerning the Soviet Brigade in Cuba on October 1, 1979. The address was televised live over radio and television. See *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, p. 1804. The speech is printed as Document 129 in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy.

and to the OAS. We have already beefed up our communications-monitoring capabilities to be able to detect such involvement.

Dr. Brzezinski then read the paper which the State Department prepared as a demarche to Castro. (The original drafts are at Tabs A and B, along with Dr. Brzezinski's handwritten suggested changes.)⁶ Dr. Brzezinski said that the drafts looked fine, except for the conclusion, and he agreed with Secretary Muskie that we should make an allusion that the message is in keeping with the President's October 1 statement. In addition, we should say that there should be no miscalculation on this subject. The U.S. will not stand by idly in the event of any foreign intervention. He asked what was the precise wordings of the President's October 1 statement, and whether it was on October 1 or 30.

Pastor said it was October 1, 1979, the President said that "we would not permit any troops from Cuba to move off the Island of Cuba in any offensive action against any neighboring countries."

Muskie said that was rather strong and suggested that we just allude to the statement without quoting from it. He then read from a recent cable that was sent from Wayne Smith in Havana on the issue of Cuban involvement.⁷ Smith says that he does not believe that there would be any Cuban intervention, and he raised this issue with Padron on November 6, in the context of saying that several members of the diplomatic community had speculated that a recent statement at a Conference of Central American Communist Parties in Havana may have implied that Cuban troops would be prepared to help revolutions in Latin America. Padron said personally that he thought the allegation was absurd, but he would speak to Castro to make sure that his personal reaction was consistent with Cuban policy. On November 12, he reported to Smith that Castro had said categorically that Cuba would not send troops to Nicaragua. This did not, however, rule out the possibility of advisers or materiel, and he does acknowledge that it would be difficult to detect involvement.

Pastor said that there are two issues regarding Cuban involvement—first, the use of Cuban advisers who are already in Nicaragua in order to put down the rebellion, and such action could have important implications, not only with respect to the rebellion, but with respect to public opinion in the United States; and second, the introduction of new Cuban troops and materiel.

⁶ See Document 320.

⁷ In telegram 7870 from Havana, November 12, Smith wrote: "My own assessment is that Cubans would not rpt not seriously consider sending combat units to Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P900077-1281)

Dr. Brzezinski returned to the draft demarches, and said that they were in need of refinement and he felt that the reference to the need to reassess our position and, allowing the Cubans “reasonable self-defense” would give them an opening that they would take advantage of. He therefore recommended a change along the lines that he suggested before. He asked if the members of the group agreed to that change, and all agreed.

(Brzezinski then asked Pastor to get those two drafts retyped, and Pastor left the room for a couple of minutes to do that.)

Military Contingencies

Claytor said that the USS FORRESTAL is in the area, and the 82nd Airborne is also ready, but neither have been alerted to moving specifically into position.

In answer to a question from *Dr. Brzezinski*, *General Meyer* said that the Army could send an entire division into Nicaragua within 7 to 10 days, and a battalion within 24 hours, provided that the Army was put on alert. If a brigade is put on alert at the time of demarche, he expected that at least two battalions (out of 3 battalions) could be sent within 24 hours.

Dr. Brzezinski said that he would assume that it would be put on the alert at the time of the demarche.

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether *General Meyer* was absolutely certain they could get 2–3 battalions (approximately 3500 men) into Nicaragua within 24 hours.

General Meyer said that he is not sure. If the surge aircraft were available every 20 minutes, then it could be done. *Claytor* said that is why an alert makes a big difference. However, *General Meyer* said there is no quiet way to put our troops on alert. Everyone would know about it. *Dr. Brzezinski* asked whether it is likely that surge aircraft could take off every 20 minutes. *General Meyer* said that only if they were on alert. The determinant condition is the question of the airlift, and unfortunately we are now spread all over the world, with the major airlift to Egypt,⁸ and so it is uncertain that we could move that rapidly.

Dr. Brzezinski asked *General Meyer* to find out precisely whether we could use the Egyptian exercise as a cover to set aside a brigade, perhaps at Fort Bragg, which could be sent in immediately to Nicaragua, if necessary.

⁸ On November 11, giant air transports carrying the new Rapid Deployment Force and soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division departed for Egypt to participate in operation ‘Bright Star,’ a combined U.S.-Egyptian military exercise in the Sinai Peninsula. (Richard Halloran, “U.S. Troops, Taking Off for Egypt, Get Some Advice on Camel Drivers,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1980, p. A6)

General Meyer said that this might be difficult to do, but he would check.

Dr. Brzezinski said that we would have to be ready for an airlift. In addition, the USS FORRESTAL should be in place to be able to interdict any flights by Cuba.

General Meyer said that Admiral Hayward is confident that the FORRESTAL could do that, and that Castro would know of our presence there, since it is already on a training mode right outside Guantamo. The key question relates to the rules of engagement, and how to respond if attacked. The operational problem is how to interdict/civilian aircraft without shooting it down. There is no way that we will know what that aircraft will be carrying. Of course, pilots could signal to the Cuban airline pilots, but if disregarded then it poses a problem for us.

Dr. Brzezinski said that if the Cuban pilots disregarded our signals, then we could take that as a presumption that they are engaged in sending troops or military materiel, and they should be shot down.

General Meyer said that rules of engagement would have to be developed providing very clear instructions for our pilots.

Dr. Brzezinski asked if any work had been done on this, and *General Meyer* said that they would begin work on this immediately. He said that the question is one of timing. It will take 12 to 15 hours to move the FORRESTAL over to MODLOK. *Dr. Brzezinski* expressed surprise that the FORRESTAL is not there now, since the President has been informed of that. *General Meyer* said that they did not want to move it there because that would be a tip-off to the Cubans that we are aware of the possibility of a coup. *Dr. Brzezinski* pointed out that the Cubans could have a thousand troops in there in 24 hours, even before we put the FORRESTAL in place. *Carlucci* acknowledged that we will have little capability of knowing when and where the Cubans were taking off.

Claytor said we could put AWACS up right away, as they are within 3½ hours of the area.

Dr. Brzezinski asked for the argument for not having the FORRESTAL sail to MODLOK now. *General Meyer* said that they are in a flight-training mode, and that is why they are moved to where they are right now. We can maneuver it to the important point within 12 hours.

Dr. Brzezinski said he just doesn't understand the General's answer. The hell with the military exercise; we may need to really use the FORRESTAL.

General Meyer said that they didn't want to move it there because they felt that it would tip our hand to the Cubans.

David Aaron said that if the carrier moves out of Guantanamo, the Cubans will have it under surveillance, and that would send another good message to the Cubans.

Dr. Brzezinski said that if we have good information that there is a coup by Sunday, and we want to credibly deter the Cubans, we should have it there.

General Meyer said that it is possible that the carrier could precipitate the coup if the Cubans saw that we would be involved.

Mr. Pastor asked whether it would not be possible that the Cubans would see the movement of the carrier for a totally different reason—perhaps for a different kind of exercise. He asked whether carriers ever do exercises in that area of waters.

Mr. Claytor said that normally they are there for training purposes, and they train at a different point than MODLOK.

General Meyer said that they would probably receive a clear signal if we sent it to that area.

Dr. Brzezinski said that the worst situation would be if we gave a stern demarche, but we didn't have either the credibility or the capability to follow up. He suggested that the FORRESTAL move rapidly on Saturday night so that they could be there on Sunday morning.

Mr. Carlucci said that the coup could begin before Sunday.

Dr. Brzezinski said that the President already approved the FORRESTAL at that location so this is not an issue. It is just not where the President thought it was. He suggested that the SCC inform the President that the Acting Secretary of Defense recommended that we redeploy the FORRESTAL to a potentially more effective place where it could perform interdiction within a few hours, and have good coordination with AWACS.

Secretary Muskie was concerned about the possibility of our pilots being trigger-happy. Before sending the pilots into action, we will need a clear assessment of the coup and its possibility of success.

Dr. Brzezinski confirmed that we will need a positive Presidential instruction on the rules of engagement.

David Aaron raised the possibility that the Cubans might try to get their people out if violence started, and he asked whether it is not possible that there may be even more Americans in Nicaragua than Cubans.

General Meyer said that there may be as many as 4400 Americans and approximately the same number of Cubans, and that he would want to consider trying to get Americans out if they were caught in the cross-fire.

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we have any capability of knowing what will be in these planes. Would the SR-71 tell us any more? *Carlucci* said no.

Claytor said that the FORRESTAL could be moved in a position where it is within 6 hours of MODLOK, and since it will take us at

least that long to get agreement on the rules of engagement, and since that would put it in a non-provocative position, that may be the best idea. There was agreement on that point.

General Meyer referred to the steps that we would need to take. First the coup starts, and we would present the demarche to Castro immediately, and move to MODLOK. *Dr. Brzezinski* confirmed that we should go immediately to the Cubans and also move the FORRESTAL into place.

David Aaron raised the issue of protecting Americans.

Dr. Brzezinski said that was an important point, but the President had asked the SCC to meet on two other issues: an approach to the Cubans; and basic military contingencies. He agreed with *David Aaron's* point that we also need to look at the question of safe havens, but that this should be done at the next meeting.

Claytor said that he would work on that right away.

Dr. Brzezinski summarized by saying that the SCC agreed that at the moment of the coup we should make an immediate demarche to the Cubans; the carrier should move to MODLOK; and the AWACS should be activated. We will ask the President to approve these three steps at this time. In addition, he said that we will need to have a continuing capability to know what the Cubans are unloading, and he asked whether the carrier planes would be able to travel behind the Cuban aircraft and detect what was being unloaded.

General Meyer said that would be difficult, but possible. He said that their 40 Antonov's could airlift in 2000 people from Cuba in 36 hours.

Carlucci said that they could send 1000 in a single sortie by 5 IL-62's and 20 AN-26's.

Dr. Brzezinski said that we will need quick decisions.

David Aaron asked whether we could have some of our people on the ground in Managua to cover the airfields and follow who and what is getting off.

Secretary Muskie agreed that it would be very valuable to do this. We do not want to shoot down planes in which there are innocent civilians on it.

General Meyer agreed that we need to be able to see that they are in fact discouraging armed soldiers.

Carlucci said that we had some SIGINT capabilities to detect that, but we don't know how good it is.

Secretary Muskie said that we should meet again, and *Dr. Brzezinski* agreed, and asked Mr. Pastor to prepare a memo from him to the President which summarized the meeting, for him to send to the President within 2 hours.⁹

⁹ See Document 320.

320. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Coup in Nicaragua (S)

At your request, I chaired an SCC today with Secretary Muskie, Acting Secretary of Defense Claytor, General Meyer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Frank Carlucci of the CIA.² According to the CIA, the situation in Nicaragua is deteriorating rapidly, and the chances of a coup, and of a successful coup, have increased. The opposition to the Sandinista Directorate is apparently coming from three sources: (1) High level military officers, who oppose the pro-Cuban Marxists in the FSLN, and who have some support from the private sector; (2) moderate democratic parties and representatives from labor and the private sector, who have walked out of the Council of State; and (3) Nicaraguan exiles, primarily former National Guardsmen and Somocistas. The CIA estimates that the first group has the highest probability of implementing a successful coup, and that they might start it by this Sunday³ or even earlier. (S)

The key issue concerns possible Cuban involvement. The SCC agreed to recommend that you authorize the following three actions at the moment a coup begins:

1. Wayne Smith, Chief of our Interests Section, should immediately make a demarche to Cuban President Castro (at Tab A).⁴

2. The USS FORRESTAL, which is currently being moved to within six hours of MODLOC, should move immediately to that point from which we could interdict Cuban air or sea traffic to Nicaragua (map at Tab B).⁵

3. An AWACS would immediately be dispatched to the same area to monitor Cuban communications and traffic. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Unfiled Files, Box 143, Nicaragua: 9/78–11/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig—Ed Inadequate—a) Msg tab A is unclear & implies US prior knowledge of coup. b) Spell out UN–OAS action by us. c) Extraction/protection of Americans." Carter also wrote: "Expedite," and circled the word.

² See Document 319.

³ November 16.

⁴ Tab A, attached but not printed, is the undated draft demarche.

⁵ Tab B is attached but not printed.

We also recommend that an NSC be called immediately to decide on rules of engagement, and we have tasked the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a number of options. Our principal problem will be to distinguish between “innocent” Cuban traffic to the Island, perhaps to evacuate their personnel, and the dispatch of combat troops and military equipment. The CIA estimates that the Cubans could dispatch 1,000 troops and light equipment in 24 hours, and thus we will not have much time to respond after the coup gets underway. We also need to decide how we will protect Americans in Nicaragua. The Joint Chiefs of Staff will review their contingency plans so as to insure that we will have the capability to send as much as one brigade (3500 troops) into Nicaragua within 24 hours. We agreed to meet again to discuss these remaining issues before Sunday. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

In summary, the SCC recommends that you approve our taking the following three steps at the moment a coup begins in Nicaragua: (1) The demarche to the Cubans at Tab A; (2) the dispatch of the USS FORRESTAL to MODLOC; and (3) the dispatch of an AWACS to the area. (S)⁶

Secretary Muskie’s memorandum on the subject is at Tab C. (U)⁷

⁶ Carter did not approve or disapprove of this recommendation.

⁷ Tab C is attached but not printed. See footnote 4, Document 319.

321. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, November 14, 1980

SUBJECT

State's Comments on the Three Demarches (S)

At Tab A are the three demarches, which I revised according to the President and your instructions, and sent to Bowdler/Bushnell.² Bushnell finally returned my call at 7:00 p.m., and said that State disagreed with the entire thrust of the demarche, and he has been asked to prepare a memo from Muskie to the President with an alternative draft.³ I asked if he would suggest to Muskie that he call you before signing the memo. (S)

Bushnell had just returned from a meeting with Muskie, Christopher and Tarnoff. The following is Bushnell's account of the meeting. (Please protect.) Christopher feels very strongly that we should not get involved in any way unless we get support from the OAS or the UN. In response to Bushnell's comment that we are unlikely to get such support, and that even if we did, it could take a week, more than enough time for the Cubans to deal a *fait accompli*, Christopher said that did not change his mind. Essentially, Christopher and Tarnoff oppose the use of any U.S. force unless sanctioned by the OAS or the UN. Tarnoff acknowledges that the Cubans are likely to send in supplies and materiel immediately, and troops later if needed. He believes that if we tried to stop that, "we would lose all of Latin America." I think that is nonsense; if we let the Cubans put down a Nicaraguan rebellion, then we will lose a lot more than just Latin America. (S)

That is just the atmospherics. Their main critique was the demarches' failure to distinguish between Cuban involvement in a coup by nature of their large presence in Nicaragua (they believe we should condone this involvement, or at least not oppose it) and involvement of new Cuban troops. They therefore plan to change the last

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 11/1–14/80. Secret. A stamped notation indicates that Aaron saw the memorandum. An additional handwritten notation reads: "11/25/80."

² Tab A is attached but not printed.

³ A memorandum of the telephone conversation between Pastor and Bushnell has not been found. For additional information about Muskie's memorandum, see Document 319.

talking point to read: "The President is determined to resist any movement of Cuban forces which threaten peace and stability in the Caribbean area. There should be no miscalculation. The U.S. will not stand idly by in the event of such a movement of forces." (According to Bushnell, Christopher accepts that language, but would oppose our carrying out that threat.) In short, we would give Castro an invitation to send supplies, materiel, and advisers. Muskie apparently does not want to mention the October 1 statement because he thinks it is ambiguous on the question of whether the Cubans move their forces in response to a request.⁴ I think his point is debatable, but not worth debating. (S)

Needless to say, I believe a meeting is necessary to resolve these differences. (C)

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 319.

**322. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Aaron) to President Carter¹**

Washington, November 15, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Coup in Nicaragua

Attached is Secretary Muskie's memo to you concerning Nicaragua and Cuba.² His bottom line is that the coup plot is not in our interest and should be opposed. As you can imagine, this judgment and others in the memo are not shared by the Secretary of Defense or Dr. Brzezinski. In particular, the pessimistic assessment of the prospects for the coup is not shared by the Intelligence Community which now believes the coup has at least an even chance of success.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 79, Brzezinski Chron—To/From President, 9/80–12/80. Secret. Carter initialed another November 15 memorandum from Aaron, which discussed the evacuation of U.S. citizens and others from Nicaragua if a civil war broke out. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: Current Crisis: 8/80–1/81)

² Tab A was not attached. See the attachment to Document 323.

As you read Secretary Muskie's memo you may want to bear the following in mind:

—The current developments in Nicaragua make clear that the FSLN Directorate has not only lost the support of the moderates and business elements, but the coup plot itself shows that the Directorate is now opposed by important and militarily powerful nationalistic elements within the Sandinista movement. Increasingly dependent on Cuba, the radical leaders are losing their legitimacy with the Nicaraguan people.

—The risks of interdicting Cuban intervention set forth in the memo appear exaggerated while the failure to respond to Cuban intervention may be understated. The idea that Castro would attack Guantanamo strikes me as extreme and unlikely. Certainly the CIA should be asked for its considered judgment on likely Cuban responses to U.S. interdiction and on Central American reactions to unopposed Cuban intervention.

—In this connection, I have modified my earlier confidence that overt Cuban armed intervention is unlikely because of Castro's assurances conveyed by Padron to Wayne Smith. Ten days before the start of the massive Cuban airlift of troops from Ethiopia we received similar assurances that Cuba would not intervene militarily in the Ogaden War. In his cable summarizing his conversation with Padron, Wayne Smith said that the principal deterrent to Cuban intervention would be threat of U.S. force—a judgment shared by the CIA.³

—An important distinction which the Secretary's memo fails to make is between U.S. unilateral intervention—which everyone opposes—and efforts to prevent Cuban intervention. The nations of the hemisphere would be able to make that distinction, particularly given the increased disaffection by Nicaragua's friends (Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Mexico, Jamaica) with the direction the Marxists are taking the Nicaraguan revolution.

—Finally, I must express my astonishment at the suggestion that we should oppose the Nicaraguan desire to take up arms against a government that is increasingly dictatorial and dependent on foreign military support. The difficulties in Nicaragua stem from the efforts of a minority to progressively impose a Marxist regime which broad elements of that society are resisting. (The circumstances are not that

³ In telegram 7792 from Havana, November 6, Smith wrote: "In my judgment, it most unlikely rpt unlikely that Cubans would send troops (rather than simply weapons and advisers) to Nicaragua to prop up GRN or save it from 'counterrevolutionary reaction.'" He added: "Whatever US in fact might or might not do, Cubans believe we would react with force to deployment their troops to participate in civil wars or suppression 'counterrevolution' in any neighboring state." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Havana, 1980–1983)

different from Afghanistan under Taraki and Amin.) For us to oppose this resistance effort would contravene the very principles on which our own nation was founded. I disagree with State's definition of the legacy of your policy in Central America and the Panama Canal Treaties: it is to strengthen progressive democratic forces, not open the region to Cuban intervention.

The recent intelligence that the coup will be put off for 10–22 days provides time for a thorough and careful consideration of your choices. (You may wish to read the intelligence cable at Tab B.)⁴ Subject to your direction, we plan to hold a meeting next week of your senior advisors to review these issues and present systematically recommendations or alternatives. In this connection, it is premature to decide on whether a Bowdler/Tarnoff mission to Castro would be desirable, but that is certainly one alternative that should receive careful consideration.

⁴ Tab B was not attached. A November 17 memorandum from McMahon to Bowdler, Spiers, Tighe, and Pastor reported a delay in the coup attempt by up to 22 days. Pastor wrote on the memorandum: "The day before the FSLN killed our source." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua: 11/15–30/80) In a November 15 note to Carter, which Carter initialed, Aaron wrote: "Our latest information from the CIA is that the reported coup has been put off for perhaps as long as 22 days. The plotters are waiting for the political climate to improve—that is, for the current conflicts between the moderate political forces in the government to further isolate the radical Marxist elements in the government." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80–1/81)

323. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Muskie¹

Washington, November 17, 1980

SUBJECT

Your Memorandum to the President of November 15 Regarding Nicaragua/
Cuba

I return herewith a copy of your memorandum, with extensive marginal comments by the President.

The President has approved some of the talking points, on a provisional basis, sharpening in some cases the proposed wording.

In his marginal notes, he notes that we should "be prepared to prevent Cuban movement of troops to Nicaragua," and he notes that we will defend Guantanamo, if need be.

With regard to the proposed contingency visit by Bowdler and Tarnoff to Havana, the President notes that such a mission "may follow" a preemptory statement of our policy first to the Cubans, as per the provisional drafts.

These drafts vary somewhat from the drafts unanimously recommended by the SCC, and I assume that we would want to review them quickly in the event of a coup.

I have to note also for the record that there was no consensus in the SCC with the view which you express "that it is in our national interest not to have the coup attempt take place."² The President did not comment on that, and it is possible that the view of other NSC members may differ. I, for one, feel that this depends on whether such a coup were successful. A successful coup, bringing to power moderates generally committed to the democratic electoral process would be, in my view, in the U.S. national interest.³

Please let me know whether you would like me to share your memorandum with the Secretary of Defense and any other SCC participant.

Zbigniew Brzezinski

¹ Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat's Special Caption Documents, 1979–1989, Lot 92D630, Not For The System, Nov.–Dec. 1980. Secret; Not for the System; Alpha Channel.

² Muskie underlined "coup attempt take place" and wrote in the right-hand margin: "whom do we fight?"

³ Muskie underlined this sentence and wrote in the left-hand margin: "Implication is that we help the coup succeed!"

Attachment**Memorandum From Secretary of State Muskie to
President Carter⁴**

Washington, November 15, 1980

SUBJECT

Nicaragua/Cuba

Following our conversations on the subject, I have been giving further thought to the delicate and difficult question of how we deal with Cuba in the event of a coup in Nicaragua. In my memorandum to you of November 13 I described the genesis of a possible coup.⁵ The more that I learn about the plotters and their prospects, however, the stronger my conviction becomes that it is in our national interest not to have the coup attempt take place.⁶ If the coup does materialize, there may be a way to discourage Cuban involvement through diplomatic channels before having to decide whether to interdict militarily any Cuban troop or resupply effort directed toward Nicaragua.

Before I outline the approaches that I recommend for your consideration, I would like to summarize briefly the problems that we would face if Cuba decides to provide men and material to the FSLN.

If we move to interdict the Cubans:

—Time constraints and the improbability of obtaining necessary majority support would likely rule out our being able to act under either OAS or UN auspices.⁷ Until the present situation, you have carefully avoided employing U.S. military forces in such situations. What would this mean for our legacy on peaceful resolution of disputes, especially in Latin America, on which we made such an investment for example in the Panama Treaties?⁸

—We would be intervening unilaterally to deny a duly constituted government the defensive assistance which it would have requested pursuant to international law. There is probably an assistance agreement between Nicaragua and Cuba. Few nations would accept the legality or morality of our unilateral action and many would view

⁴ Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed the top of the page.

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 319.

⁶ Muskie underlined "not to have the coup attempt take place" and wrote in the margin: "We have told Congress we support the moderates."

⁷ Muskie wrote in the right-hand margin next to this sentence: "Time constraints."

⁸ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph: "We should be prepared to notify UN & OAS, announce our non-intervention policy & be prepared to prevent Cuban movement of troops Nicaragua."

it as a dangerous and unacceptable precedent. What would be the ramifications worldwide?

—We might have to contend with Cuban moves to seize the highly vulnerable Guantanamo Naval Base and the probability that there would be fighting between U.S. and Cuban aircraft.⁹ The Soviet reactions to these confrontations should also be assessed, and Moscow's reactions will probably be stronger if, as I expect, American interdiction efforts win little support in the Third World even among the democratic Latin American governments.

—A decision to interdict the Cubans should be based on reasonable assurances that it will be effective militarily and that we will not harm innocent non-combatants. Even if we interdict Cubans in the air and at sea, the FSLN might win on the ground in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas, with the Cuban support already in-country, may well be able to win without additional supplies or combat forces from Cuba.

However, if the U.S. fails to act:

—An FSLN victory, with Cuban support, would produce a totalitarian and repressive regime in Nicaragua, destroying the surviving moderate forces. Such a regime would be more radical and interventionist and it could be expected to give all out support to the leftist insurgents in El Salvador. This would immediately threaten Guatemala and Honduras.

—A failure to act militarily would be viewed with relief by some but others would regard it as a further sign of America's inability to apply its military power. If we try to interdict but fail, we would be generally regarded as impotent.

Given these unattractive alternatives, I recommend that we conclude that the launching of the coup at this time is not in our national interest. We have just received a report that the coup will be delayed for approximately three weeks.¹⁰ Taking advantage of that period, I would instruct our Embassy [*less than 1 line not declassified*] to approach those whom we believe may be contemplating the coup. Without revealing our prior knowledge of the coup plotting, our representatives would be told to try to elicit as much information as possible about the intentions of the plotters. In the course of these conversations, our representatives would make clear that we have doubts about the prospects for the coup. These discreet warnings would make the rounds of the plotters, and would probably reach the FSLN leadership. I do not know what ultimate influence we may have with the plotters, but

⁹ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this sentence: "We would defend Gtmo."

¹⁰ See footnote 4, Document 322.

signaling our reservations might well have a calming effect on them. Such statements by us would also be beneficial if, as is possible, the coup rumors are the result of a provocation by the FSLN.

If the coup breaks out, I recommend that we notify Castro that Bill Bowdler and Peter Tarnoff would like to go to Havana immediately to discuss the matter privately with him at your request. In June of 1979 Castro invited Tarnoff to come to Havana to discuss Nicaragua. We declined the invitation at that time, but I now favor talks in the event of a coup. There is a precedent for a visit by an Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs to Cuba. One of Bowdler's predecessors, Terry Todman, visited Havana in early 1977.

Bowdler and Tarnoff could carry a message from you to Castro underlying the seriousness with which we would view Cuban intervention in Nicaragua. The fact of asking for a meeting with Castro would, I believe, delay any significant Cuban move into Nicaragua. In his conversations with Tarnoff Castro has invited us to raise our concerns about Cuban actions with him at an early stage. In this instance, a meeting between our representatives and the Cuban leader is worth trying and could have a moderating effect on Cuban actions before we would have to face the difficult prospect of dealing with active Cuban intervention in Nicaragua.¹¹

Attached are the draft contingency messages which have been revised as you requested.¹²

¹¹ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph: "A peremptory message describing our policy *may* be followed by further discussions."

¹² Attached but not printed.

324. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 20, 1980

SUBJECT

Nicaragua and the USS FORRESTAL (S)

According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the USS FORRESTAL is still within six hours of MODLOK. I recommend that we keep it there for at least 72 hours. We still do not know enough about what is happening within the military hierarchy between the more nationalistic coup plotters and the Marxist elements of the FSLN. Since it appears that the FSLN penetrated the coup plot, and the Nationalists are aware of this, it is at least conceivable that one or the other will make their move very soon. (S)²

The information, which we have, is on the public dispute between the FSLN and the private sector and democratic leaders, the opposition. The opposition appear increasingly unified, and not at all reluctant to confront the FSLN. They have been galvanized by the assassination of Salazar.³ On the other hand, the FSLN are clearly divided. It is not at all clear how this will ultimately play out, but for the moment the two sides are still talking. We have received intelligence reports that Cuban Vice President and Minister of Defense Raul Castro is planning a trip to Nicaragua soon. While it increasingly looks as if the FSLN has preempted the opposition, and could be successful in knocking the leaders off one by one, our information is not conclusive yet, and the critical arena is still within the military, and we don't know what's happening there. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua: 11/15–30/80. Secret. Pastor did not initial the memorandum.

² In a November 18 note to Brzezinski, Pastor wrote: "It looks as if the Sandinistas have penetrated the coup conspiracy deeply, and in the next few days we are likely to see a confrontation between the two sectors of the military." Pastor also commented: "My guess is that the entire battle is going on underground, and independently of the struggle between the private sector and the democratic parties on the one hand, and the Junta on the other." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4/80–8/80)

³ In telegram 5558 from Managua, November 18, the Embassy reported that Salazar had been killed by Nicaraguan state security in a "round up of private sector and political leaders," and that the "GRN said it had information for some months that Salazar was involved with ex-Guardia Nacional in planning counter-revolution and decided to make arrest when it received information of arms transfer." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800551–1078)

Therefore, I recommend that we keep the USS FORRESTAL in place for at least the next three days. I have spoken with Bowdler, who agrees with this recommendation. I have also spoken to CIA analysts who pretty much agree with the analysis above.⁴ (S)

⁴ Brzezinski wrote at the bottom of the page: "To stay there till Sat. 6 p.m." Pastor added the following note: "Spoke to ZB at 5 P.M., Sat., & he decided to let Forrestal move on." The date of that conversation was November 11.

325. Memorandum of Notification Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency for the Special Coordination Committee¹

Washington, December 5, 1980

SUBJECT

Additional Funds in FY 1981 for the Covert Action Program in Nicaragua

1. CIA proposes to intensify its covert action program in Nicaragua in a manner consistent with the Presidential Finding of 19 July 1979.² This will require additional funds, bringing the FY 1981 total to \$1.7 million. This amount is accommodated in the FY 1981 amended CIA budget for covert action on which Congressional action is possible this week.³

2. *Background:* The above-cited Presidential Finding authorizes the provision of funds and guidance to assist moderate elements in Nicaragua to resist attempts by Cuban-supported and other Marxist groups to consolidate their power. The SCC in July 1979 approved funds of \$750,000, of which \$650,000 were spent in FY 1980.⁴ On 6 October 1980, in response to a request for \$1.2 million in FY 1981, the Chairman of

¹ Source: Department of State, Executive Secretariat's Special Caption Documents, 1979-1989, Lot 92D630, Not For The System, Nov.-Dec. 1980. Secret. Dodson sent the memorandum to Muskie, Brown, Civiletti, McIntyre, Jones, and Turner under a December 10 memorandum.

² See footnote 3, Document 286.

³ In a December 17 memorandum to Turner, McMahon noted that Congress had "recently acted favorably" concerning the budget amendment. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 82B00035R: Committee Files, Box 2, Folder 2: Covert Action)

⁴ See Document 286.

the SCC authorized the continuation of funding in FY 1981 at the level of \$650,000, with a statement that the funding level could be adjusted at a later date. Because recent developments in Nicaragua indicate that the moderate democratic forces probably are engaged in a serious struggle for survival, we have raised our estimate of FY 1981 requirements to \$1.7 million.

3. *The Nicaragua Situation:* Actions by the GRN/FSLN during the past month have clearly demonstrated that it intends to control all activities of the private sector and independent political parties. In early November, the GRN/FSLN prohibited a rally by the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, one of the four non-FSLN political parties, sponsored a takeover of the party's headquarters, and made its leader a target of abuse. At the 12 November meeting of the Council of State, 11 representatives of the moderate sectors walked out in protest when it became clear that the FSLN would allow only pro-FSLN groups to stage rallies and meetings. Most serious of all were the events of 17 October. GRN security forces shot and killed a leading businessman and carried out a coordinated series of arrests of private sector and political representatives on charges of arms trafficking and other counter-revolutionary activities. Other private sector representatives have been threatened. These actions of the GRN/FSLN against moderate sectors fighting for their existence make our support to them at this time critical. We plan to identify funding channels within Nicaragua but will pass a major portion of the funds through third country organizations.

4. *Program Activities and Expenses in FY 1980:* Of the \$650,000 expended in FY 1980, [dollar amount not declassified] was provided to [less than 1 line not declassified] newspaper; [dollar amount not declassified] was given through [less than 1 line not declassified] to support [1 line not declassified] and a monthly subsidy of [dollar amount not declassified] was given to [1 line not declassified]. The [less than 1 line not declassified] received [dollar amount not declassified] to help finance [1 line not declassified] that focused attention on the problems of the private sector. A member organization of the [1 line not declassified] was given [dollar amount not declassified] with which to provide financial assistance to two independent labor unions and two political parties. [1 line not declassified] served as a conduit for [dollar amount not declassified] half to the private sector and half to government-approved social projects. The Agency has also generated considerable propaganda on such subjects as the increasing Cuban, Soviet, and East European involvement in Nicaragua and continues to encourage third countries to become active both as funding channels and as participants in the effort to assist independent and democratic elements in Nicaragua. Elements of the private sector of a friendly Latin American country have agreed

to channel [dollar amount not declassified] to the [1 line not declassified] and [dollar amount not declassified] is earmarked for support to church-affiliated organizations engaged in campaigns against Marxist indoctrination. Miscellaneous expenses were [dollar amount not declassified].

5. Based on the 6 October 1980 approval to continue the covert action program in Nicaragua at the funding level of \$650,000 approved for FY 1980 and the proviso that further adjustments in the funding levels could be made later, the following funds have been obligated so far in FY 1981 in response to the critical need for increases in activities and funds:

(a) [dollar amount not declassified] was provided to a [acronym not declassified] member organization for operating expenses, membership drives, and organizational expansion.

(b) [dollar amount not declassified] was obligated to support organizational activities of [3 lines not declassified].

(c) [dollar amount not declassified] was provided to [less than 1 line not declassified] newspaper for equipment and newsprint purchases and other operating costs.

(d) [dollar amount not declassified] was provided to support organizational and promotional activity of [1 line not declassified] and its youth affiliate. [less than 1 line not declassified] is one of the most active parties in the struggle for democratic pluralism in Nicaragua.

(e) [dollar amount not declassified] was obligated as a subsidy to the [1 line not declassified].

(f) [dollar amount not declassified] was obligated [less than 1 line not declassified] for two third-country media assets.

(g) [dollar amount not declassified] to [acronym not declassified] for labor organizations and political parties.

(h) [dollar amount not declassified] to promote united front activities by the moderate political groups.

(i) [dollar amount not declassified] for national poster campaign protesting the murder of Salazar.

(j) [1 line not declassified] for the purpose of publicizing the plight of the private sector in Nicaragua.

The above obligations and expenditures leave a balance in FY 1981 funds of [dollar amount not declassified].

6. *Activities and Expenses in FY 1981:* It has become increasingly important, and difficult, to support and strengthen democratic elements in Nicaragua, especially in view of intensified GRN/FSLN repression. Current activities must be continued and expanded during FY 1981.

(a) Domestic and international media operations: The only independent newspaper is under constant attack; its editor has been threat-

ened with arrest, and pro-FSLN militants threaten violence against its management and employees. An independent radio station is in debt to the GRN, which may cause it to close down, and two-thirds of the radio stations have been brought under GRN control during the past year. Depending on GRN actions against the media it does not control, we will have to get funds to them to allow them to resist GRN financial pressures. We will continue to fund international media operations to expose and counter the Cuban and Soviet roles in Nicaragua. *Estimated Media Costs: [dollar amount not declassified]*

(b) Independent political parties: The small and weak independent political parties, which were not allowed to function effectively during the Somoza regime, are trying to resist GRN/FSLN attempts to neutralize them. Their existence probably can only be preserved by uniting them in a common front. The four parties must be maintained and strengthened. *Estimated Costs: [dollar amount not declassified]*

(c) Support to the private sector, independent unions, and individuals: [1 line not declassified] has served as a voice speaking out for democratic pluralism, a mixed economy, and free elections. Continued support is needed for its organizations and propaganda activities. [less than 1 line not declassified] have been used to fund independent labor unions and political parties, and can provide organizational and moral support to any individuals or entities selected for assistance. *Estimated Costs: [dollar amount not declassified]*

(d) Support for third-country activities in Nicaragua: A friendly Latin American country and European elements are acting as conduits for the passage of funds to moderate groups and organizations, and in some cases their participation at our behest has resulted in infusions of their own funds as they became interested in and convinced of the need for our program. *Estimated Costs: [dollar amount not declassified]*

(e) Support travel of media assets to Nicaragua. *Estimated Costs: [dollar amount not declassified]*

7. *Policy Authority:* The activities proposed in this program for FY 1981 are in consonance with the proposal reviewed by the SCC on 17 July 1979 and the consequent Presidential Finding.⁵ We are notifying committee members of a significantly higher level of spending that is consistent with the request now before Congress. Assuming Congressional approval there will be sufficient funds [1 line not declassified].

⁵ See Document 285.

8. *Deadline:* The situation in Nicaragua is such that your urgent attention is requested. Please forward any comments to [1 line not declassified] by close of business 12 December.⁶

⁶ Henze sent a copy of the memorandum to Pastor under a December 8 note requesting Pastor's comments. Pastor wrote on the note: "Called on Dec., 12, 1980 and told him to support the proposal—and do more. RP." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua: 12/80–1/81) For additional information related to the ongoing covert action in Nicaragua, see Document 492.

326. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 2, 1981

SUBJECT

Nicaragua and Terrorism (S)

As you will recall, before we could disburse the \$75 million in aid to Nicaragua, you were required by law to make a positive determination that the Government of Nicaragua was not supporting terrorism in other countries. You did that on September 11, 1980.² However, the law also states that if "at a later time" you determine that the Government of Nicaragua is supporting terrorism, then you are required to terminate assistance, and the outstanding balance of any loan to the Government of Nicaragua becomes immediately due and payable. (C)

On December 4, the CIA published an item in the *National Intelligence Daily* (Tab A)³ which said that they found "a persuasive case that the Sandinista National Directorate—and by extension, the Nicaraguan Government"—is supporting terrorism in other countries. We immediately asked the State Department to prepare an analysis of the CIA's information, and to provide us with its own judgment. State described the CIA's article as "unbalanced, contains little that has not been

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua (Terrorism): 12/79–1/81. Secret. Sent for information. Carter initialed the top of the page on January 5.

² See footnote 6, Document 316.

³ Tab A is attached but not printed.

reported previously, and ascribes an unwarranted degree of certainty to intelligence reports of varying reliability" (Tab B).⁴ State does not believe that the CIA information constitutes "conclusive evidence" of Nicaraguan Government involvement. As you will recall, "conclusive evidence" was our criterion when you made your initial determination, and there is no reason to change the criterion now. The CIA has still never brought to our attention any evidence which either we or they would judge as "conclusive" that Nicaragua is supporting terrorism, and therefore I do not believe that you need to change your judgment or the Presidential determination. Nevertheless, I wanted to bring these two reports to your attention.⁵ (S)

We have also received an assessment from Ambassador Pezzullo and his country team concludes that there is no new evidence which "would justify a change in the President's determination on this issue" (Tab C).⁶ Moreover, the Ambassador points out that both the U.S. and Venezuela have been very clear about our concerns about Nicaraguan involvement in third countries, and if this were established, that it would have "negative consequences" for our relationships with Nicaragua. Our Ambassador believes this is a very important factor in FSLN calculations.⁷ (S)

⁴ Tab B, attached but not printed, is a memorandum prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, December 5.

⁵ In a December 8 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor recommended that Brzezinski "ask Turner for a specific answer (yes or no)" to the question: "Does the CIA have conclusive evidence that the Government of Nicaragua cooperates or harbors any international terrorist organization, or is aiding, abetting, or supporting acts of violence or terrorism in other countries?" Aaron added the following for Pastor: "Leave well enough alone," and to Brzezinski: "This is *wrong headed*." He also noted at the bottom of the page: "This is stupid. We have done enough. We should do brief report to the P. on the [unclear] NID." Brzezinski responded on December 9 by writing: "DA I agree. ZB."

⁶ Tab C is not attached. Reference is to telegram 6015 from Managua, December 18. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800602–0507)

⁷ Spiers included an extended critique of the December 4 *National Intelligence Daily* in a December 16 briefing memorandum to Muskie. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 39, Nicaragua (Terrorism): 12/79–1/81)

327. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 10, 1981, 2031Z

112. Subject: (S) Demarche to GRN. Ref: A. State 6357,² B. Managua 103,³ C. Managua 095,⁴ D. 80 Managua 5859.⁵

1. (S-Entire text).

2. I met with Junta member Sergio Ramirez and FSLN Directorate member Humberto Ortega this morning per instructions in ref A. I began by reviewing the position the USG had assumed at the outset of the GRN administration, offering support for the reconstruction of the country. This policy was based on undertakings made by the Junta before it took office to establish a pluralistic system, respectful of human rights and dedicated to constructing a new Nicaraguan state which would satisfy the desires of the Nicaraguan people. The administration has been generous in its assistance and has expended considerable energy and political capital convincing the U.S. Congress to support an assistance effort which is the largest in Latin America and one of the largest in the world. Sadly, the GRN's promises have not been met. The private sector is traumatized and isolated, political parties have been restricted as has the press, and human rights are not being protected. 6,000 or more prisoners are being held, the court system evidences little regard for due process, and the general attitude of the government appears to be hardening.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. Also sent Priority to San Salvador.

² In telegram 6357 to Managua, January 9, the Department instructed Pezzullo to deliver a *démarche* to the GRN on its "failure to halt arms trafficking to El Salvador, certain continuing human rights concerns and the harsh treatment of the private sector and independent political parties," and, at Pezzullo's discretion, "concern about the growing Cuban influence in Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

³ In telegram 103 from Managua, January 9, Pezzullo reported on his meeting with Ramirez, during which Pezzullo raised "increasing evidence of GRN/FSLN support for Salvadoran guerrillas." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810041-0687)

⁴ In telegram 95 from Managua, January 9, Pezzullo reported on his conversation with Borge: "I told Borge that there was increasing evidence that Nicaraguan territory was being used to aid the guerrillas in Salvador with support from the FSLN." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810013-0039)

⁵ Pezzullo reported in telegram 5859 from Managua, December 6, 1980, on his December 5 meeting with the five members of the Nicaraguan Junta, during which he described how "GRN failures to fulfill its commitments to pluralism and an open society" had fomented the "current political crisis" in Nicaragua and undermined relations with the United States. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800583-0285)

3. I contined that we had emphasized on many occasions that their pledge to follow an international policy of non-intervention had to be substantiated in deeds, given the turbulent period through which Central America is currently passing. The President, after exhaustive review by the U.S. Government, had determined in September that the GRN was not involved in aiding and abetting terrorism.⁶ That determination was made despite some evidence that support was being lent to the Salvadoran rebels, but it was not of a conclusive nature. Subsequent to that determination, considerably more evidence has come to our attention which raises serious doubts on the credibility of the GRN/FSLN commitment that it would not offer direct support to the Salvadoran rebels. We have been aware for some time that the Cuban Government is deeply involved in supporting subversive movements throughout Central America and that it has upped its involvement in Salvador as the political situation there has deteriorated. The large number of Cubans in Nicaragua, the closeness of the relationship between the two countries and, most recently, evidence of coordination of support for Salvadoran rebels raises the question of whether the GRN is allowing itself to be used to serve Cuban interests. If so, that would alter the nature of our relationship. I ended by saying I was going to Washington for consultations on these matters and had been asked to bring our concerns to their attention and seek their reactions.

4. Humberto Ortega was the principal spokesman. He focused on support to the Salvadoran rebels. He said their experience taught the FSLN that it took a tremendous amount of time, money and logistical support to organize a widespread guerrilla operation. The Salvadoran guerrillas, who aided the FSLN somewhat during its campaign, have always had more finances available to them (at least a 100 million) and are able to purchase supplies from many sources. He said, as did Borge (ref C), that most of the arms the FSLN acquired came from the United States. He assumed that that was true in the Salvadoran situation as well. He said it would be "simplistic" to believe that arms coming through Nicaragua, which doesn't have a contiguous border with Salvador could be of importance in that struggle. All Central American countries have permeable borders, he observed. The FSLN military had its hands full preventing infiltration by counterrevolutionary elements from Honduras. "Even though we know Honduran military officers sympathize with ex-Guardia insurgents and may even be supporting them, we recognize that neither the Honduran military nor any other military force in Central America is capable of controlling the flow

⁶ See footnote 6, Document 316.

of people and arms across its borders; and that certainly includes Nicaragua," he added.

5. I interrupted to say that it was not the quantity of arms going into Salvador which was under question, but whether the GRN/FSLN was clandestinely supporting the Salvadoran rebels and willingly allowing its territory to be used for transit of arms northward. Ortega said that "our principal concern is our Honduran, not the Salvadoran, since "we consider ourselves under attack from the north and have lost 100 people in the last several months in armed confrontations along our border with Honduras." He added the GRN has not given priority to the Salvadoran border and said he was unaware of any operation supported by the government or individuals in the government. He would be willing to investigate if we could provide more specific details. Some elements in Nicaragua clearly sympathize with the revolutionary left in Salvador and want to help but the GRN/FSLN had resisted getting involved. He said he would provide me with the details on a company-sized group of volunteers who were broken up by the FSLN [garble] they wanted to fight in El Salvador. He admitted that low-level FSLN members most probably were fighting for or helping supply the Salvadoran rebels, but was categoric in stating that these actions did not have leadership sanction and were broke up when encountered.

6. At this point Ramirez questioned whether the information we had was exaggerated. He said he recognized the enlightened policy taken by the USG in supporting reconstruction and in building a new relationship with Nicaragua. The USG should be mindful of the attempts the GRN has made to build the basis of a strong relationship. He said the GRN has met its promise to assume the debt of the Somoza government and has reached an agreement with the banking community on a repayment schedule. The GRN has also been very sensitive to the large U.S. investors and is in the process of working out a longterm arrangement to insure that Standard Fruit continues operations here. Negotiations with ASARCO are progressing satisfactorily, and hopefully will result in early agreement. And even though the GRN could agree that its rhetoric has been excessive, it has taken major steps to control it recently and believes the tone of our relationship has improved. The fact that we can discuss the most sensitive subjects as frankly and openly as we do is testimony to the GRN's desire to have good relations with the United States.

7. Returning to the support to the Salvadoran guerrillas, Ramirez asked a series of probing questions: "are you saying that the Cubans are using our territory . . . Are you saying that we are cooperating with the Cubans . . . or are you saying that members of this government are involved?"

8. I said we recognized that the high decibel level of anti-American propaganda had been lowered in recent months. We thought that was beneficial. And we were fully aware that the GRN is interested in maintaining a positive image in the international financial and business communities. I commended them for inviting the Council of the Americas to help them draft a new investment code. This was on the positive side of the ledger and would not be lost to U.S. policymakers as they review the substance of our relationship on the question of the specifics, of support for Salvador. I said I would not get into that now. On the Cuban issue, we were dealing with both a real and an image problem. The real problem involved Cuban designs in Central America, which were well documented; and Cuba's close association with the Soviet Union, which has forced it to send its troops abroad and to engage in military activities in Africa, the Middle East and even as far away as Afghanistan. Cuba plays on a world stage, and whether true or not, the mere presence of so many Cubans in Nicaragua, especially in the sensitive areas as intelligence, police and the military, leaves the impression that the GRN is allowing itself to be used by the Cubans for Castro's purposes.

9. Humberto Ortega interjected at that point to ask how many Cubans I thought were working with the EPS. I said probably about two hundred. He smiled and said much less and then admitted to between 50 and 100, but hastened to add that "there are many other Latins—Argentiniens, Mexicans, Peruvians, etc, who are also helping." He claimed that there are "more Americans than Cubans" helping the EPS.

10. Ortega said that he believed there is an unfortunate misreading by the United States of the revolutionary movements in Central America and degrees of Cuban and Nicaraguan influence over those movements. He observed that the Cuban reality differs markedly from that of Nicaragua, due to differences in the personalities, the historic settings and USG reaction. Cuba's attitude toward the US is markedly different from that of Nicaragua, in large part due to the way US policy played out in each country. The Nicaraguan model, which permits "political pluralism, a mixed economy and freedom and favors a close working relationship with the United States," has more impact on revolutionary movements than does the Cuban model. He said "I hope you have been aware of the substance change in the posture of the Salvadoran left, which has evolved from a very extremist position to one which is more pragmatic and moderate. That change came about because they have drawn upon our revolutionary experience," he boasted. I remarked that unfortunately the distinction he sees or tries to project between the Nicaraguan position and the Cuban position is very often lost because Nicaragua is overshadowed by Cuba. His recent state-

ments in Havana at the anniversary of the Cuban Communist Party had left the impression that Nicaragua supported fully the very hardline position Castro has been driven into. Castro admitted openly that he supported the Afghan invasion and that he also supports a hardline position on Poland. Ortega said "we do not agree with Cuba on those issues," adding that "we defined our position in these areas by not defining our position." He repeated that he thought the distinction was lost on most. I agreed, adding that Nicaragua had to take responsibility for clarifying its own international image.

11. Ramirez acknowledged that Nicaragua's international image had been hurt because of failure to be precise in articulating their non-alignment. He said they were considering two important ambassadorial changes in February. A new Ambassador would be sent to Washington "who should be more acceptable to the Reagan administration", and an entire new team will go to the United Nations. (Note: These constitute important changes. See (ref D), in which I said their international image had been damaged in large measure by the inability of their UN Mission to develop an "independent" position from the Cubans.)

12. Tom O'Donnel asked Ortega if he saw a possible solution in El Salvador. Without hesitation he responded that a "political solution was needed; that the revolutionary forces and the moderates in the government would have to sit down to negotiate an agreement which eliminated the repressive rightist elements from the military and agreed upon a program of government. He said the FDR leaders had been prepared to initiate such negotiations when they were brutally murdered by the Salvadoran right. He understood the US would not oppose such negotiations. He referred to reports that the Salvadoran guerrillas were about to launch the "final offensive," but reiterated that only a "political" arrangement would resolve the current impasse. He strongly implied the FSLN is pushing the FDR towards a political accommodation.

13. Both Humberto and Ramirez were very interested in my consultations in Washington and asked that I meet with them upon my return. I said I would do so. Ramirez in particular was concerned about what could be expected from the Reagan administration and referred to the television program "The Castro Connection" with specific reference to Reagan's comment that he would not rule out sending troops to El Salvador. I emphasized that they follow the advice I had given them months ago, that the best way to enjoy good relations with the Reagan administration was to develop a constructive and solid relationship with the United States. Unfortunately just the opposite has occurred. The political and economic climate in the country has deteriorated, the government has become more, rather than less, rigid, the increased strife in Salvador and the threat of a major confrontation in the area,

coupled with increased evidence of Nicaraguan Government support for the rebels, are led in the wrong direction. Ortega attempted to put the best face on the situation. He said one positive aspect is that we could discuss sensitive issues as freely as we do. He added surprisingly that he was “sorry” he had not taken advantage of the military offer to visit the United States last year and was hopeful the invitation could be renewed.

14. Comment: There is no question that we got their attention after three straight-from-the-shoulder demarches on the issue of our relations and, specifically, their support to the Salvadoran left. Ramirez was as nervous as a cat during the entire discussion. He does not have a poker face. His stomach doesn’t permit it. Gas attacks drive him from the room repeatedly. Ortega is a much cooler cat. If anyone is dealing directly with the Cubans, it is Ortega. The special operations unit of the military, which is under his command would be the one involved in any covert operations with the Cubans. Not once during the conversation did his face reveal evidence that they were collaborating in a clandestine way with the Cubans.

15. After these three extended conversations, it is clear to me that the leaders here are very concerned about the current status of our relations and aware that opportunities were lost to strengthen bilateral ties. The new administration has an opportunity to play on these fears and influence in a positive sense the course of events here and in the CA region. The influence the FSLN has over the Salvadoran left may not be as great as Ortega would have us believe, but it is considerable. His suggestion that a “political solution” is the best way out in El Salvador presents an option in which the FSLN could perhaps be led to play a useful diplomatic role.

Pezzullo

328. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 15, 1981, 0618Z

197. Subj: (S) Demarche on GRN Support of Salvadoran Guerrillas. Ref A. State 9158² B. Managua 0112.³

1. Entire text

2. I met this evening for two hours with GRN/FSLN group composed of Sergio Ramirez, Humberto Ortega and Jaime Wheelock. I said I regretted we didn't have a larger turnout despite our request that all members of the Junta and FSLN National Directorate attend. I was instructed to bring our message to all the leadership level because of the gravity of the issue and to insure that there was no misunderstanding in the mind of any key leader. Ortega said he and Wheelock would brief the full Directorate tomorrow and Sergio said he would do the same with the Junta; and they assured me that a full and accurate accounting of what transpired at this session would be passed on. Sergio took notes during the meeting.

3. I emphasized that the message I brought came from the highest levels in the USG. We had carefully analyzed all the evidence available to us and had come to the conclusion that an immediate demarche was necessary before any action was taken, I then translated the talking points in ref A verbatim. I stressed the urgency of their taking immediate action to halt all support of the Salvadoran rebels and to present me with a response that could be forwarded to the President by Saturday.⁴

4. Humberto Ortega began by reiterating the position he had stated in our last conversation (ref B). Jaime Wheelock repeated the same theme, i.e. that the GRN/FSLN had an official policy of not rpt not involving itself in support to Salvadoran guerrillas, even though they sympathize with their cause. Wheelock added that they couldn't take any meaningful action unless they received more precise info.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² In telegram 9158 to Managua, January 14, the Department instructed the Embassy to deliver a demarche to the GRN/FSLN group, which noted evidence of their support of Salvadoran guerrillas and warned that "immediate cessation of any support will be essential if your government is interested in preserving a constructive relationship with the U.S." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80-1/81)

³ See Document 327.

⁴ January 17.

5. I said our info indicates clearly that clandestine support operations are in process, which contradict their official policy. A simple reiteration of their public posture would not wash. We needed a commitment from them to stop. Unless that occurred very quickly, our assistance would be terminated and the repayment clause would be triggered. The effect on their economy and on our bilateral relationship would be severe. I said they should keep in mind that this demarche came from officials in the USG who designed our new relationship and have shown a willingness to go to great lengths to build a meaningful and cooperative relationship. The Govt of Nicaragua was being asked to preserve that relationship by desisting immediately from aiding the Salvadoran rebels and allowing the Cubans to use their territory for that purpose. And, while Cuba was playing in this area to further its political ambitions, Nicaragua would be the loser if our relationship deteriorated and if the violence in CA spread.

6. Sergio Ramirez then read from press cables which quoted Amb White's statement (carried by AFP out of Salvador) that a group of armed Nicaraguans had attempted to interfere in the Salvadoran conflict.⁵ White allegedly told the press that two boatloads of invaders from Nicaragua had entered Salvador. Sergio complained that these were "inflammatory and irresponsible" charges without evidence to sustain them. He understood how Junta Pres Durate might make such a charge, but was hard pressed to understand why a US Amb would make such a public accusation. He asked if the press spokesman would comment on these remarks. I said I would report his concerns to Washington and would repeat any guidance they sent me. I had no info to draw upon to make a judgment of my own. I did regret that a public statement had been made at a time when we wanted them to focus on the very serious matter before us. The latter was a carefully studied

⁵ In telegram 187 from Managua, January 14, O'Donnell reported that at a luncheon hosted by the GRN Junta for the U.S. congressional delegation, he had requested for Pezzullo an urgent meeting with the GRN Junta upon Pezzullo's return from Washington. O'Donnell also noted that White had confirmed by telephone press reports concerning his statement that the "Salvadoran Government has evidence that boats carrying 100 guerillas through Bay of Fonseca," for landing in El Salvador, "came from Nicaragua." O'Donnell concluded: "In effect, we jumped the gun on our planned demarche." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80–1/81) In telegram 226 from Managua, January 15, Pezzullo asserted that the Salvadoran Government should be "urged" to substantiate White's statement with "hard evidence," and commented that the "intense public discussion of the charges and counter-charges serves to distract the GRN's attention from our private discussions and to cast doubt on the seriousness and reliability of our evidence." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/13–15/81) Telegram 247 from Managua, January 16, included an informal translation of a diplomatic note from the GRN denying involvement in the disembarkation of guerrillas on the coast of El Salvador and protesting White's statement. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810024–0052)

position taken by the USG and required their urgent attention and early response.

7. All three then pressed for more details so they could take actions to interrupt any "operations going on behind our backs." I said the nature of the info was such that that was not possible and suggested that they do their own internal review and inquire of their Cuban friends. I asked whether it were possible that compartmentalized covert operations could be taking place without the knowledge of some gov't leaders. I got no response.

8. We then turned to clandestine radio stations and the fact that Radio Sandino was aping the same propaganda line as Radio Havana and Radio Liberation. Ortega said they would be glad to shut down the clandestine operation station if they could locate it. I said I would attempt to get a more precise location. Quick action in closing down the station would be a positive action they could take. I brushed aside their arguments that Radio Sandino was not a gov't station and insisted that they change the anti-GRN propaganda coming out of Radio Sandino "to show they they really are not inciting violence in El Salvador." (I would appreciate info by immediate cable on the location of clandestine radio stations pinpointed by triangulation. I will pass that info on to the gov't immediately to test its willingness to take some positive action.)⁶

9. I observed that they could help their position by desisting from making any more public statements which inflame an already tense situation in El Salvador and in CA in general. They took note. This led to a discussion of a possible political solution. More below.

10. When again pressed for specifics, I reiterated that the info we had came from many sources and provided the convincing evidence of Nicaraguan aid to the Salvadoran rebels. We must assume that high-level members of the gov't were aware of what was going on and that they could, if they wanted to, take measures to stop the operations. Ramirez observed "as long as we are not given specifics, we are confronted with an enigma. You ask us to act but won't provide specific info that permits us to act. Should it fail to act because we are unable to you would take actions which would all but destroy our relationship and would have devastating consequences for our country." Then he added, "if you can't reveal to us any details of these operations, when you suspend assistance and make it public, you won't be able to prove your case, especially in Latin America. It will appear as if you took

⁶ Telegram 11483 to Managua, January 16, declined Pezzullo's request. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 57, Nicaragua: 8/80-1/8)

arbitrary action." I replied, "the evidence would be terribly embarrassing to you." But that could be avoided. We are advising them so we could avoid reaching the point of an aid cutoff. We recognized the serious consequences which could flow from their failure to take responsible action. He then said "it would be a political act which will undercut our economy. We won't have the funds to make repayment, our credit standing will suffer, and the effects will be catastrophic." Wheelock added that it will appear as "economic aggression by the US", and Ortega added that "all Latin America will support us." I said "you will also be revealed for having supported a guerrilla movement in a neighboring country which violates the principle of self-determination that 'you hold dear,' and would be indefensible in international terms. You are a gov't. Despite your sympathy for the Salvadoran guerrillas, you have to be held accountable if you take actions to destabilize another country. Your gov't has been publicly hostile to the Salvadoran Junta, making any evidence presented that you were supporting the guerrillas very credible because your public posture is so slanted in their favor." I reiterated again, however, that we were trying to rescue a relationship which was in serious jeopardy due to their actions.

12. I repeated several items more that we were asking them to cease clandestine operations with the Cubans to support the Salvadoran rebels. Once they did so and informed us, we would have means to verify that the operations had been aborted. They could take immediate actions on the radio stations, the tone and substance of their official statements, and they could begin to attempt to build a constructive relationship with Salvador rather than the negative and destructive one they were currently pursuing.

13. I said while we recognize that our assessment of events in Salvador differed, support for a guerrilla movement in that country was condemnable and destructive of our relations. They should seriously study, I suggested, how much a cooperative relationship with the USG meant to them in terms of their own self-interest. Wheelock said with some feeling that the GRN/FSLN felt a political solution in Salvador would best serve Nicaragua's interests. "We realize the risks to our country," he continued, "should the violence spread." I said Ortega had made a similar statement the other day. I suggested that Nicaragua might take some initiatives in the direction of helping to solve the Salvadoran problem rather than exacerbating it. Peace in Central America, I added, required a solution of the highly-explosive Salvadoran issue. It had regional consequences. Nicaragua's long-term interests were better served by building bridges with its Central American neighbors than involving itself in the adventures of the Cubans. Wheelock said they would be most willing to play role in seeking a

solution. I said, "that's a constructive start, but we must surmount the immediate problem first."

14. We closed the session with the understanding that they would get back to me by Saturday with a position to be transmitted to the President. I asked them to cover the ground very carefully to ensure that all operations were terminated.

15. Comment: It's hard at this point to know how much impact the session had on them. They rolled out their usual defensive arguments in the beginning, but soon appeared to recognize that they would not sell. They were visibly shaken by the prospect of an aid cutoff and a possible repayment of the loan. I gave them no reason to believe that anything but a repayment requirement would be triggered. They conceive of the calling of the loan as a first step in a rupture of our relations. That may very well be the way it would play out.

16. Ramirez has a point in his argument that if we can't present them with clandestine info, how do we make a convincing public case when we terminate without revealing that same info. If there is any piece of info I could provide which would undercut their intention that they don't know what to look for, I would appreciate being advised immediately.

17. In addition to the coordinates of the clandestine radio stations, I would appreciate any further info on the intercept station that we can provide to the GRN/RSLN.⁷

Pezzullo

⁷ See footnote 6 above.

329. Telegram From the Embassy in Nicaragua to the Department of State¹

Managua, January 18, 1981, 0015Z

255. Subj: (S) Nicaraguan support for Salvadoran guerrillas. Ref A. State 12957² B. Managua 221 [112].³

1. S-Entire text

2. I met with GRN/FSLN group at noon today on their invitation. In attendance were Sergio Ramirez, Arturo Cruz and Humberto Ortega. Ramirez began as spokesman and made the following points:

—The Govt of Nicaragua reiterates its adhesion to the principle of non-intervention into the internal affairs of other countries.

—It never has been the policy of this govt to permit its territory to be used to transit arms to third countries.

—We will make use of all our material and human resources to surveil our territory and our frontiers to assure that no actions or operations occur here which would violate the principles mentioned above.

—We initiated yesterday an operation to try to locate a clandestine radio station, drawing on the info provided by the American Embassy. We have not been successful but we will continue the search and would appreciate any further info which can be provided.

—We have instructed all national radio stations not rpt not to transmit any inflammatory info about the situation in Salvador.

3. Ramirez then indicated their concern that, in the midst of our bilateral dialogue on this sensitive issue, Amb White and the Dept Spokesman had gone public and compromised the confidentiality of the discussion.⁴ He closed by noting that the Govt of Nicaragua reiterates its desire that the US and Nicaragua maintain a climate of “mutual respect and objective comprehension”. They were hopeful that nothing

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Niact Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis. For information about Carter’s January 16 decision to make specific demands on Nicaragua to stop supporting the insurgency in El Salvador, see Document 495. For information about the January 16 mini-SCC on Nicaraguan aid to the Salvadoran insurgents, see Document 496.

² In telegram 12957 to Managua, January 17, the Department informed Pezzullo that the “intelligence community is redoubling efforts to monitor support operation from Nicaragua to El Salvador,” and instructed him to “continue to press your interlocutors hard to stop allowing Nicaragua to serve as staging area.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

³ See Document 327.

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 328.

would occur to alter what has become an increasingly cordial relationship.

4. I thanked them for their comments and said I could not emphasize strongly enough the importance and the urgency of the matter. Violence in Salvador, which was fed recently by the introduction of sophisticated arms to the guerrillas, had inflamed the environment. They should understand that only their full cooperation in terminating all support operations and in putting an end to the use of their territory would offer some basis for salvaging our bilateral relationship. I said no President of the US could support assistance to a country if there was conclusive evidence that it had supported, and continued to support after warnings, subversive activities in a neighboring country. And I repeated that we had evidence of such support from several sources, adding that this included photographic evidence.

5. Ortega said they had limited capability, both human and technical, and asked if we could provide equipment to detect the exact location of the clandestine Radio Liberacion. I said these were highly mobile operations and that the info I gave them yesterday was as accurate as I could provide. I suggested that he go to his "contacts within the Farabundo Marti" organization and insist that they close up shop here and respect Nicaraguan sovereignty. He then reiterated the position he had taken before (Managua 112) that they were so occupied with preventing incursions from across the Honduran border and defending themselves against attacks that it was difficult to move against elements using their territories for clandestine operations without precise info. I responded that I had more faith than he in their capacity to exercise control over their territory. I said we would be carefully monitoring land, sea and air activities for evidence that any supply to Salvadoran guerrillas was continuing. I also informed them that investigations were going on in Salvador to determine the origin of some items of equipment and whether or not they had been transshipped through Nicaragua.

6. Ortega stated that GRN/FSLN was very sensitive to our concerns that the already difficult situation in Salvador not be further aggravated by outside supply or forces. He tried to draw a distinction between the natural Nicaraguan sympathy for the revolutionaries and official support to them. I said that while I could understand their explanation, it only complicated the situation now. I added that a shooting war is going on in El Salvador in which a guerrilla force, using highly sophisticated equipment provided from external sources, is trying to overthrow the gov't of that country. Sandinista rhetoric supporting the leftist guerrillas and attacking the gov't in itself was interventionist. Ortega admitted that there had been excesses and said that changes would be made. He said they would continue to criticize the "murder

of nuns,”⁵ but recognized that a line had to be drawn between that kind of statement of moral outrage and one of official support for the forces of the left. Ortega professed to understand the dilemma the situation in Salvador posed for the US and hoped that USG actions would be measured and restrained.

7. Ortega said that seventeen armed Nicaraguans heading for El Salvador had been stopped at the Honduran border yesterday (Jan 16). He also stated that twenty Honduras-based ex-Guardias killed another Nicaraguan soldier near the border the day before, bringing total Nicaraguan deaths in the border area to over 100.

8. I said the decision to provide the two helicopters and non-lethal equipment was taken to give the Salvadoran military some greater capability to deal with better-armed insurgents. And now we had decided to supply some limited lethal weapons as well because of the urgent need to support a military institution under attack.⁶

9. I then recapitulated our points of concern and emphasized the importance of them making every effort to avoid becoming further embroiled in an adventure which suits Cuban designs but not their own. All Central American nations would be affected should the Salvador fighting continue and worsen. Nicaragua would suffer if it allowed itself to be further drawn into a conflict which could only have negative effects on its relationship with the US. If Nicaragua feared that its security would be adversely affected by a rightist victory in Salvador, its best insurance would be to strengthen its ties with the United States. I closed by emphasizing that we were dealing with a very serious matter and asked that our discussion be shared with other members of the gov’t (which they promised to do).⁷

10. Comment: Ever since my demarche on Jan 14, I have been struck by the seriousness with which they have dealt this subject.⁸ Amb White’s comments were handled far more maturely and cautiously than is usual for this gov’t. The off-handedness and bravado often characteristic of FSLN leaders has been entirely absent. I have no doubt they have gotten our message and understand the seriousness of the consequences. How deeply they are compromised with the Cubans is

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 447.

⁶ See Document 495.

⁷ Pezzullo reported on his conversations with Cruz and Borge regarding his demarche on GRN/FSLN support for Salvadoran guerrillas in telegram 257 from Managua, January 18. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/16–19/81) O’Donnell covered the same subject in his conversation with Arce, reported in telegram 258 from Managua, January 18. (Ibid.)

⁸ See Document 328.

unknown. But the real question is whether they have the will to interrupt the operations. If this jolt weakens the position of those engaged in operational activities with the Cubans and results in the cut-off of supplies, it will be an achievement.

11. Para 5 ref A will be handled in a separate message.⁹

12. Dept please pass to San Salvador.

Pezzullo

⁹ Pezzullo reported about the emergency Embassy staff reduction plan in telegram 256 from Managua, January 18. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

Costa Rica

330. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 9, 1977, 3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

President Carter/President Oduber, Costa Rica, Bilateral

PARTICIPANTS

COSTA RICA

President Daniel Oduber
Foreign Minister Gonzalo Facio
Ambassador Rodolfo Silva

US

President Carter
Secretary Vance
Assistant Secretary Todman
Ambassador Weissman
Mr. Pastor, NSC Staff

President Carter thanked President Oduber, “a leader of a strong democracy,” for coming to Washington at some personal inconvenience. He said that he believed we would have a difficult time securing ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty, making this week’s contact with U.S. senators most beneficial.

The President indicated to President Oduber that in addition to progress on the Treaty, this week had seen a major step forward in resolution of the conflict between Honduras and El Salvador with the ratification of the mediation agreement by the latter country on September 8. He pointed out also that meetings here had given Bolivia the opportunity to deal directly with the leaders of Peru and Chile on its aspirations for an outlet to the sea. He mentioned the opportunity the week’s program had given him to talk to leaders in the hemisphere generally of the sense of common purpose expressed at Tlatelolco.²

President Carter expressed his special thanks to President Oduber for having been so hospitable to Mrs. Carter during her recent visit, as well as to Ambassador Young, who had made his trip to Central America and the Caribbean thanks to the suggestion made to Mrs.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 33, Costa Rica: 2–12/77. Confidential. The meeting took place at the White House. Drafted by Weissman. Oduber was in Washington for the ceremonial signing of the Panama Canal Treaties by Carter and Torrijos on September 7. The Treaties guaranteed that Panama would assume control over the Canal by the end of 1999.

² Reference is to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in Mexico City in 1967, which sought to make Latin America a nuclear free zone. See *Foreign Relations*, 1964–1968, vol. XI, Arms Control and Disarmament, Document 226.

Carter by President Oduber.³ President Carter referred to Ambassador Young as a “symbolic and sensitive leader” who understands the people whom he visits. He noted that Ambassador Young has just returned from South Africa with “some progress,” thanks to his persuasiveness.

The President recognized that he was a “latecomer” among leaders on human rights, since Costa Rica had endeavored for many years to heighten interest on this question. He stated that he was particularly pleased to associate himself with Costa Rica’s early initiative to improve the UN structure in this regard. He informed President Oduber that President Pinochet had indicated that he would be amenable to a small delegation of responsible people visiting Chile to examine human rights performance, if they did so without fanfare and would report first to him, President Pinochet, so that he could have an opportunity to comment on any allegations. President Carter also mentioned that President Videla of Argentina was concerned about his country’s loss of its fine past reputation because of human rights charges. While he did not deny that problems exist, President Videla believed that the matter could be resolved. President Carter concluded his discussion of human rights by noting that some other nations were not quite so forthcoming in his talks this week, but that progress exists and is certainly attributable in part to Costa Rica’s efforts.

The President then turned the discussion to the question of sugar, noting that this represented an area in which, perhaps, the two countries were not in complete agreement. The President mentioned the necessity for a multilateral approach, pointing out that if an international sugar agreement is not forthcoming, U.S. legislation will require the setting of a support price at about the 13½¢ per pound level.

President Oduber responded that there had to be international agreements between producing and consuming countries not only on sugar, but coffee and cacao as well, extending later, perhaps, to cotton. He added that he believes both floor and ceiling prices must be established in such agreements to avoid huge profits falling to certain interests, at the expense of both producers and consumers. In this regard, he mentioned the recent efforts of the Latin American countries in Mexico to join together on coffee, preliminary to talks with the Africans. He pointed out that ex-President Figueres had floated the idea of stockpiles as early as 1950 in a meeting in New Delhi. He referred to the saying in Spanish that “perfection is the enemy of the good,” noting

³ Rosalynn Carter met with Oduber in San José on May 31 and discussed a range of issues including human rights, trade policy, and political refugees in Costa Rica. During the meeting, Oduber suggested that Young be sent to visit Caribbean countries. (Telegram 3606 from Quito, June 2; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 7, Costa Rica, 1977)

that every time an agreement appeared to be prospering, somebody found it not to be perfect enough. President Oduber also raised the question of duties on sugar, noting his happiness that Costa Rica had been favored with GSP treatment benefitting her exports by 1.875¢ per pound, but that now he was worried by the additional 4¢ per pound, from which Costa Rica, he hoped, would be exempt.

President Oduber then turned to the more general problem which Costa Rica has as a result of the Lome convention⁴ which is discriminatory since its agriculture is mostly tropical and competes mainly with those countries most favored by that agreement. He also mentioned the subsidy to Cuba represented by the Soviet Union's purchase of sugar at high prices and the sale of petroleum at low ones, in addition to direct financial help, concluding that COMECON countries and the ex-colonies both get special treatment on trade, but that Latin America is the only "unprotected" area in the third world.

Observing that Costa Rica, in spite of this, has managed to show that social justice can be achieved with respect for human rights, so meeting the Cuban challenge, President Oduber stated his hope that the U.S. Executive Branch would maintain an ability to favor countries that are behaving well on human rights and provide special treatment or incentives. He emphasized that he was referring to simple, subtle discrimination in their favor. He illustrated the problem by referring to the fact that Costa Rica's exports of meat represented a very miniscule part of total U.S. consumption, and that an additional 10 million pounds a year in its voluntary restraint level would mean more progress for Costa Rica and more stability. Costa Rica has attempted to expand its markets in the Caribbean but has been met with "back door" maneuvers by the Australians to lower prices, taking advantage of Commonwealth arrangements. President Oduber concluded by noting that Costa Rica has entered U.S. markets slowly, with minimal effects on U.S. industry and U.S. labor.

Returning to the human rights relationship, President Oduber commented that the "winds have changed 180 degrees in Latin America in recent months, thanks to President Carter's efforts on human rights," and that further progress might well come from selecting one or two countries with exemplary records to favor them with simple, subtle, special treatment on trade matters. President Oduber indicated that he believes that the rest of the countries would understand this quickly and make the task much easier for him in persuading other Central American countries to improve their records.

⁴ First signed in February 1975 in Lomé, Togo, the Lomé Convention was a trade agreement between the European Economic Community and African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries.

President Oduber summed up the trade discussion by stating that Costa Rica is all for international agreements on commodities and understands the desirability of global arrangements. However, until 160 nations could be convinced of the need for this, he hoped that Costa Rica could be helped directly. He stated that respect for the accomplishments of U.S. agriculture had convinced Costa Rica to copy U.S. agriculture, but tropical agriculture is more difficult. President Carter replied that when he had visited "Don Pepe's" ranch on his visit to Costa Rica, he had enjoyed the ex-president's explanation of Costa Rican agriculture. President Oduber replied that Figueres was well informed on this subject.

President Carter concluded this segment of the meeting indicating that there was great inflexibility in U.S. legislation and that ours were the best politically-organized farmers in the world, working very hard to preserve their rights. As for sugar, he noted that we are both large producers and large consumers and that fluctuations in prices have been "devastating."

President Carter then turned the discussion to a subject he introduced as "a somewhat sensitive problem for us", that of Mr. Robert Vesco, "a fugitive from U.S. justice who had defrauded many people."⁵ President Carter solicited President Oduber's frank view as to what could be done to bring him back to the U.S. so that he could be tried, recognizing that Costa Rica has legislation which affects this possibility.

President Oduber stated that he and his cabinet had resolved two months ago to ask Mr. Vesco to leave the country, but that he has been "indicted" by two tribunals in Costa Rica, so preventing his departure. The Costa Rican President noted that his government was applying "careful pressure" to push for an early resolution of the outstanding cases. He stated that Mr. Vesco "should not be in Costa Rica when national elections take place on February 5, 1978, and hoped that he would not be."

President Oduber then reviewed the history of Mr. Vesco's investments in ex-President Figueres' firms. He added his view that the U.S. extradition effort in 1973 was badly prepared and that he had commented publicly that it appeared to have been done in such a way "as to not get Mr. Vesco out of Costa Rica." He noted that the problem

⁵ Vesco, a financier, fled the United States for Costa Rica in 1973 in order to avoid criminal prosecution; see Document 109 in *Foreign Relations*, vol. E-11, Part I, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973-1976. Vesco faced five indictments brought between 1972 and 1976 in the U.S. District Court for the South District of New York. His presence in Costa Rica and his alleged ties to Oduber became a major issue in the Costa Rican Presidential elections of February 1978, won by Carazo. Vesco departed Costa Rica for the Bahamas in May 1978.

was a difficult one for him as ex-President Figueres was “our political father at the beginning of this administration.” Nevertheless, he indicated his administration had worked slowly to make extradition easier, and this legislation has existed since last October. Foreign Minister Facio commented that extradition would depend on the Costa Rican courts in light of the current domestic cases. He also expressed his agreement with President Oduber that the previous petition for extradition “on the face of it could not prosper.”

President Oduber added that Mr. Vesco was “not nice natured,” but that he was now subject increasingly to “government orders, advice, and regulation” and that he is getting out of investments in real estate and government bonds, and otherwise generally has gotten his money out of Costa Rica, with the exception of \$5 million tied up in Figueres’ interests and one newspaper, from which President Oduber hopes he will soon be eliminated.

President Carter then turned to Secretary Vance to ask the status of the prospective performance by the Costa Rican youth symphony at the White House. At the Secretary’s request, Mr. Pastor replied, stated that the October date appeared to be a difficult one for reasons having to do with obtaining financing. He said that, an April, 1978 performance would be more suitable, and asked whether that result would be agreeable with President Oduber. Minister Facio and President Oduber quickly agreed that a postponement would be most helpful. President Oduber promised to talk personally with several corporations to help arrange financing necessary to bring them to the U.S. next spring. President Carter thanked President Oduber for freeing him of a matter of “considerable conversation with my wife.”

President Oduber noted that Costa Rica had arranged for a \$1 million loan for musical instruments for its youth, “a better investment than rifles.” President Carter took the opportunity to compliment President Oduber on having worked so hard to achieve a better life for his people.

President Carter then mentioned his awareness of Costa Rican interest in securing patrol boats from the U.S. President Oduber stated that having no army, Costa Rica may not appear to be eligible for help, but that he believed a credit for this purpose was justified to deal with problems of smuggling, both of drugs and weapons. He explained to President Carter that Costa Rica “is a country of exiles” some of whom wish to invade their former countries, and so they seek illegal weapons. Additionally, he noted that Costa Rica lacked a current capability to conduct search and rescue operations.

Secretary Vance indicated that he believed the U.S. government could work out an FMS credit for this purpose, and that the State Department has been checking out this matter. Ambassador Silva said

that he hoped that Costa Rica "would not be penalized for not having an army," and Secretary Vance repeated that he thought FMS credits could be obtained.

President Carter again thanked President Oduber for his presence in Washington. The latter replied that he had talked with Senator Case the previous day and had pointed out that "fresh winds of freedom" are again being felt of a kind that have not been present since the Kennedy struggle against dictators. Today's autocratic regimes are more sophisticated and harder than then, he observed, using Castro as an excuse though he didn't represent a true threat. Rather, President Oduber pointed out, no military government is either efficient or could control Castro. Costa Rica, on the other hand, has met the Castro threat by freedom and sees today no more Communist strength in its votes than the party had 40 years ago. President Oduber mentioned that he has been eager to help on the problems not only of Panama, but also of Haiti and the entire Caribbean, and that Costa Rica's response to the threat of Castro is to demonstrate to Costa Rican youth what can be achieved by democracy.

President Carter asked what President Oduber thought would be the reaction to our normalizing relationships with Cuba over a three to four year period. He replied that Costa Rica would be happy to see this occur, since it would dispose of the myth now entertained by students and remove the pretext for supporting Castro, since a normal state of relations would leave Castro as "just another dictator." President Carter inquired whether Costa Rica maintained an office in Havana, to which President Oduber replied only a Consulate General. He has been thinking of establishing full relationships, but said he would wait for the outcome of the Presidential elections in February, 1978, before doing anything about it.

331. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, September 14, 1978, 1636Z

3908. Subj: Concerns of Carazo re Border Situation Increase.

1. Carazo called me night of September 13 to advise that while there were no further attacks during the day, he is increasingly preoccupied over the border situation.² Three reasons: (a) Nicaraguan planes continue to overfly Costa Rican areas, including one incident involving passes over fishing boats in CR territorial waters; (b) the GON has delivered a sharp note protesting a further crossing north of FSLN forces in a zone being closely watched by GOCR security forces and where Carazo believes such passage could not have gone undetected; and (c) reports of considerable fighting still underway between Rivas and the border, apparently centered around San Juan Del Sur, suggesting that the Nicaraguan areas closest to Costa Rica remain active.

2. In view of the accumulating dangers Carazo sees in the above, Costa Rica will be requesting that the OAS focus urgently on the violations of its territorial sovereignty. Carazo did not suggest that his current thinking had gone beyond a hope for a condemnation of the GON and the expectation of a call for an end to GON incursions. (As of early morning Sept 14 this had crystallized into a GOCR decision to seek to invoke Rio Treaty, after and independent of vote on Venezuelan resolution.)³

3. Though no mention has been made of any specific measure such as posting of observers, Carazo's continuing preoccupation and the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780374–0461. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua.

² In telegram 3879 from San José, September 12, Weissman indicated that Carazo had informed him that a Nicaraguan aircraft had machine-gunned an automobile within Costa Rican territory. The Government of Nicaragua held that that the incursion was in reprisal for an FSLN attack that had originated on Costa Rican territory. Carazo pledged to secure an OAS response on an urgent basis. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780371–0364)

³ The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio Treaty), was signed in Rio de Janeiro by many South and Central American countries in 1947 and it entered into force in 1948. In essence, members pledged to consider an attack on one member to be an attack on all members and committed members to provide reciprocal assistance. The Venezuelan resolution regarding Nicaragua at the OAS, September 2, and resolution delivered by Echeverria on September 14 to the Permanent Council alleging the bombing and machine-gunning of Costa Rican civilians by Nicaraguan aircraft, led to a September 18 resolution approved by the OAS Permanent Council to convoke a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consider "the grave events in the Central American region" and to inform the UN Security Council. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Nicaragua—Misc. Memoranda, August–September, 1978)

possibility that incidents and recriminations may continue and mount suggest that the time may be approaching when raising the possibility of an OAS observer presence could prove desirable. Costa Rican public acceptability for such a move undoubtedly is greater now than it would have been three days ago, and Carazo may well find such a measure prudent and welcome relief from the growing squeeze. This would certainly be more likely to hold true if an observer mandate could be fashioned and agreed to in such a way that Somoza did not come out looking like the principal bereaved party and major beneficiary. Should there be any serious Costa Rican resistance to the idea, posting observers on the Honduran/Nicaraguan border also, if otherwise desirable and feasible, would probably reduce or eliminate any major misgivings.⁴

4. Carazo raised the number of Sandinistas who have surrendered to GOCR security forces during the last 24 hours to ten and said that it has been decided to send them packing. Presumably, Panama will be their destination, but Carazo did not specify beyond saying they would be heading south. [1 line not declassified] the detention of a total of 15 FSLN members in Costa Rica. Included in this number are Eden Pastora (Coandante Cero) and Plutarco Hernandez, who are Costa Rican citizens.

5. Carazo addressed the nation night of Sept 13. He confirmed publicly that not only would OAS MFM be supported, but that Costa Rica would urgently request that meeting deal with GON violations of its territory. If that does not produce success, Carazo added that Costa Rica was ready to carry its case to UN.⁵ Septel follows summarizing speech.⁶

Weissman

⁴ Telegram 3998 from San José, September 21, reported that Carazo informed Weissman "that the OAS could put troops on the Nicaraguan side, but he simply could not go along with uniformed soldiers patrolling Costa Rican soil." Carazo noted that the idea was "abhorrent" and "would do little to stop the Sandinistas, but would give Somoza an incentive and convenient mechanism for making further wild claims," and justify Somoza's continuing control of Nicaragua. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780395-0015)

⁵ For information about Carazo's efforts at mediation and the Venezuelan request for an OAS response to the situation in Nicaragua, see Documents 90, 91, 93, and 96.

⁶ Not found. In telegram 4960 from San José, November 22, the Embassy reported that the Nicaraguan National Guard and Costa Rican security forces had engaged in a firefight in the area of La Cruz during the night of the 21st. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D740480-0329) In telegram 4961 from San José, November 22, the Embassy reported that Carazo had announced in the late evening of the 21st that his government had broken diplomatic relations with the GON, citing "continuing incursions" by the Nicaraguan National Guard. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D740480-1027)

332. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, December 7, 1978, 2120Z

5215. For Asst Secy Vaky from Weissman. Subj: What Makes Rodrigo Run. Ref: State 308126.²

1. In reply to para 5 reftel, it was precisely because of the subject report that I asked Carazo directly, December 5, in the presence of Ambassador Bowdler and FonMin Calderon, about “reports” of recent shipments of arms from Panama to the FSLN in Costa Rica. My immediate cue was Carazo’s statement that Torrijos had become disenchanted with the Sandinistas two months ago, but I also had in mind his earlier assertion that Carlos Andres Perez calls the shots re the FSLN in Costa Rica, as well as Carazo’s frequent insinuations in the past that Venezuela is the major source of FSLN arms. Carazo’s reply that there have been no shipments “in the past four weeks” may be as much an admission that the FSLN has, with GOCR knowledge, been supplied in the past, as it can be interpreted as an effort to dissemble. His response to a similar query from me December 7 does not change that view.

2. We have from time to time found reason to doubt that most GOCR officials, including Carazo and Echeverria, have been totally candid about the extent of the GOCR’s relations with the FSLN and Eden Pastora. Even Carazo’s suggesting to Bill and me that the most recent FSLN communique³ doesn’t reflect Pastora’s true attitude toward us and the mediation falls into a familiar pattern. Impulsive and emotional about most things, and almost blinded by dislike and distrust of Somoza, most GOCR officials, with the probable exception of Calderon, could be expected to show misguided sympathy for anybody, particularly a naturalized Costa Rican, who can stick it to Somoza. Eden Pastora’s successful attack on the Congress made him almost an untouchable folk hero in Costa Rica, and earned him a certain amount of respect among the machos in the GOCR. Beyond this lingering romanticism influenced by the Don Pepes and other holdovers from Caribbean legion days, just plain fear obviously plays an important

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780187–2322. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua, Panama City, and Caracas.

² Paragraph 5 of telegram 308126 to multiple posts, December 6, instructed Weissman to comment on reports of arms deliveries by Panamanian aircraft with the knowledge and approval of Costa Rican authorities. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840139–1685)

³ See footnote 2, Document 158.

part in conditioning the GOCR attitude toward the FSLN movement into, around, and out of the country as a key factor in determining what they can or should do with respect to the FSLN. Even where some capability exists, they aren't too good at security matters, with their training appearing to come mainly from watching re-runs of *Kojak*. Recall that they freely admitted it was fear of possible FSLN reprisals that caused the Carazo administration to release Plutarco Hernandez last June.⁴

3. While I find largely credible frequent GOCR assertions of inability to control FSLN in Costa Rica, I suspect that such accommodation of the FSLN as has taken place has been helped along by a combination of strong Venezuelan and some Panamanian persuasion, plus a marked tendency of Carazo's to play to the domestic gallery. Carazo's statements to Bill Bowdler and me re Perez' control of FSLN in Costa Rica was his most candid admission to date of impotence, as well as an honest revelation of who Carazo recognizes as the grand strategist on this side of the Nicaraguan fracas. I believe that the round of shooting was threats in September, aided and abetted from the South, made him begin to realize he was caught up in something he could influence but not control, and that this is sinking in deeper all the time.

4. The subject report may be accurate, but I do not discount the possibility that it is overdrawn or not totally exact, especially in the light of the GOCR's difficulties in communicating within itself on overt matters. Nor do I completely rule out the possibility that there is some free-lancing going on at or below the ministerial level.

5. Whatever the assistance or accommodation the GOCR has extended to FSLN, by or through whom and for whatever complex of reasons, it is unlikely that this has come as a straight-line flow from a conscious, deliberate, or well thought out top-level policy decision, e.g., to support Pastora as the best, viable future prospect since all else will fail or be worse. Rather, the GOCR under Carazo continues to have high points and low points, stops and starts and jerks and reverses, and the operational consequences of Carazo's highly emotional and often erratic perspective of the Nicaraguan problem remain a fact of life. No doubt he omits to mention things to us, and at times is oblivious to transparent contradiction. He is now busy taking on the press for reporting, admittedly in grossly exaggerated form, that there are FSLN camps here, at the exact same time he is telling us they have found

⁴ In telegram 2390 from San José, June 2, the Embassy reported that the Costa Rican Cabinet had issued a pardon on June for Costa Rican citizen and FSLN leader Plutarco Hernandez. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P780232-0784)

them. I sometimes think it is less a lack of candor, than frenetic inconsistency, that makes Don Rodrigo run.

Weissman

333. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, April 11, 1980, 0325Z

1888. From Bowdler. Subj: Conversation with President Carazo on Costa Rican Involvement With Salvadoran Insurgents. Ref: State 92916.²

1. S-Entire text.

2. Charge Binns and I met with President Carazo alone for over an hour this evening to discuss Costa Rican involvement in support of Salvadoran insurgency. We approached the subject delicately by drawing him out on the situation in El Salvador, particularly with respect to the strength and strategy of the far left and the prospects of the Junta.

3. Carazo thought that the JRG, having survived the Archbishop's assassination,³ was now in a position to begin a dialogue with moderate elements on the right and left leading to agreement on an electoral process that would bring legitimacy to the government. He was under the impression that the two extremes had lost ground in recent weeks and that such a dialogue, while not acceptable to them, would tend to increase their isolation. He believes that Costa Rica can play a constructive role in encouraging the JRG (through his personal contacts with the PDC), moderate groups on left (he specifically mentioned FAPU), and on the right (he specifically mentioned his business and professional contacts).

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890003–0675. Secret; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² In telegram 92916 to San José, April 9, the Department provided talking points for Bowdler's meeting with Carazo, noting: "We are persuaded that high level officials of the Public Security Ministry are involved with direct collusion with Salvadoran insurgents and are allowing support operations to occur in Costa Rica." The telegram also contained the observation that the levels of staffing of the Cuban and Soviet Missions in San José "are already beyond those required to conduct their legitimate bilateral relations with Costa Rica." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047–0019)

³ See footnote 2, Document 429.

4. Using the talking points contained reftel, I first expressed appreciation for what he had done, and enabled us to do, in supporting the JRG. I next told him that I shared his view that the two extremes had lost some ground in recent weeks, but that the state of the JRG remained fragile because of the high level of violence, especially that committed by the far right and the security forces, and its narrow base. I went on to explain our sense of the long range strategy being followed by the extreme left, as the indicators that it was following this strategy by playing for time, using political weapons to undermine the JRG, while at the same time building up its capabilities for armed conflict.

5. Stressing our common interest in seeing the JRG succeed and the serious consequences that would follow from failure, I led into the specific talking points in reftel, and followed these throughout, with the exception of sub-para two, of "Q", which I left out because of the Embassy's uncertainty as to its reliability.⁴ As I made the presentation, President Carazo interrupted frequently to ask for additional details or to express surprise and concern. His reaction appeared to be genuine.

6. The highlights of President Carazo's response can be summarized as follows:

—He seemed most interested in the activities of the Soviet Embassy and the clandestine Cuban operations center, asking for additional information on both.

—He specifically asked for the location and other details concerning the Cuban OP Center, leaving us with the impression that he was prepared to act against it.

—He urged Charge Binns to pass to him personally and promptly any future information we receive regarding suspected support operations.

—He manifested a full knowledge of the identity and antecedents of Ponce De Leon, his association with Radio Noticias Del Continente and the orientation of that station, as well as his close personal ties with Public Security Minister Echeverria, a linkage which Carazo himself took the initiative in making. He specifically requested additional details regarding Ponce De Leon's involvement with the Cuban Operations Center.

—He also asked Charge to provide him with the name of the Salvadoran insurgent who had been released following arrest by the Ministry of Public Security for being involved in arms purchases in Costa Rica so he could follow up.

⁴ Reference is to Panamanian aircraft landing in northern Costa Rica to unload cargo.

—In commenting on Elio Espinar, he displayed deep hostility and indicated that he would personally look into his activities.

—He asked if we had any information linking Carlos Enrique Guerra (Pillique) with clandestine arms shipments/support activities. Charge indicated familiarity with the name but did not go beyond that since we have not been able to corroborate frequent rumors of his activity (when we spoke to Carazo we did not have the text of San Jose 1887 which reports allegations against Guerra).⁵

—Twice during the presentation I specifically referred to the fact that members of his Public Security Ministry had knowledge of, or were involved in, some of these clandestine activities. On neither occasion did Carazo pursue the observation. He appeared ill at ease, which we interpret as indicating awareness that we were referring specifically to Echeverria and some of his associates.

7. Comment: While we did not succeed in getting Carazo to commit himself to specific actions, we believe that the conversation was highly useful in putting him on notice that we are aware of what is going on, and the seriousness with which we view Costa Rican involvement. It was clear in making the point that we might have to go public—with all the consequences this would entail—that Carazo got the message. His response requesting additional information provides an opportunity for follow-up, giving us a means to test his performance and pursue the matter with even greater vigor. He is on the spot and now knows it. Follow up will be important to maintain the pressure.

Binns

⁵ In telegram 1887 from San José, April 11, the Embassy provided reporting about Costa Rican support for Salvadoran insurgents. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800180–1009)

334. Editorial Note

By April 6, 1980, more than 11 thousand Cuban refugees had entered the Peruvian Embassy compound in Havana. (Telegram 3203 from Havana, April 6; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800173–0291) For more information about the Cuban refugee crisis, see Document 89 in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, volume XXIII,

Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean. In telegram 1839 from San José, April 8, the Embassy reported that Costa Rican Foreign Minister Carlos Francisco Aguilar Calderon had noted that Costa Rica was "prepared to share the burden with other nations in receiving Cubans now jammed into the Peruvian Embassy compound in Havana." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800177-0023) The White House released a statement on April 14 announcing that Costa Rica had offered to serve as a "staging area for the refugees to assure a rapid evacuation" and that President Jimmy Carter had decided that the United States would admit 3,500 of the Cuban refugees. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980*, Book I, page 682) By April 16, an evacuation operation had flown about 700 refugees to Costa Rica. On April 19, the *Washington Post* reported that the Government of Cuba suspended the refugee flights and demanded that "thousands of Cubans seeking to leave their homeland be flown directly to the countries where they are to settle and not to a staging area in Costa Rica." ("Cuba Suspends Refugee Flights," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1980, page A16)

Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo Odio wrote a letter to Carter on April 23, requesting that Carter cancel the planned armed maneuvers around Cuba in response to the Cuban refugee crisis. Carazo wrote: "The area at this moment in the throes of a convulsion, will react negatively to these military exercises and these maneuvers will be used propagandistically to satisfy foreign interests which will try to stir up the countries of the region for their own political benefit." (Telegram 2205 from San José, April 23; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800202-0418) In telegram 115401 to San José and Lima, May 1, the Department forwarded a letter from Carter responding to Carazo's request. Carter acknowledged Carazo's concerns and wrote: "The landing scheduled for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, will not take place." Carter also asked that Carazo "take the lead" in organizing an international conference to address the Cuban refugee issue. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0042)

In telegram 2415 from San José, May 2, the Embassy reported that Carazo had accepted the proposal to organize a conference (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0046) The May 8-9 San José conference on the humanitarian aspects of the exodus from Cuba, attended by 22 countries and 7 international organizations, led to the formation of a tripartite humanitarian initiative by the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, and the United States to negotiate a modus operandi regarding migration from Cuba. (Telegram 2599 from San José, May 9, and telegram 2647 from San José, May 9; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800229-0423 and D800230-0381 respectively; see also *Public Papers: Carter, 1980*, Book I, pages 912-916) The *Washington Post* reported that on May 22 Cuba "rejected a proposal

by the United States, Britain and Costa Rica to hold talks aimed at resettling Cuban refugees in other countries,” and noted that the rejected proposal “came out” of the San José conference in which Costa Rica and the United States “were comparatively unsuccessful in persuading other governments to help launch an international effort to resolve the Cuban refugee situation.” (“Cuba Rejects 3-Nation Bid For Talks on Refugee Crisis,” *Washington Post*, May 23, 1980, page A11)

335. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, June 19, 1980, 2257Z

3483. For Asst Sec Bowdler from Charge. Subject: (C) Costa Rican Connection: An Augean Stable. Ref: (A) San Jose 3478,² (B) San Jose 3482.³

1. S-Entire text.

2. Subsequent to refs A and B, Seso has finally picked up what appears to be hard, detailed information on Costa Rican involvement in arms shipments to El Salvador, under the direction of the Cubans. It seems evident from this information that the recent aircraft crash was just the tip of the iceberg. Seso is also picking up indications that two of Carazo's sons, Mario and Rodrigo, are involved, perhaps up to their respective ears. I am not sure whether the latter information will be reported at this time.

3. At this point it appears Carazo has fallen into a stable of Augean dimensions, that the accumulation of muck was the result of his own decisions (or negligence) and that the horse is Cuban. It is also difficult for me to see how he can clean the mess up without extremely serious damage to himself and his government. I recognize, however, that the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047–0090. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² In telegram 3478 from San José, June 19, the Embassy reported that the Chargé met with Costa Rican Public Security Minister Arguedas to discuss “recent events which directly link Costa Rica with the smuggling of arms and ammunition to Salvadoran leftists.” Arguedas conceded Costa Rican involvement in two cases. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800298–1045)

³ In telegram 3482 from San José, June 19, the Embassy reported on ammunition improperly diverted from Costa Rican stores and the crash of a Panamanian aircraft carrying arms to Salvadoran insurgents. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800298–1105)

Costa Ricans have a relatively high toleration threshold for governmental scandal. But it seems to me that Carazo has alienated the opposition, many of his own supporters and influential private sector elements to such an extent that resentment and disgust will probably pass over the traditional threshold.

4. I therefore believe it is increasingly urgent for the preservation of our own interests—which would not be served by greater instability in Costa Rica—that we urge Carazo to take prompt and dramatic action, especially closing up Cuban operations.

Binns

336. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Costa Rica¹

Washington, June 21, 1980, 1657Z

163708. For Charge. Subject: Support for Salvadoran Insurgents: Closure of Cuban Ops Center. Reference: San Jose 3470.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Given the very serious and highly explosive nature of the information we have received concerning Costa Rican involvement in the illicit arms traffic to El Salvador we determined that an approach to Carazo to urge closing of the Cuban operations center, and expulsion of some Soviet and Cuban diplomats was necessary. We preferred to have Assistant Secretary Bowdler make this demarche to Carazo immediately following San Jose II conference to avoid jeopardizing that important initiative on the refugee problem.³ However, your

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0094. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Cheek; cleared by Bowdler, Pastor, W. Scott Butcher (S/S-O), and in the CIA; approved by Newsom.

² In telegram 3470 from San José, June 19, Binns wrote: "I believe it is opportune to raise again with Carazo the possibility of GOCR raiding and closing down the clandestine Cuban operations center." An unknown hand wrote on a copy of the telegram: "Maybe Binns could also raise gun-running issue." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 10, Costa Rica: 5/80-1/81)

³ In telegram 159509 to San José, June 17, the Department described Bowdler's June 14 meeting with Carazo in which Bowdler informed Carazo that Cuba had rejected a second tripartite group note on the Cuban refugee issue (see Document 334) and asked Carazo to convene a "San Jose II." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800295-0957) In telegram 159501 to London and San José, June 17, the Department reported that Carazo had agreed to convoke a second international conference in San José on the Cuban refugee issue. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800295-0370) For more information about San José II, see footnote 4, Document 337.

assessment that public exposure of details of Costa Rican involvement may be imminent has forced us to reconsider the timing of our demarche. We have now concluded that despite the risk to San Jose II, we should proceed promptly with our approach to Carazo. You should therefore see President Carazo following your presentation of the note concerning San Jose II⁴ and make the following points:

—Information which we have received as a result of the recent plane crash in El Salvador⁵ indicates that there is a substantial Costa Rican and Panamanian involvement in a major arms traffic to Salvadoran leftist insurgents which appears sponsored and directed by Cuba, using Cuban operatives in San Jose.

—We are seriously disturbed by this intervention in Salvadoran affairs and this flagrant exploitation of Costa Rica by the Cubans which is very damaging to the national integrity of the countries involved and to our mutual interests in the region.

—We assume that you also are aware of these developments and share our concern.

—We believe the time has come to put an end to Cuban and Soviet exploitation of Costa Rica as a base for their operations in support of intervention in the various countries of the region. We therefore urge you to:

(1) Close down the clandestine Cuban operations activity which Ambassador Bowdler discussed with you on his last visit.

(2) Make significant reductions in the staff of the Cuban and Soviet official Missions in San Jose to limit their capability for illicit operations and to make them pay in a very visible and public way for their intervention in your affairs and those of your neighbors.

—Decisive action by you to take these steps would focus public opinion on the Cubans rather than the Costa Ricans or Panamanians as the real source of the problem.

3. We anticipate that in presenting this demarche you will elicit from Carazo some of the information he has as well as an indication of what he is willing to do and when. If Carazo presses you for details concerning information we have you should not go beyond general

⁴ In telegram 162869 to San José, June 20, the Department instructed Binns to request that Carazo proceed with calling San José II. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800300–0316)

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 335.

wording in first tick but you should assure him that we are satisfied as to accuracy of our information.⁶

4. FYI: We plan to have Assistant Secretary Bowdler hold follow-on discussions with Carazo on this subject when he is in San Jose next week for the refugee conference.⁷ In addition, Ambassador White is discussing incident with high level Salvadoran officials to ascertain what information they may have and what actions they may contemplate taking. End FYI.

Christopher

⁶ In telegram 166991 to San José, June 25, the Department included two additional talking points for Binns to deliver in his démarche to Carazo: First, that weakness by Costa Rica regarding Cuba would weaken Costa Rica's position and influence, impact the survival of the JRG, and "tempt the Cubans and Soviets to meddle in Costa Rica," and, second, that indications of Costa Rican involvement with arms trafficking to El Salvador had raised questions from the U.S. Congress and public that might complicate the U.S.-Costa Rican relationship. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0101) In telegram 3597 from San José, June 25, Binns reported that he had delivered the relevant talking points to Carazo who reacted defensively. Binns commented: "Carazo is not prepared to move against Cubans or Soviets without a colorable case. If we want him to take such action, we will have to provide hard information, which will allow him to make a plausible public case." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0103)

⁷ For Bowdler's report on his meeting with Carazo, see Document 337.

337. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, June 30, 1980, 1840Z

3706. Subj: Meeting with President Carazo: San Jose II and His Predicament Over Clandestine Arms Shipments. Ref: San Jose 3705.²

1. (S-Entire text)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0110. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In telegram 3705 from San José, Bowdler reported on his June 29 meeting with Carazo during which they discussed issues unrelated to the San José II conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800315-0724)

2. I met with President Carazo last night at his home. For this part of our conversation only Charge Binns was present. The most significant aspect of our visit was that that atmospherics have changed markedly. Carazo was courteous but he was tense and the old cordiality was not there. The enthusiasm he had displayed over San Jose I was also lacking. The obvious strain he is under has subordinated San Jose II to other preoccupations. Unlike previous sessions he showed no eagerness to discuss the Central American scene. Behind this change of attitude is clearly the pressure generated by Costa Rica's role in clandestine shipment of arms to El Salvador. He may also believe that we are somehow behind the relentless campaign of the local media to find out the extent of Costa Rica's role in the recent incident in El Salvador. All of this complicates our task with San Jose II.

3. We reviewed all the principal elements of the meeting. Attendance by other countries and organizations looks good. While perhaps not as strong as for San Jose I, the differences do not appear to be that great. I noted reports that he was not planning to participate in the meeting and expressed the hope this was not so since his presence is important and failure to open the session would lead to invidious comparisons. He bowed to this nudge and will inaugurate the conference. We went over the agenda, the revised objectives paper and the draft communique. He expressed agreement on how things are planned but it was clear from this part of the discussion that his mind was more on other things. The sense of involvement—of exploring the issues and assessing the tactics—was not there.

4. Given this frame of mind and his failure to take the initiative in making the customary review of Central American problems, I decided this was not the moment to bell him on the issue of Costa Rica's role in facilitating clandestine arms shipments to the far left in El Salvador. Fearing that to do so might push him into non-cooperation in achieving a successful outcome to San Jose II, I arranged to meet with him on Wednesday, July 2.³

5. Following the meeting with Carazo we met briefly with Foreign Minister-designate Niehaus. Principal point to emerge from this exchange was his desire to have communique signed by all the participants, another indicator of Costa Rican reluctance. We agreed this was theoretically desirable, but pointed out serious problems that pressing this point could raise. Niehaus did not pursue the matter.

³ For Bowdler's report on his July 2 meeting with Carazo, see Document 338.

6. We meet again with Niehaus morning June 30 to make final review of arrangements.⁴

Binns

⁴ Telegram 3728 from San José, July 1, relayed Bowdler's comments at the June 30 opening session of the San José II Conference. Bowdler raised five points that required further attention: arrangements, with preconditions, for safe and orderly migration; clarification of the resettlement offers made during San José I to ensure they included refugees in the United States in addition to those in the Peruvian Embassy in Havana; ceasing the export of criminals by the Government of Cuba; further engaging international organizations on the problem; and addressing the Cuban refugees confined in the U.S. Interest Section in Havana. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800316–0169) In telegram 3764 from San José, July 2, the Embassy provided a concluding assessment of the San José II conference, noting that the conference "ended with consensus" on a communiqué issued by the Government of Costa Rica. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800318–0036) In telegram 3784 from San José, July 2, the Embassy transmitted the Spanish text of the communiqué released by the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry that morning. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800319–0192)

338. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, July 3, 1980, 0219Z

3804. From Asst. Secretary Bowdler. Subject: Support for Salvadoran Insurgents: Closure of Cuban Ops Center. Ref: (A) San Jose 35971;² [(B)] San Jose 3706.³

1. S-Entire text.

2. In my pre-departure meeting with Carazo, I again found that his attitude and the atmospherics had changed markedly from our Sunday evening meeting (ref B). He was once again cordial and seemed delighted with the outcome of the San Jose II Conference.⁴ But a good part of the change was probably due to the fact that he wanted some-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 12, Costa Rica: 12/77–5/80. Secret; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² See footnote 6, Document 336.

³ See Document 337.

⁴ For an overview of the conference, see footnote 4, Document 337.

thing from us, i.e. help with Costa Rican financial problems (see septel on this subject).⁵

3. In any event, I was able to raise the use of Costa Rica as a transshipment and supply point in the arms traffic with Salvadoran insurgents with ease. Without going into specifics, I pointed out that Costa Rican territory was being used for that purpose and, possibly, to train Salvadoran extremists as well. Drawing on data provided by Seso, I noted that the Cuban support network established to help the Sandinistas continued to function, and that it was in both the U.S. and Costa Rican interest to put a stop to it. I also reminded him that he had earlier agreed to close the Cuban ops center, but that we had mutually decided to delay this action so as not to jeopardize the initiative on the Costa Rican airlift of Cuban refugees and San Jose I.⁶ I also asked him to look at Cuban Consulate and Soviet Embassy with a view to reducing their size since they also [garble] as bases for promoting subversion.

4. He accepted the point on the Cuban operations center without exception, indicated his basic agreement and observed that he had earlier moved to reduce the size of the Soviet Embassy, but in sending the two Soviet diplomats home he had a pretext—one had been in Limon shortly before a serious strike in that city, while the other had met with a number of Communist labor leaders shortly before the strike. While he would be happy to close the Cuban ops center, as he had previously promised to do, he needed a rationale he could use to justify such action. If we could provide information on which he could follow through, he would move. I pointed out that his own sources could surely provide the necessary link, but Carazo maintained they could not.

5. Seeming to warm to the subject, he suggested that July (in which he expects to see increased labor unrest) might offer a propitious opportunity to take such action. He would, he said, have to play it very close to his vest, since there were a number of people in the Public Security Ministry whom he does not trust. In this regard, he repeated earlier assurances he had given to Charge Binns that he planned to make

⁵ In telegram 3801 from San José, July 3, Bowdler reported that Carazo had asked for U.S. financial assistance to address Costa Rican balance of payment difficulties, as well as U.S. assistance with influencing the IMF toward a favorable assistance package for Costa Rica. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800319–0473)

⁶ In telegram 2092 from San José, April 18, Binns wrote to Bowdler that Carazo had informed him on April 17 that he had decided to “hold up raid on Cuban ops center” due to his fear that Castro would retaliate by revoking the departure authorizations of Cuban refugees. Binns wrote: “Carazo reiterated that GOCR will close ops center once all Cubans have been evacuated.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800200–0400)

extensive changes in that Ministry shortly; he is only waiting for the return of Civil Guard Chief Col. Munoz Marin from training in Taiwan to initiate action. (Comment: Seso reports that Munoz Marin is deeply and directly involved in the removal and sale to Salvadoran insurgents of left-over FSLN arms. Putting Munoz in charge of a clean up of public security is like selecting a fox to guard the chicken house. Carazo may have made this suggestion to try to draw us out on how much we know about the funny business in that Ministry.) Again, he affirmed the need for a plausible information peg on which to hang action against the Cuban ops center. I said I would see what we could do, pointing out that we had to keep in mind the need to protect sources.

6. I subsequently discussed with Seso ways in which we might provide an information "fig leaf" for Carazo, as evidence of our willingness to meet his perceived requirement. It may be possible to do this without risk of blowing any sources, I understand Seso will be in touch with its headquarters on this matter. I also believe Carazo's selection of the July timeframe for possible action against the operations center and request for a specific peg on which to base his action give us benchmarks against which we can measure his performance. If we can come up with as good a rationale as he used in ringing the Soviet diplomats, we can test the validity of his declared intentions.

Binns

339. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, July 16, 1980, 1525Z

4088. Subject: Cuban OPS Center. Ref: San Jose 3972.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. I gave President Carazo talking points (returned after he took notes).³ He was surprised and intrigued by the Romero brothers and the training camp being set up near Siquirres. He said they had lost the Cuban ops center, and I told him it had moved to the Consulate and it would be necessary to close the Consulate to close the ops center permanently. I went on to say that, sadly, the fact the ops center moved every time we told him suggested someone somewhere in his government was telling the Cubans. He said he did not know whom to trust in the security apparatus except Arguedas, who did not himself know who to trust. He asked for further information about a Costa Rican who may have taken refuge in the Cuban Consulate.

3. In response to my question, he said he wasn't prepared to move yet. He wanted to catch them in the act, and had gotten together a group of friends, totally apart from the security apparatus, to investigate the matter. They would follow up the two new leads we had given him and he hoped we would try to give him further hard information.

4. He did not react badly at all to my pressing him, but he is looking for the smoking gun. I see nothing to do but keep feeding him

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 10, Costa Rica: 5/80–1/81. Secret; Immediate; Cherokee; Nodis.

² In telegram 3972 from San José, July 10, McNeil reported on his meeting that day with Carazo who, referring to arms smuggling, "said quite frankly that elements of his security forces were obviously involved, that Panamanian Government officials were involved, and that there was lots of money, which certainly came from the Cubans." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890003–0667)

³ In telegram 181442 to San José, July 10, the Department transmitted talking points including "specific information on Cuban use of Costa Rica as a transshipment and supply point in the arms traffic with Salvadoran leftist insurgents and on Cuba's possible use of Costa Rican territory to train Salvadoran extremists as well." On July 10, Aaron addressed the following to Pastor on the first page of a copy of the telegram: "Bob—I think they want proof i.e. a 'denuncio' or photo or something tangible. DA." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 10, Costa Rica: 5/80–1/81) In telegram 3968 from San José, July 10, McNeil indicated that the Embassy had generated additional talking points for his meeting with Carazo. The points included information about Cuban financial support for the PVP's efforts to train Salvadoran leftists in Costa Rica and information about individuals, including Alejandro Romero and Cesar Romero, who allowed their property to be used in arms smuggling operations. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 12, Costa Rica: 6/80–1/81)

information (difficult and tricky though this may be) with a reasonable hope, though not the certainty that he will act. I do not know him well, obviously, after a week here, but I have seen him three times and I do sense considerable anger at the Cubans for meddling in Costa Rica's affairs and, of course, for causing him a major potential headache.

5. We will follow up on further specific information in Seso channels.⁴

McNeil

⁴ On July 17, Aaron wrote the following on the final page of the telegram: "Pastor—Can't we get tough? Threaten to leak this evidence which he fails to act on? Tell him we can't tell him more if the only effect is to pass it on to the Cubans. We might as well tell the press it might have more effect. DA."

340. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 4, 1980

SUBJECT

Letter to President Carazo (U)

During the last few months, President Carazo of Costa Rica has been extremely helpful to us on a number of issues, especially Cuban refugees and El Salvador. He has hosted two conferences in San Jose on Cuban refugees, and he has agreed to challenge the Cubans for a UN Security Council seat next fall. In the months ahead, we will need his cooperation even more on Central America, at the UN, and on Cuban refugees. On May 26, President Carazo wrote to you to request help on an issue of fundamental importance to his country—economic development (Tab B).² He will expect us to be as responsive to his concern as he has been to ours. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 7, Costa Rica, 1980. Confidential. Sent for action. Carter initialed the top of the page.

² Attached but not printed is a translation of Carazo's letter.

President Carazo describes the serious economic problems his country faces and requests your support for two proposals: (1) a special fund for housing (requiring a \$50 million soft loan); and (2) a mechanism for channeling US deposits into Costa Rica's banking system. He writes that "exceptional solutions are required to keep Costa Rica as a true example of democracy." (C)

The response which State prepared (Tab A) was delayed because State and IDCA are currently debating whether to continue the bilateral aid program to Costa Rica, a middle-income developing country, in FY 82. IDCA wants to phase out such programs in line with Ehrlich's concentration strategy, while State argues that Costa Rica is a key democracy in a turbulent region and terminating aid would not only be a setback to Costa Rica's economy but it would send a signal throughout Central America that we are treating radicals like Nicaragua better than democracies. State and IDCA resolved this debate by deferring it until the Fall Budget Review. The result is that the letter at Tab A does *not* include a paragraph reaffirming your intent to maintain a bilateral aid program, even though State, OMB, IDCA, and Owen all recognize that the letter would reinforce the present Costa Rican *expectation that our development aid program will be continued in FY 62*.³ (C)

If you sign the letter at Tab A, which is reasonably positive, while contemplating the termination of aid to Costa Rica, it will at best be considered disingenuous. The very fact that we are addressing questions such as whether to end aid and restrict textile exports from Costa Rica rather than questions such as how to increase aid and trade suggests an intent different than implied by the letter. Considering the special and difficult circumstances of Costa Rica and the importance which our aid program has in showing that we favor democracies in the region, you may want to consider adding an explicit reaffirmation of your intent to continue the aid program. This would send as powerful a message of your concern to our government as to Costa Rica's. The following paragraph added to your letter would make that point: (C)

Generally speaking, our bilateral development assistance is directed toward the poorer developing countries of the world and is targeted to assist urgent, long-term development problems in specific sectors. But I have made an exception to this approach for the Caribbean and Central America, and I place a particularly high priority on assisting democratic and progressive nations in the region. We intend to maintain our bilateral aid program to Costa Rica and to seek ways to make it more effective in the future. (C)

³ The reference to "FY 62" is an apparent typo for FY 82.

However, the above would constitute a decision *to continue aid* to Costa Rica. State, IDCA, OMB and Owen would prefer that you send the letter at Tab A without the paragraph above. (C)

Tab A

Letter from President Carter to Costa Rican President Carazo⁴

Washington, August 4, 1980

Dear Mr. President:

Before responding to the issues raised in your letter of May 26, may I first express my appreciation for Costa Rica's key role in arranging the San Jose II Conference. Although much work remains to be done, your active participation helped us in our search for creative solutions to our hemisphere's grave refugee problem.

I share your deep concern about the economic situation Costa Rica now faces. Rising oil prices and inflation are causing economic dislocation in most nations, and I know that such problems are particularly difficult for a small democracy that wishes to remain responsive to the aspirations of its people in a turbulent time and region.

Certainly any strong effort to control inflation and balance-of-payments difficulties merits international assistance in support of domestic measures within Costa Rica. I am pleased to see that you are continuing to work with the International Monetary Fund.

Costa Rica's friends and the multilateral development lending institutions may also have a major role to play. Much of our development assistance goes through multilateral lending institutions, and I have asked the U.S. Executive Directors at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank—the principal sources of assistance within the hemisphere—to lend strong support to programs for Costa Rica in the context of a determined effort by your government to address Costa Rica's economic difficulties.

With respect to your proposal for a housing fund, we have already provided Costa Rica with an \$11.4 million housing guarantee program. I understand this \$11.4 million is available as soon as the Costa Rican institutions involved conclude the necessary negotiations with commercial banks in the U.S. We would be pleased to continue cooperating on housing investment guarantees.

⁴ No classification marking.

We have also recently augmented the housing program of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration by \$23 million, and Costa Rica should be able to take advantage of these funds.

Regarding the question of time deposits with Costa Rican banks, I was pleased to note Costa Rica's recent success in placing a five-year bond issue of \$50 million in the international market. This reflects continuing investor confidence in your country's long-term economic prospects. Given this confidence and continued pursuit of strong economic policies, it can be expected that foreign investors will wish to take advantage of future investment opportunities in Costa Rica.

Finally, I have asked Frank McNeil, the new U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, to work closely with you and your government and to cooperate in every way. Costa Rica has consistently been an example to the hemisphere of a nation devoted to the welfare of its people. I assure you of our continued interest in Costa Rican progress.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

**341. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the
Department of State¹**

San José, October 9, 1980, 2054Z

6035. ARA only. Subject: (C) Costa Rica—Coping Badly With Foreign Extremists.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Costa Rica's institutions and her citizenry have great resilience to them and three months here have by no means made me into a Cassandra. But one has the sense that events may be overwhelming the GOCR's capacity to cope in the security field (the subject of this message) as well as the economic field where panic over the GOCR's belated austerity measures brought about a presumably temporary 50–60 percent devaluation of the colon on the street.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In telegram 5699 from San José, September 27, the Embassy reported that Carazo had announced economic austerity measures on September 25 which included "new measures the GOCR was taking to reduce imports and travel, stimulate exports, reduce consumption and generally get the economy back into equilibrium." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800461–0863)

3. We have focussed in this channel on our mostly unsuccessful efforts to get the GOCR to do something about the Cuban ops center.³ But the GOCR continues to demonstrate an inability to cope with the activities of all foreign extremist groups, now expanding to include far rightist groups as well as the familiar Latin left under Cuban sponsorship.

—Despite the information we gave the President, not only does the Cuban ops center continue to exist unmolested, but Willy Azofeifa, a man whom we identified as a Cuban contact, continues in a major position in the Ministry of Public Security.

—Reports continue of efforts at arms smuggling, although the Minister of Public Security, who is honest if overwhelmed, can make something of a case that the Salvador plane crash put a damper on this Cuban-sponsored activity. At all events, if the information in San Salvador 6979 is correct, the FARN got significant arms through Costa Rica.⁴

—Reports continue of guerrilla training, both of leftist Salvadorans and, now on the right, of anti-FSLN Nicaraguans.

—The GOCR gave former Interior Minister Johnny Echeverria, who was involved in some fashion in the Salvador arms smuggling, an official passport on which, according to Seso reporting, he will surreptitiously travel to Cuba and Moscow.

—To the earlier Seso reports of Salvadoran terrorist plans in Costa Rica have been added a spate of reports on right wing terrorist plans (variously involving local Cuban exiles, Miami-based Nicaraguan Somocistas, and Guatemalan right wingers).

—The Minister of Public Security just informed me that in the last several weeks 12 East German passport holders had drifted into Costa Rica, some across frontier checkpoints, the rest via commercial air. Seso is checking names.

—The Communist Party, which has three deputies in the legislative assembly, sponsored a meeting of extreme leftists from a claimed 30 countries in the hall of the legislative assembly itself, which drew no

³ In telegram 5593 from San José, September 23, McNeil reported that he and Cheek had "raised Cuban activities" in Costa Rica with Carazo who said that "the GOCR (and Public Security Minister Arguedas) were still working hard at it." McNeil commented: "In keeping Carazo reminded of the Cuban problem we upset him slightly, but gain the larger benefit of letting him know we remain concerned." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-0128)

⁴ Telegram 6979 from San Salvador, October 7, described a visit by a U.S. television news crew to a FARN camp in El Salvador where officers claimed that their weapons had been shipped from Belgium through Caracas and San José. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800485-0973)

little criticism from the press. The meeting predictably called for violence almost everywhere except Costa Rica.

—A suspected Italian right wing terrorist runs a business here despite the continued efforts of the Italian Government to have him expelled.

—The well-financed Radio Noticias Del Continente (originally of Montenero origin) continues to broadcast inflammatory but intelligent propaganda to Salvador and elsewhere, despite representations by several governments. The President has told us and others he would like to close it down, but can't because of constitutional protections on freedom of the press. However, its broadcasts have reached the equivalent of Oliver Wendall Holmes' "crying fire in a crowded theatre," and it is more likely the involvement of Echeverria and others, for financial reasons, has afforded the radio extra-official protection. Seso report TDFIRDB-315/03586-80, dated 22 Feb 1980, alleged the bribery of Echeverria by Latin American Revolutionaries: US \$25,000 from Radio Noticias Del Continente for his assistance in keeping the radio station in operation; and US \$25,000 from a representative of Salvadoran Revolutionaries to gain his cooperation in providing official protection for guerrilla training camps within Costa Rican borders.⁵

4. In essence, what has happened is that President Carazo's impetuous support for the Sandinistas set in motion a chain of events in which the Cubans set up their ops center and, early this year, essayed using GOCR officials and other Costa Ricans with whom they had worked during the Nicaraguan war to move arms to Salvador. While Carazo did not will this activity, GOCR complaisance and general ineffectualness in dealing with arms trafficking and reports of guerrilla training have left the impression among the extremist fraternity that Costa Rica is an easy mark, where extremists of both left and right can move relatively unmolested. The ultra-right has clearly been stimulated by the ultra-left and one has the impression Costa Rica simply cannot cope with all its unwelcome visitors.

5. In our efforts, we have encountered more words than action. Carazo, after flirting with the idea of throwing out Comas, the head of the Cuban ops center, refrained from doing it because of explicit or implicit Cuban blackmail on the subject of associates or even family. And, as the Department knows, while our representations on arms smuggling did to some degree inhibit the Cubans, it was at the cost of alerting them through GOCR leaks. They have tightened up security, restricting our current knowledge of Cuban activities. We can expect more extremist activity including, perhaps, terrorist incidents unless

⁵ Not found.

the GOCR does something to make this place less of a Mecca for extremists. We have collectively talked with Carazo on a number of occasions and the Mission has religiously supplied the government with any information on reputed, terrorist activities—left or right—but while this serves to alert the security people, it has done little more than help them expel a few undesirables.

6. A peculiar schizophrenia affects this government, a habit seen in many areas of doing conflicting things simultaneously. Here Carazo and the GOCR have rendered what can only be described as vital support for Salvador and yet activities go on here aimed at destroying the JRG. To be fair, I suspect his unwillingness to act against the Cubans goes beyond family considerations. He knows his police and security forces are not terribly effective in these matters, probably fears the Cubans could stir up considerable trouble here were they evicted and sees their presence as a kind of guarantee against local leftist acts aimed at Costa Rica itself.

7. This message offers no prescriptions except to keep plugging away where we have opportunity. At writing, anti-Salvador activities here hurt but do not seem to be of a scale that could effect the outcome there. Carazo, like so many others, is waiting for the US elections. Once past, we will have to look at strategies again, particularly in the context of his visit to the U.S.

McNeil

342. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 28, 1980

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Costa Rican President Carazo (U)

Carazo is in Washington to receive an honorary degree at Georgetown, and he asked to see you to express his personal gratitude for your human rights policies to Latin America. In addition, he will ask

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 10, Costa Rica: 5/80–1/81. Secret. Sent for information. For the memorandum of conversation, see Document 343.

you to support an increase in development aid and a \$2.9 million PL-480 Title II program. He also wants you to reject the CAB's recommendation to award Air Florida the only American non-stop service between Miami and San Jose. (His preference is Pan American.) Unfortunately, you cannot be very forthcoming, except in accepting his congratulations. (S)

Costa Rica is a friend in trouble, a model democracy in a region of violence and radical change. However, since its per capita GNP is about \$1500, qualifying it as a middle-income LDC, we find ourselves continuously constrained from being as helpful as we would like or as they are to our concerns. They have helped us on the Cuban refugee issue and in opposing Cuba for a UN Security Council seat (which they finally lost when Cuba threw its support to Panama). They have adopted a constructive approach to El Salvador and Nicaragua, and indeed the only important issue of some disagreement between us is Carazo's unwillingness (or inability) to close down the Cuban operations center (in San Jose) which directs Cuba's illegal arms trafficking and guerrilla movements in the region. (One possible reason for Carazo's inaction is the possibility that the Cubans are blackmailing him because of the possibility of Carazo's son's involvement.) Ed and I agree that you should emphasize the importance of his acting strongly against Cuban officials who are using Costa Rica to promote terrorist activities in Central America.² (S)

Partly because of global economic conditions and regional political crises, Costa Rica is in an extremely difficult state. Some observers have begun to compare it to Uruguay—a model South American social democracy for 30 years, which deteriorated rapidly into chaos and terrorism in the 1970's. Your meeting with Carazo is one of many examples of the political support we have provided to Costa Rica. In the economic area, we have not been as helpful. Our aid program remains small—\$7.6 million in FY '81—and there are many in the government who would prefer to phase it out. The Title II PL-480 program of \$2.9 million was personally requested by Carazo, but since Costa Rica is a middle-income LDC, OMB, IDCA and USDA oppose it, but would support a Title I program of the same amount. On this, you should respond that we are still reviewing the availability of both Title I and Title II resources and await Congressional appropriations. (Owen has agreed to chair an inter-agency group and submit a formal

² Reference is to Muskie. In a November 25 memorandum to Carter, Muskie included a suggested talking point for Carter to make during his meeting: "We believe that you are as concerned about Cuban interventionist activities in Costa Rica and in the region as we are. We hope you can act promptly and strongly against any Cuban officials who may use Costa Rica to promote terrorist activity elsewhere in Central America or otherwise abuse their welcome." (Ibid.)

recommendation to you after the meeting.)³ With regard to Carazo's request on awarding the air link to Pan American, OMB submitted a memo to you on November 19 recommending that you approve the CAB's award to Air Florida.⁴ If you take no action, CAB's recommendation will take effect on December 9. We recommend that you hear Carazo out. (S)

In addition, you may want to encourage Carazo to continue playing an active leadership role on human rights and on seeking moderate political solutions in Central America. (S)

³ In a January 8, 1981, memorandum to Pastor, Denton summarized the policy supported by the interagency Food Aid Working Group: "All agencies agreed that the appropriate form of food aid for Costa Rica should be a Title I program rather than Title II, given that country's relatively high income level. However, the Costa Ricans have been led to expect a favorable response to their request for a Title II program in FY 1981. A refusal at this stage would have a negative impact on US relationships with that country especially since no Title I program could be implemented in its place this fiscal year. A consensus was reached on a compromise position: 1) Allocate a Title II program of up to \$2 million only for 1981. 2) Advise the government of Costa Rica that US consideration of a Title I food aid program in FY 1982 would be contingent upon demonstrated food and economic need. 3) In light of their legislative procedures, Costa Rica should now begin their internal procedures to consider such a program." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Special Projects, Hazel Denton, Box 56, Costa Rica, 8/80-1/81)

⁴ Not found.

343. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 1, 1980, 11:35 a.m.–12:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

The President's meeting with President Rodrigo Carazo Odio of Costa Rica

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Henry Owen, Ambassador-at-Large
Guy Erb, Deputy Director of International Development and Cooperation
Administration
John Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Interamerican Affairs
Ambassador Francis J. McNeil
Robert Pastor, NSC staff member

President Rodrigo Carazo Odio
Mario Carazo Zeledon (son)
Ambassador Jose Rafael Echeverria
Foreign Minister Bernd Niehaus
Neil Seidenman (interpreter)

The *President* welcomed President Carazo, expressing his pleasure in having the opportunity to meet with him. (U)

President Carazo thanked the President, recalling the warmth and responsiveness that he and his Administration have shown in dealings with Costa Rica. He considered it to be an historic imperative to meet with the President within his final weeks in office, and to convey to him his appreciation and recognition for the close relationships which the President has developed with Latin America, after so many years and so many problems. He was gratified to be able to speak with the President and share with him some of his country's current problems. (C)

The *President* thanked President Carazo for his remarks, adding that the U.S. and Costa Rica had indeed worked together on some common problems. He expressed gratitude to President Carazo for his country's cooperation in regard to the Cuban refugees, and its contribution to the maintenance of stability in Central America, despite severe tests and trials of patience. (C)

President Carazo assured the President that their common position regarding the Cuban refugees was not simply a product of the occasion,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 10, Costa Rica: 5/80–1/81. Confidential. The meeting took place in the Oval Office. Carazo was on a private visit to the United States November 29–December 1.

but rather a reflection of the values the U.S. and Costa Rica attach to humanitarian considerations. He considered the attitude of the Castro regime towards the U.S. and the world as an expression of contempt for human dignity, an insult, and a serious situation in our time. Accordingly, when the situation at the Peruvian Embassy deteriorated, the Costa Rican government decided to act for the common cause.² President Carazo added that for him it was a source of shame to see a country of our hemisphere, having common geographic, ethnic, and historical roots, committing these acts. Therefore, he felt that in taking the position he did he was above all commanded by conscience.

The *President* asked what Costa Rica could do to prevent Cuba from transporting arms to other countries of Central America in support of subversive activities.

President Carazo stated that the problem of Cuba's intervention in the region was a serious matter. His government, the U.S. government, and all of Central America were aware of it. He stressed that the situation in Central America was being exploited not only by Cuba but by all outside groups that wanted to destabilize those countries, and the struggle was at its worst in El Salvador, in a battle of the extremes. Unfortunately, it was a situation that had its effects on Costa Rica as well, if only in the political aspect. In response to the *President's query*, he stated that Costa Rica would need assistance from the U.S., inasmuch as Costa Rica alone lacked the military and technical wherewithal to monitor this type of activity. The Costa Rican authorities have been aware of and have discussed with the U.S. Ambassador certain activities centered in the Cuban Consulate in San Jose, and the government has undertaken to act accordingly. But Costa Rica was not equipped to maintain effective control of its air space, and the Cubans were aware of this. He said that up to the present, they have not used Costa Rican territory, but they have used Nicaraguan territory. This was a serious development. And just the week before, the Cubans moved arms through Nicaragua to El Salvador, using aircraft bought in Costa Rica. This was the first time a move of this kind by the Cubans had been detected. Up until then, we had not been aware of such movements.

President Carter responded that the most helpful step we might take at this point would be to provide assistance from our intelligence, to be combined with information developed by the Costa Rican government, to prevent Costa Rican territory from being utilized.

² See Document 334.

The *President* mentioned Costa Rica's negotiations with the IMF and asked whether President Carazo is expecting a visit in January from the IMF.

President Carazo confirmed this, indicating that there would be an IMF mission to Costa Rica in January. The Costa Rican Minister of Finance was at the moment engaged in discussions at the IMF. Costa Rica was determined to define and resolve its short-term obligations, which at the moment constituted their heaviest burden, in view of payments due in the coming months on non-governmental trade operations accounts. And in regard to the special arrangement being sought with the IMF, which President Carazo thought Costa Rica would be granted—given the importance of solving the financial problem, the Fund has also shown consideration of the political implications. In Costa Rica, the President of course could not give orders to the legislature, which pretty much did what it pleases! A bill has been pending for some months now, designed to address fiscal matters, still awaiting legislative disposition, which is not a very satisfactory situation. Of course, a democracy had to operate in this fashion. This explained a part of the problem *vis-à-vis* the IMF, which wants immediate action. In addition, Costa Rica has adopted a few non-traditional measures. The IMF traditionally required curbing imports. In the interest of its relationship with the IMF, Costa Rica has taken a number of unorthodox steps, but as temporary measures to tide it over the 90–100 days pending the special arrangement. Costa Rica also desires, with the IMF's agreement, to seek means of handling its balance-of-payments deficit, under pressure of short-term trade obligations in an environment of rising costs of goods purchased abroad against weakening prices for Costa Rica's exports, primarily coffee. The arrangement would require reform and reinforcement in areas mentioned. Besides IMF, Costa Rica was also seeking cooperation from various private and commercial banks in the U.S. and other countries. (C)

President Carazo went on to say that Nicaragua obtained a special arrangement with the IMF. But then Nicaragua suspended payments abroad. Costa Rica did not wish to follow Nicaragua's path and risk jeopardizing its good name and credit standing. In dealing with the various credit institutions, Costa Rica has sought to bring about an awareness of the political sensitivity of coffee exports for the country. And operating in a context of fixed quotas and fixed prices could jeopardize the country's ability to sustain the terms of payment, which would pose a serious problem. (C)

President Carter pointed out that he had seen many instances in which executive authorities had been able to benefit by the IMF's requirements for restraint by countries in such circumstances. A case in point was Prime Minister Callaghan of Great Britain, facing a Parlia-

ment that did not want to go along with certain measures, which were finally obtained thanks to the IMF's position. Much the same happened with Mexico, Egypt, Turkey. So that, if Costa Rica could negotiate well with the IMF regarding steps President Carazo basically approved of, this might provide the necessary elements of discipline for the legislature to resolve the problems. The President said he had observed how the IMF could play a constructive role in the assessment of the political consequences involved in situations of this kind. (C)

President Carter went on to state that the U.S. Government was pursuing opportunities, within our budgetary limitations, to meet Costa Rica's needs under PL 480. We were also reviewing Costa Rica's concern regarding the airline contracts, and were aware that the Costa Rican government preferred Pan American. The President explained that our government just wanted to try to accommodate our carriers by providing the opportunity to compete in the market, and at the same time, bring about more access to Costa Rica from Miami, Houston, Los Angeles. The President said he did not know what could be done on this issue, but he wanted President Carazo's views. (C)

President Carazo expressed his appreciation for the President's attention to these matters, which were of great interest to Costa Rica. Of particular importance were the arrangements under CCC and Title II, as Ambassador McNeil was aware from their many discussions. He said that Costa Rica looked with great optimism on a prospective solution to the problem. Their concern regarding the airline contracts was centered primarily on Pan American's (PAA) established personnel structure. President Carazo remarked that he regarded PAA with personal affection, since he himself had been a PAA employee at one time! Employment is an important factor. He would not wish to see undue harm to many Costa Ricans who had been on the company's payroll for so many years.³ (C)

President Carazo made brief mention of two other items. The first was a regional meat import quota. He expressed the hope that a complementary formula might be adopted in the application of the Central American quotas, so that if, for example, Guatemala fell short of using its full quota, the unused portion would not be allocated to Australia or New Zealand, but rather to the Central American region. Secondly, the President applauded the Carter Administration's approach to AID policy, emphasizing the private sector. This had been valuable in devel-

³ Following a December 30 order by the United States Civil Aviation Board, Air Florida inaugurated its Miami to San José service on January 1, 1981, replacing Pan American airlines. (Telegram 341865 to San José, December 30, and telegram 82 from San José, January 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810001-0017 and D810009-0764 respectively)

opmental efforts, since aside from public agencies, various private institutions were essential factors in economic development. Therefore, the shift of emphasis in the flow of credits was a positive development, and he wanted to encourage that. (C)

President Carter thanked *President Carazo*, and asked if *Costa Rica* had meat to export. *President Carazo* said “yes,” and the *President* responded that he had just eliminated the meat quota system and so the U.S. market was open for all *Costa Rica* could export.⁴ (C)

President Carazo said, “Magnifico!” He concluded by extending to *President* and *Mrs. Carter* a standing invitation to visit *Costa Rica* as a great friend of that country. (U)

⁴ In telegram 319896 to multiple posts, December 3, the Department transmitted a November 28 press release from the Department of Agriculture “announcing the President’s intention to suspend meat import quotas in 1981.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800577–0077)

344. Memorandum Prepared in the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency¹

PA–M–81–10019

Washington, January 14, 1981

Costa Rican Aid to Regional Insurgents [classification not declassified]

Summary

A wide range of factors—geographic, political, military, and socio-economic—dictates that Costa Rica will continue to be an important Central American entrepot for illegal arms. Since the onset of the Nicaraguan insurrection, and continuing through last year, a substantial number of private and official Costa Ricans have been involved in virtually all aspects of the trafficking, from procurement to delivery. Most participants have been motivated more by financial than ideological considerations and most recent support activities involve arms trafficking to the Salvadoran guerrillas. [classification and handling restriction not declassified]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 84T00664R: Production Case Files (1980–1981) Box 1, Folder 111: PA–M–81–10019—*Costa Rican Aid to Regional Insurgents*. Secret; [handling restriction not declassified]. Prepared in the Office of Political Analysis. Requested by incoming Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Richard Allen.

For a variety of reasons—not the least of which has been news media exposure of official complicity in clandestine activities—Costa Rican involvement in arms smuggling has lessened somewhat over the last few months.² Cuba and Nicaragua, the principal movers behind regional insurgent aid, are now shifting the focus of operations to Nicaragua. Still, Costa Rica remains not only a transit point for arms from Cuba and other suppliers, but has its own large black market for weapons. The crash in El Salvador in June 1980 of a Panama registered light plane bearing arms from Costa Rica—and a similar incident in November—confirmed [*less than 1 line not declassified*] that trafficking continues. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

Guerrillas also are training and recruiting in Costa Rica. In addition, supporters of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement—such as Nicaragua's Deputy Defense Minister Eden Pastora, Panama's guerrilla "groupie" Hugo Spadafora, and Argentina's Montonero terrorist leader Mario Firmenich—are regularly in and out of Costa Rica, presumably running errands on behalf of the Salvadoran left. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

Despite some half-hearted efforts by the Carazo government to control such activities, Costa Rica remains a vacuum into which leftist subversives will be drawn so long as revolutionary turmoil endures anywhere in the region. The tolerant political atmosphere draws exiles and extremists of all stripes from throughout Latin America. Costa Rican security forces are small, ineffective, vulnerable to corruption, and divided among several ministries. The combined Civil and Rural Guards total only 8,000 men and their limited investigative and search capabilities are no deterrent to gunrunners. The borders are long and porous, and many areas in the northern provinces are sparsely populated. Costa Rica has hundreds of small, remote airstrips and heavy, unmonitored private air traffic. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

Perhaps the most significant factor contributing to the continuation of this kind of activity is the extensive involvement of many Costa Rican officials and private citizens. Former Minister of Public Security Juan Jose "Johnny" Echeverria was and probably remains a central figure. He has admitted publicly to Costa Rican congressional investigators that he facilitated transportation of arms from Panama and Venezuela to Sandinistas during the Nicaraguan revolution. Although he denied such charges, Echeverria also:

—Permitted arms to arrive in Costa Rica directly from Cuba.

² The attached map shows the level of known activities in late 1980. [Footnote in the original. The map is attached but not printed.]

—Siphoned off significant portions of the materiel intended for Sandinistas for sale later to various guerrilla groups.

—Reportedly diverted munitions from official Costa Rican stores to the Sandinistas. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

Echeverria is involved primarily for profit, but regional leftists and Cubans also have had some success in cultivating him. Private citizens plus other high-ranking officials, such as the deputy director of the Office of National Security and officers of the Civil Guard, have been involved as well, presumably also for personal gain. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

The Legislative Assembly's 6-month investigation of arms trafficking during the Nicaraguan revolution has nearly run its course. But new revelations about activities during that period, as well as continued trafficking to Salvadoran guerrillas, have kept the issue alive and have continued to undermine public confidence in the national leadership. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

The most serious recent incident helping to perpetuate this scandal was the charge in November 1980 that President Carazo had taken a \$30 million bribe to permit the Sandinistas to use Costa Rican territory during their campaign against Somoza. Certainly some of Carazo's closest associates profiteered during the Nicaraguan revolution, and two of the President's sons were also reportedly involved. To date, however, there is no hard evidence implicating Carazo; at worst he may have shared in a considerably smaller sum. The President could have made it inconvenient for Sandinistas to operate out of Costa Rica, but he hardly could have halted their activities. Given Costa Rican popular sympathies with the anti-Somoza cause at the time, moreover, Carazo would not likely have wanted to obstruct the guerrillas. Cuba and Nicaragua may be fueling the bribery scandal for their own reasons, but the readiness of many Costa Ricans to believe some of it indicates the poor standing of the administration. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

The net effect of Carazo's past role and the present capabilities of the government leaves little prospect that the President will crack down on activities in support of leftists. He is personally vulnerable and, even if he had the intention, he does not have the tools to shut off arms trafficking. He has ordered an expansion of the civil reserve force, but not even a major effort would significantly improve Costa Rica's weak security posture. [*classification and handling restriction not declassified*]

Carazo has considered tightening border controls and taking other administrative measures to cut down on trafficking and to show his displeasure with Nicaragua's steady shift toward authoritarian Marxist rule, but his options are limited. Costa Rica needs good relations with

neighboring Nicaragua not only to ensure its political security (Nicaragua has a 17,000 man army and plans to expand its militia to 50,000) but also for economic reasons. Among its regional trading partners, San Jose regularly enjoys a trade surplus only with Nicaragua. Publicly, Carazo has supported the Salvadoran junta but with Nicaragua in the back of his mind, he is likely to continue to do so with some restraint. *[classification and handling restriction not declassified]*

At least until the 1982 elections, insurgents and gunrunners will likely be able to utilize Costa Rican territory pretty much as they have in the past. *[classification and handling restriction not declassified]*

345. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, January 15, 1981, 2241Z

283. Subject: (S) Follow-up With Carazo on Cuban Activities. Ref: State 005249.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. After having enlisted Foreign Minister Niehaus in the cause, I saw President and Niehaus per instructions reftel on Nicaragua and Cuba.

3. He is sending Niehaus to see D'Escoto tomorrow (Niehaus will follow the Venezuelan Calderon Berti, who concerted his approach to Nicaragua with Carazo). Niehaus was instructed in my presence to tell D'Escoto to stop intervention or face consequences, isolation and loss of financial support from West, plus danger from other CA nations (i.e. Guatemala and Honduras). Calderon Berti will have told Nicaraguans that Venezuela will continue oil support (\$30 million, according to Carazo) for Nicaragua only so long as it behaves.

4. I then made presentation on Cuba, saying that Cuban sponsored intervention in El Salvador now offered perfect opportunity to throw them out. Carazo said he would not say yes or no now, but would

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In telegram 5249 to San José, January 9, the Department instructed McNeil to meet with Carazo in order to convince him to halt Cuban clandestine activities in Costa Rica. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 12, Costa Rica: 6/80-1/81)

consider it in the light of public evidence developed on Cuban intervention.

5. I will continue the effort.

McNeil

Honduras

346. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 8, 1977, 5:15–5:50 p.m.

SUBJECT

President Carter/Honduran Chief of State Melgar Bilateral

PARTICIPANTS

HONDURAS

Brigadier General Juan Alberto Melgar Castro, Chief of State of Honduras

Colonel Roberto Palma Galvez Minister of Foreign Relations

Dr. Roberto Lazarus, Ambassador of Honduras

Mr. Guillermo Bueso, President of the Central Bank

US

President Carter

Vice President Mondale

Secretary Vance

Assistant Secretary Todman

Robert Pastor (NSC)

Charge Carl Barch

The President said it was a great pleasure to have the Honduran Chief of State in this country. He said he was grateful that the Chief of State had taken the time to come here to attend the ceremonies in connection with the signing of the treaties between ourselves and Panama.² He said this is very important to our people, and it also provided an opportunity to meet and consult with other leaders of the hemisphere. The President expressed the hope that the Chief of State's visit would be pleasant and productive. He added that he wished to express his regret that the Chief of State's wife couldn't be here because of her father's recent death. He said he hoped the Chief of State would convey his best wishes and condolences to his wife.

The President said he had received the very good news that the Congress of El Salvador had approved, by unanimous vote, the border

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 27, Latin America: 2-9/77. Confidential. Drafted by Barch. The meeting took place at the White House.

² Torrijos and Carter signed the Panama Canal Treaties in Washington on September 7. The Treaties effected the future transfer of control of the Panama Canal from the United States to Panama after 1999. See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIX, Panama.

mediation agreement with Honduras.³ He said he hoped that this might prove to be the first step in the elimination of the differences between Honduras and El Salvador. The President said that he would like the Chief of State's analysis of what might be expected in the future.

General Melgar said that in his reply to the President's letter he had said that he wished to discuss two subjects.⁴ He was very pleased to note that El Salvador's action in ratifying the mediation agreement had so happily resolved the first problem he had to discuss. General Melgar said he hoped to meet with the President of El Salvador tonight to celebrate the good news with him. Just as the President had expressed the hope that the signing of the Panama Canal treaties would usher in a new era of good relations with Latin America, he hoped that El Salvador's action would resolve Honduras' difficulties with El Salvador. The best news I can take back to the people of Honduras, he said, is the very good news that El Salvador has ratified the agreement.

General Melgar thanked the President for mentioning the death of his wife's father. He said unfortunately and painfully, they keep the tradition of mourning for a long time, and therefore his wife couldn't come. He added, however, that he and his wife hope they can both come here in the near future.

General Melgar said the second subject he wished to raise was a matter affecting not only Honduras, but Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua as well. He said he hoped President Carter could help in this matter.

President Carter asked General Melgar what kind of help he needed. General Melgar replied that he referred to the study concerned with the El Cajon hydroelectric project. He said Honduras is ready to begin construction of this very important project, but needs backing.

The President said he is familiar with the project but that it is not possible under our AID program to finance that kind of project. He said that ordinarily the World Bank and the IDB or some other long-

³ The ratification of the October 1976 border mediation agreement was part of the peace process following the 1969 war between Honduras and El Salvador. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. E–11, Part I, Documents on Mexico; Central America; and the Caribbean, 1973–1976.

⁴ Carter wrote to Melgar on August 27, inviting him to visit Washington to participate in the Panama Canal Treaties' concluding ceremonies. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 8, Honduras Chief of State Juan Alberto Melgar Castro, 8/77–2/78) As reported in telegram 4068 from Tegucigalpa, August 31, Melgar accepted the invitation in an August 30 letter to Carter and indicated his intention to discuss his country's need for assistance and the El Cajon hydroelectric project, as well as the peace negotiations with El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770316–0922) For additional documentation on the peace-keeping effort for El Salvador and Honduras, see Document 365.

term lending institution may be able to assist in financing such projects, and we would be glad to work with Honduras on this. He said that AID is designed to undertake small, short-term projects, but it's illegal for AID to engage in these other projects. He said perhaps the Secretary of State could explain other opportunities that may exist.

The Secretary said that as the President stated, nothing can be done under AID. Perhaps something might be done by the Eximbank, and we would be pleased to explore this with the Honduran Ambassador.

Mr. Bueso said Honduras is ready to move forward with the El Cajon project; that some financing is being obtained from the IBRD and the IDB, but more money is required. He said Honduras has been in contact with the Germans, Canadians and the Arabs in an effort to obtain special concessional financing. He said this project is of a regional character and Honduras and its neighbors need it to develop their markets. He said if the project is not undertaken soon, Honduras will suffer from a severe fuel shortage, and will be forced to import more petroleum, at increasing cost.

Mr. Bueso said the Hondurans are well aware of the points the President and the Secretary made, but Honduras is asking for U.S. support in the IDB to obtain assistance through the Fund for Special Operations. He said the Hondurans not only need IBRD and IDB funds but additional funds under soft, concessional terms. He said Honduras' requirements are of a special nature, and if its negotiations with Canada, Germans, and the Arabs are successful there could also be good news on this project.

The Secretary said perhaps we could study this matter with the Treasury Department to see if anything might be done to help.

General Melgar said the Hondurans would await this development.

The President responded that the Hondurans should continue to work on standby financing while they are waiting. He said we are very much interested in Honduras' economic development. It is part of multilateral cooperation and the friendly relations that might result from it. The Secretary will discuss it with Treasury, and, the President said, he would take a personal interest in this matter. He added that he is interested in the fact that the Hondurans turned to the Arabs and European countries, which increases the chances of success of the Hondurans' efforts.

The Secretary said the Shah of Iran is particularly interested in this kind of project. He said he talked to the Shah several months ago.⁵ He

⁵ Vance met with the Shah in Tehran during the CENTO Ministerial meeting May 12-15. A record of their conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1977-1980, vol. X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977-November 1979.

said if the Hondurans have not been in touch with the Shah, it might be worth their while to do so.

Ambassador Lazarus said he only wanted to say one thing. Banks such as the World Bank and the IDB know all about the El Cajon project, having studied it for years. Nevertheless, they still find obstacles. He said that although the delegations were told that no gifts were to be exchanged on this visit to the U.S., the Hondurans would be pleased to accept one present—U.S. support for the El Cajon project.

The President said the Hondurans have already given something important to us, and that is the ratification on the American Human Rights Convention, and we do appreciate it; so perhaps that would be a fair exchange.⁶

The President presented the Chief of State with a copy of his book *Why Not the Best?* and a book of space photographs. He said similar photos could be used for analyzing crops and undertaking geological and geodetic surveys, if the Hondurans are interested.

The Chief of State thanked the President, and said the Foreign Minister had taken the initiative in the move to ratify the American Human Rights Convention. He said he is well aware of the President's great interest in human rights, and he is happy to report that there is broad respect for individual rights and freedom in Honduras.

⁶ The American Convention on Human Rights was adopted at a meeting of Western Hemisphere states in Costa Rica in 1969 and came into force in 1978 after ratification by eleven Latin American countries. See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. II, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Document 47.

347. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, August 1, 1978, 2046Z

3626. Subj: Possible Changes in Melgar Government. Ref: (A) Tegucigalpa 3591,² (B) State 192117.³

1. Summary: In an unusual three hour meeting arranged by the request of Armed Forces Commander Paz on July 28, the General gave me his side of recent events that has led to speculation that government changes are in the offing. As is evident from the conversation, Paz and the Supreme Defense Council want change but are not sure how to go about it without precipitating a crisis. This is only the second time I have had this type of meeting with Paz, who sees things quite differently than Batres.⁴ Paz made it clear the military want free elections to proceed on schedule, and even claimed Melgar would be an acceptable candidate in such elections. Paz denied any involvement in coup plotting. End summary.

2. Paz was very relaxed and initiated our conversation by explaining in detail how the Superior Defense Council (SDC) was established and how it operates.

3. Paz recalled when Melgar had gone to the United States for his medical checkup, and the SDC had left Paz in charge. Paz had then proposed that the Council of Ministers and the SDC meet in order for the SDC to offer help to the Ministries. Since the regional commanders are in the rural areas, they thought they could support the Ministries in their work by keeping them informed as to how projects were developing. He said that the Ministries of Education and Communications were especially out of touch with rural concerns. He related the disappearance of money that had been budgeted for road work but lost before implementation. He said that the military are available to

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780315-0219. Confidential; Priority; Limdis.

² In telegram 3591 from Tegucigalpa, July 31, the Embassy promised a separate telegram reporting on Jaramillo's discussion with Paz. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780313-0781)

³ In telegram 192117 to Tegucigalpa, July 29, the Department instructed Jaramillo to issue "some reasonably delicate sign of support" for the Melgar government and its commitment to "initiating the process of institutionalizing democratic procedures" in Honduras. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780312-0257)

⁴ In telegram 3486 from Tegucigalpa, July 25, the Embassy reported that Cesar Batres had noted on July 24 that the Armed Forces Superior Defense Council had asked for the "immediate resignations of Melgar's personal advisers, the heads of four autonomous agencies and four Cabinet Ministers" and that Melgar "replied by offering his resignation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780305-0709)

check on the implementation of projects because of their postings in the countryside. This could help the Ministries. Such joint SDC/Ministerial cooperation was not received well by the Ministers.

4. During his long monologue, he repeated that the SDC is not interested in handling money. He said the military does not want to play accountant but feels an obligation to help the country by ensuring that projects are carried out.

5. He said that when Melgar returned, the second joint meeting of the Ministers and the SDC proceeded smoothly. At that time he said a commission composed of both Ministers and the military were to write a document on how they could work together. The Ministers then suggested a large number of tasks that the military could do, but the military refused and reiterated that they only wanted to keep the Ministers informed and help them check on implementation. It was then decided to re-do the initial rough draft. He suggested a number of reasons why the committee and the Ministers have not been able to agree. He said that around the time that these proposals surfaced, there were strikes, land invasions, protest movements, and the general campaign against the military. He said this temporarily shelved the SDC's original plans.

6. He elaborated at length the problems the Minister of Education faces and how the SDC could help. The biggest complaint against her, according to Paz, is that she does not know how to compromise. She takes a firm position and the opposition never has an opportunity to dialogue. He said the commanders in the rural areas could keep the Minister posted on many important problems that could easily be resolved if she was willing.

7. He explained at length about how the military and he, himself have been victims of a malicious campaign. He mentioned that they have tried to connect him to coup plotting, narcotics trafficking, to the Ferrari deaths, to the Olancho killings,⁵ and to the Gamero arrest.

8. Paz told me about the three military who had been arrested in the narcotics scandal. One had been dishonorably discharged and two

⁵ In an August 4, 1979, briefing memorandum to Vance, Vaky noted that in July 1975 Honduran security forces killed 14 people, including U.S. citizen Father Jerome Cypher, during a "hunger march and land invasion" in Olancho province. Two Army officers were convicted of murder in February 1978, "while nine other defendants were acquitted." Upon appeal the Supreme Court "found all but one of the eleven defendants, both military and civilian, guilty of murder," and imposed jail sentences. Vaky characterized the ruling as a "human rights success in Honduras" and concluded that "the message is clear: shooting campesinos in Honduras can land you in jail." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P790133-1700)

were suspended from the army for two years. (Tegucigalpa 3596).⁶ He emphasized the SDC only thinks about the good of the country. They know they must keep a good reputation in order to attract industry and commerce, but they do want some immediate changes done for the benefit of the poor.

9. He said that after the date for the elections was announced, the campaign against the military got worse which leads them to believe that much of it is political in nature. He said the Communists, the mafia, and many politicians who don't care about the country, and even some fellow military who are weak, are involved in this campaign.

10. He also said that some of the autonomous government agencies were misusing their power. He specifically discussed Conadi and Cohdefor, outlining some of their shortcomings.

11. He read portions of a letter that Bogran (owner of *El Tiempo*) wrote to Reina, the rector of the National University, criticizing Paz and suggesting ways of discrediting him. He also talked about how Lopez Arellano, former chief of state, has joined the leftist group to try to discredit the Paz commanded military.

12. In discussing his and President Melgar's relationship, he said that Melgar had refused to take a strong public stance on the narcotics scandal and that he, Paz, had to have a press conference explaining the military's position.⁷ This had infuriated the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Information because he felt he was the government's spokesman. He also recounted his and Melgar's entire professional careers. Obviously, both have been competitors with Melgar already having been a Lieutenant when Paz joined the service.

13. Although Paz did not pause in his three-hour monologue, when we were about to end our meeting, I asked him if Melgar were to be a candidate, would the military support him. Without any hesitation he said the military would support him and that the military have great interest in having free elections because they want to return to the barracks.

⁶ Telegram 3227 from Tegucigalpa, July 7, provided a chronology of the narcotics scandal involving the kidnapping and murder of alleged narcotics smugglers Mario and Mary Ferrari and the accusation by the Chief of the Honduran Police, Interpol Section, of "high-level military involvement in narcotics trafficking." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780283-0133) Telegram 3596 from Tegucigalpa, August 1, reported that Major Armando Calidonio and Lieutenant Carlos Coello had been suspended from duty for two years and Lieutenant Juan Angel Barahona, former Head of the Interpol Unit, was dismissed from the Army for "irregularities" in handling the investigation of the Ferrari case. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780315-0972)

⁷ Telegram 1243 from Tegucigalpa, March 10, reported on Paz's press conference regarding the Ferrari case, drug trafficking, and the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780145-0734)

14. Paz rambled over a large number of topics (already reported by [*less than 1 line not declassified*]) often talking about himself, his career, and occasionally just talking about the country in general, or isolated events that are of little importance to Washington at this time, but will be used in biographic reporting.⁸

Jaramillo

⁸ Not Found.

348. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Honduras¹

Washington, August 8, 1978, 2136Z

200321. Subject: Embassy Posture in Aftermath of Removal of Chief of State. Ref: (A) Tegucigalpa 3731² (B) State 198351.³

1. Department does not consider replacement of Chief of State Melgar by Junta to be a coup d'état and therefore we expect to continue our existing relations with the government. Rationale is that Superior Defense Council (SDC) was supreme governmental authority which installed and removed Melgar (or accepted his resignation) and which

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780324–1002. Confidential; Niact Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to San José. Sent for information to Managua, Guatemala City, San Salvador, and Belize City. Drafted by Matthews; cleared in ARA, L, in substance in NSC; approved by Christopher.

² In telegram 3731 from Tegucigalpa, August 8, Jaramillo reported that she had “just been informed by three Colonel delegation from Superior Defense Council that General Melgar’s resignation as Chief of State is being announced tonight.” Jaramillo also noted that the Superior Defense Council’s reasons for seeking the change included “dissatisfaction with Melgar’s respect for SDC policies, implementation of development projects and social decomposition.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780323–1048)

³ Telegram 198351 to Tegucigalpa, August 5, endorsed Jaramillo’s approach of expressing U.S. support for the “restoration of democratic procedures” and “economic development” while “refraining from endorsing, or appearing to endorse, any particular individual on the Honduran political scene.” The Department also instructed Jaramillo to “indicate, as appropriate, USG support for other human rights such as freedom of the press, free trade unions and economic rights, in addition of course to an expeditious return to democratic procedures.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780321–1152)

installed new Junta. Superior Defense Council therefore continues to govern Honduras through appointed Chief of State (or Junta). Embassy should therefore continue normal contacts with GOH in order to conduct routine business.

2. However, Department wishes to carefully monitor developments for a short time in order to observe initial actions and policies of Junta before giving signal of high level contacts which could be interpreted as political support. Therefore, Embassy should refrain from initiating high-level contacts or signing government-to government agreements pending further instructions. Ambassador may receive any GOH representatives, however, and may attend group meetings of Ambassadors if she is summoned to Foreign Ministry or Chief of State's office. Embassy should not respond to press or other inquiries regarding recognition or contacts, though it may use Department's press guidance (septel).⁴

3. We note para 6 of FBIS account of armed forces communique states, *inter alia*, government will continue to observe international treaties and agreements, will continue the mediation process with El Salvador, and will continue to respect press freedom and human rights.⁵ Ambassador should, as appropriate, continue to indicate U.S. support for human rights as noted in ref (B).

4. Please keep Department informed of developments, including public reaction, and Embassy's recommendation on when high-level contacts should be initiated and content of any proposed Embassy press statement.⁶

Christopher

⁴ Telegram 200081 to Tegucigalpa, August 8, included new press guidance on the removal of Melgar. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780324-0912)

⁵ Foreign Broadcast Information Service account not found. Telegram 3737 from Tegucigalpa, August 8, included a translation of the Superior Defense Council's communiqué announcing a change of government. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 25, Honduras: 8/77-12/79)

⁶ In telegram 3926 from Tegucigalpa, August 16, Jaramillo described her meeting with Palma Galvez. Jaramillo hand-carried a diplomatic note to Galvez that communicated the U.S. Government's desire for continued relations with Honduras. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780335-1037) In telegram 3943 from Tegucigalpa, August 17, Jaramillo reported on her "first formal call on the new Junta," August 16, headed by Paz. Jaramillo wrote: "I used this opportunity to underline U.S. interest in human rights and a peaceful solution to the border dispute. Speaking on behalf of the Junta, General Paz sought to make it as clear as he could that the armed forces will respect the electoral timetable, freedom of the press, work toward economic and social development and seek to resolve differences with El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780336-0997)

349. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Commander in Chief, Southern Command¹

Tegucigalpa, January 19, 1979, 2000Z

355. Subject: (U) General McAuliffe's Meetings with Honduran Junta. Ref: Tegucigalpa 0260 (DTG 161522Z Jan 79 Notal).²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Following up on Ambassador Jaramillo's meeting with General Paz (reftel), USCINCSO Lieutenant General McAuliffe called on Honduran Military Junta on January 18 in order to discuss U.S. decision to eliminate FMS credits for Honduras in FY 1980. Charge, MILGP Commander Colonel Seely and Major Felician of SOUTHCOM were present also.

3. McAuliffe noted that President Carter had pledged to reduce U.S. budget as well as U.S. arms sales throughout the world. He stated that security assistance had already undergone sharp reductions and would suffer even greater cuts in FY 1980. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, there would be no FMS credits in Central America or the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic is an exception, McAuliffe continued, because of the new, democratically elected government and the fact that elections were honored after many pressures to change results. Panama will have a program too, McAuliffe explained, because it is required by the Canal Treaty for the next ten years.

4. USCINCSO said it is difficult to explain why FMS credits are being cut but easy to misinterpret the reasons, which is why he came. Fundamentally, he noted that credits will go to those countries that have democratically elected governments, and to those that have demonstrated care and protection for human rights.

5. From the U.S. military point of view, Honduras is a special case, USCINCSO observed. It has a good record on human rights; its government is committed to democratic elections next year; and in a turbulent region, Honduras has maintained peace, achieved economic growth and cared for its citizens. McAuliffe commented that this is

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790027–0985. Confidential; Priority. Sent for information to Guatemala City, San Salvador, San José, Panama City, and Managua.

² In telegram 260 from Tegucigalpa, January 16, the Embassy described Jaramillo's January 15 meeting with Paz in order to "convey decision to eliminate FMS financing for Honduras in FY 1980." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790027–0785.)

probably the only country in the region not threatened by terrorism thanks to the government's caring for the people.

6. As a result, McAuliffe underlined the U.S. desire for a close military relationship, notwithstanding the cut in credits. FMS cash sales and IMET would continue. McAuliffe emphasized the U.S. desire for continued good relations.

7. Speaking for Junta, General Paz said that Honduras understood U.S. policy; it was for President Carter to decide.

8. Paz then asked what U.S. would do if a problem arose for Honduras in this turbulent region. He asked if U.S. would help at the preventive stage, before the problem existed already. General McAuliffe responded that the U.S. would carefully consider a Honduran request, judging it on the merits. Paz said that if they detect a problem, they would want help before there is trouble. (Paz was not more explicit.)

9. Paz said that Honduras is headed for an electoral process which could create conflict as the political parties vie to gain adherents. He expressed appreciation for IMET and narcotics assistance. He also noted Honduras FMS credit arrearages but McAuliffe assured Paz that these did not enter into FMS decision.

10. USCINCSO observed that FMS credit program cuts were affecting all countries of the region but that Honduras was only one he was visiting in order to explain U.S. decision because of our desire to preserve good relationships, given Honduras' position in Central America.

11. McAuliffe also praised Honduras neutral stance toward Nicaragua as well as efforts to settle Honduras/El Salvador dispute via mediation.³

12. This message has been coordinated with General McAuliffe.

Rondon

³ The Summary of Conclusions from the June 11 PRC meeting on Central America noted that the "human rights situation in Honduras is much better than in neighboring countries, and the USG should therefore try to increase our aid levels to Honduras as a way to show its neighbors that we are prepared to reward better performance. DOD also agreed to try to reprogram FMS and IMET funding toward Honduras this year and in future years. The USG will work to encourage a return to civilian government by free and fair elections in April 1980." See Documents 470 and 472.

350. Telegram From the Department of State to Embassy in Honduras¹

Washington, August 17, 1979, 1105Z

215209. For Ambassador Jaramillo. Subject: Policy Toward Honduras.

1. C-Entire text

2. The President has approved PRC recommendation of August 2, 1979,² that Honduras should be given priority in economic assistance in order to demonstrate our willingness to support a government in the Central American region which has a relatively good Human Rights record and is committed to development and to a return to democratic constitutional government. We are seeking modest increases in security assistance to Honduras. We are also consulting with like-minded Latin American governments about ways to encourage multilateral support for moderate democratic change.

3. In line with this policy we are exploring the possibility of additional AID assistance for Honduras. This is the reason we sent Abelardo Valdez to Honduras last week and on the basis of his report we will study possible increases in such areas as an impact program covering such items as community development, access trails, materials for self-help housing and expanded agricultural credits.³ The AID Mission which has just visited Honduras did so to develop details for such projects.

4. It is also our intention to seek a modest increase in the IMET proposal for Honduras for 1980 and a modest FMS financing program. FYI: We will propose a reprogramming of FMS financing to Honduras on the order of 3–5 million dollars. End FYI.

5. We believe it now important for us to inform President Paz that we intend to look into increasing US economic and security assistance

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 19, Honduras, 3/77–1/81. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, San Salvador, San José, Panama City, Managua, Caracas, Bogotá, Lima, Quito, and La Paz. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in ARA, AID, I, ARA/CEN, DOD/ISA, NSC, S/P, HA, and OMB; approved by Christopher. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790374–0023)

² See Document 475.

³ In telegram 4618 from Tegucigalpa, August 16, the Embassy described Valdez's visit to Tegucigalpa, during which he described the Agency for International Development's intention to commit up to \$40 million to Honduran development. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790372–1205) No memoranda of conversation of Valdez's meetings with Paz and Cabinet officials have been found.

to Honduras because of the Honduran record on human rights and its commitment to development and political liberalization. You may make the following points:

—As we have indicated before, we are indeed concerned about the situation in Central America and the potential for extremism that exists.

—We are prepared to assist in combatting the spread of Castroist subversion and in fostering measures that will prevent radicalization and lower tensions.

—It is our belief that the best defense against subversion and the actions of extremists to exploit instability and injustice is a program which provides for human rights, democratization and economic and social justice.

—The United States is prepared to help preserve peace in the region by assisting those societies willing to structure themselves in ways that reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen political and civil liberties and equitable development.

—The United States Government is looking into ways to increase economic and security assistance and to support your programs. We are prepared to encourage other governments and the International Development Bank (IDB, IBRD) to help Honduras, and we intend to encourage private investors to help.

—We have come to this decision on the basis of the demonstrated commitment, as reflected in the report made by Mr. Valdez, of the Government of Honduras to accelerate economic development, especially directed toward the poor, and the responsible allocation of Honduran resources to achieve this goal. We are encouraged by Honduras' good human rights record.

—In addition, the USG has noted with favor the continuing progress toward free elections in Honduras and the welcome opening of the political system to allow for the achievement of a truly democratic and pluralistic society. (FYI: You may want to encourage a continued opening and allow the Christian Democratic Party to participate fully and freely. You may also wish to encourage Paz to seek help in pursuing the democratic process from other democratic countries like Costa Rica, Ecuador, or Venezuela and from international organizations like the IAHRRC. End FYI.) We are confident that this commitment will continue to be sustained through the difficult period that various countries of Central America are now passing. We are prepared to help you do this.

—With respect to security assistance, it will be recalled that Honduras was initially removed from the FY 1980 program of FMS because of budgetary constraints.⁴ Dependent on congressional action, we plan

⁴ See Document 349.

to reprogram funds to make available a continued FMS credit program for FY 1980 and thereafter. Moreover, we will seek an increase in the IMET allocations for FY 1980.⁵

6. For Andean Group Embassies: Please inform your Foreign Ministers in general terms of our intent to extend increased assistance to Honduras for the reasons mentioned. You should urge like contacts and positions on the part of host governments. Venezuelan President Herrera told Secretary Vance in Quito that Venezuela is considering increased assistance to Honduras. Ambassador Luers may want to pursue this. Ambassador Gonzalez may want to open a dialogue on Honduras with President Roldos and Admiral Poveda, encouraging them to think about ways to convey the lessons of the retorno⁶ to other governments like Honduras.

Christopher

⁵ In telegram 4771 from Tegucigalpa, August 23, Jaramillo reported that she had met with Paz on August 22 to deliver these points. Jaramillo noted that Paz was “unusually tired, sentimental, and at times befuddled” but “was nevertheless extremely excited about my message of support for Honduras.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 19, Honduras, 3/77–1/81) Telegram 4772 from Tegucigalpa, August 23, updated the Department that Jaramillo’s August 22 conversation “was held with a drunk General Paz” and that “the military have warned Paz to stay on the wagon or else.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840125–1689)

⁶ Vance attended the inauguration of President Roldós in Quito August 9–12. The “retorno” process in Ecuador involved the return of civilian government following military rule. See the chapter on Ecuador scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIV, South America; Latin America Region.

351. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, December 5, 1979, 2027Z

6889. ARA for Ambassador Bowdler from Ambassador Jaramillo. Subj: Need to Implement U.S. Policy on Honduras. Ref: (A) State 215209 (Notal),² (B) Tegucigalpa 6345 (DTG 082013Z Nov 79),³ (C) Tegucigalpa 6145 (Notal).⁴

1. (S-Entire text)

2. This message reflects my concern that the United States has as yet not taken the steps needed to help prevent the Castroite/Sandinista movement from eventually claiming Honduras. It is as if the fact that terror has not yet struck Honduras gives us time to address other pressing regional problems first. This is very risky inasmuch as it seems to imply that Honduras must first have terror and lurch to the left before we will respond decisively. Moreover, it ignores Honduras' visible friendship, mild military rule and upcoming elections (April 1980).

3. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] I believe there can be little doubt that the Cubans, Sandinistas and Salvadoran terrorists hope to promote violence in Honduras via the provision of arms, training and millions of dollars. Honduras is also being used as a conduit for the smuggling of arms from Nicaragua to El Salvador. Ref B contains further commentary on this country's fragile stability.

4. Over a year ago Honduras asked for training in urban warfare. The United States has not responded. I understand the MTT is still being "staffed" at the Department. This delay strikes me as folly if we wish to help Honduras defend itself. We will forward this week a Honduran request for ten S-58 helicopters, which will give this country an urgently needed capability to control its borders. I think it is essential

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790562-0014. Secret; Priority. Sent for information to Commander in Chief, Southern Command.

² See Document 350.

³ In telegram 6345 from Tegucigalpa, November 8, Jaramillo reported: "We are increasingly concerned that acts of violence may well be mounted before the April 1980 elections" and "there is reason to believe that the principal objective of Honduran radicals is to disrupt those elections, provoke a right-wing military reaction and thereby try to give the still quiescent masses reason to reject the government." Jaramillo also commented that "the purpose of this message is to shake anyone who is complacent about Honduras." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790516-0106)

⁴ In telegram 6145 from Tegucigalpa, October 30, Jaramillo raised the issue of Soviet and Cuban activities in Central America and urged increased military training of Hondurans to "prevent further radicalization" of the region. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790507-0316)

that we act at once on these requests and further ones if we are to give political moderation a reasonable chance to survive in Honduras.

5. Special priority must be given to reprogramming FMS credit funds for FY 1980 after our incredible shortsightedness in eliminating FMS financing for FY 1980.

6. We also must make good on our declarations of intent to provide greater economic assistance. We recently have told the GOH that we expect to be able to provide between dols 30 and 40 million in assistance from AID in FY 1980,⁵ in addition to PL 480 Titles II and III and any possible HIG's; and we have undertaken with the GOH the preparation of projects which would enable us to obligate dols 55 million in AID assistance this year if we choose to do so. Now it is important to pin down the aid level officially and if at all possible to assure a level of at least dols 40 million as was earlier mentioned during the visit of representatives from Washington. Once the AID level has been determined officially, we think it will be important to give the level and the nature of the program major publicity.

7. We also request action on Export Import Bank matters which would give a degree of favoritism to a besieged friend in a troubled area (see Tegucigalpa 6535 re financing of Boeing 737).⁶

8. In view of my apprehension about this country's future and as you assume your new duties in ARA, I felt compelled to raise this issue of United States implementation of the President's policy (ref A.)

Jaramillo

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 350.

⁶ In telegram 6535 from Tegucigalpa, November 19, the Embassy advocated ExIm Bank approve of a Honduran financing application for the purchase of an airliner. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790533–0158)

352. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Honduran General Paz (C)²

Though superficially stable now, Honduras is next. The Cubans have stepped up their training of guerrillas and are using the apparatus of the Honduran Communist Party (PCH) to funnel arms, funds, and guerrillas to the more immediate struggle in El Salvador. At the same time, the Cubans are reported to be building up the PCH to be the base for the eventual struggle in Honduras. (S)

You will only have thirty minutes with Paz. I suggest you use the time to make three points:

(1) *Communism/Democracy*. We recognize the threat to Central America, but are convinced that the best way to defeat that threat is to undertake essential social reforms, to invest in economic development, and to open up the political process. We are therefore deeply concerned about reports that your (General Paz's) government may not be impartial with regard to the constituent assembly elections on April 20.³ We hope that you will eventually permit the Christian Democratic Party and other legitimate political parties to participate in free

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 16, Honduras. Secret. Sent for information. Carter wrote on the first page of the memorandum: "El Povener, Tegusagalpo." Telegram 848 from Tegucigalpa, February 6, relayed Paz's request to meet with Carter, which Jaramillo endorsed. An unknown hand wrote on the telegram: "Pres: I will see him *briefly*." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 25, Honduras: 1-4/80)

² For the memorandum of conversation, see Document 353. Vance provided a memorandum for Carter, dated February 28 and initialed by Carter, in preparation for Carter's meeting with Paz. Vance noted four objectives: "To reiterate our support for Honduran security in a troubled region. To urge the Paz regime to move ahead toward an agreement ending a ten year break in relations with El Salvador. To demonstrate our support for a regime which has a good human rights record and is committed to more equitable economic and social development. To support the Paz Government through a difficult transition to civilian rule." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 19, Honduras, 3/77-1/81)

³ In telegram 951 from Tegucigalpa, February 12, Jaramillo noted that Paz had expressed "serious misgivings" about the upcoming April 20 elections and added that Paz "had been very impressed by his" recent conversations with U.S. officials who "made strong case for inclusion of Christian Democrats." Jaramillo urged Paz not to postpone the elections. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800076-0485)

elections in Honduras, and that you will become known as the man who brought civilian democracy to Honduras. To the extent that the Honduran government maintains its commitment to human rights, free elections, democracy, and development, the U.S. will be a firm and determined supporter. (S)

(2) *Border Dispute*. We sincerely hope that the Honduran government exhibits a spirit of compromise in its negotiations over border problems with the Government of El Salvador. We are prepared to use our good offices if you request. This is an important moment to try to conclude an agreement and reestablish diplomatic relations as it will help to strengthen a good, moderate government in El Salvador and make it easier for both countries to help each other with the terrible threat that confronts the region. (S)

(3) *Security Threat*. Because of Honduras' fine record on human rights and its commitment to development, we are eager to help you build up the capability to stop the flow of arms and guerrillas to El Salvador and prevent the establishment of a guerrilla network in Honduras. (S)⁴

⁴ See Documents 412 and 413.

353. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 3, 1980, 2:09–2:56 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of President's Meeting with General Policarpo Paz Garcia, President on Honduras (U)

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 38, Memcons: President, 3–4/80. Secret. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Drafted by Pastor, who sent the memorandum to Brzezinski under a March 4 memorandum requesting that he approve the memorandum and send a copy to the Department. Brzezinski indicated his approval of both items. Paz visited Washington on a trip which included the Central American Trade Mart conference in New Orleans and meetings in New York at the invitation of the Council of the Americas.

William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Ambassador Mari-Luci Jaramillo, US Ambassador to Honduras
Robert Pastor, Staff Member, National Security Council
Anthony J. Hervas, State Department Interpreter
General Policarpo Paz Garcia, President of Honduras
Mr. Rafael Leonardo Callejas, Minister of Planning and Natural Resources
H.E. Ricardo Midence Soto, Honduran Ambassador to the U.S.

President Carter expressed his deepest appreciation for the visit by General Paz. He said that the U.S. valued the friendship of Honduras, and he was deeply grateful for the opportunity to meet with President Paz in order to discuss the problems and the opportunities in Central America and to try to agree on a common approach to these problems. (C)

General Paz said that it was a special honor of his government and of himself to meet with President Carter. The people of Honduras had deep admiration for President Carter and the U.S. for all that the U.S. had done to help his people. (U)

President Carter asked for General Paz's assessment of the elections in Honduras in April. (C)

General Paz said that the prospects for election in April are good, and he hoped for clear and just results. He saw the elections as an opportunity for the Honduran people to express their collective will, and the armed forces will make it possible for the people of Honduras to have a freely elected government. He believes that this in turn will lead to greater stability in Honduras. At the same time, he said that Honduras faces some very difficult problems, and there is some discontent, particularly as elections draw near. He feared that if this discontent should increase, Honduras may face more problems. He therefore intends to widen the scope of social programs, and to help the rural as well as the urban poor. General Paz said that if Honduras does not face further problems before April 20th, that they would extend an invitation to international organizations such as the OAS to oversee the elections. (S)

President Carter said that he was certain that the entire world would be grateful to hear of that invitation. President Carter said that he is also deeply concerned about increasing evidence of instability in Central America, and to a lesser extent in the Caribbean. He said that he wanted to consult very closely with the Government of Honduras, and to consider Honduras as a partner in order to consider how best to address the problems and the Communist threat in the region. He said that in particular, he is concerned about Nicaragua and Salvador. He asked General Paz how our two countries could lend stability to the area. He also asked General Paz whether he felt that Cuba was using any access through Honduras as a way to get supplies to the Communist insurgents in El Salvador. (S)

General Paz said that Honduras has always been ready to cooperate to combat Communism both within Honduras and in the area of Central America and the Caribbean. Honduras was physically present and supportive in the Santo Domingo crisis. Honduras expressed its solidarity and support with the United States with regard to Afghanistan and Iran. With regard to the question about Cuban use of Honduras, he said that it is feasible that they are doing that. It is true that the threat exists. Honduras is a large area with three land borders and access by rivers and two oceans. Honduras lacks surface communication. Honduras lacks helicopters in order to monitor activities along the border. He said that he does not discard the possibility that Cuba might be using Honduras, particularly by using certain navigable rivers in isolated areas to send arms or support to the communists in El Salvador. (S)

General Paz added that Honduras would not go to the summer Olympics in response to the message which the President sent him.² He said that he totally supported the United States in this effort to stop Soviet aggression. (C)

President Carter said that General Paz's response was very much appreciated by the United States. It is necessary to stand together against Soviet aggression. (C)

President Carter said that it would be useful to exchange intelligence in order to be better able to counter subversive actions in the region. President Carter said that the United States has just approved the granting of ten helicopters to Honduras without charge.³ This will present another opportunity to consult closely and to work together to stabilize this situation. (S)

President Carter asked about the border dispute with El Salvador. He understood that progress had been made on negotiations with El

² Telegram 39975 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 14, reported that the International Olympic Committee had decided to proceed with the summer Olympic Games in Moscow and instructed posts to request governments to join with the United States in a boycott to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800078–1050) Telegram 1366 from Tegucigalpa, March 1, reported that Honduras would not participate in the games even though the Honduran Olympic Committee had already accepted the invitation. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800108–0086) In a March 3 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski noted that the Honduran Government "would not participate in the Moscow Olympics," adding, "Paz views this as a gesture to you." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 25, Honduras: 1–4/80.)

³ Telegram 2981 from Tegucigalpa, May 13, reported that the Government of Honduras had signed an FMS agreement and a no-cost lease for the helicopters. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800243–0343) Ten UH-1H helicopters arrived in Tegucigalpa by June 3. (Telegram 3405 from Tegucigalpa, June 3; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800275–0442)

Salvador, and he asked whether General Paz saw the possibility of opening the border soon and restoring diplomatic relations with El Salvador. (S)

General Paz said that he is very happy that Honduras will have the use of ten helicopters. This will help Honduras with its border patrol. He also shared with President Carter the wish to stay in touch and communicate directly. It would be very useful to have a direct link. Now Honduras is going through Guatemala and Mexico, and Honduras believes that it can contribute directly to peace in the region. (S)

General Paz said that to date, Honduras has been able to maintain peace and tranquility. Honduras would also be prepared to cooperate with others in dealing with Communist efforts elsewhere in the region. He is ready to cooperate on intelligence matters. With regard to the border dispute, he recounted that President Romero of El Salvador had re-opened negotiations, and an agenda of seven points had been set. Two problems still remain on trade and on the delineation of the border. The recent change in the Salvadorean government may provide an opportunity, but up to now, there has been no progress on those two points. However, there are several meetings which are now scheduled with the Salvadorean Junta, and Honduras hopes to find solutions on the remaining differences as soon as possible. Recently, Honduras' Foreign Minister met with the Guatemalan, Costa Rican, and Salvadorean to look into opportunities for trade integration. But for the moment, they are inhibited from going forward with this until the border dispute is settled. (S)

General Paz said that he hoped that the United States will help find a peaceful solution to the border dispute. Honduras is ready. The dispute on defining the border's "pockets" is the main problem which separates Honduras from El Salvador. Honduras has asked to move rapidly, using a mediator in resolving all of the outstanding problems, and then submitting the remainder to arbitration by the International Court of Justice. (S)

In answer to a question from President Carter about the mediator, *General Paz* said that the mediator was Bustamente of Peru (S)

In answer to a question from President Carter about whether there had been any recent actions, *General Paz* said that there had been, but there remains a lot of work to be done. He said that Honduras has recently sent a delegation to Peru, but he said that because of the changing political situation in El Salvador, our two delegations have not yet met. He said that the last meeting was in Miami, but there has not been any communication since. However, when he returns there may be certain meetings soon. (S)

[COMMENT: The two Foreign Ministers had just completed negotiations on February 29, 1980, in San Jose, and issued a press statement

saying that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations would probably occur soon. Obviously General Paz had not been in touch with his Foreign Minister. (RP)]⁴ (S)

President Carter asked Mr. Christopher to comment on development assistance to Honduras, and *Mr. Christopher* said that he had had lunch with General Paz, and they had talked about Honduras' development program and our aid effort.⁵ U.S. AID officials have great admiration for Honduras' accomplishments. And indeed, Honduras is one of the few countries where we have expanded our FY 1980 aid, and made sure that it is reaching out to rural areas as well as urban areas. (C)

General Paz said that he wished to report that he was greatly concerned about peace and tranquility in his country. He has tried to stimulate development and to work with different people and groups in order to insure that this peace and tranquility could be maintained. However, he feels that this stable situation may be coming to an end, and therefore he is anxious to start a three-pronged action program. First, he wanted to invigorate the Agrarian Reform. Second, he wanted to undertake an education reform. Third, he wanted to invest in health, rural electrification, housing, and roads. If Honduras focuses on these areas, it will be able to counteract those of the left who pretend their interest in these areas. Therefore, he is requesting assistance and help from the United States. In the past, the United States has been helpful, but most of its funds have gone to large projects, like the Cajon Dam and relatively little has gone for the poor. Moreover, the loans have been subject to major conditions, and it takes a long time to implement them. He requested a donation, or perhaps a soft loan, or a half-loan to start this program rapidly without having too many complicated conditions. Honduras needs to do these things very quickly. In 1980, Honduras needs to assist these sectors. At the same time it is necessary to move very rapidly to counteract the leftists, who will threaten these reforms with acts of violence. It is very important to counteract them, and while Honduras cares greatly about the human rights policy of the United States, and supports that policy, and he has maintained respect for human rights in Honduras, it may be necessary to take action to counteract the leftists. He hopes in those cases that the United States and President Carter will not see Honduras as violating human rights because he is deeply committed to them. But Honduras wants

⁴ Telegram 1132 from San José, March 3, reported that on February 29 Carlos Lopez Contreras and Alejandro Gomez Vides announced "that their two countries had agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations probably in the next few weeks." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800110-0629)

⁵ No record of this meeting has been found.

to work in peace and to assure a better life for its people and to work with other countries in a cooperative spirit. (S)

President Carter repeated his gratitude for this meeting. He said that he knew that General Paz would be meeting with U.S. officials from AID in the afternoon.⁶ He is gratified to know that General Paz will be moving towards democracy and honoring and protecting the human rights of people in their country. He said that he hoped that the situation in Honduras will remain stable and that any action on the part of General Paz against the voters or groups will not be necessary. President Carter said that he is grateful for the meeting, and he hopes to work closely and directly with General Paz. He said that General Paz should not hesitate to personally get in touch with the President if that were necessary. (S)

President Paz said that he had a letter which mentioned the number of requests which he had made to the President, and which he hoped the President would appoint a working group to consider this letter and prepare a response.⁷ He thanked the President again for the meeting. (C)

⁶ No record of this meeting has been found.

⁷ Paz's letter to Carter, dated February 23, requested \$150 million to assist with development projects in Honduras. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 8, Honduras, President Policarpo Paz Garcia, 3-8/80)

354. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, April 1, 1980, 1442Z

2058. For Assistant Secretary Bowdler and NSC Pastor. Subj: USG Strategy for Honduras Electoral Process Finale.

1. (Secret) Entire text.
2. Following is a resume of current Honduran situation as it concerns United States interests and a proposed strategy for pursuing

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800164-0493. Secret; Immediate, Exdis.

those interests over the next ninety days, i.e. through inauguration of the constituent assembly.

3. Until now, U.S. strategy in Honduras has been to strongly endorse the military government's commitment to constituent assembly elections on April 20 as a means of beginning needed change and a return to constitutional order through a peaceful and orderly process. Regional developments reinforced Hondurans' own recognition of this. We have increased our economic and security assistance in support of the Honduran Government's economic and national security objectives, which have also gained increased importance in view of regional events. President Paz's reception in Washington² and the messages of support from President Carter considerably reinforced our support for the GOH and its own self-confidence.

4. U.S. policy has to date urged a return to constitutional order via elections while recognizing that Hondurans must determine the modalities. By doing so, we have helped in setting the terms of debate and bringing the country to the April 20 elections. Our policy to date, however, has not engaged the issue of whether the constituent assembly should indirectly elect the next president, as is permitted by Honduran political traditions. This has left us implicitly supporting such an outcome, the wisdom of which is becoming increasingly questionable. Fortunately, recent developments now give us the opportunity to advocate direct elections which we believe will not only produce a more viable government, but will be more consistent with our desire for meaningful reform.

5. Taking advantage of DAS Cheek visit, we have received our policy positions and consulted with official and non-official Hondurans.³ We have concluded a revision and fine tuning of current strategy is desirable in order to put greater emphasis on the reform aspect of our policy. The message of support for reform has until now been largely implicit in our support for elections and economic development. It has also been rather general because the situation here, particularly as to political reform, has not permitted being more specific. As a result there is a possibility some key Hondurans may not clearly understand our expectations in the reform area, nor appreciate the importance of this for continued strong USG military and economic support. We believe, therefore, that the time has come to present a more specific statement

² See Document 353.

³ Cheek completed a 5 day visit to Tegucigalpa on April 1 after meeting with Paz, members of the Military Superior Council, and editorialists to outline the U.S. goal of "continuing support for the security of the region, support for economic development and commitment to basic reform." (Telegram 2092 from Tegucigalpa, April 1; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800166-0158)

of our policy to Hondurans in the government, the military, the political parties, private sector, church and media. We believe that the twenty days before the election are particularly opportune and that our message can have a constructive impact on all concerned.

6. We propose that our message be in the form of a statement of goals of U.S. policy which we would like to see achieved or initiated as the country enters this transitional period to full constitutional rule. The following are the expectations which would form the basis for such a statement:

(1) A constituent assembly whose election is honest and free, and perceived as such, internally and internationally.

(2) Prompt election of an interim government by the constituent assembly in order to return the executive immediately to constitutional status.

(3) Subsequent direct elections (in a reasonable time frame) which will permit the selection through an open, democratic process accepted by a vast majority of the people, of a broadly based and genuinely reformist permanent government.

(4) Reform in government administration, civil and military, to make it more honest and more effective, and thus less vulnerable to leftist attack.

(5) Reinvigoration of the agrarian reform and continued high priority attention to rural poor.

(6) Resolution of the border dispute with El Salvador to permit revitalization of the CACM.

(7) Denial of use of Honduran territory to forces hostile to its neighbors.

7. The modalities of the delivery of this message will be very important to insuring that it is received in a manner to maximize its impact and assure no misinterpretation. Our strategy calls for continued reiteration of points (5), (6) and (7) to all concerned sectors of Honduran Society. Delivery of points (1) through (4) would be limited to General Paz, the military and the political parties as described below. Once some of these key opinion makers publicly adopted these goals as their own, we would be able to openly present them to private sector, the church and the media. As a result of DAS Cheek's and the Ambassador's recent conversations, we believe that at least Paz, the military and elements of the Liberal Party will respond positively. The following is the game plan for our approaches:

(A) To President Paz: We recommend a letter from President Carter following on his meeting with Paz, which would put particular emphasis on the reform and election related aspects of our policy.⁴ This is

⁴ See Document 357.

necessary because the President did not touch specifically on these matters during their meeting. Having discussed security and economic assistance aspects with Paz, we recommend that President Carter now communicate our expectations regarding reform and the elections. In delivering the President's message the Ambassador would personally re-emphasize all points in para 6 and continue to follow up in her on-going contacts with General Paz.

(B) The military: We believe that we will be able to effectively transmit this message to the members of the armed forces superior council and other appropriate military via U.S. military and civilian members of this Mission. If we perceive a need we might request a high-ranking U.S. military figure to supplement our efforts.

(C) The political parties: The Ambassador and Mission officers will host a series of meetings with the two traditional parties and all other non-Marxist political entities to communicate our policy statement. We do not believe at this time that a supplementary communication from a high-ranking visitor will be necessary. The PINU has already adopted a position very similar to that which is being proposed. Any semblance of dictating to the Hondurans, which would be counterproductive, will be avoided, and our discussions will be private.

8. Once one of the major parties or the military publicly supports the electoral and reform process which we seek (as described para 6) the Embassy can reinforce this with:

(A) The private sector: The Ambassador and Mission officers will also communicate our policy to key members and organizations of the private sector. If the Department could get the Council of the Americas to cooperate in transmitting the same message it would be useful.

(B) The Roman Catholic Church: The Ambassador and Mission officers will enter into a dialogue with the hierarchy relaying our concerns and relating them to the Church's pastoral letter of January which raised many of the same issues.⁵ Our Vatican office could reinforce this approach in Rome.

(C) The media: DAS Cheek on an off-the-record basis has stressed the reform aspects of our policy to editorial writers of the three most important newspapers in Honduras. The Ambassador and USICA can continue this dialogue with this receptive audience being more specific.

⁵ Telegram 464 from Tegucigalpa, January 23, reported that the Honduran Bishops' Conference had "issued a long pastoral letter (published January 18–19) discussing the political situation in broad terms," and commented that "the generally conservative Honduran hierarchy has, with this extensive document, taken a first step towards a more active political posture, as happened for more compelling reasons in the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran churches." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800045–0869)

9. As recently as two weeks ago there was not sufficient recognition of the need for reform and direct elections to permit such a strategy. By now articulating our more specific policy expectations we can help Hondurans achieve a consensus for a broadly participatory, revived political process and a reform government. If the Department concurs, we should proceed immediately to implement this strategy.⁶

Jaramillo

⁶ In telegram 93928 to Tegucigalpa, April 10, Bowdler confirmed approval of the Embassy's "proposed strategy and game plan" and instructed that Jaramillo should "begin implementation immediately." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 25, Honduras: 1-4/80) In telegram 2296 from Tegucigalpa, April 12, Jaramillo reported to Bowdler that she had met with Paz that day and had made "the strongest case I could for direct presidential elections." Paz "agreed on the desirability and took it upon himself to persuade the military and National Party, particularly National leader Zuniga, of the indispensability of further elections and a broadly based government." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880139-2101)

355. Presidential Finding¹

Washington, April 16, 1980

Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, As Amended, Concerning Operations Undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency in Foreign Countries, Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection

I hereby find that the following operation in a foreign country (including all support necessary to such operation) is important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this Finding to the concerned

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 97M00733R: Policy Files, Box 1, Folder 16: Honduras—Presidential Finding/Memorandum of Notification. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation in an unknown hand reads: "rec'd 18 Apr." For information about the proposal and approval of the finding, see Documents 489 and 490. In a handwritten note to Carter, dated April 14, Christopher indicated his approval of the finding on Honduras. (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box IO20, SSC Minutes, 1980)

committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and to provide such briefings as necessary.

SCOPE DESCRIPTION

Honduras Either unilaterally or jointly with other countries encourage, support and train appropriate elements for the purpose of resisting Cuban supported and other foreign sponsored subversive and terrorist activities in Honduras, simultaneously encouraging needed political, economic and social reforms, and improvements in human rights. Also, disseminate all forms of propaganda worldwide in opposition to these subversive and terrorist efforts in the region. Encourage other governments to take actions consistent with these activities.²

Jimmy Carter

² In an April 23 memorandum for the record, drafted by Gary Miller, Assistant Legislative Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, Miller noted that that Morton Palmer (CIA/DDO/LA) had briefed Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Director Bill Bader about the covert action in Honduras. The program carried a “price tag” of \$500,000 and had a dual objective: first, “to support the country’s counter insurgency program” including “training the civilian intelligence service, provision of VIP protection training, and provision of training in how to collect intelligence of illegal arms transfers,” and, second, to “press the Honduran government to make reforms” by “providing monetary support and counsel to select groups such as women’s groups and labor unions.” The Honduran Government was not to be made aware of this second objective. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 82B00035R: Committee Files, Box 2, Folder 16: Presidential Finding—Guatemala, 16 Apr 80.) For more on the ongoing covert action in Honduras, see Document 492.

356. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, April 18, 1980, 0040Z

2408. For Assistant Secretary Bowdler. Also pass NSC for Robert Pastor. Subj: Implementation of US Electoral Strategy for Honduras. Ref: Tegucigalpa 2380.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Evening of April 16, General Paz told a nationwide radio-television hookup that the armed forces favored direct elections of the next President, believing that the upcoming constituent assembly should limit itself to drafting a constitution. Paz claimed nationally that he is not seeking a full term as constitutional President. (But he did not preclude this possibility.) Morning of April 17, Paz briefed me on events leading to his dramatic announcement, which shocked the two major parties who had been planning to name a President if they won. Paz counselled me to be very circumspect in my contacts over the next days because the parties accused him of acting on behalf of the United States.

3. Paz reported that on April 15 he met with key military officers, outlining electoral strategy steps that had to be taken. Paz kept referring to my "seven points" which the military apparently agreed to.³

4. Honduran military and Paz met with four political groupings on April 16, encountering resistance to direct elections from Nationals and Liberals.

—National Party: Paz said that PNH leaders Zuniga and Rivera Lopez were furious. A screaming Zuniga blamed the Department of State and string of U.S. emissaries who had come to visit, violating Honduras' sovereignty. Paz countered that US had not meddled and that need for direct elections was due to armed forces reaction to regional events. In telling argument, according to Paz, Paz told Zuniga that Honduras does not get along with Nicaragua and El Salvador. Paz asked Zuniga if he wanted to quarrel with United States too. Zuniga was resentful that United States would not accept present electoral process, remarking that only 20 percent of the electorate votes in the Andean countries. Zuniga finally came around to armed forces position, suggesting to Paz that the interim government should not try

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800191-0766. Secret; Niact Immediate, Exdis.

² Telegram 2380 from Tegucigalpa, April 17, reported that Paz had announced that the Honduran military supported direct presidential elections and had "no pact with any political party." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800190-0825)

³ See Document 354.

to incorporate all philosophies if it wanted to get anything done. Paz commented that Zuniga had been going around using Paz' name. Paz said that Zuniga wanted the armed forces to act as his firemen, figuring out whatever problems arose. (During course of this day we have been told that nationalists are very bitter over armed forces support for direct election, thereby depriving Zuniga of the presidency he thought would be his via indirect elections. (People are saying it was the United States' doing.)

—Liberal Party: The Liberals were almost equally mad, according to Paz. He said that the Liberals had been planning to elect Suazoucor-doba indirectly as President if they won. If the Liberals lost, they had planned to shout fraud and demand direct elections.

—PINU which had campaigned for direct elections was elated.

—“Rebels”: Paz and the military spent the most time with the “revoltosos” (a grouping of Christian Democrats and leftists). At Paz' insistence, the colonels spent several hours with this group, learning more about their views. When they met, Paz' first gesture was to order the release of a number of arrested Christian Democratic activists who had been plastering Tegucigalpa's walls with illegal abstentionist flyers. Paz said that an individual named Becerra was the most vocal of several leftist leaders in the group. They told Paz that if 700,000 people voted, it was too low; if over 700,000 voted, there had to be fraud. They advocated an eight point program, calling upon Paz to execute a palace coup and form a new reform government. In the following order, the “rebels” called for: massive and accelerated agrarian reform; massive and accelerated educational reform; price controls for basic commodities; nationalization of foreign trade; restriction of multinationals; the abolishment of repressive (sic) legislation; the expansion of foreign relationships (Paz takes this to mean relations with Cuba); and a new and unrestricted political party law.

5. Paz kept returning to National Party resentment over the electoral strategy, insistent that it was fortunate that I had not tried to deliver the message he had. He was rather insistent that I maintain a low profile between now and the April 20 elections in order to let tempers cool. He described all the steps the military are taking to ensure a peaceful vote but he was not at all convinced he would succeed.

6. With the military espousing direct elections as USG hoped, I turned to the next most difficult issue: the question of an interim government. Paz felt that it should not be in office for too long or too short a period. He said time was needed to produce a good electoral law and overcome the many, many deficiencies of the current law. Paz said he was thinking of 18 to 24 months. He also mentioned his hope that a representative, coalition-type cabinet might be formed during the interim period.

7. He also had the problem of corruption very much on his mind, although he refers to it as “administrative reform.” He said that the junior officers are being told that Honduras’ colonels are robbers who own many cars and homes, and that the senior officers [garble] to Miami the minute there is violence. Paz was concerned about maintaining military unity and reassuring the junior officers that the armed forces overall are working in the best interests of Honduras.

8. Paz reminded me that it may take several days to tally the results of the April 20 election, which cannot be declared official until 30 days transpire. The assembly must meet before sixty days expire, after the official election results are in. In other words, the assembly will probably not meet before mid-July.

9. Comment: We have now all but secured direct elections of the next full-term President of Honduras. Next tests will be the kind of interim government that will be selected by the constitutional assembly, how long the interim period will last, and the role of the assembly. While the military know generally what we want, we had best not push the parties or media in any direction until the dust settles after the election. We may have to do some fence-mending with the parties. We must also be careful that Paz not appear as our surrogate. We have much to think about but the armed forces public espousal of direct elections was a quantum step in the right direction.

Jaramillo

357. Letter From President Carter to Honduran President Paz¹

Washington, April 18, 1980

Dear General Paz:

It was a great pleasure to meet with you recently and to have the opportunity of exchanging views with you on developments in Central America and on other matters of common concern to Honduras and the United States.²

I am heartened by your commitment to the restoration of constitutional government, to the observance of the fundamental human rights of your people, and to the equitable economic and social development of Honduras.

I am pleased that we have been able to provide Honduras with significantly increased assistance in 1980. The use of this assistance, totaling some 54 million dollars, was mutually agreed upon by officials of your Government and mine and places heavy emphasis on high impact projects in the agricultural sector and in the areas of municipal development, health and housing. Two of these project authorizations—totaling 18.7 million dollars for the construction and improvement of rural access roads and trails and for the construction of rural water and sanitation facilities—were signed in Tegucigalpa on March 31. We are doing everything possible to ensure that the other projects planned for this year will be expeditiously authorized and implemented.

During our conversation we touched only briefly on the electoral process that Honduras has embarked upon. I understand that the first stage is proceeding smoothly and that the prospects for the free and peaceful election of a constituent assembly on April 20 are good.³ We hope this will lead to the emergence of a popularly elected government

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 8, Honduras, President Policarpo Paz Garcia, 3–8/80. No classification marking. Brzezinski sent the letter to Carter for his signature under cover of an April 16 memorandum, commenting that Jaramillo believed "that such a letter will reinforce the more positive currents in Paz's government." (Ibid.) Telegram 8450 from Tegucigalpa, April 22, reported that Jaramillo delivered the text of the letter to Paz on April 21, which was one day after the election of a constituent assembly. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 25, Honduras: 1–4/80)

² See Document 353.

³ Telegram 3126 from Tegucigalpa, May 21, reported the official election results, announced on May 20, noting an 82 percent participation rate and a constituent assembly comprised of 35 Liberal Party Deputies, 33 National Party Deputies, and 3 Innovation and Unity Party Deputies. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800256–1118)

based on the participation of the broadest possible spectrum of political groups. The successful completion of this process would bring great credit to your government.

We trust that both the transitional and successor governments will be genuinely reformist. I stress the word reformist because honest and effective government is the most potent weapon at the disposal of a democracy in meeting the challenges of the extreme left. Your Government's efforts in the area of agrarian reform and your increased attention to the needs of the rural poor are particularly praiseworthy. We hope that you will undertake similarly commendable reforms in the civil and military administration of the government. The U.S. is prepared to continue to give significant support to such essential reform programs.

I trust that you will consider my thoughts on these matters in the spirit of cooperation and friendship in which they are offered. Ambassador Jaramillo, in whom I have the fullest confidence, will be discussing these subjects with you in greater detail. I would very much appreciate receiving your views.⁴

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

⁴ Telegram 3039 from Tegucigalpa, May 16, included the Spanish-language text of Paz's May 12 reply to Carter. Carter initialed a copy of the telegram. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 16, Honduras) Under a May 23 memorandum, Brzezinski transmitted the Department of State's May 16 translation of Paz's letter to Carter and commented that Paz "pledges a continuation of reforms, stating he is completely in agreement that an honest and effective government is the most potent force against the extreme left." (Ibid.)

358. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, May 3, 1980, 2229Z

2755. Subject: Electoral Strategy: Meeting with General Paz.

1. (C-Entire text)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800221-0305. Confidential; Priority; Exdis.

2. Summary: General Paz believes that he is the choice of both major parties to be interim President. He does not think a civic-military junta will be called for. He also feels that both major parties favor direct elections, the only issue being the length of an interim government. Paz seems to want two years, whereas the two major parties prefer a year. End summary.

3. I met with General Paz on May 2, informing him that I had met also with Roberto Suazo Cordoba of the Liberal Party and Ricardo Zuniga of the National Party.² I did not reveal the contents of these conversations to Paz but did tell the General that I had reviewed American thinking for them. Specifically, I said the Embassy is supporting as open a democratic process as possible with direct elections. We favor a short, active interim government, one that will make itself known for initiating reforms and a new constitution.

4. Paz revealed he met with Liberals on April 25 and that they thought Paz should be the sole head of a provision government. Their main concern was jobs, a concern that provincial commanders had told Paz is being pressed actively by Liberals who want to replace Nationals now in municipal and departmental jobs.

5. The General further revealed that he met with Suazo and Celeo Arias (Suazo's top deputy) on May 1, after Suazo's meeting with me. Paz claimed that the Liberals favored direct elections (a significant turnaround in their position) and a short interim government headed by Paz. The Liberals attached the highest priority to controlling provincial and municipal governments in those areas where they secured a majority of votes.

6. Suazo and Arias raised the problem of corruption and austerity with Paz. They reportedly complained about the high cost of infrastructure projects, for example the cost per kilometer of roads. Paz told his visitors that he had tried to stop corruption but [had] been foiled when investigating commissions proved to be as corrupt as the target of their inquiries. Paz urged that the interim government period be used to institute good laws.

7. The Liberals asked reportedly about the military's stance. Paz said that he has Superior Council support but encouraged his visitors

² In telegram 2723 from Tegucigalpa, May 2, Jaramillo recounted her meeting with Suazo who "seemed to resign himself to the fact that he should opt also for new election." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800219-0299) Telegram 2751 from Tegucigalpa, May 3, reported on Jaramillo's meeting with Zuniga, who favored direct elections and "agreed with Liberal position that they take place in one year but was adamantly opposed to slicing an interim Paz government into pieces for each party." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800221-0304)

to get the parties to adopt a united stance. If all the parties agree on something, Paz seemed to imply to me the military would go along.

8. Paz expressed his concern to me that an interim government have sufficient time to do its job. I took this as a hint that Paz feels he should be President for two years. Nevertheless, I replied that a short interim seemed indicated, perhaps one year. I noted that April 20, 1981 had been mentioned to me as a possible date for elections and that this might be a good idea.

9. Perhaps ignoring my one suggestion, Paz observed that if the period is short, the constituent assembly may devote its energies to trying to recoup campaign expenditures.

10. Paz added that the assembly is expected to recognize the Christian Democrats as a party.

11. He commented that the Liberals will not take a public stance on direct elections until they hold a party convention. He expected that the Liberals would announce that Suazo Cordoba will be their presidential candidate, thereby depriving Alipo and the Liberal left of a chance to strip Suazo of his leadership role.

12. Paz underlined that both the National and Liberal Party wanted him to be interim President. He indicated that the idea of a civic-military junta appears dead. He also noted that the Supreme Council supports his presidency.

Jaramillo

359. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, July 10, 1980, 1921Z

4164. For Ambassador Bowdler from Ambassador Jaramillo. Subject: Interim Government: Talks Failing; Military Consider Staying Two Years.

1. (C-Entire text. Foreign Government Information)

2. Summary: This morning (July 10) and at General Paz's request I met for two hours with Paz and key colonels on military council.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800331-0089. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis.

Military expressed total frustration and inability to promote compromise among political parties, and said they planned inform parties that military will rule for two years while constitution is drafted. Other option would be to return to barracks; this is unlikely. Elections will be held January 25, 1982 and new civilian government would assume office in April 1982. End summary.

3. Paz was accompanied by Colonels Gustavo Alvarez, Torres Arias, Bonilla Blanco, Bodden and Bueso. After Paz gave 30-minute review of situation, Alvarez and Torres did most of the talking.

4. Paz reviewed situation and military efforts since April 20 to organize interim government representative of all parties which military could support. It was obvious that General Paz was deeply rpt deeply concerned over turn of events. (Paz repeated much that he had told me already because colonels are unaware of degree to which he has been sharing information with me.)

5. Military reported that National Party felt military proposal (on dividing Ministries) was unacceptable.² Liberal Party told military yesterday (July 9) that Liberals had no intention of moderating party demand for six Ministries and twelve autonomous agencies. Moreover, Liberals said they would not meet with National Party to try to reach compromise. Liberals told military flatly to take their proposal or leave it.

6. Military then told me that Superior Council would meet tomorrow (July 11) and following would be discussed:

—The military would stay in control of Executive power.

—Direct elections would be held January 25, 1982.

—Power would be turned over to a civilian government in April 1982.

—Military will try to work with all parties, including PINU and Christian Democrats.

—A minimal program for the interim government will be drawn.

—The civil service will not be touched (to avoid disruptive strikes of public servants).

—Municipalities (mayors) will be given to political parties in accordance with electoral results in various districts.

² Telegram 4049 from Tegucigalpa, July 3, reported that Honduran military and political officials had met on July 2. After studying proposals advanced by the Liberals and the Nationals, the military offered proposals to the Liberals: "(A) If military are to remain in Executive Branch, the Executive power must control the Ministries of Finance, Communications and Public Works and Defense." According to the proposal, the Executive power would also control telecommunications, immigration, and civil aviation. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800320-0792)

—The electoral census (voter list) will be checked for accuracy.

—Constituent assembly will be given clear instructions on what it may (write constitution, electoral law) and may not (govern or legislate) do.

7. Option of return to barracks will also be aired by Council but military said it is straw option because almost certain chaos would result.

8. Military said that they gave their word that there would be clean, honest election and they want to abide by it. They said they have made many mistakes but are trying to do their best for Honduras. They were insistent that they have tried and are trying to give up power in orderly fashion but that the parties refuse to listen.

9. Liberal leader Suazo Cordoba was characterized as an irresponsible man who keeps disappearing. Jose Azcona was described as totally uncompromising man.

10. I told military that I too had been meeting with parties, doing all I could to promote responsibility and compromise. I stressed our desire to support democratic process and said I warned politicians that if anything else was done, the United States could not be counted on. I said I made strong plea for administrative reform. The military replied that they had been giving same message to politicians, stressing also problems of internal security.

11. I said that I would inform the Department of State of their remarks. I urged that they not move too quickly on what they are proposing and that they keep looking for compromise. I also warned them that any announcement would have to be handled wisely, without lashing out at anyone. I reminded them that Honduran military's handling of Salvadoran border massacre had been defensive and damaging to army.³

12. Comment: Given Suazo Cordoba's disastrous lack of leadership skills, I cannot help but suspect that Liberals may have wanted to paint military in corner the colonels now find themselves. This would allow Liberals to accuse military of perpetuating themselves in power and give that party an even more resounding electoral victory when elec-

³ Telegram 3854 from Tegucigalpa, June 25, reported that the Bishop of Santa Rosa de Copan, José Carranza, had issued a communiqué on June 19 accusing the Salvadoran National Guard and ORDEN of killing 600 civilians on May 14 across the Honduran border. The communiqué charged that the Honduran Army refused to let Salvadorans flee into Honduras to avoid attacks by the Salvadoran National Guard and ORDEN. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800307-0404) Telegram 3883 from Tegucigalpa, June 26, noted that during the evening of June 24 the Government of Honduras issued a statement on national television denying accusations of collaboration with Salvadoran forces in a "massacre." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800308-0830)

tions are held. National Party presumably lost because it was saddled with image of cooperation with military.

13. I do not want to suggest that military have acted disinterested themselves. Military are tainted with corrupt image and there is as yet no sign that they intend to do something about it. First evidence of seriousness of military purpose will come when names of new Ministers are known. If those with bad reputations continue in office, civilian discontent will rise sharply.

14. I will continue to meet with military and politicians in hope compromise may still be possible. But it looks as if civilians will want military to assume full responsibility for an interim government that will find very tough going ahead. Military themselves will become targets of politicians, which will do nothing to promote Honduran unity in this dangerous region.

Jaramillo

360. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State and the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Tegucigalpa, July 22, 1980, 1630Z

4454. San Salvador for Ambassador Bowdler. Subj: Interim Government: Trying to Get Liberals and Military Together. Ref: Tegucigalpa 4435 (Notal).²

1. (C-Entire text)

2. I followed up my morning session with Liberals (reftel) by meeting with General Paz evening of July 21. Paz said he is waiting for Liberals to call him, while latter are waiting on General. I did all I could to get Paz and Liberals together, short of hosting a meeting myself. I believe that Liberals and military actually met last night but do not yet know whether agreement was reached which would permit Assembly to name Paz as President today.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800352–0271. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis.

² Telegram 4435 from Tegucigalpa, July 21, reported that the National Constituent Assembly “opened July 20 in presence all Deputies, the military Junta, Superior Defense Council and all Ministers.” The Embassy also noted that Suazo was sworn in as President of the Assembly and that Jaramillo also met with several Liberal Party leaders on July 21. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800350–0445)

3. I told Paz I met with Liberals to review rumors that Liberals were planning to name Suazo rather than Paz President. I reported to Paz that Liberals firmly denied that they are maneuvering in any way against Paz and are only waiting to hear from him on Cabinet, so that Paz may be elected.

4. I mentioned speculation that PINU might propose "civic-military" junta as alternative to Suazo as President. Paz felt that PINU itself was behind this rumor and may indeed have provoked alarm that Liberals are trying to elect Suazo.

5. In answer to my question, Paz replied that he is having no problem with his military colleagues. He is convinced that military would support his decision.

6. Paz said that the Liberals have not called him. He noted that Liberals are very worried about Cabinet positions, and admitted that National Party had benefitted greatly with jobs it received during military rule. Paz was concerned that Liberals do not want to define the timeframe for new elections. He was fearful that Liberals would try to provoke elections much earlier than might be possible and wise. (Military have proposed October of 1981.)

7. I informed Paz that the Liberals are anxious to know the names of key Ministers, particularly Finance, and Communications and Public Works, so that Paz may be elected July 22.³ Paz stated that he has not come up with names of apolitical, honest, wealthy individuals for these two key Ministries. Paz was also worried about change at Central Bank, which he felt would affect country's financial standing.

8. I most strongly urged Paz to get in touch with Liberals, or use an intermediary to let Liberals know he is ready to meet at once. I had earlier underlined need for military not to appear responsible for failing to reach an agreement with Liberals, when it had appeared that Paz and Suazo had agreed days earlier. Paz confirmed impression that agreement had all but been reached (but it appears Paz is having trouble coming up with individuals for key posts). I stressed that no one would be able to believe that stability of country was being jeopardized because Liberals and military could not get together.

9. Paz appeared ready to make effort to meet Liberals promptly.

10. After seeing Paz, I talked to Liberal leader Carlos Flores and told him that I met with Paz who was equally anxious to meet with Liberals. I pushed strongly for Liberals to get in touch with Paz. Flores promised to try and said he would call me immediately if meeting did

³ In telegram 4563 from Tegucigalpa, July 25, the Embassy reported that the Honduran Constituent Assembly elected Paz as interim President the afternoon of July 25. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800358-0100)

not rpt not take place. I assume therefore that Liberals and military got together last night. They will also have almost all day July 22, before Assembly convenes in late afternoon.

11. Comment: Reftel speculated that military, perhaps egged on by Ricardo Zuniga, might have spread rumors that Liberals might name Suazo as President. Paz suspects that PINU (Miguel Andonie) may have been responsible for rumors in order to resurrect PINU hopes that a junta be named which would include PINU.

Jaramillo

361. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, August 15, 1980, 2156Z

5018. Subj: Interim Government: Agreement at Last.

1. (C-Entire text) Foreign Government Information.

2. General Paz briefed me on August 15 on background of announcement same morning of new Cabinet.

3. He said that military had learned a lot from their crisis meeting with Liberals on August 11 (which lasted 4 and ½ hours). He described it as a very tough meeting. Both sides realized they had been talking past each other, and as a result both sides emerged with improved respect for each other. There was agreement to communicate far more often and an understanding that Assembly would not surprise Paz with decrees. Paz said he “thanks God that Honduras was saved”.

4. I observed that it would have been disastrous had any sort of coup occurred. I told Paz that the United States will simply have nothing to do with military coups, pointing to our actions in Bolivia. Paz responded readily that a golpe would have been suicidal. He said it would have been victory for leftists, adding that coups “are no longer possible.”

5. Paz reviewed Cabinet selection, expressing particular pleasure that Colonel Elvir emerged as Foreign Minister due to disagreement between Liberals and Nationals over Ministry. Paz noted that Ricardo Zuniga was very unhappy that his party did not get Foreign Ministry,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800389–1039. Confidential; Priority; Limdis.

while Liberals were pleased with Paz compromise choice. Paz also had praise for new Communications and Public Works Minister Casco, whom he described as young but a brilliant person. He mentioned that he was able to retain Finance Minister Valetin Mendoza because of General's need to have at least one key person which he had his total trust.

6. With evident pleasure, Paz also revealed that he will have a body of eight counselors, made up primarily of his former Ministers including Callejas (Natural Resources), Zeron (Economy), Discua (Labor), and Coussin (Health). It was clear that Paz already misses his old Cabinet and very much wanted to continue receiving help from people he trusts.

7. I suggested to Paz that he might also encourage other groups to provide ideas and advice, such as business and labor groups, so that population not get feeling that his is government of military and politicians. Paz seemed to agree with idea.

8. Paz stated that heads of autonomous agencies will be named soon although he does not yet have suggested names from political parties.

9. He added that Gonzalo Carias, who is currently with Central Bank is a Liberal, will become Deputy Governor of the bank. Praxedes Martinez will remain as bank's head.

10. Paz reported also that a number of changes in armed forces will be announced very soon, stemming largely from pressures from mid-career officers to move into command positions. Paz felt that these changes would stir press commentary but he said no one is being demoted. (It all sounded as if several senior persons would be kicked upstairs. Paz was not specific.)

11. Comment: We have a Cabinet at long last and it looks like a pretty good one. There were a few scary moments on the way to this new government but in their own characteristic, nerve-wracking way, the Hondurans worked things out through dialogue.

Jaramillo

362. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, December 31, 1980, 2220Z

8118. Subj: Support for El Salvador/Honduras Border Observers.
Ref: State 337868.²

1. C-Entire text

2. I discussed OAS observer issue (reftel) with FonMin Elvir Sierra Dec 31. He confirmed joint GOH/GOES decision to request six-month extension for OAS observers, pointing out that both governments believe observers are of vital importance to ensure “neutral and unbiased presence” in frontier area. According to Elvir, OAS presence deters Salvadoran insurgent operations in region and, even more important, inhibits extreme leftist propaganda efforts to discredit both governments through false allegations of cooperative military operations and alleged “atrocities” and/or human rights violations. He was unwilling to speculate how long two governments might ultimately wish to retain OAS presence.

3. OAS role—According to Elvir, role envisaged by two governments would require observer presence, through periodic visits, only in disputed areas (Bolsones). Where frontier is defined and agreed upon, two countries will be able to patrol and control their respective areas without presence of OAS. This, he said, would imply a reduction in the number of observers assigned. He was vague as to proposed relationship between observers and security forces of two governments, but I was left with the impression that these would remain basically unchanged (i.e., coordination of movements and frequent communication on a more or less ad hoc basis). He responded in the affirmative when I asked him if the 6 kilometer DMZ remained juridically in effect

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810002–0260. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information Priority to San Salvador, the Commander in Chief, Southern Command, and the Secretary of Defense.

² In telegram 337868 to Tegucigalpa and San Salvador, December 23, the Department discussed a possible OAS request for an extension of the Department of Defense “contract covering provision of helicopter support to OAS military observers in Honduras and El Salvador.” The Department asked the Embassies to report on the “nature of the support mission in light of any new circumstances stemming from just concluded peace treaty between the two countries.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800608–0021) In telegram 10065 from Lima, October 31, the Embassy reported that the peace treaty between El Salvador and Honduras was signed in Lima on October 31. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800520–0819) In telegram 7572 from Tegucigalpa, December 3, the Embassy reported that the Honduran Constituent Assembly ratified the peace treaty on November 28. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800576–1129)

in the disputed areas, but noted that two governments could agree to change ground rules as regards number of and arms allowed troops patrolling these areas. He has recommended to Chief of Staff that numbers and armament of Honduran troops assigned be increased, and expects this subject to be discussed at next meeting of the General Staffs of the two countries, in mid-January.

4. Assessment of risk to U.S. personnel—OAS observers are currently exposed to some risk, and one which they tell me has increased in past several months. Indeed, their flight patterns frequently take them over “Indian country” on Salvadoran side of frontier: and the helicopter based in Tegucigalpa has been fired on, presumably by Salvadoran insurgents, at least three times. As a result of increased threat, OAS requested Honduran military to issue air crew two Uzi submachine guns in addition to previously carried side arms. This was done several weeks ago. I understand air crew operating out of San Salvador is similarly armed. Most effective way of diminishing risk, of course, is to vary flight patterns and times, avoid areas known to harbor insurgent groups and fly at high altitudes whenever possible. I understand all of these techniques are used as a matter of practice. Clearly, however, reports that insurgents are receiving hand-held anti-aircraft weapons, heavy machine guns and other more sophisticated arms suggest risk is likely to increase, at least in short-term. On the other hand, if new arrangements between Salvadorans and Hondurans, which are still in the process of taking shape, result in greater control of presently uncontrolled frontier areas, risk should diminish. In summary, it seems to me that risk level is related more to type of arms in hands of guerrilla elements than to changes arising from border treaty or anticipated increase in military operations in disputed areas or elsewhere in frontier zone.

5. Recommendation—I urge that USG agree to OAS request for six-month extension of helicopter support mission.³ Given rough, isolated terrain, helicopter offers the only practicable means of transportation for observers. I concur entirely in Elvir’s assessment that it is very much in interest of both El Salvador and Honduras that OAS observers’ mission be continued. Equally, I would argue, it is also in USG interest to have U.S. and other inter-American observers present in frontier area, since they provide a credible basis to deny or disprove extremist propaganda designed to discredit both GOES and GOH and to undermine their efforts to control insurgents. The risk to U.S. personnel,

³ In telegram 11054 to San Salvador and Tegucigalpa, January 15, 1981, the Department informed the Embassies that it had requested the Department of Defense to “continue to supply services of two helicopters, their crews and two observers” through February 15. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810022-0066)

while very real, is acceptable. As one possibly useful measure of the risk, I intend to increase number and frequency of visits to frontier area by U.S. Mission personnel because I believe we must have better information about developments in the region to [garble—consider?] judgements concerning our [garble—political?], developmental and security assistance programs.

Binns

363. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, January 16, 1981, 1940Z

329. ARA for Asst Secretary Bowdler and DAS Cheek. Subject: Paz on Border Situation: "What Does US Want me to do?" Ref: Tegucigalpa 0284.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. I had a long, very frank and fruitful meeting with President Paz. He was very much at ease, albeit slightly embarrassed by his recent fall from the wagon, and we covered a wide range of subjects. As indicated reftel, he was taken aback by possibility US might decide to withdraw helicopter from OAS observer Mission. Major themes, however, were refugee and security situations on border.

3. He confirmed that GOH is seriously considering establishment of refugee camps, but is concerned about legal and financial implications. GOH has not yet recognized Salvadorans fleeing from violence as refugees, since such a decision would impose certain obligations which they are not prepared to accept. Juridically speaking, he noted, Salvadorans are displaced persons, not refugees. And given current state of GOH finances, he said, the burden imposed by declaring them refugees would be too great. When I pointed out that international agencies, especially UNHCR, were required to provide needed assistance in such cases, he agreed, but noted Honduran experience with Nicaraguan

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810023–0929. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to San Salvador.

² In telegram 284 from Tegucigalpa, January 15, Binns reaffirmed his "strong recommendation" that the helicopter support for the Organization of American States' observers be extended for an additional 6 months. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810021–1171)

influx left him with little confidence in UNHCR. While he is definitely concerned with humanitarian problems posed by Salvadoran influx, his principal concerns are security implications and possible financial and social burden on Honduras. Establishment of camps, he believes, is the only solution to security problem, but GOH simply cannot afford to go it alone.

4. After a great deal of dancing around the gut issue—what USG might be willing to do to help with this dilemma—he finally said “we will do whatever you want us to do on both the refugee and security issues.” I explained USG position on refugee question—that its international problems which comes under jurisdiction of UNHCR and other agencies—but said I was sympathetic to his problem and would pass his comments on to my government. On security issue, I said I had been meeting with my military people for several weeks trying to develop a plan of action to improve Honduran capabilities without significantly increased resources. We had come up with a number of ideas, and would like to meet with Chief of Staff and other key officers to discuss these ideas. I stressed that they would be free to reject, modify or accept our recommendations as they wished, but I thought that by initiating such discussions we could produce positive results. He seized this suggestion with alacrity and said he would chair the meeting. I will forward details of our current proposals by septel³—for the most part they draw on existing Mission resources, or can be funded under existing programs.

5. It was clear that Paz is prepared to help the Salvadorans in any way we suggest. He did not raise the apparent Salvadoran airlift request specifically, nor did he allude to his recent visitors.⁴ He gave no hint of anything GOH may already be doing to help Salvadorans, but did express explicitly his satisfaction with USG decision to resume military assistance to El Salvador.

6. In subsequent meeting with Codel Studds and Mikulski, Paz responded to question as to GOH intentions about refugees by reaf-

³ In telegram 336 from Tegucigalpa, January 16, the Embassy described a six-point program to enhance the capabilities of the Honduran armed forces, within existing security assistance program levels, that Binns planned on discussing with Paz and Honduran military leaders on January 21. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810024-0002)

⁴ In telegram 222 from Tegucigalpa, January 13, Binns reported that the Embassy had “been approached informally by middle ranking Honduran officer, asking how USG would view Honduran Air Force providing air lift of supplies to Salvadoran forces along border.” Binns commented: “Apparently GOES has made such a request.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810017-1123) In telegram 335 from Tegucigalpa, January 16, the Embassy informed the Department of press reports that FDR/DRU representatives had visited Tegucigalpa. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

firming that he would do whatever USG wished him to do. In ensuing discussion Mikulski said she believed USG should take leading role in this matter and assured Paz she would do what she could to push US into such a position. Both Congressmen were impressed by Paz' responsiveness, but I detected some latent concern on Studds' part as to Paz' obvious dependent posture.

7. As you are aware from my previous communications, I believe we must take a forward position on the refugee problem and move with dispatch.⁵ A cable responding to questions earlier raised by Department follows.⁶ If we fail to move on this, there is—at least in my judgement—a very real possibility that we will be contributing to downfall of GOES and allowing seeds of future subversion to be planted on Honduran soil. The establishment of refugee camps seems to me to be the only way the GOH can come to grips with both the security and humanitarian problems. If we are unable to find the resources to help them set up these camps, ultimate cost is likely to be much higher.⁷

Binns

⁵ In telegram 77 from Tegucigalpa, January 6, Binns noted "widespread apprehension" among Hondurans spurred by "the latest Salvadoran refugee influx." Binns advocated a leadership role for the U.S. Government in urging the establishment of refugee camps. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

⁶ In telegram 9168 to Tegucigalpa, January 14, the Department expressed appreciation for the approach Binns and the country team had taken on the refugee situation and expressed interest in providing humanitarian assistance to the Salvadoran refugees in Honduras, but without direct U.S. Government involvement. It also asked to have information on the Salvadoran refugee situation in Honduras. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810019–0142) In telegram 346 from Tegucigalpa, January 17, Binns supplied answers to the questions posed by the Department and reiterated his endorsement of U.S. Government support for constructing refugee camps in Honduras. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810024–0484)

⁷ In telegram 412 from Tegucigalpa, January 20, the Embassy reported that Paz had appointed a commission to make recommendations on the estimated 25,000 Salvadoran refugees in Honduras. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810030–0808)

El Salvador

364. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, undated

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR AND U.S. ACTIONS

SETTING

In recent months, El Salvador has undergone several developments which have disturbing human rights ramifications. Both leftist and rightist terrorist activities have increased markedly. Among other actions, leftists have assassinated the Salvadoran Foreign Minister and other officials, and rightists have murdered two priests. During this period, the country's February presidential election was marred by fraud, demonstrations (in which allegations were made that as many as 200 people were killed), and the subsequent exile of some opposition leaders.² As a result, the country was placed under a temporary state of siege, which finally ended on June 30. (The state of siege comprised the suspension of certain Constitutional rights of Salvadorans, such as freedom of assembly, movement, speech and private correspondence.) Contributing significantly to growing peasant discontent with the Government has been the virtual abandonment since late 1976 of a long-promised agrarian reform program. At the same time, United States relations with El Salvador have become strained because of our human rights scrutiny of Salvadoran affairs in general, and the unresolved case of a missing American in particular.³ El Salvador renounced FY

¹ Source: National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 1/77-1/80. Confidential. Tarnoff sent the paper and a draft letter from Carter to Romero to Brzezinski under a July 11 covering memorandum. In a June 30 memorandum to Tarnoff, Dodson requested that the Department prepare the paper and the draft letter by July 7. (Ibid.)

² El Salvador held presidential elections on February 21. Both the winning candidate, Romero, and the losing candidate, Colonel Ernesto Claramount Rozeville, claimed victory. ("2 Rivals Claim Victory in El Salvador Voting," *New York Times*, February 22, 1977, p. 5)

³ Security forces detained Ronald Richardson in El Salvador in December 1976. In telegram 815 from San Salvador, February 22, 1977, the Embassy noted evidence that "Richardson did not depart El Salvador" and concluded that he "most likely met with foul play at the hands of GOES agent." (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Tegucigalpa 1963-1979) In telegram 1464 from San Salvador, March 28, Lozano reported that he had "instructed MILGP Commander to inform Salvadoran military authorities of USG decision to reduce MILGP personnel to six as protest over failure Salvadoran Government to respond favorably on Richardson case." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2-12/77)

78 security assistance because of U.S. Congressional hearings on its elections.⁴

HUMAN RIGHTS

Within the context described above, the Government of El Salvador (GOES) has become increasingly sensitive about persons and activities which it considers a menace to the country's stability and security. There have been accusations, which the Embassy and intelligence reports support, that the security services and/or National Guard have engaged in harassment, intimidation and physical abuse of those it considers suspect, i.e., anti-government. The GOES has been highly critical of outspoken or socially active priests working among the peasants. At least a dozen such clergymen have been expelled from the country (or not permitted to reenter), accused of subversive activities. Meanwhile, rightist elements have railed against communists and leftists, and have bombed a Catholic center.

Amid these developments, the Catholic Church of El Salvador has become increasingly estranged from the GOES. The Archbishop of San Salvador has accused the Government of persecuting the Church under the guise of combatting communism. The Government, on the other hand, has campaigned against religious involvement in political matters. In particular, the Jesuit order (consisting of some 30–50 priests) has become a prime target of criticism from the Government and other rightist groups. The present emphasis of the Jesuits is on the temporal well-being of the flock (or peasants, in this instance). Their activities and exhortations, therefore, place them in conflict with the landed elite and oligarchy of El Salvador as well as with the military. Also, the Government of El Salvador claims it has evidence that four ex-Jesuits (none American) are members of the FPL leftist terrorist group, which was responsible for the murder of the Foreign Minister in May.⁵ These circumstances have focussed rightist attacks on the Jesuits.

Other incidents have kept the country in sporadic emotional upheaval. On May 1, in the main park of San Salvador a clash between National Guards and civilians ended in the death of at least eight of the latter. There was some debate whether the guards had been the victim of a planned assault by the civilians who were lightly armed.

⁴ In telegram 1291 from San Salvador, March 17, the Embassy reported that the Salvadorans had formally renounced U.S. security assistance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770091–0223)

⁵ In an undated memorandum to Brzezinski, Tarnoff noted that Borgonovo had been found murdered on May 11 after a terrorist group kidnapped him on April 19. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2–12/77) In telegram 107807 to San Salvador, May 12, the Department transmitted a message of condolence from Carter to Molina regarding the Borgonovo murder. (Ibid.)

On May 17, after watching the situation for several months, Government troops moved into the "Hacienda San Francisco" near El Paisnal to dislodge "thousands of peasant land invaders." The Government claims that the eviction was done without the use of lethal force and that no one was injured. Six youths died as a result of another scuffle between soldiers and civilians, also in May, in the city of Aguilaes, located north of San Salvador. There are unconfirmed reports from Church groups that 40 or 50 died. It is reported that some 200 persons were arrested later that same day. Policemen have been killed by leftists in rural areas. Government forces have stormed leftist hideouts, confiscating subversive material and uncovering weapon caches. Assaults and counter-assaults are almost weekly affairs.

On June 21, a rightist group—the White Warriors Union (UGB) issued an ultimatum for all "Jesuits and other communist priests" to leave El Salvador within 30 days, i.e., by July 20. To date the GOES has taken no public stand regarding the threat (which, we are told, was not published in the Salvadoran press.) *Speculation* as to the origin and financing of the White Warriors Union includes the possibility that elements of the Security Services themselves are involved. We have no firm evidence of this.

Both in Washington and El Salvador, USG officials have expressed our concern with the human rights situation. This concern led us to request that the Salvadoran Government postpone consideration of a \$90 million loan in the IDB over which we had veto power as an alternative to our probable inability to support it on human rights grounds.⁶ More recently we voiced concern that the GOES has not denounced the threat to the Jesuits.⁷ We have expressed our hope that the Salvadoran Government will be as vigorous in its actions against rightist threats to human rights as against those of leftist elements. We were told that our views would be taken under advisement.

U.S. ACTIONS

On July 1, a new President was inaugurated in El Salvador. It is our hope that we can influence the new Salvadoran regime into more

⁶ In telegram 106224 to San Salvador, May 10, the Department reported that during a May 9 meeting with Department officials Galindo "was informed that the U.S. would seek postponement of vote on \$90 million hydroelectric loan pending before IDB. U.S. decision based primarily on human rights concerns, but there was also some question about project's economic long-range rationale. Richardson case was prominently featured." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770164-1272)

⁷ In telegram 3074 from San Salvador, June 30, Lubensky noted that he had informed Acting Foreign Minister Castaneda of U.S. "wonderment" at the "lack of any public response on the part of the Government of El Salvador to the warning by the White Warriors Union to the Jesuits to get out of El Salvador within thirty days or be killed." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2-12/77)

positive human rights actions. At the moment we are exploring the idea of sending an emissary, a USG official personally acquainted with the new President, to convey our concerns on the human rights deterioration in El Salvador and to seek ways we can approach the problems in a cooperative, not confrontational, vein. (Any publicity about this approach would probably doom it to failure.)

For this reason we do not recommend a letter from President Carter, at this time. We believe that we should first test the results of the personal approach, as we pave the way for a more affirmative attitude with the new leader. If such a demarche proves unfruitful, then the letter from President Carter could be a useful escalation to impress upon President Romero the gravity of our concern over the Jesuits and other human rights problems.

It may be useful for President Carter in some imminent speech touching upon religion or human rights, to comment on our concern about the threat to Jesuits in El Salvador. We are stressing with the GOES that its image in the eyes of the world will suffer even more if it is unable or unwilling to act to protect the rights of a group which has been threatened within its borders. We are also emphasizing that our interest in human rights applies worldwide, not only to El Salvador. The Department of State is monitoring events in El Salvador as well as it can and trying to exert a positive influence on their evolution.

For your information, Congressman Fraser is planning to hold a hearing on El Salvador on July 21, i.e., timed, we assume, to coincide with the White Warriors' deadline for the Jesuits' departure.⁸

⁸ Todman's July 25 briefing memorandum to Vance described Fraser's July 21 Subcommittee on International Organizations hearings on El Salvador. (Ibid.) See also, Alan Riding, "Salvador Confused by American Moves," *New York Times*, July 25, 1977, p. 2.

365. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 31, 1977

SUBJECT

Peace-Keeping

1. El Salvador—Honduras

In a recent conversation with NSC Staff, the Salvadorean Vice President said that he thought Salvador would ratify the mediation agreement with Honduras in a few weeks. Talks between the two countries have awaited Salvador's ratification, and if their government takes that step, it will be a significant one.

The dispute is over the demarcation of the border, and the best way to resolve that problem is to have the two parties agree to a mediator, and to give full support to his efforts.

The bilaterals with the Presidents of El Salvador and Honduras are both scheduled for Wednesday afternoon.² Both governments will probably ask for some additional economic assistance to develop the border area or to build a resort in the disputed Gulf of Fonseca. They will argue that such assistance could help bring the parties together. You may want to respond that until the two countries renew their commercial relations, it is academic to consider joint development projects.

We can probably consider the discussions a success if the Salvadorean President agrees to publicly announce his intention to seek the ratification of the mediation agreement, and if both Presidents agree to open up the border in the interim to normal commercial flows.

NSC agrees with State in recommending Option #2.³

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 65, Territorial Disputes: 4/77–12/78. Confidential.

² September 7. For the memorandum of conversation of the bilateral meetings, see Documents 346 and 366.

³ Brzezinski wrote: "(Tab 1, p. 2)" following this sentence.

Tab 1**Memorandum Prepared in the National Security Council⁴**

Washington, undated

*PEACEKEEPING: EL SALVADOR—HONDURAS**ISSUE FOR DECISION*

How the USG can best assist efforts to resolve the border dispute between El Salvador and Honduras.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The long-standing border dispute and periodic incidents between El Salvador and Honduras have economic and demographic origins. El Salvador is one of the most densely populated countries in Latin America. Honduras is five times as large but with almost half the number of people as its neighbor. Therefore, Salvadorans have tended to spill over into the inviting spaces of Honduras. In the process, tensions have developed over the treatment of Salvadorans in Honduras and other disputed pockets of land along the border between the two countries. The problem is complex and emotional for both parties.

Since 1969, when the so-called “Soccer War” occurred no diplomatic or economic relations have existed between El Salvador and Honduras. This situation has impeded regional economic integration, contributed to competing arms acquisition, and maintained a destabilizing element in Central America.

The United States has pursued a policy of indirect support for efforts to resolve the dispute. This has included providing personnel and equipment, at OAS expense, for a border observer team. Relatedly, the US has tried to discourage an arms race between the two countries.

In late 1976, the two countries signed a mediation formula agreement. Honduras ratified the accord within weeks. El Salvador, beset with a series of internal problems, has yet to ratify. At present, therefore, the two countries are not negotiating.

However, it should be pointed out that high GOES officials have informed us that they are preparing public opinion and seeking popular support for the ratification of the accord within the very near term.

OPTIONS

The most helpful action the USG could take at this stage, would be to focus upon Salvadoran ratification.

⁴ Confidential.

1. Continue indirect supportive assistance with emphasis on OAS initiatives, and refrain from bilateral involvement.

Pro:

—Would underscore OAS role in peace keeping.

—Would carry weight of multilateral concern.

Con:

—Tends to perpetuate status quo; no progress.

2. Supplement our assistance supportive of OAS measures with a more active bilateral role, exhorting El Salvador to ratify rapidly.

Pro:

—May, at least, help bring the two countries to the negotiating table.

—Would provide a useful mixture of bilateral and multilateral avenues of impressing concern for progress on resolving the issue.

—May give impetus beyond a mere “holding pattern”.

Con:

—Would entail pressuring El Salvador anew precisely as its new government is trying to be responsive on human rights, after a long period of strained bilateral relations.

3. Go beyond exhortation to exerting pressures on both countries—through bilateral incentives (or disincentives)—not only for negotiations but for a resolution. This would include such measures as increasing economic assistance, resuming security assistance (which El Salvador has renounced) or—in the other direction—limiting various forms of economic support until the issue is resolved.

Pro:

—Would certainly stimulate a reaction from both parties, if implemented with vigor.

Con:

—Would place the US squarely in the middle, with the US assuming responsibility for possible resumed hostilities.

—Would tend toward what might be considered an “interventionist” policy.

Recommendation:

That you approve Option 2 at this stage, exhorting the Salvadoran President to have the mediation formula ratified rapidly so the two countries can at least begin negotiations.⁵

ALTERNATIVELY, that you adhere to Option 1 which has been our traditional position in recent years.

⁵ Carter indicated his approval and initialed.

366. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 8, 1977, 4 p.m.

SUBJECT

President Carter/El Salvador President Romero Bilateral

PARTICIPANTS

<i>EL SALVADOR</i>	<i>US</i>
President Romero	President Carter
Foreign Minister Martinez	Secretary Vance
Ambassador Bertrand Galindo	Ambassador Todman
Colonel Roque Molina	Mr. Pastor
	David Aaron
	Earl Lubensky
	Evan Dobelle
	Interpreter

President Carter opened the meeting expressing his pleasure at being able to meet with President Romero and with other leaders of the Hemisphere. He said he appreciated the hospitality shown to Ms. Patricia Derian during her recent visit to El Salvador.² He considered her visit productive in improving understanding between El Salvador and the United States. The President indicated there had been decided improvement in the attitude in the U.S. about El Salvador. He said he was anxious to hear from President Romero about the present status of the border dispute with Honduras.

President Romero, after expressing his pleasure at being able to talk with President Carter, pointed out that his Government had been in power only a little over two months. He was exerting the necessary effort, he said, toward improving the situation for the majority of the Salvadoran people. He expressed the belief that where there were good intentions and dialogue, these improvements could be brought about. He emphasized that El Salvador had serious social problems to resolve, of an immediate, mid-term, and long-term nature. He recognized that

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 27, Latin America: 2/77–9/77. Confidential. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Drafted by Lubensky. Romero was in Washington to witness the signing of the Panama Canal Treaties on September 7. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place from 4:05 to 4:43 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials)

² Telegram 5542 from Panama City, August 3, reported on Derian's August 2 meeting with Romero, during which Derian stressed "US concern over the welfare of church, consular problems, and need of government to address real economic problems behind current repression and growing political estrangement of government." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770278–0364)

President Carter was carrying the banner of human rights in the hemisphere and the world. He recalled that Dr. Urquia, recently named Salvadoran Ambassador to the United Nations, was one of the authors of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, symbolizing El Salvador's advocacy, he said, of human rights observance.

President Romero described the actions his Government was taking to implement certain political and legal reforms to bring about a better life for the Salvadoran people, especially in the fields of education, health and nutrition. He emphasized the necessity, at the same time, for combatting terrorism and crime in his country in a manner not harming anyone—never through violent means, but through peaceful means.

President Romero mentioned his problems with the Church and his efforts to bring about a dialogue with Church leaders. He was confident that a solution would be reached in a short time, unifying the forces of the Government, the Church and the people. He said his Government had to expel several foreign priests under the provisions of the Salvadoran constitution and laws; and he could not accede to the wishes of Church officials to allow them to come back. He said he had offered church officials the opportunity, however, to give him a list of names of foreign priests and they would decide which among them could come to El Salvador to cover church vacancies. He mentioned that he was in the process of forming a mixed commission of Church and Government representatives which, from the Government side, would include the Vice President, Secretary of Defense and the Minister of Justice. He was awaiting names from the Church side.

President Romero emphasized the problems of El Salvador's restricted territory and excessive population. He mentioned the Government's integrated policy of population and family planning and again the Government's policy to improve education, health and job opportunities, especially stimulating an increased role for women, not only in Government positions, but in other sectors of the society. He stressed the problems of migration, both internal and external. It was necessary, he said, to bring about a redistribution of the population internally, and to manage legal and orderly emigration of Salvadorans to those countries which might wish to receive Salvadoran people, providing them job opportunities.

President Romero said that although he had come to Washington principally to express his endorsement of the Panama Canal treaties, he was utilizing the opportunity, at the same time, to extend an invitation to the Organization of American States to have the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights send a group to El Salvador to see for themselves what was happening in El Salvador and to confirm or deny reports circulating about conditions there.

President Romero then announced that at 12:33 P.M. local time in El Salvador (2:33 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time) the Salvadoran National Assembly had unanimously ratified the mediation agreement signed in 1976 by El Salvador and Honduras.

President Carter said that was good news and another demonstration of the progress made under President Romero's leadership during his two months in office. President Carter said that he had been disturbed by the damage done to the reputation of El Salvador in the eyes of the American people and of the people of other countries, and he wanted to be sure that accomplishments were also given credit. He said he was hopeful El Salvador would accept an agreement which would open the Pan American highway, pending final settlement of the border dispute between El Salvador and Honduras. He added the U.S. was glad to lend its voice and constructive support to the effort.

President Romero thanked President Carter for the nomination of Mr. Frank Devine as the new Ambassador to El Salvador, expressing his belief, with the recognized experience of Mr. Devine, that the U.S. and El Salvador were now going to understand each other better.

President Romero, recognizing that President Carter was a very busy person, said it would be an honor to have President Carter visit El Salvador at some convenient time in the future, and if he could not personally come, perhaps the Vice President could visit El Salvador.

President Carter, in closing, thanked President Romero for expressing his problems so frankly. He presented him a copy of his own book, *"Why Not the Best?"* and a book of Landsat photos of the world, promising to give El Salvador and other countries attempting to solve their many development problems the advantages of the services that the Landsat program could offer. He emphasized the U.S. desire to cooperate with countries struggling to solve their many problems.

President Romero, in closing, presented President Carter with a framed copy of the seal of El Salvador as a demonstration of El Salvador's affection for the United States.

**367. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, December 2, 1978, 2230Z

6290. Deliver to action offices by start of business, Monday, December 4. Subj: Proposed USG-GOES High Level Dialogue on Human Rights. Ref (A) State 294003.² (B) San Salvador 6124³ (C) State 303826.⁴

1. At request of President Romero, Vice President Astacio and I met on December 1 and discussed the concept of high-level dialogue on human rights matters.

2. GOES has now constituted a permanent commission to carry on such dialogue. It consists of:

A. Vice President Astacio, who will head it and keep President Romero advised of its activities;

B. Supreme Court President Rogelio Chavez;

C. Minister of Planning Jose Eduardo Reyes;

D. Foreign Minister Antonio Rodriguez Porth;

E. Minister of Defense General Castillo Yanes.

3. Vice President specifically requested that no publicity be given to this permanent commission. In fact, he requested that we avoid impressive labels or letterheads for it and instead consider it simply a high-level dialogue group. He explained such requests on two grounds: (1) In order to avoid complications and facilitate the effective work of the group; and (2) To avoid personal difficulties and/or even dangers for its members.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780497-0521. Confidential; Niact Immediate.

² In telegram 294003 to San Salvador, November 20, the Department described a meeting between Reyes and Jerry Jacobson, who had communicated the substance of the conversation to the Department. Reyes was frustrated by a lack of effective communication with the U.S. Government and indicated that "the GOES is tentatively prepared to set up a high level task force to conduct a dialogue with the USG to work out a program to improve relations." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780478-0074)

³ In telegram 6124 from San Salvador, November 24, the Embassy discussed the possibility of a high-level dialogue with the Salvadoran Government and cautioned: "Past dialogue with high-level GOES officials tends to prosper in terms of generalities—everyone is in favor of human rights—but to founder rather quickly on specifics." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780487-0658)

⁴ In telegram 303826 to San Salvador, December 1, the Department instructed Devine to approach Reyes to obtain more information about the "substantive and technical aspects" of the proposed dialogue with the Salvadoran Government. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780495-0639)

4. With respect to contact and dialogue with the USG, Vice President said it was contemplated that the new group would deal directly with me here and through Ambassador Quinonez with the Department of State. Prior to that, however, constructive discussions were envisaged with local opposition parties such as the Christian Democrats, and a meeting was now being planned with leaders of the Jesuit community here to see if they were amenable to any semblance of “detente”.

5. Vice President said that it is hoped such a commission will contribute to better and more effective communication between our two nations, that it will be in a position to focus effectively upon the findings of the IAHRRC, and that it will provide a mechanism for review of specific complaints.

6. In commenting upon the foregoing, I expressed particular interest in the inclusion of the Minister of National Defense. I said that a recent briefing by the nation’s military leaders had brought home to me as never before the diametrically different views which are held by the GOES and important figures in the USG with respect to the role and functions of the military in El Salvador. Identifying these differences for the Vice President, I said that it seemed increasingly essential for someone to explain these facts to the top military leaders of El Salvador. I wondered aloud who should do this, whether I should do it, whether the military would accept it, and whether the new commission might offer an avenue of approach to this process. The Vice President said quietly “do it.”

7. Picking up the conversational ball, the Vice President explained to me his own concept of the problem. He said that there is a great big world out there but an “island mentality” in Central America. Within the latter, there is an even smaller “island mentality” in El Salvador, suffered by practically all sectors of society. They think they are surrounded by a wide ocean and can and must solve their problems without regard to the rest of the world. But now that the rest of the world is interesting itself in how things are done in El Salvador, it is difficult or impossible for people here to adjust to that fact. Proceeding with the analogy, the Vice President said that from time to time someone tries to lay a plank across that “ocean” and to start toward meaningful contact and understanding with the other side. But each time this happens, overly-enthusiastic or clumsy parties at one end or the other dislodge the plank and we are back where we started from.

8. I told the Vice President that I would report his words to Washington and that I knew there would be interest in what he had told me. At the same time, I took the liberty of cautioning him that dialogue for the sake of dialogue can be meaningless unless there is also a willingness to take some decisions and make some changes. He took this with good grace and even expressed agreement.

Devine

368. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher¹

Washington, December 21, 1978

El Salvador

Issue For Decision

Whether, and on what basis, to engage the Government of El Salvador in a dialogue on substantive internal reform.

Essential Factors

GOES officials have offered to establish a high-level civil-military group to review with the U.S. the feasibility of a step-by-step program to improve relations, now strained by the repressive policies of the Romero government.²

The NSC-IG/ARA met December 12 to consider how we might respond to this Salvadoran initiative.³ After reviewing various possible approaches, from negotiation of a reform package to further disassociation, *the IG concluded* that, although events might ultimately lead us to adopt tougher or more cooperative positions, we should initially accept the offer of dialogue to explore whether improvements in human rights conditions can, in fact, be achieved.

The Romero government's record, and its unresponsiveness to our discussions over the past 20 months, lead us to be skeptical of its commitment to the needed reforms. The main purpose of trying again is to determine whether, once ambiguities about what we "really" mean are dispelled, some genuine progress can take place, particularly now that increasing terrorism poses the alternative of a deepening spiral of polarization and violence.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of the Office of the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, Lot 81D113, Box 16, Human Rights—El Salvador. Drafted by Smith and Einaudi on December 19; concurred in by Richard Feinberg (S/P) and Mark Schneider (HA). Smith did not initial the memorandum; Einaudi initialed for Feinberg and Schneider.

² See Document 367.

³ Vaky sent a paper entitled "El Salvador: U.S. Policy Options" to Clift, Armacost, Lake, Derian, Graham, [*name not declassified*], Sapia-Bosch, and Pastor on December 6 in advance of the December 12 NSC-IG/ARA meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 12, El Salvador: 1/78-12/78)

The dialogue, probably conducted initially by Ambassador Devine, would begin with a meeting with President Romero, followed by several exploratory sessions with his high-level group.

We would:

- probe in detail the government's perceptions, the depth of its understanding of the situation and its likely future actions;

- make clear our views of the human rights situation by suggesting specific internal reforms on individual, political, and socio-economic rights, and commenting on what we are told without attempting to negotiate or mediate.

- make no commitments on a U.S. response, explaining that U.S. policy depends, not on the existence of the dialogue, but on actual GOES performance on the points identified in the dialogue.

An outline of talking points along these lines for use with Romero and the high level group is attached.⁴ To counter any impression that our acceptance of dialogue implies acceptance of the GOES' poor human rights record, the talking points are quite specific on abuses and make clear that cosmetic or piecemeal changes will not suffice to improve relations, and that lack of improvement in human rights conditions will yield a further deterioration in relations as we take additional appropriate steps in response.

In addition, we would keep the Church and the political opposition generally apprised of what we are doing.

The ARA/IG will monitor the discussions closely, and will recommend any subsequent U.S. actions, positive or negative, that may become necessary.

Recommendation

That you authorize us to enter into discussions with the Government of El Salvador as set forth in the attached Talking Points.⁵

⁴ Attached but not printed. The Department transmitted a similar set of talking points in telegram 39568 to San Salvador, February 16. See Document 370.

⁵ Christopher indicated his approval and initialed on December 23.

369. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Vaky)¹

Washington, January 8, 1979

SUBJECT

El Salvador Dialogue (S)

I apologize for taking so long in responding to the excellent set of instructions which ARA has prepared with S/P and HA. I have made a number of specific suggestions on the margins of the cable itself (which I attach), but let me use this opportunity to elaborate on several points.² (S)

First of all, your suggestion with regard to the draft PRM on Central America which NSC forwarded to State for comments last month seem more appropriate to this set of instructions than to the PRM.³ You noted the difficulty of doing a policy analysis of the region while the outcome of events in Nicaragua was still uncertain. I believe that one can (and should) *begin* a policy review during this period, but one should be cautious about the cross-country-implications of implementing a specific policy at this time, as the Salvador cable envisages. (S)

Somoza has repeatedly looked to Romero for support during these last four months, and I'm sure he has tried to persuade Romero that the U.S. has "targeted" him next. In our briefings to Romero on the mediation, we have tried to encourage him to see the Nicaraguan problem as we see it (broad opposition against Somoza) rather than the way Somoza sees it (Communists against Somoza, with the U.S. unwittingly lending support to the Communists). Doubtlessly, Romero is inclined to see things as Somoza does, but I would guess that he has been reluctant to throw his full support to Somoza because he fears it might mean increasingly antagonizing the U.S., and he doesn't need that now. However, if we go to Romero with this kind of message *at this time*, we may unintentionally confirm Somoza's prediction that the U.S. is targeting Romero next, and thus cement an alliance between Romero and Somoza just when we're trying to put distance between them. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1-9/79. Secret. Copies were sent to Einaudi, Kreisberg, Feinberg, Oxman, and Schneider.

² Attached but not printed. For the final version of the telegram containing the talking points for the high-level dialogue, see Document 370.

³ See Document 465.

My first recommendation, therefore, is to either postpone any demarche until the situation in Nicaragua is clarified, or alternatively break the demarche into two or three parts. If we choose the latter, then we should point the first demarche in a very different direction. Instead of pushing Romero into the arms of Somoza, as the current message could do, we should try to lure him away. Instead of trying to force Romero to see the full dimensions of his predicament and to make clear that we are prepared to be really tough with him, we should be much more solicitous, but also more direct. We should inform him in general terms of our interest in a dialogue and of our interest in helping him find ways to avoid the problem which is ripping apart his neighbor. The full set of instructions which have been drafted would not be delivered until we can be more certain that El Salvador is on our side of the Nicaraguan problem. I think you will agree that while the problem of El Salvador is an acute one, which we need to deal with soon, the problem of Nicaragua is an urgent one, which we need to have resolved first. (S)

While awaiting the outcome of events in Nicaragua, we should use the time to address some of the very important questions which serve as the premises of the message. The draft message is a significant document; it represents nothing less than a philosophical statement on the nature of political and socio-economic development and on the causes of terrorism. I am in general quite sympathetic with the approach, but I think that in places (particularly, page 4) it is too facile, implying a degree of certainty with regard to answers to fundamental questions, which we just don't have. Although there are many theories on the origin of terrorism, no one can claim with any certainty which of these theories is correct. If, as this message suggests, terrorism is the result of a system in which "peaceful means of expression" are increasingly denied, then why is there so little terrorism in Cuba or other communist countries, which have fewer openings for political expression than El Salvador, and why is there terrorism in Germany and Italy? Can you argue, as the instructions suggest, that terrorism will stop if Romero's police stop torturing people and start opening the political system? There are few examples of a nation which has successfully stopped such terrorism, and unfortunately, those countries which have "succeeded" have done so by tightening police controls and by increasing the repression, rather than the other way around. The last thing I would recommend is that we should encourage or even tolerate such abuses; all I am suggesting is that we should not pretend that we have all the answers. Moreover, there are practical reasons for trying to be a little more balanced in our approach. If we are to be credible with a military government, we should show less certainty, more balance, and try to see things from their perspective as well as from ours. Some of my comments on that page (4) reflect

this point. Let me, however, suggest below a line of argument which may have more success with someone like Romero: (S)

—We are as concerned as you are over the increasing kidnappings and instances of terrorism. We believe that this stems from two sources, and that these two sources are related to each other: (S)

First, much of the violence is done by revolutionaries, who are convinced that peaceful change is impossible. These people are dedicated to violent revolution, and will not be deterred or diverted by political openings or any changes that you could make. (S)

Second, there are objective conditions in a country which can be exploited by these revolutionaries. If the people of a country can see for themselves that the arguments which the revolutionaries make—that the system excludes them and cannot be changed peacefully—then the power of the revolutionaries increases tremendously. (S)

—We believe that the best way to suppress the revolutionaries is to isolate them, and the best way to do that is to permit legitimate groups to express their views and to participate in finding ways to fundamentally change the political and economic system in order to make it freer, more equitable, and more just. This may not eliminate all terrorism, but by giving more people a stake in the system, it will discredit and isolate the terrorism, making the government's job of fighting them easier. (S)

I hope these comments are useful to you. Let me make several other points. (U)

First, as you know, the problem of El Salvador is also the problem of Guatemala and Honduras, though to a lesser extent. Therefore, I would send such cables on an "info" basis to our other Ambassadors and encourage them to convey their ideas to us on ways to deal with the El Salvador problem as well as the problems in the rest of Central America. Also, they should begin thinking of ways to apply this line of policy to their countries. (S)

Secondly, we know that the problem of El Salvador cannot be handled in El Salvador alone, because its economy is so tied to the rest of Central America. We need to be ready to find ways to promote a re-vitalization of Central American economic integration when the political circumstances permit that to happen. Therefore, I hope we will task ROCAP as well as our Embassies to begin thinking of ways to handle this broader Central American issue when the time is right. (S)

Thirdly, if we are able to generate interest in a re-vitalization of Central American cooperation, and even if we aren't, we should try to encourage neighboring democracies—particularly Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela, but also Mexico, Barbados, and Trinidad—to help in the democratizing of El Salvador and other countries in the region and in promoting economic cooperation. This can mean any-

thing from briefing their Foreign Ministers that we have begun such a dialogue to seeking their ideas to enlisting their support. I know you have reservations about involving third countries at this time, but I hope you also have some reservations about getting the U.S. pulled into another situation like that of Nicaragua where we are, in effect, negotiating a political future for a country between internal groups. I think touching base with these democracies would serve two purposes: (1) being much closer to the socio-political and economic conditions in Central America, these countries probably have experiences and advice which would be very helpful; and (2) if we do find ourselves pulled into a greater role, I for one would prefer that the U.S. share it with other countries rather than doing it alone, finding ourselves vulnerable to charges of paternalism and big-brotherism. We both agree that the U.S. should and can be a leader without being paternalistic. A real leader can find ways to engage more than one country at a time, particularly when getting involved in the delicate affairs of discussing a country's future economic, societal, and political system. We are not just talking about a demarche on a particular abuse of human rights; in this message we are talking about how El Salvador organizes itself in the future to be more humane. I would hope that the U.S. begins to go down this path with some friends on both sides.⁴ (S)

⁴ Pastor added the following handwritten notation at the bottom of the page: "Pete— After you've had time to digest this, let's talk."

370. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, February 16, 1979, 0044Z

39568. For Ambassador. Subject: High-Level Dialogue with GOES. Ref: (A) 1978 State 294003;² (B) 1978 San Salvador 6290;³ (C) San Salvador 0195.⁴

1. (S-Entire text)

2. We have concluded that we should pursue the GOES proposal to enter into a high-level bilateral dialogue. Our main purpose would be to promote improvements in human rights conditions and reinforce our capacity to work with El Salvador in the increasingly serious Central American political/security situation. Active exploration of possibilities for genuine progress in human rights is particularly important in view of the likelihood that the alternative to such progress would be a deepening spiral of polarization, violence, repression and terrorism which could have serious consequences for El Salvador and Central America as a whole.

3. In view of the time that has passed since the initial soundings per reffels, and given Assistant Secretary Vaky's conversation with Reyes February 9 (State 037969)⁵ which raised the format of "private confidential" talks rather than a high-level commission, we think it desirable to reconfirm directly with Romero precisely what he has in mind, what he envisages by way of dialogue and what he intends to achieve. Accordingly, you should seek an early appointment directly with President Romero for this purpose, referring to the earlier approaches and to the Vaky-Reyes conversation. Talking points for this are in para 7 below. (If requests for more information on our views on the human rights situation come up, contingent talking points are contained in para 8.)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790073-0212. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information to Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, Bogotá, Caracas, and Mexico City. Drafted by Einaudi; cleared in HA, ARA/CEN, S/P, ARA, and in draft in NSC; approved by Christopher.

² See footnote 2, Document 367.

³ See Document 367.

⁴ In telegram 195 from San Salvador, January 10, the Embassy examined the "mood of the moment" in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790015-1263)

⁵ In telegram 37969 to San Salvador, February 14, Vaky described his February 9 meeting with Reyes and Rojas in New Orleans. During the meeting Reyes conveyed Romero's interest in improving human rights practices, as well as the social and economic conditions in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790069-0615)

4. Depending on what we learn we would then enter a second stage determined largely by the results of this initial exploratory talk. After completing your exploratory conversations, we would like to receive your recommendations as to the worthwhileness of proceeding, topics to be covered, and the modalities. Because the internal dialogue between the GOES and other domestic political sectors is more important to the future of El Salvador than our bilateral dialogue, we would particularly appreciate your analysis of how it should be factored into stage two.

5. FYI: Our overall objectives, which you should bear in mind in all phases of any dialogue, include:

—To get an accurate assessment of the GOES' perceptions of the situation, the depth of its understanding and its intentions.

—To make clear that we are concerned about deteriorating human rights conditions in the country, that cosmetic changes will not result in improved relations, and that lack of improvement in these conditions will yield a further deterioration in our relations.

—To counter any impression that U.S. acceptance of the dialogue implies approval of the GOES' poor human rights record to date.

—To make clear that our concerns about Central America include economic development and Central American economic conditions.

—To avoid any commitment, however, to a specific parallel step-by-step U.S. response to GOES' actions, making clear U.S. response will depend on actual GOES performance, not on mere existence of dialogue or on announcements of intention.

—To avoid involving U.S. in a process of negotiation with the GOES or in any type of mediation between it and other Salvadoran groups. We intend to keep church and political opposition groups generally apprised of what we are doing, but do not view our bilateral dialogue as a substitute for the GOES-opposition dialogue.

6. We are concerned that the bilateral dialogue be conducted in a way that will not prove counterproductive, either within El Salvador itself (where recent steps toward internal dialogue should be encouraged, not delayed), or in the overall Central American situation, by prompting Romero to conclude that the U.S. has done what Somoza has predicted—targeted El Salvador next.

7. Talking points for your meetings with Romero follow:

—We appreciate and welcome your suggestions regarding a high-level dialogue (repeating here the circumstances of the approaches). Last week Minister Reyes also spoke to Assistant Secretary Vaky regarding frank and confidential discussions. We believe this an interesting and opportune idea.

—I have been asked to discuss this with you to be sure that we understand as clearly and precisely as possible what you have in mind,

how you envisage the process and what you conceive would be its intent and purpose.

—We assume for example that beside a general dialogue about how we see El Salvador in the context of the evolving geopolitical and socio-economic situation in Central America, we should have a broad discussion of the human rights situation, including individual, socio-economic and political rights and the relationship of those things to our bilateral relations. What are your thoughts on this?

—(After Romero responds): These are important questions. Raising our dialogue to a systematic and high level has risks as well as opportunities. We believe the stakes—improving human rights, controlling terrorism, and strengthening peace and stability in El Salvador and the rest of Central America—warrant accepting your proposal. But we believe the stakes are also high enough to require as much initial clarity as possible.

—I would be less than candid, for example, if I did not make clear at the outset that we believe your human rights situation is serious, that unless it improves, political conditions and stability will deteriorate, and that such deterioration will inevitably create new problems in our relations.

—Like you, we are seriously concerned at the evident political and social deterioration and growing terrorism which we see occurring and believe threatens El Salvador's future.

—We believe improvements in human rights conditions in El Salvador are necessary to internal peace and stability.

—We look at human rights broadly in three categories, and see serious problems in all three areas in El Salvador:

—Fundamental problems of individual rights such as the practice of torture, arbitrary arrests and disappearances.

—The fundamental problem of improving the distribution of income and living conditions for all the people of El Salvador.

—A political process sufficiently open to prevent the growth of extremism and radicalism.

—We are prepared to discuss specific areas where we believe changes are necessary. Our purpose in identifying specific problems is to be helpful to you as your government makes decisions and also to help you to see the nature and dimension of our concerns. We are prepared to offer some specific suggestions, but you should view them as illustrative only, and not as complete or sufficient blueprints.

—We have been heartened by the indications of renewed political dialogue within El Salvador. We would not wish our own bilateral dialogue to interfere with it or to delay its development.

—As our bilateral dialogue unfolds, we will try to avoid any possible misunderstanding by keeping some private and political groups outside the government generally apprised of our purposes.

—The reason is that the course of our bilateral relations depends more on developments here in El Salvador and on what you achieve, than on the existence of our dialogue. Our ability to cooperate will depend on these developments.

(At the conclusion of Romero meeting): It had been indicated that a dialogue might be in the form of meeting with a high-level group. Is this how you envisage it, or do you have some other format in mind?

—I would, of course, welcome any comments you may wish to make to me directly.

8. The following talking points are for your use, if asked, in responding to questions for greater detail on how we see the human rights situation in El Salvador.

—In our view, the situation as a whole has become too grave for any single act to alter it significantly. We believe your security and that of the region require the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach rather than piecemeal reforms.

—What you decide, however, is up to you. The ideas we offer are suggestions. We do not intend to interfere in your internal politics, mediate between domestic groups, or engage in a negotiation with you over your internal affairs.

—The test of our dialogue, and the basis of our response, will be your success in engaging constructively the basic forces of Salvadoran society—business, labor, and religious groups, and political parties.

(A) Individual Rights

—We appreciate the seriousness of El Salvador's terrorist problem, but we are convinced terrorists can be combatted in ways that do not violate individual and civil liberties. Indeed, we believe that the best way to combat terrorism in the long term is to preserve these liberties.

—Fundamental problems of individual rights are the practice of torture, arbitrary arrests and disappearances.

—And the sense that these are endorsed as official policy.

Several steps could be taken to address these problems, such as amnesty for prisoners incarcerated under the public order law for non-violent actions, and systematic access to information in cases of missing persons (*desaparecidos*) and of political prisoners. (In addition to mentioning these two specific steps, you are also authorized, if you believe it would be helpful, to mention the following steps: (1) reform or rescission of the public order law along the lines proposed by the

ICJ;⁶ (2) increased discipline in the forces of public order, including provisions for prompt investigation of reports of torture, arbitrary arrests, or disappearances, by a special commission empowered to bring offenders before courts martial or to present cases for criminal prosecution in civil courts; (3) verification of prison conditions and of allegations of unacknowledged prisons by qualified international observers, like the ICRC; (4) non-use of order for paramilitary or security activities. If you choose not to mention these steps, you should at a minimum indicate that there are deeper problems in the area of rights of the person which we would be prepared to discuss in the course of the dialogue.)

(B) Political Rights

—The fundamental problem is to create conditions in which national priorities and policies can be established through a political process sufficiently open to prevent the growth of extremism and radicalism.

—A successful dialogue with the church and the political parties can only be established by regaining their confidence through concrete initiatives to open the political system.

—Steps we believe might facilitate a more open political system include:

—Amendment of the electoral law to ensure the ability of all legal parties to participate.

—Reconstitution of the Electoral Commission as a clearly non-partisan body.

—Invitation of outside observers for the 1980 legislative and municipal elections.

(C) Economic and Social Rights

—The fundamental problem is the need to improve the distribution of income and to better the living conditions for all the people of El Salvador.

—Steps in this direction might include:

—Adoption of a sound and meaningful agrarian reform law;

—Tax reform.

⁶ In telegram 4493 from San Salvador, August 28, the Embassy reported that a representative of the International Commission of Jurists had visited El Salvador and written a report endorsing the reform of the law of defense and guarantee of public order. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780351-1029)

U.S. response

—The degree of progress you achieve on these concerns will determine the course of our future relations.

—We cannot respond to each and every step you take.

—As you begin to move forward we will consider your actions carefully, keeping in close touch through this group, but concentrating on the actual realization of your proposals.⁷

9. For Bogota, Caracas, Mexico, San Jose: Please inform appropriate officials that President Romero has requested an opportunity to dialogue with the U.S. on human rights issues (broadly defined), and we have consented. You should also seek their ideas on ways to constructively pursue this dialogue. (FYI: We think it is important for you to inform and, if possible, engage the attention of these democracies. While we do not want to become as deeply involved in El Salvador as we are in Nicaragua, the dialogue will involve sensitive political issues. We want to avoid being drawn into such delicate discussions without the support, and to the extent appropriate, involvement of the other democracies.)

Christopher

⁷ For Devine's first meeting with Romero, see Document 371.

**371. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, February 24, 1979, 2100Z

1040. For delivery to action offices by opening of business Monday February 26. Subj: (S) High-level Dialogue with Government of El Salvador. Ref: State 039568.²

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder. Secret; Niact Immediate. Sent for information to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, and Tegucigalpa. Feinberg sent this copy of the telegram to Vaky under a February 26 memorandum, indicating that Devine's discussion with Romero "went extremely well. Frank must have been very persuasive for Romero to have been so agreeable."

² See Document 370.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Pursuant to the instructions contained in reftel, I met with President Romero on February 23 to pursue with him the GOES proposal for a high-level bilateral dialogue. After a most careful and specially tailed introduction, I explained to him our basic interests and motivation along the lines set forth in para 2 reftel.

3. I then reviewed for President Romero the background to our present discussion, reminding him of Minister Reyes' late November breakfast meeting in Miami which first surfaced the concept of a high level dialogue,³ then the Vice President's December 1 identification to me of a five-person "permanent commission" named to engage us in such a dialogue, my own having been called to Washington in the light of these developments, the fact that I returned to await instructions which would govern my approach to the GOES, and the last-minute uncertainty introduced by Minister Reyes' reference to "private confidential talks" rather than a high-level commission when he spoke with Assistant Secretary Vaky in New Orleans on February 9.

4. Following this, I said that I had now received my basic instructions and wished to make a rather comprehensive presentation of our position. I then presented the complete set of talking points provided me in para 7 reftel and concluded with a statement along the general lines of the section entitled "U.S. response" at the end of para 8 reftel. In view of the way our conversation developed, it was not necessary nor appropriate for me to enter into the more detailed talking points set forth in the rest of para 8 reftel.

5. President Romero heard me out and took some notes as I talked. In our ensuing conversation, he made *inter alia* the following points:

A. The five-person high-level commission identified to us by the Vice President on December 1 had been ready to meet with us from that point forward.⁴

B. When two months elapsed without any substantive response from us, they had concluded that perhaps such a vehicle for dialogue was not congenial to us, and for this reason Minister Reyes raised with Ambassador Vaky, as an alternative, "private confidential talks".

C. Reyes had specifically requested a private meeting with Assistant Secretary Vaky in order to avoid the presence on our side of a notetaker, a practice which they find inhibitory to frank discussion.

D. As an additional alternative, Reyes had suggested to Vaky the idea of his meeting privately with President Romero. Either in Miami,

³ See footnote 2, Document 367.

⁴ See Document 367.

New Orleans, or San Salvador.⁵ GOES understood that no immediate answer had been possible.

E. As matters now stand, the GOES is at our disposition for whatever dialogue we would prefer: meetings with the high-level commission; private confidential talks; or a meeting between President Romero and Assistant Secretary Vaky.

F. US participants are left to our choosing. Salvadoran participants are prepared to meet with US Ambassador alone, with a group from US Embassy, or with any visiting group from US.

G. My requests for an audience with the President had come just as he was preparing to call me in for a similar conversation in course of which he planned to inform me of GOES thinking on human rights and similar related problems, of steps being planned, and of timetable contemplated.

H. Final touches were lacking on this presentation but in course of following week (week of February 26) President would in fact invite me to his office and acquaint me with GOES action plan.

I. President Romero sees no conflict or interference between our dialogue and those others underway locally. All are pointed in same direction. USG is asking same things as other interested sectors on local scene.

J. At this point, President observed somewhat whimsically that things we are asking are same as those being asked by political opposition, Archbishop Romero, subversive organizations, terrorist groups, et al.

K. GOES definitely plans take some steps along lines we desire but asks for patience and understanding that all cannot be done at once. Too fast movement could bring the whole structure down. Remedial action must be phased over time.

L. As to purpose of dialogue, GOES sees it as to achieve understanding between USG and GOES, to acquaint us with movement which GOES is willing to take, and to seek our understanding and concurrence with timetable envisaged.

M. In closing this part of conversation, President Romero reiterated that he would be calling me in during following week for meaningful talk on steps planned and timetable envisaged by GOES for action along lines which are obviously of interest to USG. Meanwhile, I could inform Department that GOES is at our disposition for dialogue using any vehicle of our choosing.

⁵ See footnote 5, Document 370.

6. Inasmuch as moment seemed both appropriate and propitious, I then volunteered a few observations to President Romero on the deteriorating state of political, economic and social order in El Salvador. We discussed recent terrorist acts and increasing level of affluence, cooperation and confidence on part of terrorist groups. I urged necessity for a more open and participatory political system in which the nation's youth and other dissatisfied elements might find a way to express their dissent and work for change through the vehicle of political parties rather than finding this avenue closed and feeling themselves forced into the ranks of the terrorists. He said that he and some close associates shared this analysis.

7. Taking advantage of this opening, I went on to assure the President that those of his advisors who think and tell him that the American Embassy is supporting and sponsoring the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) are mistaken. We support no party. But we do support the concept of an open democratic system in which the PDC and other parties can operate. We feel that the restoration of such a system would do much to counter the present trend toward terrorist violence. Parenthetically, I told the President of my recent conversation with a member of the wealthy elite who had lamented the fact that "Christian Democrats here are not like those in Italy or Germany. Here they are all Communists. When they had a chance to nominate a presidential candidate (Napoleon Duarte) they nominated a Communist!" I told the President of my dismay at hearing such an analysis. President Romero immediately replied that what had been told me was "stupid", that he himself had met and talked with Napoleon Duarte on many occasions and knows that the latter is no Communist.

8. I reminded the President of our talk last year in which we had agreed upon the desirability of participation by the established political parties in the next election but in which I had warned him that the time to start constructing an electoral climate (which would make this possible) was "not 1980, not 1979, but right now in 1978". I observed that nothing seemed to have happened, and we were by now in 1979. He agreed but said that steps would very soon be taken to start creating the proper kind of electoral climate.

9. As long as we were this deeply into the subject, I mentioned to the President the kudos and goodwill which some Latin American military have achieved by biting the bullet and announcing that they will turn the reins of government back over to the civilian political leaders. I cited Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru in this regard. I suggested that an immediate turnover is not usually contemplated but at least a statement in principle and some semblance of a timetable. The President smiled and acknowledged that the military had controlled power for some forty years in El Salvador. He seemed to take no umbrage at my raising this subject and discussed it with me in dispassionate terms.

10. One aspect of our conversation deserves mention. When I suggested to the President that failure to take some steps in the right direction might cause us to review our bilateral relationship with an eye toward relative disassociation, he drew an immediate parallel to present US policy with respect to Nicaragua. He was appalled at the thought that we might view El Salvador in the same light as Nicaragua or measure it with the same yardstick. I had the feeling that this touched upon a sensitive underlying Central American nerve, and it may presumably be a useful point for us to remember and utilize in future negotiations.

11. In light of all the foregoing, I recommend that we approve in principle the idea of moving ahead with high-level dialogue but withhold further action until the President has called me in and informed me as to the action plan and timetable of which the GOES wishes us to be aware. I tend to share President Romero's view that there is no basic conflict between such a dialogue on our part and those others currently trying to get off the ground, but believe we should continue making the point to all concerned that ours is no substitute for the others. Finally, and subject to whatever views the Department may have, my own inclination would be that if and when we move forward with the contemplated dialogue, we lead off by having this Embassy make to the five-member commission a comprehensive presentation of the type authorized by reftel (to bring the commission abreast of President Romero's own understanding of our position), that we stand ready in the light of ensuing developments to continue the dialogue through this Embassy and/or an appropriate visiting group from Washington, and that we leave ourselves room for tactical escalation if necessary or appropriate in the form of an eventual visit by Assistant Secretary Vaky for a meeting with President Romero accompanied by members of his high-level commission.

Devine

372. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, March 8, 1979, 1800Z

1259. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Ambassador Devine. Subj: (S) Bilateral Dialogue and the Repeal of the Public Order Law. Ref State 049592.²

1. (Secret-Entire text)

2. In accordance reftel, I met with President Romero on March 7 to present new Deputy Chief of Mission Richard B. Howard and to carry out Department's most recent instruction pertinent to our high-level dialogue.

3. Following guidance in para 4 reftel, I told President Romero that after hearing directly from Assistant Secretary Vaky I wished make following points:

A. Congratulations on action taken to repeal law for defense of public order;

B. We consider it a correct and wise decision which can contribute to better understanding and goodwill among the people of El Salvador;

C. We recognize the potential significance of repeal of the law;

D. In my press conference here, we have tried to make public such recognition and our approval of the action taken;

E. In Washington, the press spokesman for Department of State took exactly same line and thereby imparted greater domestic and international resonance to such statements;

F. Because of this action by GOES we were successful in resisting pressures for a negative vote on the IDB livestock development loan;³

G. We were also, for the same reason, instrumental in moving the British from a "no" to a positive vote on that loan;

H. We hope very strongly that this positive measure will be promptly followed by others;

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1-9/79. Secret.

² In telegram 49592 to San Salvador, March 1, Vaky noted the "positive step" of the repeal of the defense of public order law and instructed Devine to "begin conversation with the GOES dialogue commission." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790093-0820)

³ In telegram 47705 to multiple posts, February 28, the Department reported that the U.S. Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank was planning to abstain "on a \$15.3 million (ordinary capital) livestock development and animal health program for El Salvador" because of "human rights concerns." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790090-0847)

I. Our ability to maintain this more cooperative atmosphere is at best tenuous and could be strengthened by GOES action of a follow-up nature which would help reinforce the positive response to repeal of the law for defense of public order.

4. Turning from the public order law to the high-level dialogue, I told the President that:

A. Due in large measure to the repeal of the law, Embassy officers and I are available immediately—whenever President Romero is ready—to begin conversation with the GOES five-person commission named to carry on the high-level dialogue;

B. Ambassador Vaky, personally, cannot at the moment plan an early visit to San Salvador; but

C. He will follow the course of our dialogue closely and will hope personally to come here and “join” the dialogue later if its progress so warrants.

5. President Romero heard me out and then reminded me that he had from the outset defined repeal of the public order law as only the first of various steps to be taken. It is important, he said, to wait and observe the reaction before future steps are taken, not everything can be done at once. The process must be spread over time.

6. With respect to our high-level dialogue, President indicated agreement to idea of moving ahead and said he would so inform Vice President Astacio who is to head the five-person commission. At same time, he noted that Astacio is now preparing to depart for Caracas to head El Salvador’s delegation to inauguration of new President Luis Herrera Compins. For this reason, he said, our dialogue with the commission will have to await the Vice President’s return to San Salvador. Parenthetically he noted that this would ipso facto allow time to observe results and reaction growing out of repeal of law for defense of public order. The President did not clarify what results or reaction would facilitate further government steps toward normalization or promotion of the intended dialogue with regard to USG–GOES, however, he assured me that Vice President Astacio would communicate with me upon his return to San Salvador (our other info indicates that this may well mean the week of March 19).

7. Seeming to imply that it might be another in the series of positive steps contemplated, President Romero said that Vice President Astacio would definitely be talking with this country’s Christian Democratic Party (PDC) Leader Napoleon Durante while in Caracas (San Salvador 1187).⁴ He also indicated that there are currently some tentative but

⁴ This information was transmitted in telegram 1187 from San Salvador, March 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790100–0342)

hopeful signs with respect to a possible new dialogue or meeting between himself and Archbishop Romero.

Devine

373. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State and the Embassy in Costa Rica¹

San Salvador, May 16, 1979, 2350Z

2597. San Jose please pass to Ambassador Devine. Subj: High-level Dialogue With GOES: First Meeting. Ref: (A) State 39568,² (B) San Salvador 2436,³ (C) San Salvador 2428,⁴ (D) San Salvador 2479.⁵

(S-Entire text)

2. At invitation of GOES, Ambassador, accompanied by DCM and Pol officer, met at 1115 May 16 with high-level Salvadoran commission

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder. Secret; Niact Immediate. Sent for information to Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, Tegucigalpa, Bogotá, Caracas, Mexico City, and USCINSCO Quarry Heights.

² See Document 370.

³ In telegram 2436 from San Salvador, May 9, Devine reported on his meeting that morning with Romero and other Salvadoran officials to discuss the "underlying political problems of El Salvador." Devine described his presentation as "long and rather serious" and commented: "I believe it struck a useful blow within the hearing of strategic listeners for the cause of dialogue and the need for a democratic opening." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790170-0676)

⁴ In telegram 2428 from San Salvador, May 9, Devine reported that he had met with Romero that morning and Romero had defended his government's position regarding violent clashes with demonstrators at the National Cathedral. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790170-0583) In telegram 2415 from San Salvador, May 9, the Embassy reported that the media had visited the "National Cathedral to witness and report on continuing occupation of cathedral by forces of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR)" who were demonstrating for the release of members who had been arrested. The Embassy continued: "News media reps arrived on scene to find large numbers of young people seated in front of cathedral, clapping hands, singing, and chanting revolutionary phrases." The journalists "agreed that what they encountered was by U.S. standards an entirely peaceful demonstration." They next witnessed and recorded "prolonged automatic weapons fire" by the National Police on the protestors. The journalists reported "that seven bodies were counted outside cathedral when firing ended but assert that many more wounded must have made it into the cathedral itself." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790170-0143)

⁵ In telegram 2479 from San Salvador, May 11, Devine reported on his discussion with Quinonez Mesa about human rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790230-1003)

composed of Vice President Julio Astacio, Foreign Minister Rogriquez Porth, Minister of Planning Jose Eduardo Reyes, President of Supreme Court Rogelio Chavez and Subsecretary of Defense Col. Jose Eduardo Iraheta to initiate high-level bilateral dialogue.

3. Ambassador Devine led off meeting by expressing appreciation for opportunity to meet with high-ranking members of the Salvadoran Government, adding that points he was about to cover were probably among most important he would make during his tenure as Ambassador.

4. Ambassador then reviewed for all members of Salvadoran commission history of mutual efforts to initiate high-level dialogue since GOES first proposed talks last November. Noting that he had precise instructions regarding the dialogue from the Department, Ambassador proceeded to give a point-by-point presentation in Spanish of USG's position regarding (A) the purpose of dialogue (ref A, para 2) and (B) the specific talking points contained in ref A, para 7, which emphasized USG interest in broad discussion of human rights situation in El Salvador. Commission listened without interruption to entire presentation with Col. Iraheta taking copious notes.

5. In Ambassador's discussion and explanation of the three categories of human rights as seen by USG, he noted in category 2 that poverty itself is not a violation of human rights but that lack of honest effort and attention to correct living conditions is violation. Regarding category 3, he stressed relevance is an open political system to prevent extremism, terrorism and radical [garble] noting that he had earlier elaborated on this point in an extended discussion with President Romero last week (refs B and C).

6. Ambassador concluded presentation by stating that USG looks forward to pursuing the dialogue. If both countries can agree on real—not cosmetic—steps to improve human rights situation, Ambassador said that USG would be prepared to respond in positive manner commensurate with GOES actions. For example, real and significant GOES measures toward human rights improvement could bring official, public US declarations of recognition and approval. Further GOES moves, the Ambassador explained, could elicit more concrete USG response, such as greater flexibility in area of economic assistance. USG views dialogue process as phased, gradual and reciprocal, if dialogue should ultimately prove completely successful, even USG resumption of military assistance could be contemplated. Rather than respond on a one-for-one basis, however, the USG will react to a clearly positive trend.

7. On other side of the coin, if dialogue fails to produce real and effective progress in the area of human rights and past trends continue, impact on USG relations with El Salvador will inevitably be negative and would probably result in disassociation and reduction in US pro-

grams and personnel. Ambassador then cited US disassociation in Nicaragua as example of what could happen in US-Salvadoran relations even though situations in Nicaragua and El Salvador are different. He reiterated Carter administration's strong commitment to human rights as a major tenet of US foreign policy and warned that lack of progress toward human rights improvement would sharply increase pressures for US disassociation from the GOES.

8. Citing his recent conversation with Salvadoran Ambassador Roberto Quinonez (ref d), Ambassador emphasized special relationship which has characterized relations between US and El Salvador, adding that an historic change in this relationship leading to disassociation would be a great tragedy. Ambassador reiterated US willingness to cooperate with GOES in improving human rights situation and thereby our relations. If this cannot be done "almost certain" alternative is a distancing in relations. In view of mounting feeling and pressures in US and serious polarization in El Salvador Ambassador said meaningful dialogue is a matter of great urgency.

9. Vice President Astacio responded by emphasizing interest of GOES and President Romero in maintaining friendship with US. He said GOES understands USG concern about situation in El Salvador and Central America as seen in context of US human rights philosophy. He stressed that GOES is also deeply concerned. While it sees opportunities for mutual cooperation, GOES fears there have been distortions of reality. Sincere dialogue, however, can help overcome these. He labelled problem in El Salvador and Central America as "terrible", adding that area is "in crisis" and that dialogue under these circumstances is "vital necessity". If both governments were to draw apart, only mutual enemies would benefit, and El Salvador could "pass to the other side". He repeated that GOES is sincerely interested in dialogue and genuine—not cosmetic—improvement. More important than such things as loans and financial assistance is continuation of our "shared ideology". Vice President said it is time to revitalize this "identity" through subsequent dialogue meetings.

10. Ambassador expressed understanding for the GOES' viewpoint but said that there is a problem of perception. What are viewed in the US as abuses of human rights, are construed by the GOES as defense against subversion. As a result, there is need to agree on concepts and definitions. Ambassador stated that US policy is fundamentally concerned with the system here which for so long has led to violations of human rights of the poor and campesinos, resulting in endemic violence and counterviolence. As an indication of general attitude in the US, he cited extract from recent US press article on El Salvador which stated: "with a state of lawlessness increasing in this small Central American republic, the military government and its conserva-

tive business allies are showing no willingness to make the economic and social compromises that might defuse the explosive political situation.” It is absence of willingness to carry out economic and social reforms which seem to many the essence of problem, Ambassador explained.

11. Citing the unfortunate violence last week, including much publicized events at cathedral, Ambassador reviewed his expression of concern to Foreign Minister and his subsequent admonition to President Romero regarding violation of human rights and negative impact in US. As evidence of further USG reaction Ambassador then read text of latest Department statement on the situation in El Salvador contained in State 122982.⁶

12. In conclusion, Ambassador stated that USG shares GOES’ concern about what is happening in El Salvador and wishes to avoid disassociation in relations by collaborating in solution through dialogue. He said such a process will of necessity be gradual but with firm commitment both countries have opportunity to move closer together rather than still farther apart.

13. At this point President of Supreme Court Chavez said that dialogue can help clarify many things and proposed setting an early date for the next meeting. Vice President Astacio, with agreement of other commission members, and subject to the President’s concurrence, proposed Wednesday, May 23, as a tentative date for the second session. Ambassador’s invitation to working lunch at his residence was accepted.⁷

14. This message has not been cleared with Ambassador Devine who departed for San Jose prior to its completion.

Howard

⁶ In telegram 122982 to San Salvador, May 14, the Department provided press guidance regarding the situation in El Salvador that urged Salvadorans to avoid violence and seek a political solution “through a spirit of conciliation.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790218–0358)

⁷ See Document 374.

374. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, May 29, 1979, 2110Z

2842. Subject: High Level Dialogue with GOES: Second Meeting.
Ref: (A) San Salvador 2597,² (B) State 39568.³

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Begin summary. Ambassador began second session of high-level dialogue by emphasizing gravity of situation and USG concern over El Salvador. In elaboration of USG position, he translated instructions contained in para 8 ref B, outlining views on individual, political, and economic and social rights as well as possible U.S. response to any GOES progress in these fields. Ambassador then discussed manipulation of "popular organizations" by smaller terrorist groups, resulting in GOES confrontations with relatively innocent masses, where violent GOES actions are resulting in "disastrous" image abroad. Ambassador cited eyewitness accounts of unprovoked and unwarranted violence and quoted remarks made to him that in "civilized country" these would not take place or if they did occur, would be properly investigated. Ambassador also emphasized that suppression of legitimate political expression was contributing to growth of radical organizations. He concluded that while his remarks might be construed as interference, they were not so intended. Vice President Astacio expressed appreciation for frankness of conversation and termed it helpful to hear USG positions and ideas in order that effective solutions might be found. Comment: Dialogue in sense of genuine exchange of ideas and opinions has really not begun. Stage, however, has been set for GOES response which should largely determine future course of dialogue. End summary.

3. Second session of bilateral, high-level dialogue, originally scheduled as working luncheon May 23 but postponed because of extended Cabinet meeting that decided on state of siege, was held evening May 25 at Ambassador's residence. New date had been proposed by Vice President Astacio who emphasized GOES interest in continuing dialogue. Astacio, Supreme Court President Chavez, Minister of Planning Reyes, and Sub-Secretary of Defense Col. Iraheta, represented GOES.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790250-1060. Secret; Priority. Sent for information to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINSCO Quarry Heights, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

² See Document 373.

³ See Document 370.

Foreign Minister Rodriguez Porth was absent because of illness. Ambassador, DCM, and Pol Off were present on U.S. side.

4. Ambassador opened substantive discussion, stating Washington had received with great deal of interest report of beginning of bilateral dialogue. He said there were two points he wished to make initially:

1) USG lamented violent acts of past week including assassination of Minister of Education and death of fourteen in incident near Venezuelan Embassy.⁴

2) Costa Rican meeting of USG officials and Ambassadors had been called because of great U.S. concern regarding deteriorating situation in Central America.⁵ President Carter himself had asked for study. Principal concern was situation in Nicaragua, but immediately second was El Salvador, with [garble] that because of dangerousness of situation, El Salvador could at any time replace Nicaragua as number one problem.

5. Ambassador then recalled that in previous session of high level dialogue he had pointed out that if there were no improvement in situation here, U.S. bilateral relations with GOES could face historic change leading to disassociation. He was now prepared to elaborate on U.S. views. To avoid possibility of error, he explained, he would translate directly from Department instructions. Ambassador then gave detailed translation of points contained in para 8 ref B, which states gravity with which USG views human rights situation in El Salvador, commenting on individual, political, and economic and social rights situation and outlining possible U.S. response to any progress GOES might achieve. Ambassador summarized that foregoing gave idea of what USG has in mind and that Salvadoran response in future would be welcomed.

6. Ambassador continued, saying that speaking for himself and Embassy we believe El Salvador is facing extremely serious national crisis. We are trying to follow, study, and understand situation, but it is a difficult and dangerous moment. FPL, FARN, and ERP have

⁴ For information about the violence at the National Cathedral in San Salvador, see footnote 4, Document 373. The Popular Revolutionary Bloc occupied the French and Costa Rican Embassies on May 4. (Alan Riding, "Militants in El Salvador Undeterred by the Death of 22," *New York Times*, May 10, 1979, p. A1) On May 12, the Popular Revolutionary Bloc occupied the Venezuelan Embassy. On May 21, the Salvadoran police fired on protesters outside of the Embassy killing at least 9 demonstrators. ("Embassy Seized in El Salvador," *Washington Post*, May 12, 1979, p. A21; and "Police Fire on Protestors in El Salvador; 9 Killed," *Washington Post*, May 23, 1979, p. A17) Karen DeYoung reported that on May 23 "Salvadoran revolutionaries assassinated the minister of education and his driver today in apparent retaliation for the killing by police of 14 youthful protesters last night." (Karen DeYoung, "Minister Slain After Killings in El Salvador," *Washington Post*, May 24, 1979, p. A1)

⁵ See Document 466.

obtained a certain control over "popular organizations". Small lethal groups are manipulating larger organizations not really so radical in character. This was situation in occupation of cathedral and Embassies.

7. GOES, ambassador said, confronts difficult dilemma. First, it is facing relatively innocent groups of people who are being manipulated. If GOES reacts violently it is condemned abroad to its own detriment and to advantage of radical opposition. But on other hand if GOES does nothing, it will lose control of situation here. Present GOES conduct is creating "disastrous" image abroad. People in U.S. and other countries not even knowing where El Salvador is are demanding that their representatives insist on sanctions against the country.

8. Ambassador continued that he did not want to disguise certain realities. He had told President Romero in matter of cathedral shooting there was new element. U.S. television and press had been on scene and reported that demonstrations had been entirely peaceful before police opened unprovoked attack. Ambassador quoted foreign observers as having told him that "in any civilized country" there would have been suspension of police involved and investigation of whole affair.

9. Ambassador then related that President Romero had phoned him in connection with May 22 shooting incident near Venezuelan Embassy to say that security forces were being attacked by BPR. Press, however, reported BPR was only trying to take food and water to occupiers of Embassy when were fired upon. It is difficult to ignore some witnesses who have described incident to embassy. One member of U.S. Mission saw policemen apparently give coup de grace to wounded marcher. Other witness saw three policemen take girl into gulley near Embassy. Three shots were heard. Policemen returned to street, but girl did not. Ambassador reiterated that such things should not happen in "civilized country", and emphasized that this raised serious question of whether security forces are really under control of GOES.

10. To illustrate widespread revulsion toward situation, Ambassador related that he had recently been visited by European Charge d'Affaires accredited to El Salvador but not resident here. Latter had said was impossible to imagine indignation events in El Salvador were creating in his country, resulting in public demands that its government take some action against El Salvador on ground of its violation of human rights.

11. In conclusion, Ambassador said there are certain realities that must be recognized. The BPR has approximately 60,000 members more or less. Many observers assert GOES is contributing to growth of BPR and other radical groups by its suppression of legitimate political expression. In this respect, Ambassador noted that certain parties have been saying USG is trying to give Salvadoran Government to Christian

Democratic Party because of USG encouragement for democratic opening. This was not at all the case. We support no specific political party but rather an open, participatory political system in which all parties can compete. If Salvadorans are not permitted to express themselves or make themselves otherwise heard politically, they will fall by default into power of BPR and similar or more radical organizations. GOES objective should be to dissuade and divorce people from radicalism. If that is not done, situation can only continue to deteriorate.

12. Ambassador concluded that GOES might construe his remarks as interference, but they were certainly not intended that way. If corrective measures were not taken, it would be extremely difficult for U.S. to maintain satisfactory bilateral relations with GOES and avoid disassociation. Ambassador thanked GOES contingency for patience and turned floor over to them.

13. Vice President Astacio expressed appreciation for Ambassador's frank presentation. He then asked for copy of message from Washington giving points Ambassador had translated. It was agreed GOES could be given suggested corrective measures in form of "blind memorandum" with no identification nor attribution.⁶ Astacio, without being specific, went on to say that GOES strategy is similar to that outlined in Department message. GOES is aware of situation and of U.S. point of view. He again expressed appreciation for frankness that marked meeting and said GOES expects to enter into subject matter in depth. Situation in El Salvador is indeed difficult. There is a conjunction of national and international forces compounding situation and GOES suffers from frustrations. But no one, including international public opinion, had perfect truth. It was important to find methods of cooperation. U.S. also had interest that local problems not expand to complicate problems of whole area. It was helpful to hear USG positions and ideas in order that effective solutions could be found.

14. Ambassador replied that real, not cosmetic changes were essential. He asked Salvadoran group to feel free to inform President Romero of this discussion, and said he personally would be glad to inform the absent Foreign Minister. Finally he said if an understanding could be reached it would be of great benefit for US-Salvadoran relations.

15. Comment: As a real exchange of ideas and opinions, high-level dialogue between USG and GOES technically has not yet begun. Salvadoran participants in both sessions have sat quietly, not making significant comment or contribution except for the Vice President's

⁶ In telegram 2994 from San Salvador, June 4, Devine indicated that he had sent the five members of the Salvadoran high level commission a Spanish-language version of the "list of the specific human rights measures," requested during the meeting. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790253-1102)

rather unorganized and seemingly positive but vague response at conclusion of each session. (In informal conversation over drinks and light buffet at conclusion of second session, Salvadorans did loosen up and begin expressing views about national scene although of a rather defensive nature and only peripherally responding to the dialogue. Highlights of these side conversations will be reported in septels.) Of the group, only Col. Iraheta has taken notes. Although he has done so very diligently, there has been no indication as to whether his notes are to be shared or for what end-use they are destined.

16. The U.S. position has now been clearly and forcefully presented; it is virutally inconceivable that Salvadoran participants are unclear as to U.S. intent. Stage has been set for GOES response. Its form and content should largely determine future course of dialogue.⁷

Devine

⁷ See Document 380.

375. Editorial Note

The Policy Review Committee met on June 11, 1979, to review policy toward Central America. President Jimmy Carter approved the committee's recommendations for El Salvador, which included the promotion of legislative elections in February 1980 and a Presidential election in 1982, the signing of an aid loan with a statement stressing the importance of respecting human rights, and improving the dialogue between the government and opposition groups. See Documents 469 and 470. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown wrote to Carter on June 25 to endorse a policy that would recognize the relative merits of Salvadoran President Carlos Humberto Romero's government and lend additional assistance to buttress Romero. See Document 471.

376. Telegram From the Embassy in Honduras to the Department of State¹

Tegucigalpa, July 26, 1979, 1704Z

4063. For the Deputy Secretary from Assistant Secretary Vaky.
Subject: El Salvador: A First Step.

1. (S) Entire text.

2. Summary: The situation in El Salvador is grim.² The advanced state of polarization has induced rigidities that will make an evolutionary process extremely difficult. I will reserve over-all recommendations until I have completed my consultations, but the possibility that chances for stability could be destroyed by a new round of indiscriminate violence leads me to recommend immediate action to authorize commercial sales of tear-gas so as to reduce the number of deaths in the labor troubles now brewing. End summary.

3. My soundings in San Salvador, (program is described in septel) confirmed a deteriorated political situation with increasing polarization.³ There are no apparent quick fixes but possibly a quick flash point. Principal conclusions, information and estimates gleaned from my discussions are:

—Nicaraguan events have heightened tensions without thus far appearing to have stimulated political imagination or creativity. Government attention is rivetted on international Communist subversion rather than on how to reduce vulnerabilities to that subversion in the political, social and economic processes.

—The government and establishment elements expect the worst in terms of spill over from Nicaragua. They still hope that the US will somehow move in and save them from the Marxists.

—Military morale is low. They are concerned over prospects for armed insurrection, particularly in the wake of Nicaraguan events and the “revolutionary euphoria” they have awakened in the opposition. Their military also appear to have legitimate re-equipment needs.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 8, Central America: PRC Meeting: 8/2/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to San Salvador.

² In advance of a July 20 SCC meeting on Central America, Pastor wrote to Brzezinski on July 19, recommending that Vaky visit San Salvador to endorse elections and then Romero be invited to Washington to emphasize the point. (See Document 472) The SCC agreed that Vaky should proceed with the trip. (See Document 473)

³ Telegram 4161 from San Salvador, July 25, described Vaky’s meeting with officials of the Christian Democratic Party. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1–9/79)

—Romero told me that he is determined to have free municipal elections in March. He said he is also convinced that a civilian should be the next President and that the military should return to their barracks. He said he was making this point to all the commanders. He did not however respond to my urging that he announce this as a public pledge.

—There also appears to be a growing realization among some in the government and those in the private sector I talked to that PCN dominance of the legislature has converted El Salvador into a single party state and shut off the free play of a democratic process, thereby forcing discontent and opposition from the moderate parties to radical action.

—Despite all this I do not sense that Romero and his government really comprehend the nature of the issues they face, of the polarization process and the pressures building against them, and of what it is really going to take to cope with them. They seem not to understand the difference between critics and enemies or how to distinguish between subversion and dissent. They exhibited a disturbing tendency (reminiscent of Somoza's premises) to believe that as things get worse, other elements of society will have no choice but to rally around the government/military rather than risk the Marxists.

—The government thus still tends to be manipulative, thinking of gimmicks and instrumental measures rather than comprehending the true change in electoral processes and credibility that must occur if polarization and radicalization are to be arrested. I have some hope that we may have created the beginnings of a realization—especially in the private sector—that dramatic and persistent crash efforts are needed to review and make credible an electoral process that can change current political dynamics.

—Official and quasi-official repression, which has been stepped up over the last two months under cover of the state of siege, is a critical problem. Violence is a way of life in El Salvador, but in the current situation is not only close to being out of control but a major factor undermining both the credibility of the government and the feasibility of moderate initiatives. For example, some in the government said they were prepared to have Napoleon Duarte return from exile, but feared that if he were then killed El Salvador would face a situation similar to that in Nicaragua after Chamorro.

—Both government and moderate opposition seem trapped in a cycle of mutual suspicion and intransigence. The dialogues are getting nowhere, but that realization is also dawning on all concerned and we noted the beginnings of efforts to renew private discussions and negotiations.

—The moderate democratic opposition, especially the parties, have been so circumscribed and hampered that they are divided and weak-

ened in their own planning, appeal and forcefulness. They are clearly on the defensive and uncertain. We noted however, that exiles are beginning to return, with GOES approval. Morales Erlich returned from exile July 25 and will reputedly take charge of the Christian Democratic Party.

—In contrast, the radical, revolutionary left grows in size and popularity, shows confidence, has the initiative, and clearly expects to be boosted (and materially helped) by what happened in Nicaragua and by Sandinista elements. Thus the initiative at the moment rests with them tasting blood, the question arises as to whether even electoral reform and revival of the process will be able to head off their momentum which now turns on institutional change and “revolution.”

4. In sum we have a situation characterized by: a political/human rights situation which over the years has polarized political life, radicalized social discontent, and converted opposition into a virtual push for “revolution”; and organized well-financed and Marxist-led extremist sector which has the momentum and initiative and has been able to legitimize itself through the government’s lack of reforms; an uncertain, somewhat dispirited but still hopeful moderate opposition that needs to be encouraged and that itself needs to take initiatives and meet the government half way; and a government that is weak, not very purposeful and that has not up to now really understood the nature of the forces and trends at work, how deep and true the changes must be, and how mistrusted and non-credible its programs and initiatives are.

5. This pattern weakens but does not, in my judgment, destroy the electoral process as way out of this polarization. The stirrings of an understanding of the deeper issues have begun, and the conviction that time is urgent has been spurred by Nicaragua. There are of course unknowns, such as how long revolutionary impulses and assistance from Nicaragua will take to reach El Salvador, and what sort of deliberate subversive push Cuba will lend.

6. At the moment, however, despite the weaknesses of the Romero government and the rigidities of the situation, there appear to be few better alternatives conceivable in either substituting for Romero or in what would result from an armed insurrection. I will reserve a more complete analysis and set of recommendations until I have completed the full round of consultations. In the meantime, however, there is one step which I believe to be urgent and important, and which I earnestly recommend to you.

7. The BPR and terrorist organizations, which currently have the initiative, are planning a series of demonstrations and labor actions as a direct challenge to the government. These demonstrations, though illegal and conducted with a conscious intent to provoke government

violence, will initially be largely non-violent. If the GOES responds indiscriminately as in the cathedral steps shooting, it is highly likely that whatever chances may exist to arrest the polarizing dynamic will vanish and the total political deterioration may accelerate to the point of insurrection.

8. In discussing these problems, Christian Democratic Party Secretary General Rey Prendes lamented that security forces controlling demonstrations now did so with machine guns rather than with tear-gas and shields as had been the practice a decade ago. If the spate of violence that has occurred under the state of siege were now to be increased with further deaths occasioned by government repression even under provocation, PDC participation in the electoral process could easily be precluded.

9. Whatever strategy we adopt toward El Salvador, I believe that the commercial sale of tear-gas is perhaps the single most important means available to help keep our options open. The Romero government appears neither competent nor purposeful enough to warrant unconditional support. There is, however, no ready alternative, and it will take time to create better conditions. To have that time, we must do everything we can to prevent more blood from flowing.

10. Action requested: I recommend that we immediately authorize the commercial sale of tear-gas.⁴

Jaramillo

⁴ In a July 28 memorandum to Christopher, Bushnell outlined Vaky's recommendation regarding the issuing of munitions list export licenses for the sale of tear gas and posed the issue for decision. Tarnoff indicated that the decision should be held for further study after Vaky's return. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder)

377. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 1, 1979

SUBJECT

Central America (U).²

Attached at Tab A is an intelligence assessment of Cuba's strategy for promoting revolution in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.³ At this time, the Cubans are training some of the cadre and encouraging different groups to better coordinate their activities. The scenario is ominous, though the estimate suggests that the Cubans will go slow until after the NAM Summit.⁴ My guess is that Salvador is headed for a full-scale insurrection by perhaps as early as this Fall, and we need to do something rather dramatic now to get them to focus on the real nature of their problem and to do something that will give the non-Communists a chance. (S)

While Pete was in Salvador,⁵ he tried out my idea for early elections (this Fall) with President Romero, who deflected by saying they weren't necessary. I think early elections may be his only hope, and that they could work to halt polarization in its tracks. But they need to be held soon because the Christian Democratic Party is already beginning to split between those who want free elections and those who think the time has passed when the government can be trusted to hold them. Unless we get Romero to move quickly, he will lose the middle to the radicals. *The only way to stop the polarization process is to give a rapid injection of legitimacy to the Salvadorean government, and this can only occur by an early, free election.* We are very, very fortunate that there is a

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 25, Meetings—PRC 120, 8/1/1979. Secret. Sent for information.

² Pastor wrote to Brzezinski and Owen on August 1, in advance of an August 2 PRC meeting on Central America, to stress that El Salvador was the most urgent case and needed a dramatic remedy. (See Document 474) The PRC recommendations, approved by Carter, included a quid pro quo of economic and military assistance for human rights and political improvement. In an August 3 memorandum to Brzezinski, forwarding the summary of conclusions of the August 2 PRC meeting, Pastor stressed that the Salvadoran Christian Democratic Party was central to any solution for the country. (See Document 476)

³ Tab A, attached but not printed, is an August 1979 report prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency entitled "Central America: Short-Term Prospects for Insurgency; Part III: The Vulnerability of the Northern Tier, An Intelligence Assessment."

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 308.

⁵ See Document 376.

legitimate and responsible middle in Salvador now—the Christian Democratic Party—but they won’t hold together for long. (S)

We need to get this message of the necessity of early, free elections to Romero, and I propose we use three channels:

(1) *General Torrijos*, who has a lot of old “school ties” with the Salvadorean military leadership. (S)

(2) *Joe Blatchford* (former Peace Corps Director), an old friend of mine, and presently Salvador’s lobbyist in Washington. He is trusted by Romero, and I trust him as well. I have discussed Salvador’s problems with him several times, and I believe he would be sympathetic to this approach. (S)

(3) *Salvador’s Ambassador Quinonez* is smart and savvy. You and/or Secretary Vance should see him. (S)

The message is simple:

—We believe early and free elections in El Salvador (by this Fall) are the only way to stem the polarization and prevent the guerrilla groups from eventually seizing power. (S)

—We are prepared to provide our full support through economic and military assistance during the transition to elections and after. (S)

—The government needs to take steps now to provide the environment within which free elections are possible. The electoral code should be reformed; political prisoners should be released; exiles should be permitted to return; and the killing must cease. Salvador should invite observers and technical advisers from the Andean countries, Costa Rica, and the US to help and to observe the electoral process. The Ecuadorans, in particular, can be helpful in explaining the “retorno” process—where the military *oversaw rather than participated* in the election. (S)

378. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 14, 1979

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador (U)

Yesterday, I had lunch with Joseph Blatchford, former Peace Corps Director and currently a lawyer in Washington and lobbyist for El Salvador. Joe is also an old friend of mine, and he knows Latin America very well and has a good rapport with President Romero of El Salvador. He gave me an excellent readout of the views of Romero and the atmosphere in El Salvador, and he gave me some useful recommendations which I will describe below. (S)

He said the Salvadoreans are still “reeling” from Vaky’s visit.² Their interpretation of Vaky’s message was that Salvador had to stick its neck out and undertake a series of reforms between now and the March 1980 elections; only after March would the US be prepared to assist the government. Romero and others believe that if the US adopts such a standoffish position, they cannot undertake these reforms. Romero sent a delegation from his Defense Ministry to Argentina and Uruguay to seek advice on how to deal with the terrorism problem. (Both Joe and I agree that it would not be feasible for Salvador to pursue the Uruguayan strategy, and he is trying to convince Romero of that.) (S)

I told Blatchford that the Salvadorean perception of our position is not quite accurate. We are willing to be helpful to the Salvadorean government in this interim period between now and March 1980, if the government can take steps which are viewed by the Christian Democrats (PDC) and other legitimate opposition groups as credible commitments to the democratic process. I said that my personal view was that the situation in El Salvador was becoming desperate, and that time was precious and short. The Christian Democratic Party will have its convention in September, and if the party divides, as current intelligence reports suggest might be the case, between those who continue to seek free elections and those who have given up, *we may find ourselves*

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 11, El Salvador, 7/79–2/80. Secret. Sent for action. Aaron wrote at the top of the page: “ZB—Seems a little panicky. DA.” Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: “Let Vaky recommend this to CV.”

² See Document 376.

at a point of no return. I emphasized that it was my personal view that the Romero government needed to do something dramatic now in order to attract the legitimacy and the support of the middle democratic parties. For too long, the Romero government has viewed the PDC as their enemy, rather than the hope which they really represent. If Romero wants to save his country from a civil war or a violent revolution, he really needs to do something dramatic like accelerate the electoral process so that elections could occur this Fall for Congress and the Presidency, or seek a coalition government. (S)

Blatchford said that it was impossible to get Romero to consider accelerating the electoral process. He acknowledged that the Romero government views the PDC as a threat, and he, working with the Salvadorean Ambassador in Washington, has been trying to change that. The Romero government feels pushed by the State Department beyond their capacity to undertake reforms. (I explained that they were being pushed by events not by us, and Blatchford accepted that while at the same time reiterating that the Salvadorean government's perception is different.) He said the Salvadoreans are genuinely thinking about a "Urguayan solution," and if that happens, the 200 assassinations a month which the government is currently sanctioning, will be multiplied by ten. (S)

Blatchford said that *if we wanted the Salvadorean government to do something dramatic, we had to be prepared to do something dramatic as well.* After requesting a meeting with the President, Romero was doubly disappointed to not only fail to get a meeting, but to get a "shock treatment" from Vaky. Joe said that if the message was what I said rather than what the Salvadoreans interpreted Vaky as saying—that is, *if we are prepared to help them now undertake the reforms we want, that message might succeed in breaking the roadblock in our dialogue. But he insisted, the way the message is conveyed is as important as the message itself.* We should not deliver the message from our Ambassador Devine to Romero nor should we use Vaky or Christopher, who are not credible to the government. He said the only one who is credible with the Salvadoreans at this time is you. They perceive you as the only one in the government who understands the problems of subversion and Communism. If you deliver the message, that would have tremendous impact. He recommended that you consider meeting with Romero at a half-way point, say Miami or New Orleans. Alternatively, we should invite the Vice President here to meet with you. (It would not be "correct" to invite Romero to Washington to meet you, and not see the President, and Vaky agrees with me that a meeting with the President now is out of the question. Vaky also agrees that a meeting with the Salvadorean Vice President will not do the trick since he does not exercise sufficient influence on Romero or the rest of the government.) (S)

I spoke to Vaky about both recommendations, and he agreed with the logic of your meeting with Romero, but wondered whether the Secretary would have problems with it. I said that I was certain that your preference would be *not* to do such a meeting, but I felt that Blatchford's point was right on the mark, and we really did need something dramatic like a meeting between you and Romero. Vaky agreed and suggested that I ask you to speak to the Secretary about it. (S)

We are really running out of time and we need to convey the message of our new approach in an effective and persuasive manner by the end of the week. *I am persuaded that a Brzezinski-Romero meeting in Miami (with Vaky and I present) would do the trick, and I strongly recommend that you raise this with the Secretary and seek his concurrence.* If you and the Secretary approve, I will begin preparing talking points with Vaky for the meeting. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you speak to Secretary Vance about this. (U)³

³ Brzezinski did not indicate his preference with respect to this recommendation; see, however, footnote 1, above.

379. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, August 18, 1979, 1704Z

216924. Exdis for Ambassador Devine. Subject: Policy Toward El Salvador.

1. S-Entire text

2. The President has approved the PRC recommendation of August 2 that we should seek to secure establishment of a real and credible electoral process leading to free municipal/legislative elections in

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 8/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, Managua, Tegucigalpa, Panama City, San José, Caracas, and Bogotá. Drafted by Vaky; cleared in AID/LA, L/PM, DOD/ISA, OMB, T, S/P, PM, HA, NSC, ACDA, H, S/S-O, and Treasury; approved by Christopher.

March 1980 in return for which we would be prepared to offer a *quid pro quo* of economic and security assistance.² Our immediate objective is to arrest the rapidly advancing polarization and avoid an otherwise almost certain violent confrontation between the government and the extreme left by a) strengthening moderate, legitimate forces and b) providing an electoral process capable of channeling and releasing the build-up of internal, social, economic and political tensions.

3. An immediate approach to President Romero to seek such an understanding has been approved, and we will be providing you shortly with further instructions as to the modalities. We expect to send a high-level official from Washington for this purpose.³

4. President Romero's August 16 "national impact" announcement (San Salvador 4644) provides a good base—and reason—for opening such a discussion and pinning down promises made.⁴ The list of reform measures we would seek and the assistance we would offer are listed below. These do not cover all the reforms we would ideally wish. Rather, they are those a) which we think can realistically be expected in the circumstances, and b) which relate to the immediate political objective of trying to avoid another Nicaragua. These are also intended as *quid pro quos*, that is one set depends upon the other. There will, however, be some need to phase them in relation to each other, i.e. we would not expect to have a complete package of reforms accomplished and in hand before we move at all, nor would we provide all our assistance in advance. Thus, any understanding with Romero will have to define some step by step approach we will be prepared to deliver on our promises as he delivers on his, bearing in mind that delivery by him would have to include acceptance by appropriate leaders so that a consensus and true electoral process is in fact established.

5. Our discussion with Romero would start in recognition of the significant promises he made August 16. On that basis we would seek:

A) Confirmation of our understanding that his commitment to free elections and to respecting the results is sincere and true, and not

² Vaky sent a briefing memorandum to Vance on August 8, which he termed "an initial attempt to 'scrub' the *quid pro quos* discussed at the PRC." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder) In an August 14 memorandum to Carter, (see Document 477) Vance proposed exploring electoral reform with Romero along with the "quid pro quo" approach on economic and military assistance.

³ See Document 381.

⁴ In telegram 4644 from San Salvador, August 16, the Embassy reported that Romero had made his announcement of "national impact" that day. This initiative included electoral law reform, the return of political exiles, OAS supervision of the Presidential election, and Red Cross investigations at prisons. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder)

cosmetic or dissembling, and his understanding that this is a *sine qua non* for our further cooperation. Further actions by him—formal proclamation, decree, etc.—would be useful.

B) Reform of the central electoral council to ensure credible representation of all parties and reform of the electoral law to ensure guarantees of a free election. (FYI: We understand that reforms are planned but that these have not been drawn up in consultation with the parties; thus there is the risk of the worst of all worlds—the GOES believing that it had done something and the parties rejecting the reforms as unacceptable.)

C) Actual implementation of the invitation to the OAS to verify the election. On this point we want to urge OAS expert presence as soon as possible to testify to the campaign's integrity as well as the voting on election day.

D) GOES guarantee of the security of the candidates.

E) Movement toward concrete dialogue and understandings among the GOES, political parties, military, and business sectors as to the "rules of the game" for a credible free electoral process. (FYI: Fidel Chavez' suggestions in this regard as to the direction the dialogue should now take seems sensible and worth supporting—San Salvador 4564. End FYI.)⁵

F) Implementation of Romero's promise to invite the ICRC to investigate prisons and the question of political prisoners.

G) Avoidance of indiscriminate violence in controlling strikes and demonstrations.

H) Sincere GOES efforts to end private death squads and violence, and an increase in the discipline of security units. This is an important point which we shall have to stress. Reports of death squad activity undercut the GOES' credibility, belie its sincerity and affect our capacity to cooperate with it.

I) Recognizing the GOES' concern with the labor situation, we would urge a revision of the labor code and labor regulations, perhaps by a multi-party commission with wide civic representations, to provide alternatives to illegal strikes.

6. In return we would be prepared to do the following (to the extent permitted under U.S. law):

⁵ In telegram 4564 from San Salvador, August 14, the Embassy reported that in talks with Embassy officials, Christian Democratic Party member Fidel Chavez stated that the time for further dialogue between his party, the Church, the Salvadoran Government, and private business groups was past and that "each sector interested in moderate political change should present a concrete set of proposals." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790373-0868)

A) Approve export license applications for reasonable amounts of commercially purchased military equipment.

B) Reprogram modest levels of IMET and FMS financing for FY 80.

C) Provide assistance for a special urban impact aid program in addition to the longer term rural development thrust currently under way. (FYI: We are thinking of a 10–15 million dollar program if we go for a supplemental appropriation; a smaller figure would be involved if the decision is made to reprogram. End FYI.)

D) Proceed with FY 80 planned and programmed aid projects.

E) Support pending non-BHN IFI projects, assuming they meet normal economic criteria—a development corporation 10 million dollar industrial credit in the IBRD and a 4.0 million dollar pre-investment studies loan in the IDB.

F) With regard to paragraph 6 above, it should be understood that actual implementation of several of these measures especially B, C, D and E, would depend upon a clear major commitment and steps by the GOES, which provide obvious indication of a change in the existing pattern, including the security forces' human rights performance.

8. In relation to any representations we may make we note the following:

—We will have to follow a delicate line, i.e., reassurance to the GOES that we are neither trying to destroy them nor have we written them off, but at the same time achieving serious and real reforms by them which will clearly have institutional changes as a consequence.

—Moreover, as we consider how to proceed on this track with El Salvador, we will bear in mind the pace and level of our relationship with Nicaragua.

9. We would appreciate any comments you may have on all the above as soon as possible.⁶

Christopher

⁶ Devine replied in telegram 4738 from San Salvador, August 21, by endorsing the proposed scenario, stressing the need for Romero to take "concrete steps if there is to be any hope of organizing free election with opposition participation," and warning that if the approach failed the U.S. Government "will then be in serious quandary and must consider what, if anything, could still be done to protect our interests in El Salvador and Central America." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador, Telegrams, 8/79) In telegram 4949 from San Salvador, August 30, Devine reported that he had "initiated" the policy described in his instructions and remarked: "We should seek concrete human rights and electoral reform improvement—as opposed to mere words and declarations of intent—but then be prepared to move forward *pari passu* matching deeds with deeds and publicly explaining that this is our rationale." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 8/79)

380. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, August 23, 1979, 1400Z

4784. Subj: (S) High Level Dialogue With Government of El Salvador—Preliminary Evaluation. Ref San Salvador 3271, 3297, and 3328.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. As Department is aware, we have been engaged in a high level dialogue with GOES. This came into being as result of President Romero's naming a commission (San Salvador 6290, 12/2/78)³ to discuss with US the problems arising in the general sector of human rights.

3. Representing GOES in the high level dialogue have been the Vice President, Foreign Minister, President of Supreme Court, Minister of Planning, and Subsecretary of Defense. Embassy officers and I have represented the USG point of view.

4. Our basic instruction has been State 39568 which by now, in a series of discussion meetings has been rather fully conveyed to our Salvadoran counterparts.⁴ As a matter of fact, because of the passage of time and the occurrence of related events, we have had to go beyond the literal text of that instruction but have been careful always to do so in a manner fully consistent with its spirit and intent.

5. After hearing us out in presentation of the USG position, the GOES commission jointly shared in the task of giving us a formal reply. This was done on June 13, was grouped under the same three category headings which we had used, that is category human rights, Category II, and Category III, and has been reported to the Department in three separate but related telegrams, SS 3271, 3297 and 3328. The single outstanding item remains the written memorandum promised us by

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 8/79. Secret. Sent for information to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and the DIA.

² Telegram 3271 from San Salvador, June 15, reported the first part of Devine's third meeting in the high level dialogue on human rights in El Salvador, focusing on economic and social rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790271–0083) Telegram 3297 from San Salvador, June 15, reported the second part of Devine's third meeting in the high level dialogue on human rights in El Salvador, highlighting political development between the U.S. and Salvadoran Governments. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790292–0705) Telegram 3328 from San Salvador, June 18, reported the third part of Devine's third meeting in the high level dialogue on human rights in El Salvador, focusing on individual rights. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790278–0406)

³ See Document 367.

⁴ See Document 370.

Subsecretary of Defense Col. Iraheta confirming and expanding upon his presentation relative to Category I human rights and their violations. Although we have subsequently reminded Col. Iraheta of this, the memorandum has yet to reach us. In view of our expectation that it will add relatively little to his oral presentation, the Embassy concludes that it should not further delay preliminary evaluation of the high level dialogue to date.

6. Our initial evaluative comment is that the GOES deserves credit for its initiative in recognizing the appropriateness of such discussion and for naming to high-level a commission to undertake same.

7. We would, secondly, give credit to the high-level GOES officials for the seriousness with which they have approached this dialogue, the very considerable amount of time they have put into it, the effort which they have expended, and the collaborative attitude with which they have accepted our inherently critical remarks and attempted to respond to them.

8. With regard to substance, we would rate the three Salvadoran presentations in very general terms as follows:

A. Category I human rights—Col. Iraheta did a soldierly job of denying the undeniable and trying to defend the indefensible (SS 3328). There can really be no question but that the GOES is guilty of serious violations of Category I human rights. At the same time, it has never admitted to any of these, rejects charges of political murders, challenges the concept of political disappearances, denies that it holds any political prisoners, and maintains that police are strictly enjoined against torture or mistreatment of those arrested. The weight of evidence and allegation is overwhelmingly to the contrary, but at the same time we must ask ourselves if it is reasonable to expect a government to repudiate its publicly expressed and oft repeated position on such matters. Col. Iraheta did his best to carve out something of a middle position.

B. Category II human rights—Minister of Planning Reyes, with some assistance from the Vice President, argued strongly and sometimes emotionally that El Salvador's record here is considerably better and more defensible than we depict it (SS 3271 and A-50).⁵ In spite of all the bad publicity which this country receives, they maintain that El Salvador's statistics on economic performance, distribution, share of the [garble] allocated to socio-economic development, and effort to move in the direction of socio-economic reform are indeed a reflection of its poverty but do not compare all that badly with those of many other Latin American countries. In terms of current initiatives, they

⁵ See footnote 2, above. Airgram 50 from San Salvador, June 21, included a memorandum from Reyes. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P790091-0706)

argued, El Salvador is making a good faith effort to move in the right direction. The Vice President suggests that it is somewhat venturesome for the U.S. or any other outsider to interpose its judgment over that of the national authorities as to the rate and the rhythm with which the GOES can, for example, attempt to move toward land reform (as it is doing) without inviting serious damage to national production upon which the entire economy rests. Both the Vice President and the Minister of Planning feel the United States in the name of human rights has slowed and interfered with the very development plan which is designed to advance the Category II human rights of the people of El Salvador.

C. Category III human rights—The Vice President and the President of the Supreme Court struck an open and forthcoming note in their attitudes toward establishment of an acceptable electoral climate (SS 3297). Since then, significantly, President Romero has publicly assured that the forthcoming elections will be free and honest, has invited all political exiles to return, has promised reform of the electoral law, has announced that a new central commission of elections will be named, and has taken various other steps seemingly conducive to a political opening.

9. We have reached more or less the end of the first phase of high level dialogue based upon state 039568. In view of this mixed bag of somewhat differential progress, I would recommend that we continue with the high level dialogue but on the basis of renewed and updated instructions from Washington. I believe that the Embassy should be instructed and authorized to express our general appreciation for the high level dialogue conducted to date, then to seek such clarifications as the Department may consider appropriate, and finally to push forward along the following lines:

A. Category I human rights—Without belaboring the point in an unacceptable fashion, let the GOES know that we are by no means taken in by their protestations of innocence, refrain from pressing for a probably unobtainable public confession of guilt for [garble], and concentrate instead on forcefully convincing the GOES that a dramatically better performance and record beginning immediately are very much in its own best interest in terms of survival and of relations with the rest of the world, particularly the United States.

B. Category II human rights—Give the GOES some credit for its achievements and efforts to date but then press it for future action which will be less palliative in nature and more bold and structurally reformist.

C. Category III human rights—Reiterate our approval for the measures which have been publicly promised by President Romero but make clear that deeds, not words, will make the difference. Point out

that time is short and may be running out. On this basis, press for immediate, continuing, and demonstrable implementation of all that has been promised, plus such other measures as will add up to internationally acceptable elections and offer some change of restoring the faith in democracy of the by now disillusioned people and youth of El Salvador.

10. Somoza has fallen and we face something of a new situation in Central America. Attitudes and traditional positions in El Salvador have been seriously shaken. At the same time, we may have an increased stake in bringing about reform as opposed to revolution or collapse in this country. The interaction of these two factors is suggested in support of continued and more urgent high level dialogue on the basis of renewed and updated instructions drafted in the light of the situation which today confronts us.

Devine

381. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, August 25, 1979, 0200Z

4851. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Bowdler. Subj: Conversation With President Romero.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Accompanied by Ambassador Devine, I met for one hour and 40 minutes this afternoon (Aug 24) with President Romero. Earlier in the day we had called on the Foreign Minister to give him a brief of the points I was to make to the President and thereby prepare the way for a more immediate reaction on the part of the President.

3. After an exchange of pleasantries based on my previous service in El Salvador, I went through a detailed presentation of the talking points approved by the Department.² In doing this I underscored the delicacy of dealing with essentially internal matters but at the same time made clear our common concern in his government taking meaningful

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850027-2487. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² Vaky sent a copy of the talking points for Bowdler's visit to El Salvador to Christopher under in an August 21 memorandum. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder)

action to prevent a further deterioration of the political situation via a steady return to participatory democracy through the electoral process and an end to violence.

4. President Romero reacted favorably to the presentation, expressing his “great satisfaction” for what I had to say. He referred to his August 16 program³ and proceeded to detail the concrete steps he was taking to implement the program. In summary these were:

—Action taken preceding day by legislative assembly to expedite replacement of members of Electoral Council through partial amendment of the electoral code;

—Invitation to political parties to join with him next week in studying appropriate reform of electoral law;

—Conversations already commenced with representatives of the Red Cross from Managua looking toward early formalized invitation to ICRD;

—Planned invitation to OAS to send observers for March 9 elections. At my suggestion President also said he would be willing to invite OAS participation in reform of electoral law and observance of such acts as swearing in of the new members of the Electoral Council;

—Formulation of official instructions to Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Interior and other appropriate entities to permit return of political exiles. (In this connection he indicated that he had spoken recently to Fidel Chavez Mena about the return of Napoleon Duarte. A meeting between Chavez and Duarte was to have taken place this week in Costa Rica and he was expecting a report back from Chavez sometime next week. In this connection he expressed the view that the sooner Duarte returns the better and that any delay only worsens the problem.)

—Complete reorganization of ORDEN to clarify its mission;

—Discussions with the military of their movement back to the barracks and of his own replacement by civilian as next President. He noted that he is already gradually returning officials to the barracks at the rate of about one or two a month. With respect to a civilian successor, he said that great majority of military had received this idea rather well.

5. With respect to the measures we might take in response to GOES steps, Romero singled out two as of special importance. One related to the exchange of information to prevent clandestine shipment of arms to El Salvador. To this he added his interest in receiving technical assistance in the training of his intelligence and investigative forces. In this connection he made clear that he did not want experts from

³ See footnote 4, Document 379.

countries that had similar security problems and had dealt with them in anti-democratic ways, e.g. Argentina and Uruguay. The second point had to do with support for financial assistance both bilateral and from multilateral agencies. Romero pointed out the serious economic problems created by the closing of factories and the flight of capital. This trend, he said, must be reversed. Referring to his interest for help on anti-insurgency pointed out we no longer had a police program and the difficulties inherent in providing assistance of this nature in the face of a continued high level of violence from sources other than the extreme left. Romero made no reference to steps involving commercial sales, FMS or training.

6. At various points throughout the conversation I emphasized the importance of finding a means for bringing leaders of moderate groups into an effective consultative-participatory role in the implementation of political reform and social and economic development. I also stressed the importance of putting an end to violence from right-wing groups or entities associated with the government. Only in this way could it be made clear that responsibility for continued violence rests with the extreme left. His response to these points was that it would cause him no problem to invite such participation but the opposition leaders almost certainly would not respond just as they had not responded to his invitation to participate in the National Forum. Ambassador Devine and I pointed out that attitudes within TNC opposition groups are presently changing, that people are approaching us to discuss the seriousness of today's problems and that this might well create a moment of opportunity to reissue the invitation in the expectation that this time he will find a more favorable response. We also indicated that we were urging these groups to work constructively with him and would continue to do so. Another complaint voiced by Romero was that apparent agreements reached by him in private conversations with leaders of the opposition (specifically Christian Democrats) are frequently discarded or ignored by the latter in course of their public statements. (It was evident that he was citing discrepancies between private agreements reached with Fidel Chavez Mena and public statements on TV by Jose Antonio Morales Erlich.)

7. On our talking point regarding avoidance of indiscriminate violence in controlling strikes and revision of the labor code, Romero commented that 90 percent of recent labor disputes are in fact political, that premises are regularly occupied and hostages—including foreign executives—regularly seized and that he has been criticized for softness in dealing with this problem but that as a matter of fact GOES has been very lenient and restrained in its handling of such disputes. Romero noted that his Minister of Labor is already working on revision of the labor code. When I pointed out the importance of also involving

other moderate groups in this process in order to enhance the image of broader participation in vital decisions of the government, he replied that his Minister is already consulting with labor and management groups. I pointed out that involvement of the church and universities would also be helpful.

8. At the end of the conversation Romero brought up the situation in Nicaragua. He expressed the fear that Borge was dominating the situation and that radicalization of the revolution was to be expected. I told him that it was premature to reach this conclusion. It is true that the radical elements control the guns and are in a strong position, but it was also important to recognize that moderate elements occupy influential positions. It was in everybody's interest to strengthen these elements so that they in turn would be in a position to counter radicalization. I made clear that groups in El Salvador could assist in this process. While I do not think that he was convinced that the radicals could be stopped, he at least acknowledged that moderate forces in the civilian sector still held positions of influence.

9. Comment: President Romero had obviously been briefed beforehand by Foreign Minister, received us in friendly fashion, listened to my entire presentation with careful attention, and took the occasion to vent some of his frustrations with what he obviously considers less than fair tactics and positions on [the] part of opposition. He seemed receptive to our ideas but test will come in the implementation of what he said he is prepared to do. Particularly thorny point with which he did not come to grips was high and continuing level of violence emanating from both sides of political spectrum, ways of cutting back on this, and how to go about isolating the extreme left. While we repeatedly stressed the importance of devising means for greater involvement of moderate groups in the decisions bearing on the democratic opening, Romero was not as specific in what he might do in this regard as I would have liked.

Devine

382. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 5, 1979

SUBJECT

El Salvador

Joe Blatchford called and told me that President Romero would like to meet with you on September 22nd in New Orleans or perhaps Miami to discuss his response to Bowdler's demarche.² He said that Romero is prepared to follow through on his promises on electoral reform, etc., but he also wants to discuss the strong evidence he has of Cuban involvement in El Salvador. He doesn't want to discuss this with our Ambassador or with Bowdler or Vaky. (S)

I told Joe that after our last conversation,³ a decision was made that the US response to Romero's request for a meeting with the President was the sending of Bowdler to Salvador, and I had doubts whether a meeting with you would be possible. I asked whether Romero would meet with someone else, and he said that he didn't know, but it was possible that Romero would agree to meet with the Vice President or Vance. (I said facetiously to Joe that I was pleased that both he and Romero obviously had a good understanding of the hierarchy around here, but suggested it would be good for all of us if he kept that view secret.) (S)

I then spoke to Vaky, and rather predictably, he was opposed to the idea of your meeting with Romero. He thought Bowdler was fine. I tried to point out to him that we were getting a distinct message from the Salvadoreans that the issues Bowdler was raising were of grave concern to them, and they had every right to expect a higher-level dialogue. Obviously, Romero will continue to engage in wishful thinking that Bowdler's views do not represent the views of the Carter Administration unless he hears it from someone who has credibility with him. I said that I expected that you would not want to go to New Orleans to meet with Romero, but from the perspective of our overall interests, it would be desirable if you did. I asked him whether he would be prepared to recommend that Vance go as an alternative to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1-9/79. Secret. Sent for action. Aaron wrote "Pastor: FYI" in the top right-hand corner of the first page of the memorandum.

² See Document 381.

³ See Document 378.

New Orleans, and he said “No.” This floored me since he is pressing me on a daily basis to get the President to meet with the Sandinista junta. (S)

On reflection, Vaky suggested that I go back to Blatchford and suggest that he recommend that Romero go to the UNGA, where Vance could meet with him. Unless you disapprove, or believe it is worth raising this issue directly with the Secretary, I will proceed accordingly. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That I should proceed with Vaky’s suggestion and call Blatchford and suggest that he recommend to Romero that the latter attend the UNGA, where Secretary Vance would meet with him.⁴ (S)

⁴ Aaron indicated his approval.

383. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, September 6, 1979, 1420Z

5049. Subj: President Romero’s Comments on Democratization.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. On the occasion of the presentation of new USAID Mission Director Charles Stockman (Sept 4), President Romero brought up with me the status of the democratization program. He noted that there is daily progress toward implementation of his Aug 16 declarations² as to steps which would be taken to move the country toward free and honest elections on March 9, 1980. He ticked off the following letters which have now been sent:

A. To the Minister of Foreign Relations instructing him to facilitate the return of all political exiles;

B. To the Minister of Interior in the same vein;

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790412–0604. Confidential. Sent for information to Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and DIA.

² See footnote 4, Document 379.

C. To the International Red Cross inviting its visit at a time and on terms of its own choosing to carry out any desired investigation with respect to prison conditions and political prisoners; and

D. To OAS Secretary General Alejandro Orfila inviting OAS supervision of the March election and in advance thereof dispatch to El Salvador of OAS experts who could provide technical assistance in electoral matters. (On this point, I mentioned to the President the distinction made in para 3 of State 222915,³ but he said that Orfila and the OAS could out the handling of his request as they wished.)

3. The President asked if I had received the copies of these letters which he had sent me. I replied affirmatively and said that I had also seen them prominently published in the daily press. The President smiled and said that this was harder to arrange than I might believe. The media owners were not in sympathy with his program for democratization, considered it a "sell-out", and had refused to publish the text of his letters on a straight news basis. The GOES had then forced the issue by publishing them as paid press insertions.⁴

Devine

³ In telegram 222915 to San Salvador, August 24, the Department reported that U.S. officials had met with Orfila concerning the OAS role in El Salvador's upcoming elections. He commented that the OAS would provide technical assistance if requested, adding that the Salvadorans should make a request through the OAS representative in San Salvador as a technical assistance matter rather than raising the issue in the permanent council. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790387-0293)

⁴ In telegram 5083 from San Salvador, September 7, Devine reported that "Romero's proposals appear to have won no ground with moderate opposition," and concluded that "without very dramatic action on the part of General Romero it is highly unlikely that opposition can be persuaded to follow USG example of public recognition of the President's words." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 9/79)

384. Memorandum for the Record¹

NFAC–5399–79

Washington, October 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Meeting on El Salvador Coup

1. On the afternoon of 5 October, at the request of the DDCI, a meeting was held at the White House Situation Room on the prospects for and implications of a military coup in El Salvador.²

2. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Pastor of the NSC Staff. In addition to the undersigned representing NFAC, the following were also in attendance: Don Gregg and one other NSC Staff member; [*name not declassified*] C/LAD/DDO/CIA; Ambassador Bowdler, D/INR/State; John Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary, ARA, State; and a representative of DOD.

3. It was agreed that, though possible, a coup by moderate middle-grade army officers was unlikely over the weekend of 6–7 October.

4. It was agreed that more information was urgently needed about the coup plans of this group, the extent of its ties with other military and security groups and with civilian groups, and the likely nature of its political posture if it attained power.

5. Finally, it was agreed that either a smooth or a messy coup (i.e. one that led to clashes between military groups) would galvanize leftist extremists' plans for major violence. While the US would have to move quickly in such circumstances, it was agreed that more information was needed for a productive intercession.

Comment: Mr. Pastor indicated that perhaps the meeting was called prematurely. Other participants, including Bowdler, thought the meeting valuable in getting ready for a quick response in a potentially critical situation.

Jack Davis³

National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 11: (SCC) Central America. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Davis on October 9. No other substantive record of the October 5 meeting has been found.

² Turner sent an alert memorandum to the National Security Council, under an October 5 memorandum, reporting "strong indications that a group of middle-grade Army officers will attempt to oust President Romero during the next few days." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 10/15–31/79)

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

385. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, October 9, 1979, 1702Z

264095. For Ambassador Devine from Assistant Secretary Vaky.
Subject: Situation in El Salvador.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. On October 8, I chaired an inter-agency meeting to review the situation in El Salvador, our current policy and strategy and possible options.² Clearly, the situation in El Salvador is deteriorating. As you have reported, the efforts to forge a political opening through a credible electoral process have lost momentum. President Romero has been unable or unwilling to convince others he will implement a real political opening; the moderate political parties—especially the Christian Democrats—may well have definitely decided to give up on both Romero and the electoral process; the country is bitterly fragmented and coup rumors grow more insistent and credible; the extreme left shows greater strength and capability; and signs indicate that we probably cannot expect further significant steps on the human rights front nor progress against violence from the government.

3. Questions are thus raised as to whether it is realistic any longer to believe that a legitimately contested electoral contest in March 1980 can be fashioned, encouraged or induced. More broadly than that, is it now possible to create any sort of “moderate” coalition of military, private sector, church and democratic parties to regain political momentum and thus increase the government’s legitimacy and isolate the extremists? The reported coup plotting appears to spring as much from frustration and desperation as anything else, but these reports raise serious concerns as to whether a coup scenario provides any viable alternative to insurrectional violence, or whether a coup would not split the military, create vacuums and bring further violence effectively opening the way to the extremists.

4. Clearly, we must now decide whether we should—or can—involve ourselves more deeply in attempting to shape an outcome compatible with our interests, and if so how and in what direction. In this connection, we believe that we still need to test more rigorously than we have whether our present policy’s assumption is in fact realis-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850027-2496. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, San José, and Panama City. Drafted by Hemenway and Vaky; cleared in NSC, S/S-O, and ARA; and approved by Vaky.

² No minutes for the October 8 meeting have been found.

tic, before assuming too early that it is not, i.e. whether or not it is possible to fashion a coalition of GOES, democratic parties, private sector, church, etc. to create an electoral, political process capable of halting the deterioration and polarization. To determine these matters and to answer questions like the ones listed above, it was agreed that we need to know more about current dynamics and what the various players think and are planning now. In particular, we would like to know more about the Christian Democrats' current thinking and planning, with whom they have been in contact, what their internal situation (and possible divisions) may be, and what scenarios they see as likely or desirable. We also believe that we must once again press them hard with regard to the electoral route, and probe more insistently their willingness to make a real and realistic effort to establish a credible electoral process.

5. We similarly need this kind of deep probing with Archbishop Romero, who is clearly a key player in any future scenario. Are the two Romeros absolutely irreconcilable? Does the Archbishop believe that any evolution toward a political opening and electoral process is now possible? Is he willing to support this course or not, and if so, under what conditions? What does he see as possible scenarios in the circumstances? With whom is he working and what are his objectives? Who are his contacts and whom is he relying on for information and planning purposes?³

6. Accordingly, please arrange to see ASAP—separately of course—Morales Erlich⁴ and Archbishop Romero for the above purposes. Any correlative information you may develop from other sources bearing on the above points should also be reported. We wish to provide recommendations to the Secretary by October 12, and you should therefore try to provide us with a report as soon as you can. By separate cable I am asking Ambassador Luers to make similar contact with Napoleon Duarte.⁵

7. In talking with Morales Erlich, you may draw upon the following points:

—President Romero has taken some steps, not entirely satisfying your concerns, aimed at providing the atmosphere for a political opening. We still believe strongly that you should respond to these steps in order to give the game an opportunity to be played out. Otherwise there may be no game to play.

³ See Document 386.

⁴ No record has been found of this meeting between Devine and Morales Erlich.

⁵ In telegram 264159 to Caracas, October 9, Vaky instructed Luers to call on Duarte to seek his views on "what, if anything, would induce the PDC to participate in the electoral process." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840171–1241)

—What can Romero do concretely to overcome PDC reluctance to participate in the electoral process?

—What are your views about the current situation in El Salvador? What steps is the PDC thinking about taking now? (FYI: We need to know with what groups, civilian and military, the PDC is in contact and what is the nature of its internal divisions. End FYI.)

—What is the likely scenario if the PDC and other opposition groups do not choose to participate in elections?

—(FYI: If Morales mentions a coup as a possibility, you should ask if Morales Erlich and the PDC have carefully thought out the consequences of supporting or acquiescing in the removal of President Romero in other than a constitutional process. A democratic outcome is by no means assured by such a development.)

8. In talking with Archbishop Romero, you may wish to draw on the following:

—Your homilies, many of which I have heard, are unremitting in their criticism of the present government, and are having the effect of making a democratic opening more difficult and precarious. Under the circumstances is there anything that President Romero can do now that would help induce the participation of the moderate opposition, especially the PDC, in the electoral process?

—If the game of political opening is to be played out, it would appear that the moderate opposition should consider taking some steps toward meeting those steps that President Romero has taken. What should these steps be?

—What alternatives do you see to the evident stasis in the efforts toward a political opening? (If he mentions a coup, he also should be asked if all the consequences have been carefully studied.)

—(FYI: In the conversation with Archbishop Romero, it will be helpful to draw out the nature of his present contacts to find out who he is relying on for information on which he bases his assessments. End FYI.)

9. For San Jose: As reported by septel, President Carazo told Vice President Mondale that he believed Duarte's return to El Salvador was essential since his leadership was urgently required.⁶ He promised to convey this to Venezuelan President Herrera whom he believes has

⁶ Telegram 263971 to multiple posts, October 9, included portions of an October 1 memorandum of conversation recounting a meeting between Carazo and Mondale in Panama. During the meeting, Carazo emphasized the importance of strengthening the position of the Christian Democratic Party in El Salvador and persuading Duarte to assume a leadership role. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

great influence on Duarte. You may wish to inquire of President Carazo, reminding him of our conversation, as to whether he was able to communicate with Herrera.⁷

Vance

⁷ In telegram 4704 from San José, October 11, Binns reported that Carazo had already conveyed his views on El Salvador to Herrera. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 6, El Salvador: 10/1–14/79)

**386. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, October 11, 1979, 2315Z

5835. Subj: Situation in El Salvador. (S). Ref State 264095.²

1. (S-entire text)

2. As instructed reftel A, reconfirmed by Oct 10 Hemenway-Howard telecon, DCM and I met at 10:30 this morning with Archbishop Romero and two of his closest advisors.³ Drawing from we presented the questions in its para 8.

3. In responding, Archbishop and associates made following points:

A. Government position is bifurcated one. On the one hand it offers free and honest elections, while on other hand it steps up level of violence and repression;

B. It is incorrect to speak of conflict between GOES and Church—conflict is between GOES and people of El Salvador. Church is with the people and would have best possible will toward GOES if it would reconcile its differences with people;

C. Parties of moderate opposition have tried to point up for GOES the road toward better relations and acceptable electoral climate; in return they have been threatened by “Mano Blanca”;

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850027–2508. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information to Caracas, Panama City, and San José.

² See Document 385.

³ Minutes for the October 10 telephone conversation between Hemenway and Howard have not been found.

D. In Church meeting with parties of moderate opposition and enlightened elements of private sector, agreement has been reached on five indispensable elements for free election;

(1) Cessation of repression, this to include inter alia change of attitude of heads of security services and reorganization of ORDEN;

(2) Explanation of all the missing persons (desaparecidos);

(3) Freedom to organize for both workers and peasants, and recognition of organizations which already exist;

(4) Effective freedom for political parties to organize and to campaign;

(5) Observance of and respect for constitutional rights of all citizens.

E. If GOES were to comply with points (1) through (5) it would create a climate permitting necessary discussions. Moderate opposition has made these requirements known publicly through its "popular forum";

F. Church strongly supported effective dialogue with GOES aimed at meaningful democratic opening but President's deeds have contradicted his words. USG assumption that President Romero has taken some meaningful steps which merit positive response while understandable in terms of what Romero appeared to be promising, is a mistaken premise; President Romero's so-called steps taken to date have represented no effective advances in five areas outlined above in today's world, President Romero has lost his credibility and his words have no real backing or impact;

G. Even so, some response has been forthcoming from moderate opposition in form of political telecasts demonstrating that people are considering and commenting on the political approach which he suggests. Similarly, Church has tried to be a moderating force but finds so little real good to comment upon that archbishop's homilies nearly always sound negative. Nevertheless, Church for its part, remains alert for good or positive news upon which to comment and in this way is trying to respond;

4. We turned then to question of alternatives. Archbishop Romero said he was not sure it was for Church to define these. He hears public clamor from the left for a popular insurrection, and he hears much talk about possibilities of a coup d'état, either by ultra-rightist or by progressive elements within the military. He agreed with our suggestion as to the danger of a coup d'état splitting military and opening the way for far left. He suggested however that this would depend on the mentality and character of the coup itself. For the Archbishop, an autocoup (#) or coup by the rightist military would change nothing of today's situation and would heighten the chances for armed insurrection. In contrast, a coup by progressive military who would offer

change—or chance for recent transition to something new—could well win public confidence and isolate far left.

5. At this point one of Archbishop's advisors interjected that in his view USG and Embassy pressure had led President Romero to make his Aug 16 declarations in favor of free elections. Could we not now exert similar pressure to move President Romero to compliance with five "indispensable elements" (cited in para 3 above)? We explained that we have discussed exactly these matters with President in the past and always received from him and his associates pat GOES position that charges are untrue. For President to accept suggestions from us now on these points would entail complete reversal of GOES position as conveyed to us on previous occasions and therefore seems somewhat unlikely.

Note by OC/T: (#) as received.

6. Archbishop's other advisor then summed up present list of unpalatable alternatives as:

A. Popular insurrection;

B. Elections in an atmosphere completely inappropriate and inhospitable for same; and

C. Coup d'état.

He then asked as to USG preference among these. We responded that all our recent actions have been directed toward alternative "B" and finding ways and means to improve the climate for meaningful elections. He said that was clearly Church preference as [garble], but that one must look at matter with realism. In real, practical terms, at this late date, prospect of any free, meaningful election looks completely theoretical and highly doubtful.

7. Church officials said that coup d'état could conceivably be least among evils facing the nation. They pointed out that it could conceivably open way for free, meaningful elections. We pointed out it might also open way for popular insurrection. They agreed and said danger lay in how the popular forces would react. But, they said, trying to hold elections under present circumstances could easily bring on popular insurrection. On balance, they appeared clearly to believe that coup d'état route offers more manageable risks than electoral route in today's conditions.

8. When we inquired about points of contact and sources of information, Church representatives were not particularly forthcoming.

Admitted to some contacts with opposition political parties, limited contact with military, some with progressive elements in private business sector, but denied seeking or initiating contact with "illegal" groups or organizations.

9. As a closing comment, our visit—under instructions—to archbishop is very unlikely to go unnoticed. Depending on events of imme-

diate future, it will almost certainly be interpreted and misinterpreted in many ways.

Devine

387. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, October 13, 1979

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador—PRC Meeting on Monday, October 15, 1979 (S)

Let me review what has occurred since the August 2 PRC meeting on El Salvador² and then identify policy options for you to consider. (U)

Current US Policy—What Went Wrong?

On August 2, the PRC agreed on a “*quid pro quo*” strategy to El Salvador: we would extend economic and security assistance in return for human rights improvements and progress toward meaningful elections. This strategy has not worked, and the first question we need to face is whether it can be revived or should be abandoned? (S)

What went wrong? On August 15, President Romero announced a number of steps to reform the electoral process,³ but repression by the National Guard has not diminished, and Romero has been reluctant to carry on a direct dialogue with the major opposition leaders or the Archbishop. We have continued to encourage the Christian Democratic Party (PCD), other opposition leaders, and the Archbishop to accept Romero’s reforms and build on them; and we have tried to encourage Romero to stop the violence and communicate with the opposition. This has failed for two reasons:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 78, PRC–126, 10/15/79, El Salvador and Central America. Copies were sent to Aaron and Owen. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: “invite Duarte [unclear] Venezuela.” He wrote at the bottom of the page: “1. invite Duarte. 2. offer milit[ary] aid. 3. [unclear] 4. counterinsurgency aid. 5. Venezuela [unclear].”

² See Document 475.

³ See footnote 4, Document 379.

—Romero is a weak, indecisive leader who is not very bright. He may be running Salvador only in name. He has been unable to stop the killing of moderate leaders (priests, teachers, businessmen), and an increasing number of people believe he is incapable of implementing reforms even if he really wanted to, and many doubt that he does.

—The Christian Democrats (PCD)—the main legitimate opposition party—no longer believe that Romero can deliver on free elections. As the Left attracts massive popular support, the PCD has become even more reluctant to deal with Romero, since they know that would reduce their own credibility. The PCD is also suffering from the disease of escalating expectations: the weaker Romero gets, the less they want to deal with him or accommodate themselves to his reforms. (S)

Therefore, stalemate.

What Now?

State's paper has five options, but after several meetings with Vaky and others, I think there are two real options.⁴ Both presume that Romero cannot effectively deal with the threat from the Left, and that he will have to step aside. Both presume that our current strategy has reached the end of the road, and we must abandon it. The basic difference between the two options is that the second relies on working with Romero for the solution, while the first ignores him. (S)

Option (1): Get behind the Christian Democrats (PCD) and help them to power.

This is Vaky's option, and I think it is a strong one. For too long, in Nicaragua and in El Salvador, we have supported a *process*, while no one agrees on the rules. Vaky believes we should adopt the Cubans' strategy: identify a group and give them whatever is necessary to seize power. The PCD is a strong middle party with good leadership, Napoleon Duarte who won the Presidential election in 1972 but was immediately exiled by the military. He recently told Amb. Luers of an elaborate plan to achieve power in El Salvador (see Tab B).⁵ Pete believes we ought to invite Duarte here (he said he would come), and tell him we will give him the support necessary to reach power. (S)

⁴ An October 11 paper entitled "U.S. Policy Toward El Salvador," drafted by Einaudi, Winstanley, Feinberg, and Schneider, posed five options: 1) "Distance ourselves from Romero;" 2) "Actively back Romero;" 3) "Press for national unity government;" 4) "Encourage a reformist coup;" and 5) "Keep our distance." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 78, PRC-126, 10/15/79, El Salvador and Central America)

⁵ Tab B, attached but not printed, is telegram 9884 from Caracas, October 11. In it, Luers reported on his meeting with Duarte who "described in detail PDC's strategy and contacts," and asked for an invitation for a secret mission to Washington.

Option (2): Seek agreement from the major actors for a new Coalition of National Unity.

Unlike Option (1), in which the US would support an actor, this option has us suggesting a formula for resolving the impasse. This formula has, to a certain extent, emerged from discussions we have already had; it should be fleshed-out in further discussions—the major ones being between Duarte, Romero, and perhaps also the Archbishop. The basic outline would have Romero retire, to be Commandant of the National Guard. Either Romero or the National Assembly would first appoint a three-man junta—one military leader, one person from the PCD, and the third from the Church. This junta would run the government and assure free Presidential elections in a 3–6 month period. There would also have to be changes in the security forces and in the Cabinet, and these changes would have to be acceptable to the PCD. At the time of the transfer of power, the US would firmly come to the support of the junta with military aid and technical assistance and help the Salvadorean army better cope with the guerrillas. (This might require US advice for counter-insurgency.)

After refining the plan in discussions with the PCD and the government, we should try to get Herrera and Carazo to accept the plan. An emissary from Washington should be sent to do this. After that, we should take the plan to the PCD and tell Duarte that if the PCD accepts this plan and Romero doesn't, we will back Duarte (*à la* Option #1). If Romero backs it, however, and the PCD doesn't, we will throw our full support behind Romero. (S)

Assuming the PCD accepts it, we then take it to Romero and tell him that if he accepts it, we will do all we can to help him eliminate the Communist insurgency. If he rejects it, we will abandon him and lead the international human rights criticism against him. (We shouldn't tell him about Option #1; let him presume it.) (S)

Both options have real risks and drawbacks. Option #1 presumes that the PCD has adequate contacts with the army to attract their support and keep them from splitting. We know they have a few very limited contacts, but that could lead to a schism that the Left could easily exploit. It is possible that once the army begins to realize that the US is backing the PCD, they might join them, but I rather think that a different dynamic will result. Confident about US support, the PCD will reduce its contact with the army and increase its contact with the extreme Left—the purpose being to win back some of their popular support. The PCD will engage in more and more Leftist rhetoric, and this will scare the military away even more. We would be caught backing the only horse in the race which lacks firepower, and our horse will be bleating Leftish slogans. (S)

The risk of Option #2 is that everyone could reject the “American plan” as interventionistic, leaving us discredited and looking impotent.

Both options require a willingness to commit resources if our hoped-for scenario works. (S)

There will be an extraordinary temptation at the PRC meeting to avoid these two stark options because both are unattractive and risky. There will probably be a temptation to try the existing policy one more time, only harder. And that's why I am glad we did it last week. What we learned was that Romero feels he has done enough and won't budge, and the PCD is already looking into ways to overthrow or go around Romero, with or without the US. (S)

I suppose one could take the view that we should just stand aside and let the PCD carry out their coup, but even if one assumes that the PCD plan succeeds, we still risk a division within the military or a dangerous alliance between the PCD and the Left in which anti-Americanism may be the principal common denominator. Or the PCD could fail to get off the ground, and then we could have lost a lot of valuable time. (S)

I strongly recommend Option #2. I think that if we present the package in as stark terms as I outlined, both sides will accept it. Then, we can really throw our full support behind it and join the army in eliminating the hard-core guerrillas. This is the major incentive for Romero. I think it would be a mistake to ignore Romero as Option #1 suggests. It is possible he is the only one who can assure a smooth transition. If we tell him that this is his historical opportunity to transform Salvador into Costa Rica, I believe he could buy it. (I think we should get Vance to persuade the liberal PCD; and you could persuade Romero.) (S)

If we eliminate the guerrillas with the Salvadorean army, that would be a significant deterrent to the other Cuban-oriented guerrilla groups in Central America. It would put another democracy on the map; and it would have set the Cuban strategy backwards. (S)

388. Editorial Note

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) met the afternoon of October 15, 1979, to discuss El Salvador and Central America. The agenda called for a review of the current situation in El Salvador, an evaluation of the present policy, a review of options, and a survey of the situation in other Central American countries. (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 78, PRC-126, 10/15/1979, El Salvador and Central America) However, in telegram 5853 from San Salvador,

October 15, the Embassy reported that a coup was in progress in El Salvador. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams 10/79) National Security Council Staff member Robert Pastor recounted the events of the day in an October 15 Daily Report item: "Cy Vance chaired a PRC meeting today on U.S. policy to El Salvador, just when we begin receiving reports of a coup in progress. Our intelligence suggests that the coup is being led by reformist army groups with contacts to the Archbishop and the Christian Democrats. We decided to get immediately in touch with Napoleon Duarte, the head of the Christian Democrats, to find out what he knew about it. It turns out that he knew very little. If it looks as if the coup is genuinely reformist, we should be prepared to assist it to deal with the insurgency problems better." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 10/15–31/79) Pastor's handwritten notes, dated October 15, are the only substantive record of this meeting that have been found; the notes indicate that the PRC focused solely on the ongoing coup. (Ibid.) For President Jimmy Carter's reaction to the coup, see Document 391.

**389. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, October 15, 1979, 1940Z

5859. Subj: (S) Status of Coup d'Etat in El Salvador as of 1:30 pm.
Ref: San Salvador 5840.²

(S-Entire text)

Request Dept Pass DIA WashDC

1. Two principal coup leaders, Ex-Air Force Major Alvaro Salazar Brenes and LtCol Rene Guerra y Guerra contacted Datt at 1230 hours Oct 15 to request urgent meeting at nearby office building. LtCol Gerald Walker and operations coordinator CW2 William Smart met for ten minutes with coup leaders, who, in essence, delivered following message:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850081–2563. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

² Telegram 5840 from San Salvador, October 13, reported on possible coup planning. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790470–0627)

A. Coup movement has taken control of all major military installations in the country except for two minor installations, presumably outside city.

B. To date coup movement has been confined to cuartels and there has been no resistance or bloodshed.

C. Coup leaders contacted President Romero early this morning and gave him until 1500 hours today to depart country with guarantees for his family. Similar guarantees were provided for following key members of the military High Command and their families: General Federico Castillo Yanes, Minister of Defense; Col. Jose Eduardo Iraheta, Sub-Secretary of Defense; and Col. Carlos Eduardo Melendez, Chief of Armed Forces General Staff. Col Iraheta has gone to Airborne Company at Airport where he reportedly may attempt to develop countermovement utilizing 300 man Airborne force.

2. President responded to offer of safe exit by requesting additional two hour delay. Coup leaders are concerned that such a delay would provide Col. Iraheta with opportunity to mobilize Airborne company in countercoup effort to rescue President and that this would engender violent confrontation within armed forces and provide far left with opportunity to exploit situation. As a result, coup leaders requested DATT to approach Ambassador Devine on urgent basis and request him to call President Romero at Casa Presidencial and urge him to depart country by 1500 hours as a humanitarian gesture to preclude bloodshed. Coup leaders requested that DATT check with Ambassador and call them back regarding approach to President Romero.

3. After discussion regarding this approach, Ambassador decided that DATT would not return call at this time but if called by coup leaders would inform them that Ambassador in the field does not have authority to take action requested but that their request has been relayed to Washington.³

Devine

³ Telegram 269480 to San Salvador, October 15, instructed Devine to inform the coup leaders: "While we urgently hope that bloodshed will be avoided, it is not possible on basis of limited information available for Ambassador to take action requested. At the same time, we would not want DATT to lose or alienate the channel, and he may say that we would be interested in further information as to developments and their plans." Devine was also instructed to ascertain, as soon as possible, who was behind the coup and what the "power dynamics look like." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850081–2567) In telegram 5875 from San Salvador, October 16, Devine reported that Romero and his associates had departed for Guatemala and that Mayorga would be President of the new Junta government. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

390. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, October 16, 1979, 2335Z

270716. For Ambassador Devine from Assistant Secretary Vaky.
Subject: Contact With New Government. Ref: San Salvador 5889.²

1. S-Entire text

2. The Ambassador should seek an immediate appointment with Col. Gutierrez and/or other members of the governing junta and elicit comments about the evolving situation and their plans for reform and development. He should inquire how we can best support their programs. FYI, we find initial reporting of their intentions very hopeful and if such a trend continues, we expect to move vigorously to assist the new government. End FYI

3. During conversation with Col. Gutierrez, the Ambassador should comment that the points contained in the new government's proclamations, such as dissolution of ORDEN and the amnesty for political prisoners, appear to us to be very positive. Ambassador should also point to other considerations which in our judgment would help the new government to consolidate its position nationally and internationally:

—Prompt implementation of measures designed to reverse past curtailment of fundamental rights accompanied by full publicity;

—Restraint in adoption of new security measures so as to avoid criticism of resort to abuses of previous regime;

—Public declaration of support from Church, political parties and professional and civic groups.

We would hope for quick public implementation of these steps. Also, those inclined to be skeptical that a Salvadoran Government with military participation will be looking for significant evidence that the Security Forces' heavy-handed treatment of those viewed as being critical of the past regime has in fact ended. Also useful would be public declarations of support from political parties and other groups, though we understand that this is somewhat beyond the control of the new government.

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79. Secret; Flash; Exdis.

² Telegram 5889 from San Salvador, October 16, reported that Gutierrez and Majano temporarily headed the new Government of El Salvador and that a five-man governing junta was "supposed to be constituted" during the course of that day. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850081-2569)

4. You should request the new government to circulate a diplomatic note concerning continuing diplomatic relations as soon as possible. We expect to respond immediately.

5. FYI. We remain concerned that given the very progressive steps announced to date that the extreme left might find itself both threatened and challenged. We would appreciate any information pertaining to the reaction of the terrorist organizations and the popular front organizations, such as the BPR, to the new government and its emerging program. If the Government's hopeful trend continues we expect to offer specific assistance in dealing with the extremist threat.³ End FYI.

Vance

³ See Document 392.

391. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, undated

1. *El Salvador*: The five person *junta* comprises two military officers and three civilians. The two military members have been named and are known to us to be moderate. Initial reports are that the US-educated head of the prestigious Catholic University, Ramon Mayorga, will be the *junta's* president. Mayorga is well known to us for his moderate and progressive views and intellectual gifts. The other two civilian members have not been named. Our Embassy is in contact with the new government.

The proclamations issued to date by the new government also indicate a moderate and progressive philosophy. Specifics include the dissolution of ORDEN (a para-military organization responsible for human rights abuses), amnesty for political exiles and political pris-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 10/15–31/79. Secret. Carter wrote in the left-hand margin: "Let them know that we will give them every support if they continue to honor human rights & democracy." Pastor wrote "October 16, 1979" at the top of the page.

oners, agrarian and tax reforms, a call for elections, and guarantees for unions and political parties of all ideologies to organize.

The new government has dissolved the legislature and the courts and will govern by decree until elections can be called. The Armed Forces have called upon the extremists of the left and right to give up violence and have indicated that they will deal vigorously with any extremist effort to interfere with the *junta's* intended program of democratization.

**392. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, October 17, 1979, 0525Z

5937. Deliver to action office by start of business Wednesday October 17. For Assistant Secretary Vaky from Ambassador Devine. Subj: Contact With New Government of El Salvador. Ref State 270716.²

1. (S-entire text)

2. DCM Howard, DATT Walker, and I met for two hours tonight with Colonel Guiterrez and Colonel Mahano for full discussion of present situation and complete presentation of points contained reftel.

3. Both officers were reserved and even somewhat nervous at outset but relaxed visibly, became more friendly as conversation progressed, and were volunteering considerable comment by latter part of meeting.

4. With respect to formation of Junta, they expressed hope this would come about within next 48 hours. Confirmed that it would include two military officers, one nationally prestigious figure, one member of progressive private sector, and one person acceptable to members of popular forum. Thought matters were moving ahead but that this took time because of consultative process and civilian hesitancy to commit selves until sure military situation would hold together.

5. In accordance para 4 reftel we suggested circulation of diplomatic note concerning continuation of diplomatic relations and described content of such a note. They indicated this would be done after Junta formed and in being.

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis.

² See Document 390.

6. Officers said they were currently engaged in outreaching dialogue and found this productive process in terms of allaying suspicion and building support. Part of their objective is to isolate the extremes.

7. They anticipate serious opposition and even provocation from both extremes. Are determined to maintain law and order but will attempt to do so with all possible restraint. Present state of siege they see as preventative measure to be relaxed as circumstances permit. In quick rundown of three popular organizations, they confirmed that FAPU seems susceptible to dialogue, LP-28 less so, and BPR is intransigent.

8. When we pressed for prompt corrective action on human rights abuses, they said:

A. Political prisoners—amnesty has already been announced, Red Cross is being contacted, and need is recognized for complete open door policy;

B. Elections—heard out in seeming agreement, did not mention timetable, but spoke desirability of return of military to its proper role as soon as possible.

C. ORDEN—confirmed dissolution of this pro-GOES peasant organization and blamed its former status and abuses on oligarchic pressure on President Romero;

D. Labor disputes—prefer to keep military and security forces clear of labor disputes and approach problem instead by reform of labor laws to make legal strikes and resolutions of disputes more feasible.

9. We urged desirability of public declarations of support from church, political parties and professional and civic groups. Officers said they had met with Archbishop Romero who has already issued such a statement (septel).³

10. When we explained that internationally acceptable human rights image would enhance our ability to assist new GOES, they said and repeated that they would need our help.

Devine

³ In telegram 5930 from San Salvador, October 16, the Embassy reported on a radio broadcast of Archbishop Romero's pastoral message on the coup which "admonished people to be patient, wise, and moderate in expectations and demands and called upon new government to adhere to promised reforms." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790474-0864)

393. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, October 18, 1979, 1623Z

272443. For Ambassador Devine. Subject: Current U.S. Policy and Objectives in El Salvador.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. This cable summarizes for your information and guidance our policy assessments and immediate objectives with regard to the current situation in El Salvador as defined at the highest levels, and the corresponding lines of action that would be indicated:

—The October 15 coup has provided an opportunity for the country to emerge from the downward spiral of polarization and threat of radicalization in which the country seemed to have been caught.

—The successful creation of a joint civilian/military junta, representing broad public support, which would undertake a dedicated, decisive program of respecting human rights, instituting social reform and establishing free democratic processes, could isolate the extremists, reduce tensions, avoid insurrection and stabilize the national processes.

—On the other hand the failure of the Junta either to gain broad support or undertake such reforms could lead to renewed confrontation and eventual success of Marxist extremists.

—It is therefore very much in our interest to help the new government succeed and obtain broad support, and to influence and urge it to undertake the kind of policies and programs that will enable it to be viable and us to support it.

—We desire in this regard to be active in efforts to assure such an outcome, to assist the new government with both economic and security assistance, and to dialogue with it and other sectors to urge them to deal realistically with the opportunity and challenge before them. This may well be the last opportunity for Salvadorans to avoid civil war and the emergence of a Marxist regime, and for us to influence the situation productively. The sense of needing to seize this real but perhaps passing opportunity is very strong here.

—We are prepared to be seen publicly as supportive of this government in a positive and correct manner if it adopts the human rights/

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador, Telegrams, 10/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, Tegucigalpa, Caracas, and San José. Drafted by Wilson and Vaky; cleared in ARA/CEN and S/S-O; approved by Vaky.

democratic policies that appear necessary. It is felt here that we should be imaginative and positive as may be opportune.

3. The situation in El Salvador must also be viewed from the perspective of U.S. global interests. The role of Cuba on the international scene and in Nicaragua, the Soviet/Cuba troop issue and the President's policy statement on U.S. intentions in this hemisphere² are all very relevant to the situation that is evolving in El Salvador. The factor of potential external support for extremists and terrorists is complicating. We believe this must be prevented. We are prepared to assist the new government in confronting that kind of challenge.

4. Given the above, we believe the following broad lines of action are called for:

—Continuous contact and dialogue with the Junta members to ascertain their views, to recommend action and to encourage them to move along the lines sketched above. (Your contacts and discussions as exemplified in Salvador 4966 are precisely the kind of interaction we have in mind.)³ Please continue your excellent contact and advice to the Junta as in your discretion appears necessary and important to insure the success of a viable, reformist government.

—Continuous contact and dialogue with other sectors of society to urge them to cooperate, support and join a broad based reform effort. Please continue your close contact and continuous dialogue with the Church (the Secretary is particularly desirous that you maintain contact with Archbishop Romero), the Democratic parties, private sector, labor, et al. Our effort here would be aimed at ensuring that these sectors understand that the success of this government may be the last hope of avoiding an extremist outcome, that their cooperation and support is necessary for success, and that their support, cooperation and interaction with the Junta can insure its moderate, democratic course. The necessity of isolating the extreme left should be stressed. (The potential uncertainties between the Christian Democrats and the military foreshadowed in Salvador's 5948 and 5968, suggest the desirability of a specific effort to urge both sides to maintain friendly and constructive relations.)⁴ We are concerned that a wait and see attitude

² See footnote 5, Document 319.

³ In telegram 4966 from San Salvador, October 17, Devine reported to Vaky about his efforts to engage Gutierrez and Majano on the importance of human rights. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

⁴ In telegram 5948 from San Salvador, October 17, the Embassy relayed the Christian Democratic Party's analysis of the current situation in El Salvador. (Ibid.) In telegram 5968 from San Salvador, October 17, the Embassy reported that the Popular Forum had selected nominees for the new civilian/military junta. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790476–0964)

or a critical posture by the Christian Democrats or other significant sectors would greatly diminish the possibilities of a successful outcome to the present situation. These sectors should also know that we are prepared to provide prompt and significant support and assistance to the new government in the circumstances described above.

—We want to be ready to respond quickly to requests for aid or to meet obvious needs. This refers to immediate opportunities as well as short and longer term programs.⁵ You should let us know as soon as you can what you suggest as to assistance in both the economic and security fields (State 271342 already raises the question of your recommendations in the latter case),⁶ and what you recommend. Are these immediate things we should do? Your recommendations should perhaps reflect the Junta's views as to what it thinks they may need immediately and in the longer terms, and you should therefore determine how best to ascertain that. We are of course prepared to consider any specific requests by the Junta very promptly.

5. The above will provide you with the general concept and assessment which we believe should now govern our actions. The bottom line is that we should do all we can to ensure the satisfactory outcome that now appears possible.⁷

6. For San Jose and Caracas: You should point out to appropriate representatives of the Christian Democratic Party and to government authorities and host country nationals who may have influence with them, our views of the situation. You should particularly urge Copei and appropriate authorities of the GOV and GOCR to use their influence with the Salvadoran PDC to encourage the latter to adopt a positive and cooperative posture vis a vis the new Junta. Should the PDC hold itself aloof at this critical moment, it could end the hopes of that party and other democratic parties to be relevant to the future in El Salvador.

Vance

⁵ In telegram 272951 to San Salvador, October 18, Vaky noted his assumption that Devine understood "that you may specifically inform the Junta in your discussions with them that we will give full support to the new government if they honor human rights and democracy." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

⁶ In telegram 271342 to San Salvador, October 17, Vaky referenced the "initial difficulties that new government is experiencing with public security and the reaction of leftist organizations," and instructed Devine to request that Walker send an assessment of what kinds of military assistance would be appropriate. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 18, El Salvador, 7-12/79)

⁷ Devine replied in telegram 5985 from San Salvador, October 18, with a preliminary estimate of the Salvadorans' short term military assistance needs and remarked: "As Department is aware, question of military assistance to new civilian/military junta is politically sensitive and fraught with important policy implications." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850027-2520)

394. Editorial Note

In an October 17, 1979, memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky, the Director of the Inter-American Region, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Admiral Gordon Schuller, recommended an immediate package of military training and equipment for the new Salvadoran Government. (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330–82–0205, El Salvador 1979) U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Frank Devine also endorsed the approval of commercial tear gas exports to El Salvador in telegram 6076 from San Salvador, October 22. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790484–0513) Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski discussed the issue during an October 25 luncheon. According to an unsigned October 26 memorandum for the files about the luncheon: “All agreed that we will await the El Salvadoran approach to us before offering assistance. In the meantime, will review the DOD proposed list.” (Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, 1979 Brown/Brzezinski Lunches Oct./Nov./Dec.)

In an October 25 memorandum to National Security Council Staff member Robert Pastor and Legal Counsel of the National Security Council Robert Kimmitt, Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Robert Gates referenced the October 25 luncheon, noting that “Vance talked to Salvadoran Foreign Minister and they will come to us when they know what they need.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 18, El Salvador, 7/79–12/79)

In telegram 282178 to San Salvador, October 29, the Department noted that the Salvadoran Ministry of Defense requested tear gas and related equipment “to meet challenge of current disorders,” but there were “no formal license applications currently pending for the export of tear gas and related equipment to El Salvador.” However, “tear gas grenades, gas masks, bulletproof vests, and steel helmets are available from US military stocks and DOD assures us they could be on plane to El Salvador within 72 hours of receipt” of a Salvadoran request for a foreign military supply (FMS) cash sale. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

In telegram 6359 from San Salvador, November 5, the Embassy relayed the Salvadoran request for an FMS cash sale of riot control items. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams,

11/79) In telegram 6664 from San Salvador, November 20, Devine noted that the "initial shipment of non-lethal riot control equipment" arrived on November 9 and that the military training team gave instruction in using the equipment and surveyed the Salvadoran need for counter-insurgency training. Devine recommended that the U.S. military group be augmented and that the Salvadoran armed forces be strengthened. (Ibid.)

395. Memorandum From Paul Henze of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, October 22, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC on Covert Action Proposals—23 October 1979

You called this meeting to consider three CIA covert action proposals relating to:

El Salvador	—	TAB 1.A. ²
Jamaica	—	TAB 1.B.
Afghanistan	—	TAB 2

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I047, SCC-I on Covert Action, 23 October 1979. Secret; Sensitive; Outside System. Sent for information. In an October 18 memorandum to Brzezinski, Gregg noted that "the covert action plan from CIA for El Salvador is a good one" and that "Pastor feels it should be approved soonest and that to wait until the 25th will be too late." (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I025, El Salvador, 15 October 1979–11 February 1980) In an October 19 memorandum to Brzezinski, Gregg wrote: "Pursuant to my conversation with you yesterday, I called CIA and urged them, if at all possible, to move quickly in implementing a survey in El Salvador which would be a preliminary step to offering specific counterinsurgency aid to the new government (the assassination of the Inspector General in San Salvador indicates such aid may be necessary). CIA reports that their lawyers believe that no Presidential finding is needed for the survey to be undertaken." Brzezinski replied by writing in the margin on October 20: "OK Proceed." (Ibid.)

² Tab 1.A., attached but not printed, is an undated memorandum from the Central Intelligence Agency to the members of the Special Coordination Committee outlining two covert action options for El Salvador. Option 1 involved a unilateral action using "agents-of-influence within the new government and in other political and private sectors to oppose Soviet/Cuban-backed subversion, to forestall further polarization and to work toward a more open political system. Provide moral and financial support to moderate elements." Option 2 involved a joint operation to "provide counterinsurgency and counterterrorism training to El Salvador security forces under a new moderate regime." Tabs 1.B and 2 are attached but not printed.

Of these three proposals, the one on Afghanistan is best worked out, since it reflects work already done as a result of the 3 July 1979 Presidential Finding. The Salvadorean and Jamaican proposals reflect commendable willingness on the part of CIA to attempt to do something in these important countries, but are not based on a great deal of preparatory work. Both essentially involve spending money for purposes which are defined only in a very general way. It is not clear how much guidance and influence we might be able to exercise in these situations. The best argument for action in both is that by getting involved we are *at least doing something* that will provide a base of experience on which better programs can be worked out.

El Salvador and Jamaica (TABs A and B)³

Bob Pastor has given you a memorandum endorsing Action Option #1 of the Salvadorean proposal but opposing both options of the Jamaican one—TAB 1. Recommend you read it before reading the proposals. I find Pastor's recommendations persuasive in both cases.

We know from informal word from CIA that State is unenthusiastic about the Salvadorean proposal—Vaky feels that it is too early and our own policy is too unclear to justify our getting into the situation to the extent the proposal envisages.⁴

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

³ Tab B is attached but not printed.

⁴ In an undated action memorandum to Christopher, sent through Newsom, Bowdler provided brief summaries of agenda items for the October 23 SCC-I meeting. With reference to El Salvador, Bowdler noted: "Action on the two proposed options should be held in abeyance pending further clarification of the needs and desires of the new government and the alternative ways of handling the proposed options. At this stage it does not appear necessary to resort to covert agents of influence to generate support for the new government. We can deal directly with groups in Salvador and with other governments through diplomatic channels. With respect to the second option—counterterrorist and counterinsurgency training—it is not clear at this stage whether we should be the ones to provide this service or whether it would be politically advantageous to consider assistance from third countries." (Department of State, INR/IL Files, vol. 12, Intelligence Committee Report, Transfer Identification Number: 980643000013) For the summary of conclusions of the October 23 SCC-I meeting on Covert Action, see Document 396.

Tab 1

Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)⁵

Washington, October 19, 1979

SUBJECT

Covert Action Options for El Salvador and Jamaica (S)

With regard to the CIA's options paper, I recommend that we support action Option #1 for El Salvador described by the CIA, and strongly oppose any of the options on Jamaica.⁶ (S)

El Salvador. The new Junta in El Salvador gives us an opportunity to help a moderate democracy emerge, but we should not be lulled into thinking that the threat from the extreme left has diminished in any way. All that has changed is that the new Junta has positioned itself so as to be more capable to deal with the leftist threat, and we, in turn, are now able to help them. My guess is that the Cubans will not let up; the guerrillas have built a powerful internal structure and realize that the new Junta represents their greatest threat. (S)

In El Salvador, there will be a lot of violence, and we should be prepared to compete with the Cubans, adopting their principal tactic of picking a group and supporting it. We ought to do Option #1 now; it calls for using agents-of-influence within the new government and providing moral and financial support to moderate elements. I believe we ought to be more cautious about getting involved in a joint counterinsurgency operation, as envisaged by Option B until we have a better fix on how the Junta plans to deal with its internal problems. For one thing, they may not need counterinsurgency assistance. Secondly, if the Junta proves rotten, or if counterinsurgency operations get entangled with charges of torture, we would regret the decision. Therefore, I recommend that we not consider Option B at this time.⁷ (S)

⁵ Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. According to another copy of the memorandum, Brzezinski saw it. (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1025, El Salvador, 15 October 1979–11 February 1980)

⁶ See footnote 2 above.

⁷ In an October 22 memorandum to Brzezinski, Gregg commented on Pastor's October 19 memorandum to Brzezinski. Gregg recommended that Option 2 (counterinsurgency training) should be considered and a feasibility study begun. (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1025, El Salvador, 15 October 1979–11 February 1980)

As you examine the question of covert support for centrist groups in El Salvador, I hope you will ask the CIA to keep us informed as to which moderate groups they intend to assist. When I asked that question of them with regard to Nicaragua, the answer was disappointing for two reasons. First, they were only supporting three groups while there are undoubtedly more who merit support. Second, one of the groups is finished as a viable political force. In addition, I hope you will press the CIA to consider ways to help moderate groups by working through democratic third countries [*1 line not declassified*] (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

396. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, October 23, 1979, 4:30–5:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Covert Action

PARTICIPANTS

State
David Newsom, Under Secretary
for Political Affairs

OSD
Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Clayton, Jr., Deputy
Secretary

JCS
Lt. Gen. John Pustay, Assistant to
the Chairman

DCI
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director
[*name not declassified*] Deputy
Chief/LA/DDO
[*name not declassified*] Deputy
Chief/NE/DDO
[*name and title not declassified*]

Justice
Attorney General Benjamin
Civiletti
OMB
Dr. John White, Deputy Director
White House
Zbigniew Brzezinski, Chairman
Donald Gregg
Hedley Donovan
NSC
Paul B. Henze, Notetaker

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Box I047, SCC-I on Covert Action, 23 October 1979. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this meeting was to consider three covert action proposals presented by CIA, relating to El Salvador, Jamaica and Afghanistan, and to consider whether covert action proposals for other problem countries should be developed for future consideration.² (S)

After discussion of the situation in *El Salvador* and U.S. policy objectives there, the committee agreed to endorse a covert program designed to strengthen the new government and democratic elements supporting it now or likely to support it in the future. CIA representatives pointed out that initially this effort would be based on existing agents and friendly contacts in the junta. CIA had refrained from discussing with them steps that might be taken to bolster moderate, pro-democratic elements but with SCC approval and a Presidential Finding will now be able to develop a program.³ \$700,000 will be allocated for this program. The covert program will be parallel to a larger program of overt U.S. Government (and possible European) actions serving the same basic policy purpose. (S)

The group also reviewed options for *counter-terrorist* aid and possible *counter-insurgency* assistance in *El Salvador*. CIA's proposed [*dollar amount not declassified*] counter-terrorist program was endorsed. CIA will gather information on possible counter-insurgency assistance but no action in this field will be undertaken until more concrete proposals are made and reviewed by the SCC. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

² See Document 395.

³ See Document 398.

397. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, October 25, 1979, 1400Z

6150. Subj: Meeting with New Civilian/Military Junta of El Salvador on the Continuation of Relations. Refs (A) State 275713,² (B) San Salvador 6141.³

1. (S-Entire text)

2. On Oct 23 at 1600 DCM Howard and I met for approximately one hour with three civilian and two military members of the new Junta to present the official diplomatic note (ref A) on the continuation of diplomatic relations between the GOES and the USG. Meeting marked constructive, substantive and useful beginning.

3. After expressing the USG's pleasure at establishing formal relations with the Junta I covered passages from my separate public statement (ref B) commending the Junta's expressed determination to adhere to principle of human rights, to hold free and democratic elections and to seek a more just future for the people of El Salvador. From the outset, I emphasized USG's desire to strengthen bilateral relations and our willingness to assist the Junta by providing political, economic, social and even security assistance should the Junta deem such help appropriate and consistent with its policies and programs.

4. Responding initially on behalf of the Junta, Dr. Guillermo Ungo expressed appreciation for the continuation of diplomatic relations and my statement regarding the nature of relations between our two governments. He stated that the new government welcomes and looks forward to the possibility of "close cooperation" with the US in the economic, social and political areas. He then turned to his colleagues for their additional responses and comments.

5. Economic crisis and need for early assistance—Col. Gutierrez spoke of the serious economic crisis confronting the nation reflected in heavy capital flight, lack of investment and virtual cut-off of financial credits—both internally and externally. Elaborating on this theme,

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, 8/79–1/81, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information Immediate to Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and DIA.

² In telegram 2757143 to San Salvador, October 23, the Department provided guidance on the continuation of relations with El Salvador. (Ibid.)

³ In telegram 6141 from San Salvador, October 24, the Embassy reported on Devine's October 23 public declaration of the continuation of relations with El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790491–1284)

Junta member Andino made a strong plea (endorsed by other Junta members) for US assistance in improving the image of the country and thereby facilitating the flow of public and private financial credits to assist nation in weathering this difficult period.

6. In similar vein Andino expressed hope that improvement in national situation will permit early removal of travel advisory which as reflection of national reality has seriously affected tourism and investments in El Salvador.⁴ I responded by assuring Junta that travel advisory has never intended as means of pressuring El Salvador. Noting initial signs of improvement attendant upon change of government, I stressed that the Embassy and USG strongly desire to lift advisory as soon as situation in El Salvador permits.

7. Picking up on economic assistance theme, Dr. Mayorga implied that country would welcome and need substantial external help both through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. He implied that El Salvador would like substantial increase in AID program with understanding that additional funds could now be used more effectively for well being of poor and disadvantaged in El Salvador. He, as well as other Junta members, alluded several times to Junta's commitment to structural changes which would make such assistance both necessary and more useful in helping the most needy.

8. Referring to forthcoming IDB mission, Mayorga lodged a special request for USG understanding and active support—not just neutrality—in new government's efforts to obtain substantial assistance in soft loans to carry out program of economic transition. Mayorga said new GOES is putting together "emergency" economic program whose primary objectives will be to create employment, stimulate production and put unused capacity to work. Program's success will, in important measure, depend on affirmative US support in the IDB. El Salvador desperately needs a rapid and agile response to its aid requests, Mayorga emphasized.⁵

9. Human rights—at this juncture conversation shifted to question of human rights and corollary and thorny issues of political prisoners

⁴ In telegram 2739 from San Salvador, May 23, the Embassy requested a travel advisory "warning all U.S. citizens to avoid traveling to El Salvador if at all possible." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790235-0110)

⁵ In telegram 281355 to San Salvador, October 27, the Department requested that Devine inform either Junta members or a Cabinet Minister that "given the new government's stated intention of working toward social justice and political and economic reform in the context of respect for human rights, and in recognition of the progress already made, we have instructed our delegate to the IDB to support El Salvador's preinvestment program when it comes to a vote." (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 10/79)

and disappeared persons. In response to Ungo's inquiry about how foreign press is reacting to Junta, I pointed out that initial reaction to new Junta has been positive with tinge of skepticism as to whether new leadership will be able to cope with extremes of left and right while following through on promised reforms in human rights and other fields. Gutierrez and Ungo then outlined difficulty Junta is encountering in coping with continuing violence and nearly insoluble problem of disappeared persons.

10. Regarding latter, Junta has searched jails and now verified that alleged 300 political prisoners no longer exist, but it does not know how to reveal and admit this fact publicly without provoking public outcry. Meanwhile, Human Rights Commission, Committee of Mothers, leftists groups, etc., are demanding that Junta obtain extradition of ex-Presidents Molina and Romero and bringing of charges against numerous officers in military and security forces for their alleged responsibility in past human rights violations. He said rooting out and punishing past violators is a desirable but politically impossible task under current circumstances. As a result, Ungo explained that challenge and primary objective of Junta is to implement positive human rights measure in future which will create good record and overshadow negative and probably unrectifiable excesses committed in the past. This is not the ideal or most desirable solution, Ungo said, but it appears to be the only viable course of action given existing political realities.

11. On the equally sensitive issue of excessive official violence in the pursuit of law and order, I informed the Junta that a group of US human rights activists had met with me earlier in the day and criticized the security forces for using unnecessary and excessive violence in dissolving Ta Fapu organized March on Oct 22 on the road from the airport. In response both Andino and Gutierrez uneasily admitted that all of their efforts to date have produced conflicting versions as to what really happened in terms of responsibility for this violent confrontation. Gutierrez and Ungo tacitly acknowledged that there may be some truth to charges of overreaction by the security forces. Gutierrez added, however, that the Junta is committed to strengthening its investigative capability and as soon as circumstances permit will proceed to ween out undesirable elements in the security forces. In this context, Gutierrez said the Junta met several days ago with leaders of all the security forces and warned them that excessive use of violence, torture of political prisoners and other human rights violations will no longer be permitted. Ungo said that appointment of new Attorney General and a thorough restructuring of judicial system should greatly assist in handling violence and illegal actions in a more humane way. While it would be unrealistic to expect 100 percent improvement overnight, they stressed that the Junta is committed to and engaged in improving human rights practices in El Salvador.

12. US assistance and independence position of Junta—conversation then shifted to Andino, who in name of Junta expressed hope that USG would understand and accept that new government must maintain its “independent criteria” regarding programs and presumably related question of possible US assistance. In this context he also made a specific reference regarding unhelpful nature of a US-originated report about possible US knowledge of the coup. I replied that USG understands and respects domestic and external sensitivities of new Junta, reiterated our desire to be helpful while respecting Junta’s instincts and guidance regarding what forms such assistance might take. When Junta has completed its economic diagnosis I said USG will be pleased to consider and respond to requests for economic assistance. In addition, I reiterated that USG is disposed to help in any other way the Junta considers appropriate. (It was interesting and perhaps significant that at no time did any Junta member bring up subject of security assistance.)

13. The meeting concluded on a positive note with Junta members stating their desire to maintain close, informal and discreet contact with me and other key members of the Embassy staff. They proposed, and I readily agreed, to work out flexible and informal channels of communication which will enable our two governments to work together effectively in the difficult period that lies ahead.

Devine

398. Presidential Finding¹

Washington, November 2, 1979

*Findings Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistant Act of
1961, As Amended Concerning an Operation Abroad to Assist the
Government of El Salvador*

I find the following operations in a foreign country are important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this finding to the concerned committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and provide briefings as necessary.

SCOPE	DESCRIPTION
El Salvador	Assist moderate elements in El Salvador by providing them with resources and training. Utilize agents of influence in key sectors to assist the people of El Salvador to resist the efforts of Cuban-supported and other guerrilla groups to subvert or overthrow the regime, while simultaneously encouraging movement toward needed political, economic and social reforms. Provide training and assistance to the intelligence and security forces of El Salvador to enable them to deal effectively with terrorism. ²

Jimmy Carter

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 81M01032R: Subject Committee Files (1943–1980), Box 9, Folder 19: Covert Action Pres Find El Salvador. Secret; Sensitive.

² In Aaron’s November 1 memorandum to Carter, he indicated that Carter signed a Presidential Finding for El Salvador on October 30. Aaron commented that the updated version of the finding included revised language: “You have already signed a Presidential Finding on El Salvador but, on reflection, the State Department was concerned not about its substance but about appearances in the way the last Finding was formulated. State and CIA have now gotten together on a new version which is substantively the same as the last one but which would have presentational advantages.” (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1025, El Salvador, 15 October 1979–11 February 1980) The version of the finding Carter signed on October 30 is in the National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files Box 1020, Minutes—SCC 1978. Notations on it indicate that it was not sent and was scheduled to be destroyed per Henze’s instructions. For more information regarding the ongoing covert action in El Salvador, see Documents 454, 489, and Document 492.

399. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, November 14, 1979, 2000Z

6565. Subj: Delivery of President Carter's Letter to Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) of El Salvador.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. President Carter's letter of November 8 was delivered today to the Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) of El Salvador.²

3. Immediately upon return from Washington, I informed Foreign Minister that I had brought the letter and would appreciate opportunity to effect personal delivery to JRG. As result, I was received today by all five members of JRG, Fon Min Dada, and under Secretary of Foreign Relations Hector Oqueli.

4. I described my recent consultation in Washington and emphasized high level of interest there in new government of El Salvador and its announced program of respect for Human Rights, for political/economic/social reform, and for taking nation to genuinely free elections. I told JRG of widespread sympathy for new GOES, desire to assist it, but recognition of fact that USG assistance must be of a character and at a pace best determined by political judgement of JRG itself.

5. Illustrative of ways in which we might be able to be of assistance, I mentioned:

A. Contributing to very survival of JRG in face of dangers presently confronting it;

B. Helping to strengthen armed forces and their ability to defend JRG;

C. Helping to maintain and strengthen positive international image of JRG;

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador, Telegrams, 11/79. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and DIA.

² In a November 3 letter to Carter, the JRG said that it stood for "respect for human rights, the process of democratization, the holding of truly free elections," and "peace and tranquility under a regime of law." Carter's response to the JRG, dated November 8, noted that "we are encouraged by the democratic philosophy adopted by your government," and offered U.S. cooperation. In a November 8 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski forwarded the letter for Carter's signature and noted: "The Junta is being provoked and attacked by the extreme left, and your letter of support will be very welcome." (All three in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence With Foreign Leaders File, Box 5, El Salvador, Members of the Revolutionary Junta of Government, 11/79-10/80)

- D. Helping to counter destructive efforts of the political extremes;
- E. Making known our support for reform program of JRG; and
- F. Supporting economic and development program of JRG.

6. As a means of moving all of this from the abstract to the concrete, I suggested that JRG think all this over and if it desires our help along these and other lines that it authorize us to discuss details and work out implementation with appropriate individual members of JRG or Cabinet Ministers. (This will offer distinct advantages in terms of security, celerity of movement, etc.)

7. All present listened with interest and apparent appreciation. I then thanked them for the letter they had entrusted to me for President Carter, said that I had brought back President Carter's reply, and offered to read it aloud in Spanish for them if they so desired. They rather eagerly accepted this and seemed genuinely delighted with the content of the letter.

8. I told JRG members that we would leave up to them decision as to whether to publish President Carter's letter. Should they decide affirmatively, however, I asked that we be notified so that we might arrange corresponding and reinforcing publicity through our own channels. Should this occur, I recommend that we publicize both letters in the exchange of correspondence.

9. As conversation closed, I reemphasized our Embassy's hope to stay in close contact with JRG and with Cabinet Ministers so as to be able to contribute whatever we can to their program of respect for Human Rights, Political/Economic/Social Reform, and the holding of genuinely free elections.

Devine

400. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, December 19, 1979, 2130Z

7283. Subj: (S) Survivability of Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG). Ref State 326018.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. In partial response reftel, this message (which was already in process) is written to bring Dept abreast of sharply deteriorated situation in El Salvador and to suggest possible remedial measures.³ Second telegram now in preparation will address other specific questions raised in reftel and will complement this present message.⁴

3. Revolutionary governing/(5-(JRG) came into being to great relief of Salvadoran people who were by mid-October thoroughly disenchanted with preceding Romero regime. Formation of new GOES evoked positive reaction. We and rest of hemisphere welcomed more broadly based government and wished it well in its proclaimed reform program. What we may not have fully recognized at that time was that it was an inherently unstable compound which could contain the seeds of its own destruction.

4. Perhaps equally important and not fully appreciated was degree of radicalization which had occurred and level of strength achieved by extreme left (FPL, FARN, and ERP) plus—and perhaps even more importantly—its popular street organizations (BPR, FAPU, and LP-28). From outset of new GOES, extreme left has confronted it with insatiable demands, popular demonstrations, marches and acts of armed confrontation successfully designed to keep GOES off balance. Also serious, of course, has been potential threat of extreme right, likely to become effective if and when far-reaching reform program might begin to take definite shape or effect.

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 12/79. Secret; Immediate; Exdis.

² In telegram 326018 to San Salvador, December 18, the Department expressed concern over events in El Salvador and requested the "Embassy's diagnosis of why Junta seems unable to establish its authority and seize the initiative from the extreme left." (Ibid.)

³ On November 7, Devine estimated the JRG's chances of survival "at 60-40." By December 10, he had lowered the odds to "55-45." (Telegram 7083 from San Salvador, December 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790570-0222)

⁴ In telegram 7310 from San Salvador, December 20, Devine continued his reporting from telegram 7083 on the situation in El Salvador and endorsed an economic assistance program. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 12/79)

5. In face of this difficult situation and these powerful foes, JRG has proven less than effective, not well coordinated, given to excessive internal debate and dialogue, and with its disparate members individually responsive to their respective constituencies to such an extent that business of government has been slowed and often seriously impeded.

6. As Dept is aware, we have by now been able to bring in some visitors to assess intelligence and military situation here. In both cases, visitors have been appalled at inadequacies of human, organizational, and other resources which they have unearthed. Results of their surveys have been appropriately conveyed to members of JRG and appropriate Cabinet Ministers with some apparent impact, but up to week of Dec 16 apparently failing to produce sense of urgency even remotely approaching that which we feel. Until recently, "business as usual" has seemed to dominate local mentality to such extent that meetings with key officials have been slow in forthcoming, promised points of contact and official requests for military assistance come forth with great delay, etc. Only in certain cases have we encountered any apparent realization among key GOES officials that GOES is by now at war with an implacable enemy. Recent trend toward increasing armed confrontations and brutal violence measured out to "enemies" of extreme left is finally awakening some, and as of Dec 18 there is suddenly evidence of a new GOES determination to attempt to restore some law and order.⁵ As of now, of course, it remains to be seen how effective or how sustained this will be.

7. In face of this generally deteriorating situation, we have talked very seriously to members of JRG, to Minister of Defense, to leading figures in young officers' group, and to others.

8. At this point, with our own USG agencies now somewhat clear in their own minds as to types and quantities of assistance needed here, Embassy is exceedingly uneasy that time may be running out. Visitors from Washington and from SOUTHCOM have devised programs of assistance in intelligence and military fields. Senior programming officer from AID is here now to devise large-scale economic assistance programs. (In latter case JRG has responded much more rapidly than in security assistance area where difficulty of reaching consensus is more acute.) If any or all of these take usual length of time to get off ground, we could by then be facing successor government to JRG.

⁵ In telegram 7263 from San Salvador, December 19, the Embassy reported that Majano, speaking on behalf of the JRG, "condemned terrorist acts in rural areas and stated armed force is ready to safeguard tranquility of nation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

9. This being the case, we ask ourselves what can be done to help stem the tide which may be running against JRG and our interests. Rather than see a Marxist-Leninist government established in Central America, are we prepared or able at this late date to take bold action, to short-circuit normal bureaucratic process, and/or to adopt a posture which may be out of keeping with our philosophy but dictated by circumstances of the day?

A. As one suggestion, would USG at highest level be prepared to issue public statement of support for JRG and its proposed reform program, state that we subscribe to political/economic/social reforms and announce that early in Jan USG will despatch high-level team to San Salvador for purpose of working out specific ways and means in which USG can endorse and assure forward movement of workable reforms? If we do indeed still enjoy reservoir of respect and good-will among Latin peoples, it is conceivable that prospect of our close-in association with GOES program solidly committed to concept of reform might strengthen JRG, reinforce faith of general public that reform will be carried out, give pause to rightist elements opposed to reform, and wean away from extreme left some of its less fanatical supporters who might still be prepared to place trust and confidence in good name and intent of USG.

B. Second immediate action which USG could take to demonstrate our support for JRG and our commitment to try to prevent accession to power in El Salvador of an extreme left avowedly anti-U.S. and Marxist-Leninist oriented takeover would be to respond positively and quickly to any reasonable JRG request for U.S. security assistance involving training and material.⁶ In the first instance such a response would involve immediate USG introduction of military training teams (MTTS) from SOUTHCOM with appropriate follow-on materiel as soon as available (bearing in mind that time would be of the essence).

10. In making this proposal I am fully aware of broad political implications and the commitment which such a decision would signify. [garble] convinced that only decisive action of this nature, complemented by economic and other assistance (including intelligence) already being programmed, offers reasonable chance of shoring up JRG and non-extremist forces in bitter struggle to prevent takeover by extreme left in El Salvador. Were this to be done, it would of course

⁶ In telegram 7349 from San Salvador, December 23, the Embassy reported that the JRG had delivered a formal military assistance request to Devine during a December 22 meeting at the Embassy residence. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador Telegrams, 12/79) In telegram 7355 from San Salvador, December 24, the Embassy provided the full text of the JRG request for military assistance. (Ibid.)

be done at request of duly constituted government of El Salvador, recognized by most nations of the hemisphere, and in support of a program of political, economic and social reform rather than in defense of status quo or vested ingerests.⁷

11. As of Dec 18 JRG has reportedly decided to respond forcefully to armed challenge from extreme left and will almost certainly be requesting military assistance from USG. Given radicalization and increasingly [garble] strength of extreme left, decisive U.S. response of the kind outlined would not in itself guarantee survival of non-Communist government in El Salvador. Based on existing trends and information, however, alternative of any less immediate or vigorous USG support for JRG would almost certainly reduce its current prospects for survival. Related message follows.

Devine

⁷ In telegram 330681 to San Salvador, December 23, the Department noted that “a high-level statement of U.S. support for the Junta in the absence of some readily identifiable reason or occasion might lead to unhelpful speculation and not produce the benefit which is sought” and concluded that Devine’s proposals of an official visit by the JRG to Washington and a high-level visit to El Salvador by a U.S. official “would more naturally and productively” convey a declaration of support for the JRG. (Ibid.)

401. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, December 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Withdrawal of Dependents from El Salvador (S)

State, over the objections of the Ambassador and the Peace Corps, is ordering a substantial reduction of the number of dependents at our Mission and all the Peace Corps contingent.² While the security situation has deteriorated, especially in the countryside, there is no indication that dependents' safety is threatened, provided they take normal precautions. Nor am I convinced that the situation is worse today than before the October 15th coup. The only thing that would justify the withdrawal is events in Iran, not in El Salvador. (S)

At this moment, we need to find ways to provide immediate support to the Junta. The only alternative to their success is a bloody civil war. Withdrawal of our dependents is the worst thing we could do now; it would completely demoralize the already beleaguered government; it would be interpreted as a U.S. loss of confidence in the Junta and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 11/79-12/79. Secret. Sent for action. An unknown hand wrote at the top of the page: "RP. copy. Original hand-carried to ZB's office Saturday morning (22nd) by Flo."

² In telegram 287407 to San Salvador, November 3, the Department stated that leftist extremist groups were ready to escalate violence to weaken the JRG and intended to link the U.S. Government to the JRG and had "therefore turned their attacks on the United States." Noting deep concern "at the very highest levels of the Department," the Department suggested a security drawdown of U.S. personnel in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790505-0004) In telegram 315738 to San Salvador, December 8, the Department noted that Vance wanted personnel whose positions would be "phased out" for security reasons to depart quickly. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790566-0144) In telegram 321055 to San Salvador, December 13, the Department instructed the Embassy to "take immediate steps to reduce substantially the number of dependents at post." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790573-0486)

would be a significant morale boost for the terrorists.³ There are indications that the Junta has finally decided to bite the bullet and fight the terrorists. I have asked DOD to begin working on a range of alternative ways we can assist them to do this job. They promised me it after the holidays. (S)

By withdrawing our people, we will detract from the Junta's efforts to control the left, and ultimately increase the danger for all Americans in El Salvador. We should not panic. (S)

I have suggested in the memo attached at Tab I a list of five steps State ought to take soon to shore up support for the Junta, and one step they shouldn't take. (S)

I understand that the Secretary may be submitting a memorandum to you or the President on Monday on the Salvadorean situation, and that is why I am transmitting this memorandum to you sooner.⁴ I was told by State that this subject came up at the Friday breakfast, but it is not clear what was decided.⁵ Among the five steps I recommend is a meeting with the President, and you may want to check with him first on that. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I.⁶

³ In telegram 7195 from San Salvador, December 14, Devine wrote that a substantial reduction of dependent personnel would "very quickly become matter of public knowledge and inevitably have strong political and psychological impact on already precarious political situation in El Salvador." Also, noting the kidnapping of Peace Corps volunteer Deborah Loff, Devine endorsed the total withdrawal of the Peace Corps. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790576–0296) In a December 20 memorandum to Vance, Celeste opposed the withdrawal of the Peace Corps, terming such a proposal as "arbitrary and self-defeating." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Agency File, Box 16, Peace Corps, 6/79–7/80)

⁴ December 24. See Tab A, Document 403.

⁵ December 21. On December 20, Tarnoff sent Vance a memorandum for his breakfast with Carter outlining steps taken and planned to help the Junta. (Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, President's Breakfast, 9/1/79–12/31/79) According to a December 26 memorandum from Bowdler to Vance, Carter asked Vance during the December 21 breakfast meeting for a "detailed memorandum on the present situation in El Salvador and U.S. policy and initiatives." Bowdler transmitted a copy of the requested memorandum under the memorandum requesting that Vance sign it. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador, Misc. Memoranda, Nov.–Dec., 1979) The final version of the memorandum is printed as Document 403. No other record of the December 21 meeting has been found.

⁶ Brzezinski did not indicate his preference regarding this recommendation; however, he did sign the memorandum.

Tab I**Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Vance⁷**

Washington, December 26, 1979

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to El Salvador and the Drawdown of U.S. Personnel (S)

I am concerned that the consequences of the decision to require a substantial reduction of the number of dependents in El Salvador could have very serious repercussions on our broader interests, and indeed could contribute to less security for the remaining personnel in the country. (S)

A drawdown could be interpreted as a loss of confidence by the U.S. in the Junta (JRG), and could boost the morale of the leftists. We should not ask anyone to stay in El Salvador against his or her will, nor should we allow any U.S. personnel to remain if a clear threat exists. All I suggest is that we not implement an across-the-board drawdown unless our Ambassador and the people on the ground believe the threat demands it, and that no other response is satisfactory. (S)

We also need to take immediate steps to show our support for the Junta, politically, diplomatically, economically, and militarily. I am persuaded that the five members of the Junta are deeply committed to human rights and social and political reforms, but they face a war against committed leftist guerrillas, and unless they gain our support early on, their chances of implementing their reforms may not be too good. (S)

(1) *Political Support.* I understand that the Junta (JRG) has recently requested a meeting with the President in early February. We should issue an invitation and announce it in such a way as to show our support for the direction the JRG is taking in El Salvador. We also should try to protect the flanks of the JRG by briefing U.S. human rights groups on the situation in El Salvador, and the acceleration of the guerrilla war by the extreme left. Undoubtedly as the violence picks up, these groups will begin accusing the JRG of human rights violations.

⁷ Secret. A copy was sent to Brown.

Unless there is evidence suggesting that the JRG is condoning such violations, we ought to try to dampen that criticism by keeping these groups fully informed. You may want to consider speaking to Father Healey from Georgetown; he knows and understands El Salvador and could be very helpful. (S)

(2) *Diplomatic Support.* We should continue to encourage other countries in the region to show their support for the JRG. Panama and Honduras could be particularly helpful, as could Venezuela and Colombia. You may want to consider sending Chris⁸ or Bill Bowdler on a quick trip to the country for an assessment. A trip by SOUTHCOM General Nutting also could be helpful.⁹ Archbishop Romero's understanding and support for the decisions of the JRG are essential, and if you think it would be helpful, I would be happy to ask the Pope for his help on this. (S)

(3) *Economic Aid.* When the aid team returns from their inspection, we ought to reassess our program for FY 80 and FY 81 and seek increases, if necessary. The present FY 81 level of \$7 million is unhelpful to our interests. We also ought to continue to encourage the government to work with the IMF. It is difficult to encourage foreign investment at this time, when we ourselves are considering pulling out, but we will want to think about how to do this when the situation improves. (S)

(4) *Military Aid.* If Congress approves the reprogramming of \$300,000 for MTT's, as I expect they will, we will be in a better position to help the Salvadoreans and also to identify their most serious problems. In the meantime, we ought to be examining a range of possible alternatives to help the government fight the war against the guerrillas, if they so request. I understand that there was some problem with licenses on various munitions items for El Salvador. I trust these have been resolved, and the licenses have been granted. (S)

I believe if we take all these steps, and we are careful with U.S. personnel, we will not only have ensured the safety of Americans there, but also we will give the new Junta a chance to succeed in implementing its democratic reforms. (S)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

⁸ Warren Christopher.

⁹ On his copy of the memorandum received on December 27, Brown wrote: "I agree with ZB's approach. Let's follow up on Nutting's visit, & on Mil. Aid." (Washington National Records Center, FRC 330-82-0205, El Salvador 1979) In telegram 450 from San Salvador, January 18, 1980, Devine recommended against a visit by Nutting due to the Salvadoran military's split over the retention of Garcia as Minister of Defense. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800031-0505) In telegram 18042 to USCIN-SCO Quarry Heights, January 21, 1980, the Department agreed with Devine and deferred Nutting's visit. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800036-1084)

402. Memorandum From Vice President Mondale to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 31, 1979

I have been noticing with growing concern the intelligence reports of Cuban covert activities including the supplying of arms to the radicals in El Salvador leading to the destabilization of that government. I don't believe it's enough to simply disclose Cuban activities there, although I think that's important. And I would hope that we could assemble immediately a small staff to consider what activities, both in the intelligence collection and perhaps even in the covert field, we might pursue to help defend the El Salvadorian government. I have always opposed American covert activity to destabilize another government, but it seems to me this is the other side of the coin, where it's not just enough to use words in the defense of a legitimate government which is being destabilized, in this case by the Cubans, and I'm sure with the help of the Russians. I'm not sure, nor am I recommending that we take any steps, but I think it ought to be thoroughly explored and quickly.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 11-12/79. Top Secret.

403. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 5, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador

The situation in El Salvador is quite fluid. Several members of the Junta and the Cabinet have apparently carried out their threat to resign if the military chose not to accelerate the process of reform or to curb their unlawful use of force.² The Christian Democratic Party (PDC), after a serious internal crisis, has apparently coalesced around a bold proposal. Napoleon Duarte, the leader of the PDC, has publicly offered PDC participation in the formation of a new government and has sought to down-play this current crisis as a “natural development in the revolutionary process” rather than as a “collapse of the revolution.” The PDC initiative is an encouraging sign, but we will need to wait to see how the negotiations play out. (S)

Cy's memo at Tab A discusses the problems which undid the current junta and outlines his recommended policy. Essentially, the junta has found itself under continuous pressure from the extreme left, which Castro has helped to unify. At the same time, the right-wing military has inhibited the reform process and refused to curb its excessive repression. Under these conditions, the junta and the Cabinet split. (S)

We have informed the junta repeatedly that we are prepared to be helpful in dealing with their security, intelligence, and economic situation. Teams from State, AID, DOD, and CIA have all completed assessments of the situation and what we can do to help. We are ready to send in military training teams and political operatives and to expand our aid program when the situation clarifies, and the government requests it. Cy also wants to “substantially reduce” the number of our mission dependents and other Americans in El Salvador for security reasons. While I obviously agree that we do not want to keep Americans there if the chances of physical harm are high, I believe we need to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1/80. Secret. A copy was sent to Mondale. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum.

² Junta members Mayorga and Ungo resigned on January 3 along with many Cabinet members. (Telegram 50, January 4, and Telegram 40, January 4 both from San Salvador; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800009–1034 and D800008–0447) Junta member Andino announced his resignation on January 4. (Telegram 72 from San Salvador, January 5; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800011–0412)

be careful about taking steps—such as pulling out large numbers of Americans—that could unintentionally destabilize the government and be interpreted as a loss of our confidence in the government. I have told this to Cy; you may want to mention it as well.³ (S)

The Vice President has written me, expressing his great concern about the deteriorating situation in El Salvador. He recommends that we set up a small group to explore all available alternatives.⁴ An informal group involving my staff, Assistant Secretary Bowdler, and CIA is following developments closely, and we have a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in San Salvador now helping our Ambassador. We have sent cables to countries that have important interests in Salvador, including Venezuela, Colombia, Portugal, Germany, and Costa Rica, bringing them up-to-date and encouraging them to help the Salvadoreans find a way out of the crisis. We believe the PDC plan may represent the best way out of the crisis, and we are supporting it and urging the military to be flexible. (S)

Once the situation solidifies, an SCC meeting examining our medium-term alternatives might be in order. (S)

Tab A

Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter⁵

Washington, December 26, 1979

SUBJECT

El Salvador: Prospects for the Junta and U.S. Policy

THE SITUATION

The five-man military/civilian Junta that took office following the October 15 military coup against the repressive government of President Romero finds itself in serious difficulties because of inherent weaknesses, the immediate violent opposition of the extreme left, and

³ See Tab I, Document 401.

⁴ See Document 402.

⁵ Secret. Carter wrote at the top of the first page: "Cy—Move on program. Don't pull people out precipitously. J." According to a draft copy of the memorandum, Bowdler and Wilson drafted the memorandum on December 24 in response to Carter's December 21 request. (See footnote 5, Document 401) It was cleared by Feinberg and D. Randolph (INR) and in substance by Donald Planty (H) and David Cox (PM). (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, El Salvador, Misc. Memoranda, Nov.–Dec., 1979)

the latent threat of the far right. In trying to follow a reformist program it is buffeted by cross currents and challenges that inhibit resolute action to implement specific projects or deal effectively with disruption of public order.

Junta's Program: The Junta has called for fundamental socio-economic reforms, including higher wages, nationalization of the marketing of export crops, agrarian reform, free trade union organization and tax reform. On the political side it has called for the democratization of the political process, including free elections and the right of all political groupings to organize freely, and respect for human rights. It has failed, however, to come up with concrete proposals on many of these key issues and has not yet developed a consensus within the Junta on many points essential to governing effectively. This has produced a dangerous sense of drift.

Vulnerabilities: Consolidation of the Junta's position is hampered by these vulnerabilities:

—The Junta has inherent weaknesses, including political inexperience, ineffective collegial decision making, fundamental philosophical and ideological differences and a tendency to hold to the views of their constituencies rather than working for consensus.

—The left's systematic use of violent tactics to undermine the Junta's authority and provoke a repressive reaction results from a realization that the Junta's reformist program would destroy the extreme left's use of widespread popular discontent as a vehicle to power.

—The Junta's proposed reforms, which are essential for building a strong popular following and depriving the extreme left of appealing issues, threaten the economic interests of the still powerful right; this poses the danger of a coup by conservative elements and produces caution and indecision in the Junta.

—Many of the progressive young military officers who promoted the coup are becoming increasingly impatient at the apparent lack of action by the Junta and could move to take power into their own hands.

—At the same time the proficiency of the security forces has deteriorated to such a degree that their ability to deal with a sustained guerrilla effort by the extreme left is in question.

Factors favoring the Junta: Despite the foregoing weaknesses, the Junta still has these factors working in its favor:

—The Junta has its priorities straight in emphasizing socio-economic reforms and moving cautiously in dealing with public disturbances so as not to adversely affect its popular base.

—Broad support from the Church and moderate organizations which opposed the previous governments, conditioned on implementation of the reform program.

—Continuing approbation and support of most of the international community.

—An extreme left still not unified or able to launch a full-scale offensive against the government.

—An economy which although under increasing attack by the extreme left retains a strong productive capacity.

THE PROSPECTS

In the two months it has been in office, the Junta has not consolidated its position as it should. It is aware of this and under the continued pressure of the extreme left has come to realize that it must act on both the reform/development and security fronts if it is to halt the deterioration of its position.

The Junta's most immediate threat is a determined and violent challenge from the groups which comprise the extreme left. Intelligence sources indicate that preparations to launch a concerted attack on the government are under way.

The danger from elements of the far right is still incipient, but nonetheless real. How they react will depend on their perception of the reforms and the ability of the Junta to control leftist violence.

We believe the Junta can meet these threats if it:

—moves quickly to organize itself and implement significant elements of its reform and development program;

—responds firmly (but with due regard to human rights) to current efforts to undermine its authority;

—takes immediate steps to upgrade the capabilities of its security forces; and

—does a much better job of publicizing the mobilizing public opinion in support of its programs.

In order to improve the lot of the underprivileged the Junta has raised wages significantly in certain sectors and frozen the prices of some essential commodities. Over the weekend it announced the nationalization of the foreign marketing of principal agricultural products. Last week it decided to use measured force in dealing with the violent tactics of the far left and is already acting on this decision. It has been slow to upgrade its security forces, but under the prodding of our intelligence and military survey teams it has formally requested USG assistance. It has also invited a New York public relations firm with considerable experience in advising democratic governments in Latin America to help devise a strategy for winning support at home and abroad.

We cannot predict whether the Junta will correct the deficiencies in time to meet the challenge from the left or possibly from the right.

The imponderables are too many. But with the advantages it now enjoys, coupled with timely action along the lines described above, the Junta stands a better than even chance to consolidate its position. In this confrontation with the far left the role of our Embassy in counseling the Junta and our ability to respond rapidly to essential needs will be very important.

UNITED STATES POLICY

In supporting the Junta we identify with forces advocating basic economic and social change and a return to democratic procedures. The alternatives to the Junta are inimical to our interest: a takeover by the far right will further polarize and radicalize the crisis, while a victory by the far left, because of the strong class antagonism existing in El Salvador, will usher in a revolutionary regime more radical than the Sandinistas. The impact on Honduras and Guatemala of either outcome, following on the heels of revolutionary success in Nicaragua, would be highly destabilizing.

We therefore need to give maximum support to the Junta while avoiding too close an identification that could be exploited by the extreme left. The far right will be inhibited by our involvement especially as it serves to bolster the Junta against the radical left. Our strategy for helping the Junta is based on these elements:

We have already:

- asked Ambassador Devine to increase his efforts as a catalyst in helping the Junta see the seriousness of the extreme left's challenge and the need for cohesion and decisiveness in maintaining its authority;

- asked Ambassador Devine to devise an approach to the Junta to elicit Andean and Mexican assistance in order to multilateralize the support effort. We would move behind the Junta's initiative and encourage those governments to be forthcoming;

- provided the GOES with tear gas and other nonlethal crowd control equipment and an MTT to give instruction in its use (\$205,000);

- sent an AID team to develop with GOES officials high-impact projects in rural and urban areas pegged to a target FY 80 aid level of \$35 million;

- sent intelligence and military teams to assess needs for U.S. remedial assistance in training and equipment;

- reached inter-agency agreement to reprogram \$3.5 million of FMS financing (when we have our FY 80 appropriation) for purchases of most immediately needed materiel; and

- notified Congress of our intent to reprogram \$300,000 of IMET for provision of MTT's and other training to cover most immediate deficiencies.

We have under consideration:

—a visit by Junta members to the U.S. for discussions with official and private groups in early February. (If your schedule is too full to receive them, we might follow the pattern used with the Nicaraguan Junta and have them meet with the Vice President with you dropping in);

—in connection with the foregoing visit an appropriate high-level statement welcoming their plans to return to constitutional procedures with full respect for human rights and indicating support for their reform and development programs;

—a visit to El Salvador in early January by a high U.S. official to underscore our support of the Junta; and

—gearing up a people-to-people program for El Salvador as soon as the security situation permits Americans to travel there without serious risk; meanwhile we are working on efforts which do not require such travel.

In order to reduce our vulnerabilities we are:

—substantially reducing the number of U.S. mission dependents;

—closing out the small HEW-malaria and IAGS-mapping operations; and

—working on a further scale-down of the Peace Corps presence, looking toward close-out if the situation deteriorates further.

404. Memorandum From the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America (Davis) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner and the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (Carlucci)¹

NFAC–0552–80

Washington, January 18, 1980

SUBJECT

Mini SCC Meeting on El Salvador, 18 January 1980, 1630–1730 hours

1. The meeting addressed both short-term and long-term aspects of US policy toward El Salvador. Aspects affecting CIA interests and tasking of CIA are covered in paragraphs 11–13.

2. The meeting was chaired by David Aaron. Attendees included: Pastor, NSC Staff; Assistant Secretary Bowdler and Ambassador-designate White of State; General Pustay, JCS; Frank Kramer and Admiral Schuller, DOD/ISA; NIO/LA and [*name not declassified*] of OPA/CIA.

3. Aaron opened the meeting by underscoring the extreme concern of the White House and of top Department officials about the Salvadoran situation.

4. Bowdler emphasized his own concern about the seriousness of the situation and presented the bottom line of short-term US policy as getting the government going so that it can protect itself from the extreme left challenge. He presented various options for pressuring the military and Christian Democrat (PDC) members of the junta to settle their differences, complete the forming of a cabinet, and open the way for US security as well as economic assistance² (see discussion paper dated 18 January 1980, attached).³

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 11: (SCC) Central America. Secret; Sensitive. Sent through the Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment. Neither a completed version of the minutes nor a summary of conclusions for the January 18 SCC meeting have been found. Pastor's handwritten notes are in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1/80.

² In telegram 274 from San Salvador, January 11, Devine reported that he had met with the newly constituted JRG on January 10 and briefed the members on the "present status of USG proposed programs of assistance in economic, military and intelligence fields." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800018–0809) In telegram 391 from San Salvador, January 16, Devine reported that Dada had telephoned him to give a "green light" regarding the proposed U.S. economic assistance program. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder)

³ Not attached. The January 18 mini-SCC discussion paper which was sent to Mondale, Vance, Brown, Jones and Turner under a January 18 memorandum, is in the Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 121, SCM 107, 1/18/80, Mini-SCC El Salvador.

5. The group expressed general support for Bowdler's conclusion that Defense Minister Garcia be kept in place for the time being, despite concerted PDC and some military efforts to remove him. Bowdler feels that the military is too weak for Garcia to be removed for political reasons (i.e., to the left, including the left-wing minority of the PDC, Garcia is a symbol of an independent law-and-order military). Bowdler suggested that the PDC be told that Garcia could be removed later, under circumstances less threatening to military unity and effectiveness.

6. Bowdler reported (a) he intended to visit El Salvador next week to effect the above,⁴ (b) he already had sent his assistant, James Cheek, to El Salvador to pave the way, and (c) he plans to ask the Venezuelans to send a representative to urge PDC leader Duarte to resolve the present impasse.

7. Aaron suggested that the US use its leverage on the Salvadoran military for some symbolic act—such as a declaration affirming military subordination to the junta government—to defuse the General Garcia issue. The PDC, at the same time, should be pressured into accepting US security assistance, which party leaders had not yet approved.

8. *[less than 1 line not declassified]* said that key players inside and outside El Salvador did not know how to read US intentions regarding staying the course. If US policy concludes that an extreme left takeover is intolerable and communicates our intentions to stay the course (even behind a center-right government without the PDC), the US would probably have greater leverage to get the forward movement needed to confront the rapidly growing threat from the extreme left. This would also give us a sounder footing for (a) giving Cuba some pause in aiding the extremists, (b) gaining Honduran cooperation in curbing infiltration of arms for the extremists through the Salvadoran border, and (c) pressuring Panama and Costa Rica not to assist the extremists.

9. Aaron said that we had to get the US policy line out through a high-level statement. Pastor urged that this be tied to Cuban intervention in El Salvador.

⁴ Devine wrote to Bowdler in telegram 373 from San Salvador, January 15, to renew his warning about the deteriorating situation in El Salvador and to endorse U.S. support for the Junta. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1879) Bowdler responded in telegram 12255 to San Salvador, January 16: "The problem is not the level or nature of our planned economic and military assistance programs but our inability to get even these programs under way. Our top priority effort, therefore, must be to press the JRG to quickly put together an effective government apparatus, launch its reform programs and open to the door to USG economic and military assistance by reconfirming its earlier request." Bowdler also noted that he would be visiting San Salvador the following week to "help resolve these issues." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1872; see also footnote 2, Document 406)

10. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] pointed out that the church in El Salvador was making soundings against US security assistance and about an extreme left-center left government as the best way to avoid a civil war. It was decided to request the Vatican to make representations to Archbishop Romero against these leanings.

CIA Interests and Tasking

11. Aaron expressed with emphasis and repetition the need [*2 lines not declassified*] He wanted a coordinated CIA–DOD plan on how to expand our intelligence in the region and enhance the intelligence capabilities of the Honduran and Salvador governments.

12. Aaron asked [*less than 1 line not declassified*] to take the lead in developing ideas on strengthening the perception of US policy determination to resist the fall of El Salvador to leftist extremists.

13. [*1 paragraph (3 lines) not declassified*]

14. Notes

a. Aaron urged that El Salvador get as much aid as quickly as possible. He indicated that Italian-made helicopters were available.

b. Bowdler indicated that the State paper on Caribbean policy was ready to go to the Secretary and would soon be available for an interagency airing.

c. General Pustay indicated that we should not make avoidance of civil war a top priority, because this could undercut our other objectives.

d. Bowdler suggested that we invite Duarte to Washington to emphasize US backing for reform as well as for curbing the extreme left.

e. NIO/LA stressed the growing strength of the extreme left to emphasize that reversing the situation in El Salvador required more than government unity and determination. Pastor praised the high quality and usefulness of the advanced draft of the OPA interagency paper on Salvadoran extremists.⁵

Jack Davis⁶

⁵ Not found.

⁶ Davis initialed “D” above his typed signature.

405. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador (S)

On January 18, David Aaron chaired a mini-SCC meeting to assess the situation in El Salvador, and to decide on the strategy for Assistant Secretary Bowdler's trip to Central America this week.² (S)

The immediate problem in El Salvador is the inability by the Christian Democrats and reformist military to reach agreement on a new Cabinet or on the direction which the new government should take. The Christian Democrats (PDC) are insisting on the resignation of the hard-line Defense Minister, General Garcia, because they feel that association with him would taint their Party and make it more difficult for them to attract popular support away from the revolutionary front groups. Bowdler will try to persuade the PDC and the military to put their differences aside so that they can address more effectively the armed struggle which lies ahead. As an added carrot, he will offer our economic and military aid.³ (S)

Once the Junta requests military aid, DOD will expedite its release, and we will speak to the Italians about selling helicopters to the government. In addition, we will assist the Junta in public relations to make clear that US military assistance is our response to Cuban and other external involvement, and that it represents our support for the reformist goals of the new government. In addition, Bowdler will encourage leaders from the PDC, including Duarte, to come to Washington for

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 34, Meetings—Vance/Brown/Brzezinski, 1/80–2/80. Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "We have to wait for Bowdler's return." Denend wrote at the top of the page: "1/23 ZB—this was used as a DR today. LD."

² See footnote 2, Document 406.

³ In a January 22 memorandum to Vance, in advance of a January 23 Vance, Brown, and Brzezinski luncheon, Bartholomew noted that a \$55 million economic assistance package was proceeding, but security assistance was delayed because the junta "has not yet agreed to ask for it." (Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Vance/Brown/Brzezinski Lunches Jan./Feb./Mar.) In a January 23 memorandum to Aaron and Denend, Brzezinski reported the decisions reached at his January 23 luncheon meeting with Vance and Brown, writing: "wait for Bowdler to report and to take up at next V-B-B. In the meantime, check about interception of Cuban planes to Honduras." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1/80)

talks. Such meetings would provide us the opportunity to demonstrate our firm commitment to the new government. (S)

Our economic assistance efforts are on track. Since Archbishop Romero is so influential in Nicaragua, and since he could be doing much more to strengthen the moderate groups, we are considering approaching him through the Vatican.⁴ (S)

[2 lines not declassified] Honduras, which has become the conduit for arms smuggling to Salvador. I intend to request a broad military-intelligence review of our operations in Central America in order to better adjust our resources to our requirements.⁵ (S)

⁴ In a January 25 memorandum to Vance, Brzezinski noted Bowdler's argument that "a neutral position from the Church must be achieved" in El Salvador and stated that Carter "noted that we might talk to 'el Papa.'" (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 123, Vance, Miscellaneous Communications 1/80–4/80)

⁵ Brzezinski's January 22 memorandum to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Jones, and Turner requested an interagency assessment of the "current military and intelligence needs in Central America." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 121, SCM 107, 1/18/80, Mini SCC El Salvador)

406. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 28, 1980, 1:30–2:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador and Central America (U)

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Ambassador William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs

OSD

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

Frank Kramer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs

JCS

Lt General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Jack Davis, NIO for Latin America

OMB

Ed Sanders, Deputy Associate Director for International Affairs

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Ambassador Henry Owen

NSC

Robert Pastor

Minutes

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by suggesting that Ambassador Bowdler report on his trip throughout Central America.² (U)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC–274, 2/15/80, El Salvador. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. For the summary of conclusions of the meeting, see Tab A, Document 407.

² In telegram 542 from San Salvador, January 24, the Embassy reported on Bowdler and Devine's January 23 meeting with the members of the JRG and Foreign Minister Chavez Mena: "Bowdler cited profound USG interest in JRG success in its reform effort and willingness to help." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800042–0519) Bowdler reported on his trip to El Salvador in telegram 529 from San Salvador, January 24: "My discussions have served to confirm internal conflicts and drift but have turned up little that is new." He also noted that "the far left meanwhile is picking up in strength," as indicated by the January 22 demonstration, which "achieved two objectives:—it showed marked progress toward unity and drawing power;—the shooting cast it in the role of the victim and gave it more grist for attacking the PDC-military alliance." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1860) The *Washington Post* reported on January 23: "At least 20 persons were killed and more than 120 wounded yesterday when a street demonstration organized by El Salvador's newly formed united revolutionary front ended in a gun battle with government and paramilitary forces." ("20 Die as Gun Battle Ends Demonstration in El Salvador," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1980, p. A26)

Ambassador Bowdler said that there are two crises of greatest concern to us in the region, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In Nicaragua, the basic problem is how to get the economy moving. If there is no progress made within the next six months, the government will have to take some sort of action. He doesn't know how they will deal with it, whether they will turn to the left and crack down, or whether they will become more pragmatic. There is evidence of both strategies at the current time. On the one hand, they have invited the cotton growers to participate in the discussions on the development of agriculture. On the other hand, the Sandinistas have cracked down hard on the Trotskyists in Nicaragua. (S)

Bowdler said that in El Salvador, the PDC—Military Coalition is highly tenuous. It has not yet jelled. In order to succeed in pulling itself out of a tailspin, it will need to do three things: (1) broaden its base; (2) implement its program of social reforms; and (3) strengthen its defenses from the extreme left and the extreme right. The base of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) is not as large as the military originally thought, or even as large as the PDC had thought. It has been eroded greatly over the last eight years. They do not have a large public backing at this time. The military are divided along generational, rank, and to a certain extent, ideological lines. If the Junta moves too rapidly, the military could split. The PDC has similar problems; 30 percent within its ranks are more inclined to go to the left. The only reasonable chance this Junta has of pulling itself together is if it satisfies the three conditions he mentions above. (S)

Secretary Vance said that the way to broaden the base of the junta is to draw from the Center and the Right, and isolate the extremes. (S)

Bowdler summarized several of the basic policy questions: How to build cohesion in the junta? How to get the church to be neutral? How to get the government to accept our military assistance? On the last question, the Christian Democrats said that they need a "multilateral cover" in order to bring in our military assistance.³ They fear that if we go in alone, that will become the battle cry of the extreme Left, and they do not want it to happen like that. They are quite willing to accept our presence in a multinational program, and they have already approached the Spanish and the Germans and several other countries. They want the Colombians to help on guerrilla warfare, the Spanish to assist in the National Guard, and they want us to help in surveillance

³ In telegram 545 from San Salvador, January 24, the Embassy reported that Majano had "restated the case for multilateral cover for dispatch" of U.S. Military Training Teams to El Salvador during the second day of Bowdler's visit. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1853)

and interception, and to provide equipment and civic action techniques to the military. (S)

In response to a question from Dr. Brzezinski, Bowdler said that none of this is moving yet. We have approached the Salvadoreans, and have approached each of these governments, and by Monday,⁴ we hope to formalize the requests. The Andean Mission, composed of representatives from Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, will arrive tomorrow. Bowdler had spoken to Herrera about this. (S)

Pastor said that President Herrera has been moving extremely slowly on this, based on his last conversation with Ambassador Luers. He wondered whether we shouldn't press Herrera by a Presidential letter. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that Herrera may be waiting for the report from the Andean group. Perhaps we will need to follow-up after the Andean group returns. (S)

Secretary Vance asked whether it would be worth another push to Herrera before the report. Ambassador Bowdler said there would not be any harm to it, and Secretary Vance said that then we should do it. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that whatever we choose to do in El Salvador we must also follow in Honduras. We do not know for sure where the arms or the guerrillas are coming from, but it's very possible that they're coming from Honduras. (S)

General Pustay wondered whether we shouldn't be building up the OAS peacekeeping force on the border. Ambassador Bowdler said that he wouldn't try to get them involved at this point. (S)

Secretary Vance said that the Mexican Foreign Minister believes the only way to get through this current crisis in El Salvador is by revolution. They probably are helping the Marxists. Dr. Brzezinski asked whether the Mexicans were also including the Guatemalans as possible candidates for revolutions. Secretary Vance said that apparently all that they are considering now is Nicaragua and El Salvador. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that Guatemala is also clearly a target. In Honduras, bank robberies and kidnappings have already begun. This is probably the first phase of a guerrilla struggle. In Guatemala, Castro is urging 3 or 4 of the revolutionary groups to unite. This is the same pattern that he has followed elsewhere. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked if all the steps that Bowdler had outlined occur and arms are funneled through third countries, what is his estimate of the likelihood of the Left taking over? (S)

⁴ February 4.

Ambassador Bowdler said that it would be a tough battle. If the junta begins to succeed, it will get increasingly attacked by both extremes. He said he thought the junta would stand a reasonable chance of taking care of the Left, if we can hold the Right in place. If the junta does not succeed, Bowdler thinks that the PDC will pull out, and the military and the extreme Right will take over. (S)

Ambassador Owen said that we will have a civil war regardless of which way it goes. Ambassador Bowdler said that is true, but the difference is that we can support *this* government, whereas we would have real problems with an extreme Right government. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we have given this issue only sporadic attention because we have had so many other demands on our time. Also, because of a stringent budget, we have not been able to have the flexibility that we need. If Ambassador Bowdler's analysis is correct, then he would conclude that this is an extremely serious situation. Secondly, that the Salvadorean crisis has important political implications for U.S. policy all over the world. Third, we need to look hard at our program, based on the assumption that this *is* a very serious problem for the United States. (S)

Secretary Vance said that he is operating under that assumption. The big question he has is, do we have enough funds to do the job? (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked what it would take to counter the Left in El Salvador. (S)

Secretary Vance said that there is a real mess down there now. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we need a combination of economic and political measures to deal with the problem there. Perhaps we also need a Presidential statement. (S)

Ambassador Owen said that this is a very different situation than in Afghanistan. A Presidential statement there drew the line. A Presidential statement on El Salvador could well be counterproductive. (S)

Graham Claytor said that what we need is a multilateral cover. We should focus on trying to get one or two other countries in with arms or advisers, and then we could send in the MTT's. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we make absolutely clear to the Mexicans and the Cubans that there are certain things we just will not tolerate. In that sense it should be a little like Afghanistan; we did a lot in that case that the Russians did not anticipate. Perhaps we should try to get this across to them before the event in El Salvador. (S)

Ambassador Owen said that it was a lot harder to do things in El Salvador. What we are doing in economic aid to El Salvador is not negligible. If we are going to think about a supplemental, then we're not talking about trying to get any money in until at least July. (S)

Secretary Vance asked whether the \$200M requested by the Salvadorean junta for balance of payments support represented a valid request. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that we need to look at that very carefully. (S)

Ambassador Owen asked whether there was any way that we could speed up aid to El Salvador. *Secretary Vance* said that part of the problem is that we can't get the junta to move on it quickly. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler [1 line not declassified] (S)

Ambassador Owen said that if this case is that important, we should send a high-level emissary to the region. (S)

Secretary Vance said that he supports that idea, if we do not get an immediate response to the request for multilateral support for El Salvador. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that the Andean mission would be making a report by next Wednesday.⁵ We should follow-up after that report with Ambassador Luers and in the other capitals. (S)

Secretary Vance said that we should go in and urge the Spanish and the Germans to help. We should send Todman to Madrid and we should also invite the Germans in to meet with us. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should press them further, diplomatically, and consider sending an emissary. On the Pope, we are already contacting him, but perhaps we should consider more. (S)

Secretary Vance asked whether we needed any increases in FMS. *Ambassador Bowdler* said that we need the MTTs in there first; then, we should find out what more they will need. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that we should beef up the CIA and DOD; these agencies should let us know if we need an increase in their personnel. (S)

David Aaron asked whether we are structurally prepared to deal with this problem well. He suggested we consider setting up a task force on El Salvador and Honduras in order to give full-time regular attention. *Ambassador Bowdler* said that he would recommend that Jim Cheek chair such a task force. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that would be very useful. The task force could meet regularly and send reports to the NSC and to State. *David Aaron* said that the task force could also develop psywar plans, and think about propaganda initiatives. *Secretary Vance* asked if we should develop additional reprogramming of \$300,000 for IMET. *Ambassador Bowdler* said that we should. *Secretary Vance* said that in that case, let's develop the proposals. *Secretary Vance* asked whether we should grant Salvador 12-year financing of

⁵ February 6.

FMS rather than 7 years. He also asked that we take another look at the balance-of-payments request by El Salvador. (S)

Claytor suggested that CIA and DOD develop a plan to interdict the flow of guerrillas and arms into the area. Secretary Vance asked Turner to develop a paper on what Mexico and Panama are doing, and what we should do, about that. Secretary Vance said that the Panamanians may be helping the guerrillas get passports, much as they did with the case of Nicaragua. (S)

Jack Davis of CIA said that the Panamanians are on the fence right now, and they want to be on the winning side. Secretary Vance said that we should send Ambassador Moss in to talk with Torrijos on this soon. Ambassador Bowdler said that we should try to involve the Mexicans, perhaps through an economic regional plan. But first we need to find out their intentions. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he realizes the sensitivity of the region, but he wondered if it really is counterproductive to let them know that we care about what's going on there. Isn't it worse if the area thinks that we don't give a damn? (S)

Secretary Vance said that the region will look much more at what we do than what we say. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that a private message is what he is talking about. Ambassador Owen asked whether we have made clear to the Nicaraguans our concern about this matter, and Ambassador Bowdler said that he had gotten a flat statement from Borge, Nicaragua's Minister of Interior, that the Nicaraguan government is not supporting the guerrilla groups in any way at this time. Pastor suggested that the President send a letter to several of these Heads of State, expressing our concern and the seriousness with which we view the issue. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should suggest a letter from President Carter to the Heads of Government of the region, perhaps including Panama and Mexico, restating our commitment to non-intervention, but expressing concern about what the Cubans are doing and about the problems in the area, and what we would be able to accept. He said that the acceptance of the principle of non-intervention by the United States does not entail a license for others to intervene. The message must be very carefully drafted. Secretary Vance agreed to try that idea. (S)

David Aaron asked DOD and CIA what kind of local and other forces would be necessary to cope with the threat in the region. He wondered whether the scale of our effort would be commensurate with the threat that we sense. What do we really need? (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we are really faced with a dilemma. We have moved to a policy of non-intervention, but we need to make

others understand that American policy does not mean a green light for others. Our policy depends on others' actions. (S)

Ambassador Owen said that we should convey concern to the governments of Mexico and Nicaragua that our policies to them and their policies to others will affect our relationship. Our posture should be firm. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that at the same time, however, we want to stick with the same course that we have developed from the beginning. The major theme in the message is that we don't want to reverse history. (S)

In response to a question from Secretary Vance, about whether this should be an oral or written message, *Dr. Brzezinski* suggested we decide this once we receive the letter and check the circumstances. He asked what capabilities do we have to divide the Left. (S)

Admiral Turner [1 line not declassified] We now have a counter-terrorist program, but not a counter-insurgency program yet. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked Mr. Bowdler whether the Colombians will be very helpful on training against guerrillas. Bowdler said their experience is extensive but ineffectual. (S)

Mr. Pastor pointed out the necessity of trying to give the Junta a sense of momentum. To do this, we will need to help them regain support from at least one or two of the moderate left groups which have gone to the left. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he would consider writing a simple letter to the Pope. He had discussed Central America with the Pope during their dinner in Washington. He asked if State could give him a draft.⁶ Secretary Vance said that State had already talked to Cassaroli, so this won't be news to the Pope, but the important point is the Pope has to get to Romero, and call him back from Salvador to talk to him. (S)

Deputy Secretary Clayton asked about our ability to intercept arms shipments. Turner said that there are persistent reports about commercial airlines bringing in military equipment, but we haven't been able to nail this down yet. Jack Davis said it is important to give Honduras a capability to move against the *apparat* which is being set up there. (S)

Mr. Aaron asked whether there are Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras, whom we have trained, who could be helpful. He said that he sensed that there is a lack of cadres to intercept such arms shipments. (S)

⁶ Tarnoff sent Brzezinski a draft letter from Brzezinski to Pope John Paul II on January 31. (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 182, SCC-261, El Salvador, 1/28/80)

Mr. Davis said that there are people who could be used, but he didn't think that we should use Nicaraguans. He would recommend we devote much more time to building up Honduran capabilities. (S)

Mr. Aaron said that we need dozens of people, not just one or two in the area. Unless this is a major organizational effort, we will not be able to succeed. (S)

Mr. Bowdler said that there is too much of a risk to get the Nicaraguans involved. He recommends that we beef up our military group [less than 1 line not declassified] in both countries. (S)

General Pustay [1 line not declassified] He also said that we need a few victories in order to change the momentum. (S)

Mr. Pastor [1 line not declassified] If we are going to deal with this growing problem, we are going to need to think in much larger terms than just that. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then summarized the necessary tasks to be done as a result of the meeting:

(1) The CIA should prepare a report suggesting ways to divide the extremist groups in El Salvador, and persuade the moderate left groups to give their support to the Junta.⁷ (S)

(2) State should continue to encourage the Vatican to try to influence the Salvadorean church in a favorable direction and should prepare a letter for Dr. Brzezinski's possible use. (S)

(3) State Department, in consultation with CIA and Defense, should prepare a report describing the threat to established governments in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, and propose alternative ways to cope with this.⁸ (S)

(The other tasks suggested by Dr. Brzezinski are in his tasking memorandum of January 31, 1980.)⁹ (U)

⁷ See footnote 6, Document 409.

⁸ See Document 410.

⁹ In a January 31 memorandum to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Jones, and Turner, Brzezinski requested a number of additional reports (described in Document 407). (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 1/80) For the outcome of Brzezinski's instructions given in the January 31 memorandum, see Document 411 and footnote 8 thereto.

407. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 29, 1980

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to El Salvador

On January 28 I chaired an SCC to hear Ambassador Bowdler's report on his trip to El Salvador and the rest of Central America and to decide what additional steps were needed to bolster the new government in El Salvador and prevent the extreme left from seizing power.²

The CIA has written a report which describes the extraordinarily rapid growth of guerrilla groups and their popular front organizations in El Salvador in the past year.³ Hardcore insurgents have grown from 200 in 1977 to more than 2,000 today. Through kidnappings in 1979, these groups may have amassed \$40 million for weapons and operations. With Castro's personal influence, the two leading guerrilla groups, their front organizations, and the Salvadorean Communist Party merged this month, giving them added strength. The CIA concludes that "if external support for the insurgents is half of what it was in Nicaragua, the extremists in El Salvador have a better-than-even chance to seize and hold power after the anarchy and violence they will sow."

The conclusions of the meeting are summarized at Tab A. The SCC agreed to follow-up in the following ways:⁴

1. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] State will prepare a report suggesting ways to divide the extremist groups and persuade the moderate-left groups to give their support to the junta.

2. State and NSC will encourage Vatican officials to try to influence Salvador's Archbishop Romero to support moderate change through the new junta.

3. CIA, DOD and State will prepare a report describing the threat in Central America and examining alternative ways to cope with it,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 11, El Salvador, 7/79-2/80. Secret. Carter initialed the first page of the memorandum.

² See Document 406.

³ Reference is to a January 24 memorandum from Turner to the National Security Council regarding the "threat of a leftist extremist takeover in El Salvador." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator for DCI (1977-81), Box 14, Folder 3: SCC Meeting El Salvador, Nicaragua)

⁴ See footnote 9, Document 406.

including possible increases of U.S. personnel and resources. DOD will also examine military contingencies, a counterinsurgency proposal, and alternatives for intercepting illegal arms shipments to the guerrillas.

4. State will prepare draft messages for you to Heads of State in the region in order to demonstrate your personal concern with recent developments and to seek their cooperation. CIA will do a report analyzing the views and activities of Mexico and Panama.

5. State will chair a special Inter-Agency Task Force on El Salvador and Honduras to monitor developments closely and assure a coherent response.

6. State will examine a number of questions on aid, FMS, IMET, and balance of payments support.

The SCC concluded that the deteriorating situation in El Salvador should be viewed with the greatest seriousness by the U.S. Government as it has enormous implications for the region and for the credibility of the U.S. in the world. We need to follow developments there very closely in the weeks ahead.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A.⁵

Tab A

Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting⁶

Washington, January 28, 1980, 1:30–2:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador and Central America (U)

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Ambassador William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs

OSD

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Clayton, Jr.

Frank Kramer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs

⁵ Carter indicated his approval and signed his initial.

⁶ Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

JCS

Lt General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Jack Davis, NIO for Latin America

OMB

Ed Sanders, Deputy Associate Director for International Affairs

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Ambassador Henry Owen

NSC

Robert Pastor

Summary of Conclusions

1. *Salvador Junta.* The current junta is a coalition of moderate military elements and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC); it is weak and in a tenuous position. In order for this junta to stand a reasonable chance of success, it must broaden its base, develop an effective social and political program, and strengthen its defenses from the extreme left and right. We should try to persuade the extreme right not to overthrow the junta, while the junta approaches the extreme left with a political-military strategy. The junta has informed us that U.S. assistance—particularly military assistance—will be easier to accept politically if we do it as part of a multilateral effort, involving the Andean Pact countries, Spain, and West Germany.

2. *Extreme Left.* The CIA presented a report which describes the extraordinarily rapid growth of guerrilla groups and their popular front organizations in El Salvador in the past year. Hardcore insurgents have grown from 200 in 1977 to more than 2,000 today, and terrorist-incited violence has increased as dramatically. Through kidnappings in 1979, these groups may have amassed \$40 million which they use to purchase weapons and coordinate an extensive guerrilla network. With Castro's personal influence, the two leading guerrilla groups, their front organizations, and the Salvadorean Communist Party merged this month, giving them added strength. Membership in the front groups already exceeds 60,000 activists.

3. *Divide and Weaken the Extreme Left.* CIA and State will prepare a report suggesting ways to divide the extremist groups, and to try to persuade the moderate-left groups to stop supporting the extreme left and start assisting the junta. The Archbishop has recently expressed his support for the left, and we will continue our efforts to ask the Pope if he would invite the Archbishop to the Vatican to seek a change in his views.

4. *Threat and Response.* CIA, DOD, and State will prepare a report examining the leftist threat in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala

and the capabilities of each of these governments to cope with that threat. The report will also focus on what additional US resources ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] DOD personnel) are necessary to assist these governments to cope effectively with the threat. DOD will also prepare two papers: (1) on US military requirements that could become necessary if the situation in El Salvador should deteriorate very rapidly; and (2) on a counter-insurgency program which the Salvadorean government could implement either by themselves or with our assistance.

5. *Multilateral Support.* The junta has approached the Andean group (which has a mission in El Salvador now), Spain, and West Germany for assistance.⁷ Independently, we have urged each of these governments to help. State will also draft a possible message for you to send to the Heads of State of these governments, expressing the seriousness with which we view developments in El Salvador and your hope that we will work together to assist the new government there. State will prepare a separate and individualized message for the Heads of State of Mexico, Panama, and Nicaragua, stating clearly that the U.S. policy of nonintervention should not imply that we accept the intervention of other governments in El Salvador. If current efforts to obtain multilateral support for the junta do not bear fruit, we will recommend the sending of a Presidential Emissary to these countries.⁸ CIA was also tasked to do a paper on how the governments of Mexico and Panama view the problem in El Salvador, what they are doing, and whether they would cooperate with a broader effort to assist the Government of El Salvador.⁹

6. *Economic and Military Assistance.* The U.S. has informed the junta that we are prepared to increase our economic and military assistance at their request. While awaiting their specific request, State will examine: (1) ways to expedite the transfer of economic aid; (2) whether the Salvadorean request for \$200 million balance of payments support is a legitimate request or whether it should be referred to the IMF; (3) whether an expanded US aid program is needed and how we should relate the international banks to such an effort; (4) how we can reprogram additional IMET, above the \$300,000 currently requested; and (5) whether we should grant 12-year FMS financing terms rather than seven years.¹⁰

7. *US Government Organization.* We agreed to set up a special inter-agency Task Force in the State Department under Deputy Assistant

⁷ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this sentence: "Best approach."

⁸ Carter underlined "Presidential Emissary" and wrote "ok" in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁹ Carter wrote "good" in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

¹⁰ Carter wrote "work with OMB" in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph.

Secretary Cheek to monitor developments in El Salvador, and also Honduras, on a regular basis, to respond to questions from the SCC, and to raise important issues for high-level consideration.

8. *Nicaragua*. The economic situation is likely to reach crisis proportions in the next six months unless the government receives substantial amounts of economic aid. If there is no progress within this period, Ambassador Bowdler believes that the Nicaraguan government will either crack down and turn sharply to the left, or it will adopt a more pragmatic approach. The chances of the latter occurring are not good, but would be increased if the US and western governments are playing large roles at that time. We will repeat to the Nicaraguan government our grave concern with any possible Nicaraguan government involvement in El Salvador.

9. *Central America*. The Honduran and Guatemalan governments are targets of guerrilla groups, and the pattern of escalating anti-government political activity is very similar to what has occurred in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Honduras is already conduit of arms supplies to the Salvadorean guerrillas, and CIA and the Department of Defense will re-examine the possibility of intercepting these arms shipments.

408. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 8, 1980

SUBJECT

Message on El Salvador (U)

The situation in El Salvador is deteriorating very rapidly, and we are searching for ways to help the current junta which is composed of moderate military officers and Christian Democrats (PDC). The junta appreciates our help, but can only accept it within the context of multi-lateral support. Therefore, they have requested security and economic aid from the Andean Pact, Spain and Germany, and we have, in turn, encouraged these governments to help.² (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 2/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote "Zbig" and initialed at the top of the page.

² Carter circled the final two sentences of the paragraph and wrote in the left-hand margin: "Insert this theme in msg."

The SCC believes that a message from you directly to several heads of state in the region will make it clear to them that this is an issue which personally engages you.³ We do not know whether the junta will last, and we fear that any vacillation by these other governments will give momentum to the leftward shift of moderate groups in El Salvador. The pattern is very similar to the Nicaraguan situation last winter when the FAO disintegrated and shifted their support to the Sandinistas. Unless the junta holds together, we may face the awful prospect of a fully polarized Salvador—with all civilian groups supporting the revolutionary left against the military. (S)

This is therefore a critical moment, and we believe that a message from you will be very helpful in Caracas, Bogota, Lima and Quito. The Mexican position is unhelpful; Lopez Portillo apparently believes that the left will prevail, and he is therefore betting on it by condemning the current government. We do not believe that a message from you at this time would make a difference, although, we are looking into the possibility of sending someone, who understands the Salvadoran issue and whom Lopez Portillo knows and respects. We will recommend such a man when we have found one, and when we think the moment is right. In the meantime, State and I recommend that you approve the message attached at Tab A.⁴ The message has been cleared by the speechwriters.⁵ (S)

³ See Documents 406 and 407.

⁴ Attached but not printed is an undated draft Presidential message to the Presidents of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Panama, and Ecuador.

⁵ Carter neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation. The final version of Carter's message to the five Latin American Presidents was sent in telegram 36613 to Kuwait City and Doha, February 10, and repeated the same day under the same telegram number to Caracas, Bogotá, Lima, Panama City, and Quito. In the message Carter asked that the five countries join with the United States in assisting the JRG to withstand the "explosive" situation in El Salvador. Carter also affirmed his policy of "non-intervention in the affairs of other states," noted that "our adherence to this policy is not a license for others to intervene," and stated "Cuba should not be permitted, by sponsoring subversion, to threaten the peace and security of Central America." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 65, Special Coordinating Committee Meeting on El Salvador (2/15/80), 2/80) Telegram 1030 from Quito, February 13, reported delivery of Carter's message to Roldos. (Ibid.) Telegram 1493 from Bogotá, February 12, reported delivery of Carter's message to Turbay. (Ibid.) Telegram 1219 from Lima, February 11, reported that the Embassy had given to Garcia the message from Carter to Morales Bermudez. (Ibid.) Telegram 1451 from Panama City, February 15, reported delivery of Carter's message to Royo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800079-0768) Telegram 211 from Doha, February 11, reported the delivery of Carter's message to Herrera. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870148-2149)

409. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, February 11, 1980

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to El Salvador—Mini-SCC (I)

There will be a mini-SCC(I) on El Salvador on Tuesday, February 12, to review the CIA's program and to decide on additional steps.² The full SCC on Thursday³ will review overall U.S. policy to El Salvador (including the enormous package requested by the last SCC); by Thursday, we should have received full responses to a series of questions on the viability of the junta which we posed to our Embassy in El Salvador, and we should also have a much better idea of which other countries are willing to join us in assisting the junta.⁴ I will send you a memo for the SCC then.⁵

For the mini-SCC, I attach three documents which deal with questions of intelligence capabilities and covert actions. At Tab A is the CIA paper which describes what they are doing and what they plan to do; it also indicates the number of CIA personnel in the area and proposes marginal increases.⁶ No one else has this paper.

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1025, El Salvador, 15 October 1979–11 February 1980. Secret; Sensitive. The date is handwritten. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the first page: "DA—good memo. Let's speak before you chair. ZB."

² See Document 410.

³ February 14.

⁴ Telegram 36612 to San Salvador, February 10, requested that the Embassy provide an estimation of the deteriorating political situation in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800071–0086) The Embassy responded with a lengthy assessment in telegram 977 from San Salvador, February 12, describing the JRG's prospects for survival as "tenuous." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800076–0007)

⁵ See Document 411.

⁶ Tab A, attached but not printed, is a February 6 paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency that was sent to Brzezinski under a February 7 memorandum from Carlucci. The paper was prepared in response to Brzezinski's January 31 request. (See footnote 9, Document 406, and Document 407) The paper noted: "Major emphasis should be placed on identifying and providing guidance and support to leaders of moderate leftist groups to provide active public support for the Junta and to increase their ability to attract individuals and groups who are now cooperating with the extremists because they believe there is no alternative way to bring about substantive reforms."

At Tab B is a paper prepared by DOD, which assesses U.S. intelligence capabilities in the area as “poor.”⁷ It makes recommendations on pages 8–9 which should be considered at the mini-SCC.

At Tab C is a memo from Harold Brown, which recommends that we consider a covert action program along the lines of what the SCC accepted about six months ago.⁸ Someone is not up-to-date at DOD. CIA is prepared to address those recommendations at the meeting.

I recommend you ask Carlucci to summarize their paper to you. It is extraordinarily inadequate when you compare it to the threat in the area.⁹ Indeed, Tabs A and B are extremely discouraging in their failure to give the region the kind of priority which is required. [10 lines not declassified]

This is a typical example of the problems we are having with the entire bureaucracy. The main thing I hope emerges from the mini-SCC is the universal recognition that we are dealing with crises in El Salvador and Honduras, and we need to put our *best* people into these countries immediately, and they must begin operating immediately. Bob White has another week here, and we should use his time here to assemble a good team of intelligence and political operatives. (Constantine Menges, an NSC consultant who Zbig and Sam Huntington know, might be encouraged to go down there and help. We should look into that.)

I can not argue with the direction of the CIA or DOD proposals, only their size and pace. We need to do more and do it more rapidly. We have very little time. CIA also suggests we might want to approach Torrijos and try to get him to isolate the extremists in El Salvador. I’ve spoken to Bowdler about this, and we agreed that it is a long shot, but worth a try. I think the only way to approach him, however, is using the old channel of Hamilton and/or myself. I haven’t spoken to him since he came up here last July to try to make a deal on Nicaragua. As far as we know, he kept to that deal even though it burned him, and didn’t work. I would like to explore with him as a way to approach the Salvador issue by asking what lessons he has drawn from his help for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

⁷ Tab B, attached but not printed, is an undated memorandum to Bowdler from Komer. (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC 274, 2/15/80 El Salvador)

⁸ Tab C, attached but not printed, is a February 2 covering memorandum from Harold Brown to Brzezinski entitled “Putting the Cubans and Soviets on the Defensive.” Under it, Brown transmitted a proposal to develop a regional covert action policy to counter the Cubans and Soviets in the Caribbean and Latin America.

⁹ Brzezinski placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to this and the previous sentence.

With regard to DOD's recommendation (pp. 8–9 of Tab B), they look fine, but also not enough. You should also ask General Schweitzer, who has just returned from Honduras to discuss his proposals for intercepting the flow of arms into Salvador and for preventing the establishment of a guerrilla infrastructure in Honduras.

I have prepared an agenda (Tab D) and will go over it with you before the meeting.¹⁰

¹⁰ Tab D is attached but not printed

410. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, February 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Mini SCC/I Meeting—White House Situation Room 12 February 1980

Chairman

Mr. David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. William G. Bowdler, State
Mr. Jim Cheek, State
Ambassador Robert White, State
Lt. Gen. John Pustay, JCS
Mr. Frank Kramer, ISA
Maj. Gen. Robert L. Schweitzer, USA
Mr. Robert Pastor, NSA
Representative from the Department of Justice
Representative from OMB
[*name not declassified*] CIA

1. Maj. Gen. Robert L. Schweitzer, Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy (DCSOPS), who recently returned from a trip to Honduras, was asked by Mr. Aaron to give the group his appreciation of the situation

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 11: (SCC) Central America. Secret. No other substantive record of the February 12 SCC meeting has been found. Drafted by [*name not declassified*] on February 13.

in Honduras. The General reported that people and materiel were being infiltrated through Honduras to support subversive activities in El Salvador and Guatemala. He pointed to the Coco and Patuca Rivers and the Gulf of Fonseca as the primary infiltration routes adding that air infiltration is also taking place via light aircraft using remote airfields. He stated that Hondurans are receiving guerrilla warfare training in Cuba. Insurgency in Honduras is presently focused on the establishment of logistical and operational support sites. According to General Schweitzer these small insurgency-support groups are vulnerable to interdiction. The General claims the Honduran armed forces can be expected to fight but will depend heavily on U.S. materiel and training support to meet the threat in Honduras. General Schweitzer stated that the interdiction operations should include: (a) surveillance and interdiction operations in the Gulf of Fonseca and other coastal areas; (b) surveillance and interdiction of river infiltration routes; (c) surveillance and interdiction of air infiltration into remote landing sites; (d) ground reconnaissance and combat patrols to conduct border surveillance and interdiction operations; (e) long range surveillance and interdiction operations along remote infiltration routes; (f) a capability for rapid reinforcement of long range patrols to exploit information gathered by these patrols; and (g) capture insurgent personnel and equipment. Special operation companies should be organized, trained, equipped and deployed in small boats, helicopters, ground vehicles or on foot as appropriate. These units will require special training and equipment to accomplish their assigned tasks. Both aerial surveillance and surface surveillance would be required to combat seaborne infiltration.

2. Mr. Aaron stated he had received the DOD and CIA covert action plans for El Salvador.² While finding the CIA plan on track, he did not feel that it was enough and said that more of an effort must be made. He stated he would like to see a dramatic strengthening of our efforts in Salvador and Honduras. He advised Ambassador White to immediately increase the size of his mission in San Salvador. Mr. Aaron emphasized that our efforts in El Salvador must be given top priority adding that the Middle East is important for oil but Salvador is our own backyard. Mr. Aaron also stated that more personnel must be added to those elements in Headquarters working on the Central American problem. He talked about a special group to draw up and implement an aggressive game plan for each country as well as the entire region. It was suggested that what was more urgent were decisions on the plans already presented. Mr. Bowdler will write an action

² See Document 409.

memorandum addressing the issues requiring decisions in Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala for the SCC meeting scheduled for 14 February 1980.³

3. Mr. Aaron requested and the group was provided an update on training in Salvador (see below). They were also informed that a training program for Honduras would be under way in the next two weeks.

a. A [*less than 1 line declassified*] counterterrorism team began a four to six week course in VIP protection on 25 January 1980 in San Salvador. There are 31 students representing the Estado Major Presidencial (EMP) which includes members of the national police, presidential security force, national guard and treasury police. The VIP course will be followed by a one-week course on Incident Management for higher-level security officials. A follow-up VIP protection course is currently being planned for approximately mid-April and will be expanded to include executive driving.

b. A [*less than 1 line not declassified*] team is scheduled to arrive in Salvador on [*date not declassified*] to conduct a Technical Defense Measures training course for approximately 25 security management personnel.

c. An independent contract annuitant expert in counter-intelligence arrived [*date not declassified*] to initiate contact with the newly formed Salvadoran National Analysis Center (CNA) in preparation for training the 13 members of CNA. Another [*less than 1 line not declassified*] officer will join the independent contractor on [*1 line not declassified*] to prepare, plan and coordinate the training schedule. The independent contractor will remain in Salvador for six months [*1 line not declassified*].

d. Terrorist devices as well as threat-and-response training for nine new candidates to the local bomb squad is scheduled for April 1980 at a training site in the U.S.

4. In conclusion, the following was noted in describing problems in each of the three countries:

a. Honduras—the least complicated; the government is cooperative and we should be able to provide whatever help and equipment is necessary.

b. El Salvador—the most delicate; the PDC/Military relationship may not last. State is concerned that if the MITs are brought into the country, this could cause a crisis in the PDC and force it to leave the government. There is concern over a possible split in the military. It is also recognized that if we do nothing, this could be even more dangerous for the present junta and government.

³ The meeting took place on February 15. See Document 412.

c. Guatemala—the most difficult because of the nature of the government and the human rights issue.

5. Mr. Bowdler scheduled a meeting for 1000 hours on 13 February 1980 and requested a new memo on staffing requirements for Central America.⁴ The highest priority is to increase the staff of the U.S. Mission in San Salvador.

[name not declassified]
Chief, Latin America Division

⁴ Attached but not printed is a February 13 memorandum from *[name not declassified]* to Bowdler, in which *[name not declassified]* provided the CIA response to the request for staffing. In a February 13 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor described the February 12 SCCM as “an extremely frustrating meeting, and DOD and CIA [*less than 1 line not declassified*] pretended that the problems we were having in Central America were because of our human rights policy. I am not aware of anyone arguing that that is a problem in El Salvador and Honduras, nor do I think it would be useful at this point to bring Guatemala in because: (a) it is not an urgent problem as the others; (b) there is absolutely no evidence of guerrilla arms going to Salvador or Honduras from Guatemala; and (c) if Honduras and El Salvador can make their transition towards social reforms, that will be the best policy we could send to Guatemala.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2/12–24/80)

411. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron), and the Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, February 14, 1980

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on El Salvador, Friday, February 15, 1980—4:00 p.m. (U)

The time for getting this government moving in an effective way toward turning the problems in El Salvador and Honduras around has arrived. There are three objectives for the SCC meeting: (1) to gain complete and unequivocal agreement on the objectives of US policy in El Salvador and Honduras and the nature of the threat we face in both countries;² (2) to gain agreement on what additional resources are needed and where we can obtain these resources; and (3) to gain agreement on how much additional personnel we need in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala and where we can get them. If there is any ambiguity about the SCC's decisions—particularly in the last two areas—the bureaucratic quagmire will slow us down 2–4 weeks, which could be fatal. Certain agencies will seek to divert the discussion to pet concerns—for example, DOD may try to debate US human rights policy and Guatemala, a contentious issue, which we do not need to address at this time. Zbig will have to draw a clear line through the bullshit, which David sampled on Tuesday,³ and which I have been wading through for the past several weeks. We really need some decisions. (S)

Background and Objectives

Let me suggest that Zbig begin the meeting by summarizing as a brief consensus statement the objectives of US policy as suggested during the last SCC meeting.⁴ (C)

In *El Salvador*, we want to find all effective ways to: (1) bolster the Junta (coalition of Christian Democrats and moderate military) by ourselves and with multilateral support; (2) divide the left and try to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC 274, 2/15/80, El Salvador. Secret. Sent for information. A stamped notation indicates that Brzezinski saw the memorandum.

² Pastor wrote "reaffirm" in the margin next to this clause.

³ February 12. See Document 410.

⁴ See Documents 406 and 407.

get leading groups and individuals (like Archbishop Romero, MNR, Jesuits) to leave the left and support the Junta; and (3) prevent the right from staging a coup or undertaking measures to de-stabilize the reform elements in the Junta. (S)

The Christian Democrats view the right as a far greater threat than the left, and recent evidence suggests their assessment may be correct. Conservative civilians do not accept the reforms recently promulgated by the Junta; right-wing military continue to be notorious for their brutality. Right-wing terrorist groups (Orden and White Warriors Union) have been killing as many, if not more people than leftist terrorists, and the right-wingers seem to be targeting the moderates while the left is aiming at the military and police. (S)

Fortunately, we probably have more potential influence with the right than with the left. We need to get SOUTHCOM and JCS to send a clear message to the conservative military that we would not accept a coup, and that we believe they should be doing everything possible to help the Junta and to submit to rule of law and political direction by the civilians in the Junta. There are a number of different contacts we could use to get the message to the conservative businessmen, through the Chamber of Commerce (which I am contacting) and through groups in Florida. State, CIA and DOD should be tasked to develop a list of possible contacts to use in trying to neutralize the right. (S)

We should continue to work on the left, and indeed should open up lines of communication which we could utilize in the future, if necessary. (We should also try to strike a deal with Torrijos. I believe he would be amenable to the right approach to him for two reasons: (1) he should feel that Castro used him in Nicaragua to serve Cuba's, not Torrijos' purposes; and (2) he is angry about the leftist takeover of the Panamanian Embassy in San Salvador, and is reported to be holding leftists in El Salvador as an exchange. I would very much like to sound out Torrijos on this, but this should not be discussed at the SCC meeting. You may want to ask Vance about the idea privately.) (S)

Our objectives and message must be crystal clear to all USG personnel who have any contacts in El Salvador, and to Salvador: we support the Junta, and we will not consider any other coalition government. (S)

In *Honduras*, our objectives are to: (1) keep the military's feet to the fire with regard to its commitment to hold free (constituent assembly) elections on April 20;⁵ (2) help the government develop an intelligence and interdiction capability to prevent the transit of arms and guerrillas to El Salvador; and (3) assist the government to prevent the establish-

⁵ Brzezinski underlined the words "hold" and "elections" in this phrase.

ment of a guerrilla infrastructure. We have recently received reports indicating that the military view the Christian Democrats as "leftists" or "communists," and that they are considering postponing the elections indefinitely. This would represent a terrible setback, and a real dividend to any incipient extremist organization. We should try to keep the military on track on the elections issue, and when we inform Honduran General Paz that the President will be able to see him, we should make very clear that the President feels very strongly about the Honduran elections and would be extremely concerned if there was any truth to the possibility that Paz might postpone them.⁶ (S)

Our objectives in both countries are to help them to resolve their border dispute and to work closely together to deal with this guerrilla threat. (S)

I don't think you will find much disagreement on these specific objectives, but I do think it imperative to get these objectives under our belt and transmitted as clear guidance by the SCC. There may be a great temptation to look into alternative options based on the assumption that the Junta will fall apart, but I would encourage you to limit discussion on this issue because it would be divisive (DOD would like to lean to the right; State perhaps to the left) and because it is essential that the entire government transmit a single message to the Salvadoran right and left. If the right thinks that we will back them if the Junta fails, they will make the Junta fail. Our tactic at this time should be to support the Junta, but to open up channels to both right and left for the purpose of trying to co-opt them now or perhaps work with them better in the future. (S)

With regard to *multilateral consultations*, the President's letter was very helpful, but we need to follow-up.⁷ Since our main interest is getting several other governments to send military advisers, and since the military in most of these countries are most excited about the Communist menace to Central America, I suggest that the SCC instruct SOUTHCOM General Nutting to write to his colleagues in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru and encourage them to express their interest in assisting El Salvador. I mentioned this to Nutting today, and Nutting was enthusiastic about the idea, and said that in his discussions with Latin American Military Commanders at the annual conference in Bogota many of his colleagues had complained that we weren't doing enough to stem the "red tide." Now, he would like to throw the ball back in their court. Nutting also said that he would like to be plugged in more to help us in Salvador and Honduras. We should

⁶ See Documents 352 and 353.

⁷ See footnote 5, Document 408.

attach a Polad to SOUTHCOM and do much more liaison with them. We should also use our Milgroups and CIA throughout the Andean Pact to exchange intelligence on a regular basis on events in Central America. I understand this is not being done. (S)

Resources: Economic and Security Aid

I have worked closely with State to try to condense the massive response (Tab II, A through I) to you SCC tasker from the last meeting into a manageable set of issues papers.⁸ (S)

At Tab I is the agenda for the meeting.⁹ (U)

At Tab A is the Issues Paper on Security Aid.¹⁰ There are two issues for El Salvador and four for Honduras. With regard to El Salvador, we are ready to send in three MTT's as soon as we get the green light from the Junta and the Venezuelans indicate that they have no problems with it. (There is no sense sending in MTT's if it provokes the Venezuelans to withdraw their aid.) The Venezuelans just informed us that as long as we refer to the MTT's as "groups of technicians seeking to study in depth the requirements of the Salvadoran military in the fields of communications and transport," that would be fine with them. Also, they ask that we maintain secrecy on their own "study teams" until they gain full support in their Congress. They're working on that. (S)

You will need to literally walk the SCC through the issues papers and get agreement to approve each item. (U)

The issues in El Salvador are:

(1) *Whether we should offer an additional \$7.5 million for helicopters, and how to pay for it (reprogramming or the President's emergency authority). We need the \$7.5 million, and we also need State and OMB to agree on how to do it.* (S)

(2) *Whether to instruct Treasury to give Salvador the best concessional terms available for FMS. We should.* (S)

On Honduras, our objective of helping them build a capability to interdict the flow of arms and guerrillas requires the following decisions by the SCC:

- (1) Reprogram an additional \$200,000 IMET. (S)
- (2) \$10 million FMS for helicopters. (S)
- (3) Conduct combined training with the Honduran Navy. (S)
- (4) Provide best concessional terms for FMS. (S)

⁸ Tab II, consisting of Tabs A through I, is attached but not printed. For Brzezinski's January 31 tasking memorandum requesting the preparation of these papers, see footnote 9, Document 406. Also see Document 407.

⁹ Tab I, attached but not printed, is the agenda for the February 15 SCC meeting.

¹⁰ Attached but not printed.

At Tab C is the economic aid issues paper.¹¹ We need to have the capability to disburse funds rapidly to leave maximum political impact. There are three options presented, all of them require difficult choices. You and Vance really have to decide whether this money is more or less important than ESF to Portugal, Jordan, Israel, or Egypt. (S)

The recommendation on PL-480 is essentially "a sense of the SCC"—that the bureaucracy should try to put together a larger PL-480 program as rapidly as possible. (S)

Personnel

The basic problem we face in formulating a response to the Salvadoran challenge is that we are searching for additional resources while the pie is getting smaller. Vance and others are reluctant to face the hard trade-offs and so the middle levels of the bureaucracies run in circles, and the result is paralysis. This dilemma is most acute in deciding on personnel levels. For the past two years, we have demanded an extraordinary amount of work from extremely small, low quality missions. CIA has formulated a wonderful covert action plan,¹² [4 lines not declassified]

Everyone will ask for more people if we can lift the mode (which the President won't), but if they've got to take it from another place, they're reluctant. (S)

At Tab C is the recommendation on increasing personnel which I frankly believe is the minimum we can reasonably expect to implement our strategy.¹³ *Ambassador White should be authorized by the SCC to put together a team here in Washington composed of people to fill those additional slots.* When he goes down there on February 25, the Embassy should be ready to operate. (S)

I think it's unrealistic to expect an increase in the mode. Brown, Turner, and Vance must agree to get the additional personnel from other countries; a fair compromise would be to get 50% of the increase from ARA posts (primarily Southern Cone: Chile, Argentina, and Brazil) and 50% elsewhere. (S)

Additional Issues

The SCC also needs to recommend that the President will meet with the Salvadoran Junta in late February, as their Emissary requested.¹⁴

¹¹ The issues paper on economic aid is attached as Tab B and is not printed.

¹² See footnote 6, Document 409.

¹³ Tab C, attached but not printed, is an issue paper on personnel.

¹⁴ In a February 11 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor reported that Ambassador Bertrand, a special emissary from the Salvadoran Junta, had requested that Carter meet with the Junta. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 2/80)

Secondly, we need to try to make a special effort to resolve the Honduras-Salvador border dispute so that the President can put the finishing touches on that when he meets with them. [4 lines not declassified]

412. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, February 15, 1980, 4:25–5:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador and Honduras

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
Robert White, US Ambassador to El Salvador

OSD

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Claytor, Jr.
Frank Kramer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Security Affairs

OMB

John White
Randy Jayne, Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs

JCS

General David Jones

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner
John McMahon, Deputy Director for Operations

AID

Douglas Bennett

Justice

Ken Bass, Office of Legal Counsel

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Henry Owen

NSC

Robert Pastor

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC 274, 2/15/80, El Salvador. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. For Brzezinski's summary of the meeting, see Document 413.

*Minutes**Objectives in El Salvador*

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by reviewing the objectives of the United States in El Salvador. He said that he thought there was agreement on the objectives, but that it would be useful to review them in order that we send the clearest of messages. He said there were four objectives:

(1) To bolster the Junta by ourselves and with multilateral support. (S)

(2) Tactically, to try to split the left and neutralize the right. With regard to those who are supporting the left, we have been in touch with a number of individuals, including Archbishop Romero. Dr. Brzezinski said that he himself had personally conveyed a message to the Pope to try to seek his support with regard to Archbishop Romero. (S)

(3) To deter the right from staging a coup, and to use whatever leverage we have to prevent them from undertaking any measures which would destabilize the reform program of the Junta. (S)

(4) To try to persuade the military to submit to rule of law under the Junta in order to try to give the Junta the time and opportunity to implement its reforms. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether there was any disagreement with these objectives, and there was none. (Claytor said O.K.) (U)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should move immediately to questions of implementing these objectives, and he urged the group to turn to the papers which were prepared by the task force, and to recommend decisions.² He suggested that we first consider the paper on Security Assistance to El Salvador. (S)

Security Assistance to El Salvador

Deputy Secretary Claytor said that we had just received word from the Salvadorean Junta that we could send our military training teams (MTTs) in as soon as possible.³ The question then is how to finance them. (S)

Mr. Kramer said that of the \$7.5 million of additional materiel assistance, which we need for El Salvador, \$6.3 million is for helicopters,

² See Document 411.

³ In telegram 1066 from San Salvador, February 15, the Embassy reported that the JRG advised the Chargé that it "had reached decision regarding dispatch of MTTS and response was positive, that teams should arrive as quickly as possible, and that Ministry of Foreign Relations would send a note to the Embassy confirming this decision." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 65, Special Coordinating Committee Meeting on El Salvador (2/15/80), 2/80)

and we could provide them on a no-cost lease to El Salvador so that they would not need any FMS credit for them. Therefore, we will only need \$1.2 million of FMS credits, and these could be reprogrammed without any problem. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether there were any problems in sending the MTTs in at this point, and *Amb White* asked how many people do we envisage sending in right now. (S)

Deputy Secretary Christopher also asked *Ambassador Bowdler* to comment on the possible Venezuelan reaction. *Ambassador Bowdler* said that we had received the green light from the Junta, but the question is whether to go in before the Venezuelans have their act together. He said *Ambassador Luers* suggested that we wait until *President Herrera* returns from the Middle East on Sunday.⁴ He anticipates that the *Cardozo* group will go on Tuesday or Wednesday, unless the *Karen DeYoung* article, which has had a terrible press play in Venezuela and is causing the government very difficult political problems, makes it impossible for them to send it.⁵ *Ambassador Bowdler* said that we could send in an advance party of about 3 or 4, and then send the rest in after 10 days. (S)

Dr Brzezinski said, then in that case, we should wait 3 days and then send in the 3 individuals of the advance team. There would be no sense to our creating any additional problems for the Venezuelans just to be in there a few days sooner. (S)

Deputy Secretary Claytor said that we should go in right away. The Salvadoreans asked us to go in as soon as possible, and we should go now. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should wait for the Venezuelans to go in ahead of us, but perhaps we should set a deadline for the remainder of the teams, and make this clear to the Venezuelans so as to encourage them to get in there before the deadline. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler concurred that he didn't think there would be any problem for the Venezuelans if we sent the three advance people in first. The only question is the other 33 members. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized by saying that we should send the three members of the advance team in soon after informing the Venezuelans,

⁴ February 17.

⁵ February 19, 20. Reference is to *Karen DeYoung*, "U.S. Weighing a Military Role in El Salvador," *Washington Post*, February 14, 1980, p. A1. In telegram 42247 to multiple posts, February 15, the Department sent press guidance about the news report: "There is currently under consideration an assistance program for El Salvador, which includes both economic assistance and a limited amount of military training and equipment." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800083-0019)

and tell the Venezuelans that we want to send the remainder in within ten days. Then we could see if they have any objections to that. (S)

Bass expressed concern that unless the MTTs are clearly instructed, it is possible that they may trigger the War Powers procedures. For example, if the MTTs fire, this might trigger the War Powers procedures. He asked that Justice be involved in drafting the guidelines for the MTTs. (S)

Deputy Secretary Christopher said that this is the first that he has heard of this method of no-cost leasing. He asked whether DOD feels that the helicopters are necessary for the interdiction effort. (S)

General Jones said that the helicopters are needed in order to increase their mobility to detect infiltration and to move quickly in response to such infiltration. (S)

Mr. Kramer said that the Salvadoreans could use helicopters and they have the pilots right now to man them. *Mr. Christopher* said that the issues paper suggests that a study is needed about whether the helicopters could be used effectively, and he suggested doing that first. (S)

Mr. Claytor said that we have already been waiting too long, and a study will only delay it. (U)

Deputy Secretary Christopher asked directly whether a study is needed in order to determine the best means for interdicting the flow of arms and guerrillas into El Salvador. Or could a study be done in conjunction with sending the helicopters? (S)

General Jones said that the helicopters alone will not stop the infiltration, but they will help. A study could be done in conjunction with sending in the helicopters. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether OMB had any problems in DOD's reprogramming \$1.2M of FMS, and *Mr. White* said that there were no problems. (S)

US Policy Objectives to Honduras

Dr. Brzezinski then turned to Honduras, and pointed out that our policy objectives there were similar to those in El Salvador. He said we have three basic objectives:

(1) To hold the government to its commitment to hold free elections on April 20;

(2) To help the government develop an intelligence and interdiction capability to prevent its being used as a conduit for arms and guerrillas to El Salvador; and

(3) To assist the government to prevent the establishment of a guerrilla infrastructure there. (S)

There were no objections to that statement. (U)

Security Assistance to Honduras

Dr. Brzezinski then turned to the recommendations. *Mr. Kramer* said that DOD would not have any problems in reprogramming \$200,000 IMET for border surveillance MTTs, and DOD could also provide helicopters on the same no-cost leasing basis, although he suggested that GAO might have some problems with that. (S)

Mr. Claytor said that he would be glad to deal with GAO if there were any such problems. (C)

Mr. Kramer said that the helicopters would cost \$9.5M, and \$530,000 would need to be reprogrammed for additional materiel. In response to a question from *Dr. Brzezinski*, *Mr. Kramer* said that the only step necessary to provide the helicopters on a no-cost lease basis would be for the Secretary of the Army to find that the helicopters were not needed for public use in the US. (S)

Mr. Claytor said that DOD will reprogram the \$530,000 additional money and will work out any problems with the Secretary of the Army. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether there were any objections to the combined training between the US and the Honduran Navy. *Mr. Kramer* said that the purpose would be to help train the Honduran Navy for purposes of interdiction. *Mr. Bass* raised the same concern about War Powers; but, there were no other objections, and it was decided to go ahead with combined training. (S)

Mr. Kramer said that we could do the same thing for Salvador since they have boats. (S)

Mr. Claytor recommended that the SCC agree to working with both the Honduran and El Salvador Navies, and *Dr. Brzezinski* said that we should do that. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether there were any problems in providing FMS financing at the best and longest terms available. *Randy Jayne* asked *Bob Pastor* whether he had checked with Treasury, and *Pastor* said that he has spoken with *Fred Bergsten* and *Bergsten* said that if the SCC determines this as a high priority, Treasury will explore ways to be helpful. *Mr. Kramer* and *Mr. Jayne* raised a number of issues about the nature of the concessional financing terms, and *Dr. Brzezinski* summarized the discussion by saying that the SCC would recommend that Treasury be as flexible as possible with regard to FMS concessional financing to Honduras and El Salvador without creating insurmountable obstacles on precedents. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should brief Capitol Hill on these matters soon since Congress should have a sense of involvement as we develop our strategy. He suggested that both DOD and State brief Congressional leaders, and also the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. *Mr. Kramer*

suggested that the briefing on these military items be done within the context of a general briefing on our strategy to the area. This was accepted. (S)

Economic Assistance

Dr. Brzezinski raised the issue of economic assistance, and *Henry Owen* said that there were a number of problems that had not been ironed out in this area, and he wondered whether these should not be worked on during the next week. *Dr. Brzezinski* asked whether it would be possible or a mistake to delay consideration of these matters for a week. *Amb. Owen* said that we don't even know the needs in the area; how can we decide on our resources? *Mr. Bennett* said that we were already beginning to sign project loans. *Amb. Bowdler* said that he understood there were many who want us to move much more cautiously on ESF. *Dr. Brzezinski* asked whether *Amb. Bowdler* felt that we should be losing essential time if we waited a week. Since we will be moving in the security area, that will at least demonstrate our commitment and our desire to help. Can we wait an additional week on that? It was agreed that that could be done. (S)

Mr. Jayne recommended that when we do examine the ESF needs for El Salvador, that we do so by looking at it within the context of our ESF objectives in Thailand and the Sudan. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that we should have a paper which summarizes our needs and objectives with regard to ESF and other economic assistance, and examines ESF within the context of these other countries, and we should have this paper by the meeting next week. (S)

Personnel

Dr. Brzezinski said that we needed more personnel in our Embassies in El Salvador and Honduras and wondered whether we could reprogram people from low-priority areas to these two countries. He said that he felt this was really a Departmental matter, but he was raising it in this context because of the importance of reacting quickly. (C)

Deputy Secretary Christopher said that there is a real question of the quality and the morale of the 30 people who are already there. It is a very dangerous situation, and he asked whether we want to increase our Embassy to 76 in such circumstances. We have a new Ambassador who's about to go down there; we should wait to let him judge how many people he can use effectively. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that there is a basic principle involved. If we are going to move to shore up the junta there, we will need more people than would normally be responsible for such a mission. Clearly the same number of people will not be adequate. (S)

Amb. White said this an issue in which the Secretary of State has overall responsibility. We shouldn't have to deal with this in such a meeting. (U)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed, provided that we do not go on as usual with the same number of people in the mission. (C)

Deputy Secretary Christopher said that State does need more people in Honduras and El Salvador. *Mr. Claytor* [2 lines not declassified] *Dr. Brzezinski* asked for a report [1 line not declassified] within one week's time about how they could beef up their respective missions. (S)

Admiral Turner [2 lines not declassified]

Ambassador White said that they face a political problem in El Salvador, and this will not be helped if the Embassy looks like it is primarily a military mission. (S)

Other Issues

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether the SCC should recommend that the President meet with the Salvadorean junta when they come up here. *Amb. Bowdler* said that they would probably be here on February 28 and 29. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked where Romero was. *Amb. White* said that he thought he was in Mexico, and *Amb. Bowdler* said that Duarte was in Europe. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that Archbishop Romero had just gotten a message from the Pope, but *Amb. White* said that it is possible that such a message did not have a favorable impact on Archbishop Romero. In that case, *Dr. Brzezinski* said, he would probably get another message, perhaps Monday⁶ or Tuesday. (S)

Deputy Secretary Christopher said that he wondered whether we should recommend a meeting with the junta, given that it may not be there by the end of the month. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that the SCC tentatively recommend that the President meet with the junta as a courtesy visit, but the final recommendation would depend on the political circumstances in El Salvador and scheduling problems here. (S)

Mr. Pastor asked how we should respond to the question that was made on behalf of the junta for the meeting. (S)

Amb. Bowdler said that the Foreign Minister would be here first, and we can speak to him about that. (U)

Amb. White said that it would be very bad if the President did not meet with the Salvadorean junta, since everyone remembers his meeting with the Sandinistas.⁷ *Dr. Brzezinski* agreed with that. (S)

⁶ February 18.

⁷ See Document 308.

Amb. Bowdler said that the junta is likely to come to Washington for other business, but we should really try to make sure that that happens.

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we shouldn't get General Nutting to write letters to his colleagues in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, to encourage them to play a larger and more supportive role to the junta in El Salvador. He asked whether we should not get General Nutting to use his leverage better on behalf of our political strategy. (S)

General Jones said that he is in favor of that; he is also very concerned that this may be too little and too late. Next in line after El Salvador are Honduras and Guatemala—perhaps Panama. He gets the feeling that things are being handled on a very fragmented basis by the missions down there. There is a greater need for joint intelligence involving Honduras and the other countries, and to get CIA and military intelligence involved. He believes that we should set up a multinational mechanism with the other Central Americans to deal with this intelligence problem, and *Graham Claytor* said that we should staff that. *Gen. Jones* said that intelligence should only be one piece of this coherent strategy; if it is successful, counter-inflation and insurgency will also be necessary. (S)

Mr. Pastor suggested that we should think of this in terms of three distinct steps. The first step is to encourage and to enhance the intelligence-gathering capabilities of Salvador and Honduras individually. The second step is to encourage them to exchange their information and to work more closely together. Then, in the third step, we should begin thinking about this larger, multilateral effort. (S)

Adm. Turner said that the CIA is already trying to create an intelligence serve in El Salvador. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that *Gen. Jones* was suggesting a more collective effort. *Dr. Brzezinski* suggested CIA and DOD, with CIA in the lead, develop a proposal for next week's meeting which suggests ways to enhance and integrate the intelligence capabilities of governments in the Central American region.⁸ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized that in addition to this intelligence and counter-intelligence study, papers should be prepared on: (1) economic assistance efforts that are necessary to help El Salvador, and (2) [*less than line not declassified*] DOD and State personnel—ways to increase their numbers and quality. He also said that we would inform the Venezuelans that three people would be sent as an advance team on the MTTs and the other 33 will follow within ten days. He said that we will want to do this in a way which will not create impediments for the Venezuelans. (S)

⁸ See Document 419.

Amb. Bowdler said that Luers thinks that we probably will be able to go ahead with this, and *Mr. Pastor* asked *Amb. Bowdler* whether a letter from the President could help to spring this loose as it was able to spring the mission of Calvani loose. *Amb. Bowdler* said that he would ask Luers about that. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski also asked whether we could obtain a report from General Nutting on what he has already done to assist the political strategy and what more he could do. We should also ask whether there is anything more we can do with regard to getting the Spanish in to help. *Amb. Bowdler* said that as long as the Embassy is held, that will be difficult.

Deputy Secretary Christopher said that we can ask Torrijos to help the Spanish deal with their Embassy problem. *Mr. Pastor* said that *Mr. Christopher's* remark was said in jest, but he may have a point there worth developing. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski closed the meeting by saying that we should meet one week from today. (C)

413. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 16, 1980

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on El Salvador and Honduras, February 15, 1980 (C)

I chaired a very productive SCC meeting to discuss US policy to El Salvador and Honduras.² We reached complete agreement on the objectives and remarkable unanimity on the tactics, instruments and resources we will use to pursue these objectives. (S)

Since the January 28 SCC meeting,³ we have been working hard to build multilateral support for the Junta. State has been in touch with

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC 274, 2/15/80, El Salvador. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig—a) Without active involvement of Venezuela & others, our own efforts will likely be counterproductive. b) Does the press attend SCC meetings? J.C." McMahon's February 19 memorandum for record is in Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 11: (SCC) Central America.

² See Document 412.

³ See Document 406.

the Vatican and I sent a message to the Pope, who then called Salvador's Archbishop Romero to Rome for talks. Romero has been partial to the left, and the Pope is trying to encourage him to take a more balanced and peaceful approach.⁴ (S)

Your letters to the heads of state in the region were extremely helpful.⁵ In Caracas, your letter stimulated President Herrera to overcome his own reservations and his government's bureaucratic problems; he immediately sent a military mission to El Salvador. We expect he will send a second mission unless the domestic fallout from a *Washington Post* article proves so serious that he decides to delay it.⁶ Colombian President Turbay was reluctant to consider helping the Junta until he received your letter; now he has expressed enthusiasm with the idea. The Ecuadoreans promised to follow the issue closely, and we have not yet heard from the Peruvian President. (S)

General Torrijos immediately sent a message through Gabriel Lewis that he wants to help, and he wants to set up a meeting between Bowdler and Pastor and leftist groups from El Salvador. Cy and I feel that Torrijos has given us the opportunity we need to try to neutralize the extreme left and extreme right so as to bring peace long enough to El Salvador to give the Junta a chance to implement its reforms. (Torrijos has relatively greater influence over the left, and we have greater influence with the right.) We have informed Torrijos that we are prepared to send Bill Bowdler and Bob Pastor down to meet with him to explore a way to carry out this goal of giving the Junta time to implement its reforms. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the Summary of Conclusions.⁷ (U)

⁴ Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph: "It didn't work."

⁵ See footnote 5, Document 408.

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 412. In the left-hand margin, Carter drew an arrow to this sentence.

⁷ Carter indicated his approval, initialed, and wrote: "Subject to above comment." The Summary of Conclusions is attached but not printed.

414. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 21, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador—Update (S)

El Salvador. The Junta continues to feel strong pressures from the extremes, while we are trying to dampen support for it. Jim Cheek, who is substituting as our Ambassador in El Salvador, is meeting with the Archbishop today. Yesterday, he met with Major D'Aubuisson, former Vice Director of Intelligence under Romero, and apparently the chosen candidate of the extreme right. With money provided by the 14 families, D'Aubuisson has waged a sophisticated, well-financed, anti-Communist, anti-Junta television campaign. He met with Cheek, seeking the slightest indication of U.S. support for a coup. Cheek did his best to dissuade him.² (S)

The Junta remains deeply divided, and the announcement of U.S. military assistance continues to cause both sides problems.³ (S)

International. Luers continues to try to pry an answer out of President Herrera, but everyone has been too busy with the President's return to meet with him. In addition, the entire Copei government is going into a 2-day closed door session to evaluate the government's activities over the past year. They are moving so slowly that it is driving us nuts, but Bowdler and I still believe that we ought to delay sending in the advance team until we have some indication of Herrera's views.⁴ We are particularly hesitating because of the President's comments on

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 32, Meetings—SCC 282: 2/28/80. Secret. Sent for action. An unknown hand wrote "urgent" at the top of the page. Brzezinski wrote to Denend at the top of the page: "LD—Remind me to call Mon. ZB." This is presumably in reference to Aaron's suggestion that Brzezinski call Miller; see footnote 8 below.

² In telegram 1257 from San Salvador, February 20, Cheek reported that D'Aubuisson had given an "impassioned plea for us to give up on the Christian Democrats and to support an all military JRG with a Cabinet of 'independents' drawn from the right." Cheek indicated that he and other Embassy officials had replied "with a firm reiteration of current US policy supporting the JRG and warning against action from the far right." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800090-0368)

³ See footnote 5, Document 412.

⁴ Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to this sentence and wrote "OK" in the margin.

the SCC meetings, that without Venezuelan and other support, our efforts will be counterproductive.⁵ (S)

I met last night with the Colombia military Chief of Staff, after General Jones met with him, and we both reiterated our hope that he will convey a message directly to President Turbay that some official Colombian military presence in El Salvador is essential if we are to keep the extremists from seizing power. He had planned to stop in Miami for a day, but after our conversation he promised to fly directly back to Bogota on Thursday⁶ to convey the message to the President. We have alerted our Ambassador to follow up immediately. (S)

I met with Lewis and Jordan today, and urged Lewis to tell Torrijos that we shouldn't wait until Tito dies before we meet. I also explained to Lewis, who I believe will be a critical interlocutor, and who I hope will replace Selamin as Torrijos' adviser on El Salvador that Torrijos' initial response to our message was disturbing. I suggested that he repeat the points we have asked Ambler to make: That Torrijos should not touch base with the Nicaraguans or the Cubans and not try to unite the Left; he should wait until we get down there. Lewis conveyed these points to Torrijos, who agreed to see us as soon as we get down there (this weekend). Torrijos also said that he did not intend to involve the Cubans, but he asked the Nicaraguans to "locate" several Leftist leaders. Torrijos said that the Left is so disorganized that it is difficult even to find them. I will work on a memo this evening, suggesting the strategy we should take in our conversation with Torrijos.⁷ (S)

Domestic. Bob White went up for confirmation hearings for the fourth time today, and the Foreign Relations Committee voted it out, 8 to 2. There is still a strong possibility that Helms will try to prevent White's nomination from going to the Floor for about 10 days. In the meantime, a Helms aide, Carbaugh, is reportedly going down to El Salvador to try to get the government to PNG White before his arrival.

⁵ See Document 413.

⁶ February 21.

⁷ In a subsequent February 21 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor proposed a strategy to "get Torrijos to help the Junta gain time to implement real reforms." Brzezinski approved the overall approach, but noted that the case for the Junta would need to be more specific to be convincing, and he warned against putting Torrijos off. Aaron commented that the plan was "not very realistic" and noted: "let's not permit this to deflect us from action in El Salvador." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2/12-24/80) In a February 26 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor referred to a press report, based on an official Panamanian source that the United States was promoting a right wing coup in El Salvador. Pastor stated that either Torrijos would have to give "an explicit and public denial" or Moss "should tell Torrijos that we can no longer communicate with him because he does not respect the confidentiality of our exchanges." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 2/25-29/80)

*I recommend that you call Senator Byrd and urge him to bring White's nomination to the Senate Floor as soon as possible.*⁸ (S)

SCC. I believe a SCC meeting next Monday would be useful, as we expect a response from the Venezuelans by then, and as we should have something to work on from the task force (economic package) and from the trip to Panama.⁹ (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memo at Tab I in order to convey one of the decisions of the SCC to the Treasury Department.¹⁰ (C)

⁸ An unknown hand drew a line in the margin next to this sentence and wrote "Madeleine concurs," referring to Albright. Another unknown hand wrote below: "YES!"

⁹ Brzezinski wrote in response to this sentence: "Good idea. White should be there." For the summary of conclusions of the February 27 SCC meeting, see Document 419.

¹⁰ Aaron added the following at the bottom of the page: "It's an odd thing to sign; shouldn't you just *call* Miller? DA." Attached but not printed at Tab I, is an undated, unsigned memorandum from Brzezinski to Miller noting Carter's approval of the January 28 SCC recommendation to prioritize FMS financing for Honduras and El Salvador. Brzezinski signed a copy of the memorandum dated February 22. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 18, El Salvador, 1–3/80)

415. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, February 22, 1980, 1830Z

1336. Subj: Rightist Coup Imminent in El Salvador?

1. (S-Entire text)

2. During the last week the US Mission and the Salvadoran nation as a whole have been inundated with rumors that a rightist coup could come at any moment. We have taken these rumors seriously because there is every reason for the ultra-right to strike. From their viewpoint, the current JRG has transformed itself from a joke to a real menace to their vital interests. Although the JRG remains weak and ineffectual,

¹ Source: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, and Madrid.

the right is realizing that it has the determination and authority to at least promulgate an agrarian reform law and may do so within the next week. The Junta may never be able to implement land reform but the very existence of such a law on the books could cause the masses in the countryside, backed by the armed revolutionary groups, to take this law into their own hands. Either way, powerful right wing forces see their interests as doomed. Consequently, they are actively plotting a coup and soliciting acquiescence if not support from the USG on the grounds that the producing classes are the last bulwark against a Communist onslaught that will engulf all of Central America, Mexico and finally the US. Even the relatively moderate members of the private sector who are prepared to accept some reforms are being forced to make common cause with the extreme right by the rapid economic deterioration which convinces them that time is running out and something drastic must be done to save the economy from collapse.

3. We have not only responded to these approaches but have sought out all conceivable participants in a rightist coup, particularly the military, to: (a) forcefully reiterate our support for the JRG; (b) make clear that such a coup would ignite a civil war that would have disastrous consequences for everyone; and (c) warn that they could not count on US support for such an adventure.

4. We are satisfied that this message has been communicated. We hope our warning will prove an effective deterrent, especially with the military which counts most heavily on US support. Our concern, however, is that the right in this country may be perceiving US actions elsewhere as contrary to our local message. Many on the right here appear to be interpreting our stand in South Asia, especially in Pakistan, as a shift in US policy away from insistence that regimes respect human rights and other USG interests and toward a less discriminating stance that asks only that regimes be anti-Communist. They also seem to be interpreting statements emanating from Washington as a return to the 1950s when the test the US applied to its Latin American allies was how stridently anti-Soviet they were. As one junior of Igarch (fanatical anti-Communist and likely coup plotter) told us this week, "We are aware that the pendulum in the United States is swinging our way; the Republicans best exemplify this so we intend to contribute to their victory." We understand that a group is already in Washington representing this point of view and more are likely to follow.

5. All Mission officers are doing their best to convince the Salvadoran right that this is a mistaken interpretation of current US attitudes. We are telling them that the reality of their country is so threatening that repression and anti-Communist rhetoric unaccompanied by real reforms will not head off a leftist revolution. We know fundamental social change is necessary here and are willing to support the reforms.

The question is, are the Salvadoran military and civilian elites prepared to make any sacrifices of their own? A rightist coup now means the answer is no, not without a fight.²

Cheek

² In his February 22 evening report to Carter, Vance noted right-wing coup plotting in El Salvador. He highlighted the Embassy's effort to "make clear our support of the Junta, our opposition to a coup, and our inability to support a repressive rightist government." Carter wrote in response: "We may have to support the more conservative group—then force democratic reforms and elections." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 20, El Salvador: 2/12–24/80)

416. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 25, 1980

SUBJECT

Letter from Salvadoran Archbishop Romero (U)

Attached at Tab A is the cabled text of a letter to you from Archbishop Romero of El Salvador, dated February 17.² The Archbishop is a very influential religious leader in El Salvador. Despite our efforts to convince him to support the current governing Junta, he has continued to come out strongly against the present government and in favor of a leftist alternative. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 2/25–29/80. Confidential. Sent for information. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Let Cy sign answer. J."

² Tab A was not attached. Telegram 1122 from San Salvador, February 19, transmitted the text of Romero's letter to Carter as it appeared in press. Romero wrote: "I ask you, if you really want to defend human rights, to prohibit the giving of this military aid to the Salvadoran Government, and to guarantee that your government will not intervene directly or indirectly with military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressures to determine the destiny of the Salvadoran people." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80) An unknown hand noted that on March 3 the National Security Council received a Spanish-language copy of the letter dated February 17. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 2/25–29/80)

The letter calls on the U.S. not to send economic and military aid to the current government in El Salvador, and equates such aid with the continuing repression of the Salvadoran people. (U)

I have asked the State Department to draft a reply for your signature. (U)³

³ Brzezinski added a hand-written postscript at the bottom of the page: "P.S. Lately, there has been some accommodation in his views." In a February 26 memorandum to Vance, Brzezinski noted Carter's instruction that Vance should sign the reply to Romero. For Vance's reply, see Document 422.

417. Telegram From the Embassy in Guatemala to the Department of State¹

Guatemala City, February 25, 1980, 2359Z

1272. Department please pass to Panama, Caracas and San Salvador from Bowdler/Pastor/Cheek. Subject: (S) Assessment of Where We Stand in El Salvador Situation.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. We believe developments of the past week have had a salutary effect on both the military and civilian components of the JRG. The military, influenced to a considerable degree by our strong stand against a coup, have temporarily put aside plans to replace the JRG and are making a last effort to work with the PDC in reaching JRG decisions on agrarian and banking reforms and ancillary security mea-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870148-1918. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Also sent from the Department as telegram 50823 to Panama City, Caracas, and San Salvador, February 26. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N800004-0030) On another copy of the telegram, Brzezinski wrote the following to Pastor: "RP I agree with the general approach. What do we now do to implement?" An unknown hand dated Brzezinski's comments February 26. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 2/25-29/80)

tures by the end of this week. The assassination of Mario Zamora² seems to have brought the PDC more closely together and given them a heretofore missing sense of urgency to reach JRG decisions on reform and security measures. Thus, under the pressure of events, the JRG may at long last be moving to the decisive stage toward which we have been urging it for the past month.

3. Last night (February 24) the PDC leadership outlined to Jim Cheek the following plan, saying they are determined to carry it out by the end of this week at the very latest: (a) Final JRG approval of the banking reform which has been under active consideration by the Junta for the past month; (b) Final JRG approval of the agrarian reform decree which has been staffed out in detail by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agrarian Reform Agency (ISTA); (c) JRG approval and implementation of a number of social order measures (e.g., temporary suspension of guarantees of free speech and assembly to permit a ban on demonstrations and on the massive propaganda campaign being waged by both left and right in the media, a public commitment from the security forces to more effectively deal with violence of the extreme left and right, and the mobilization of reserve forces to protect implementation of the agrarian reform from extremist attacks).

4. Although the PDC and the military seem determined to act quickly and decisively this week, some major issues remain to be negotiated between them. The PDC has publicly committed itself to a “nationalization” of the banks but the military, uncomfortable with this, would like to limit the reform to majority state ownership of bank stock rather than full ownership. The complex agrarian reform contains a number of questions on which the military and the PDC are at odds agreeing. There are also significant differences between the two parties on the social order measures, with the military seeking more than the PDC wishes to give. Whether the PDC’s and the military’s new determination, backed by their realization that time is running out, will prove sufficient to overcome these obstacles remains to be seen. Embassy San Salvador believes the odds that they will are about even. In any event the components of the JRG are closer to moving ahead with key reforms and necessary security measures than they have been

² In telegram 1357 from San Salvador, February 23, the Embassy reported that PDC leader Mario Zamora Rivas had been killed that day by masked assassins. The Embassy commented: “Murder of Zamora appears coldly calculated to exacerbate as greatly as possible present extremely delicate situation in PDC and in country.” The PDC national convention was scheduled to take place on February 24 in order to elect leaders to party vacancies. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800095–0611) Telegram 6181 from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, February 24, reported that “the extreme right-wing White Warriors Union” had claimed credit for Zamora’s assassination. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, unlabeled folder)

since the October 15 coup and both parties seem to realize that they confront a now-or-never opportunity.

5. If the JRG successfully carries out the PDC game plan this week, we will pass to a new phase of the October 15 revolution. A number of major new problems will confront the JRG as it attempts to implement the agrarian and banking reforms and security measures:

—The agrarian and banking reforms should remove grave uncertainties relative to the economy and clarify to the majority of the business, industrial and agricultural sectors that are not seriously threatened by these reforms. However, the reforms will hit hard at the oligarchy and large land owners who can be expected to go all out violently to attack the reform program.

—The reform program will steal thunder from the left and its successful implementation could dash the left's hopes to gain control of the government through failure of the JRG. The extreme left will therefore try to step up its campaign of disruptive tactics, including greater violence, which, if backed by the united "popular forces," could prevent implementation of the agrarian reform. The JRG's security measures, however, will give the left cause for concern. Opportunities for dividing the left and negotiating with its less extreme elements will exist and the JRG will have to take advantage of them.

—Sizeable external assistance will be needed to finance implementation of the reforms and to overcome the economic crisis through which the nation will pass. The JRG will have to effectively mobilize these resources.

6. In the first phase of the emerging process (i.e., the delicate negotiations between PDC and military that will take place over the next few days on the reform-social order packages), it is hard for outsiders to play an influential role unless they have close knowledge of the process and the confidence of the players. We have excellent communications and considerable influence with both parties. Our forthright public stand of the past week³ and our assistance in blocking the rightist coup have further enhanced our position. Both sides of the JRG view us as a close and trusted friend. We foresee that they will readily call upon us to help them resolve sticking points that emerge in their negotiations and that we can effectively do so. The only other country

³ Graham Hovey reported on February 23: "For the second time in two days, the State Department took the unusual step today of publicly warning El Salvador's armed forces and their right-wing supporters against any attempt to overthrow the existing Government." (Graham Hovey, "U.S. Warns Against Rightist Coup in El Salvador," *Washington Post*, February 24, 1980, p. 3) Telegram 47653 to multiple posts, February 22, included the February 22 statement to the press. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800093-0609)

which might help is Venezuela which knows the situation better than any other Latin country. If a Mission under a person like Ambassador Cardozo, who has demonstrated a capacity to collaborate with us, could arrive in San Salvador in the next day or two, this would be helpful. (Jim Cheek strongly counsels against attempting an approach such as the truce-dialogue proposal discussed with the Panamanians over the weekend because it would torpedo the present effort and could result in the breakup of the JRG. Bowdler and Pastor accept this assessment.)⁴

7. The second phase of the process (i.e., implementation of the reform packages) will in all likelihood stimulate the two extremes to step up efforts to defeat the programs. Various steps might be taken to reduce this danger both by the JRG and by outside parties.

8. Dealing with the right: With respect to the right the JRG will want to resolve pending issues in the agrarian and banking reform packages which will split the extreme elements from the moderates. It will also be necessary for the JRG to insist that the military make clear to the leadership of the far right that further acts of terrorism and sabotage will not be tolerated. Charge Cheek will pursue these points with the Junta. In addition the USG should be ready to take the following steps.

—Soon after promulgation, issue a statement endorsing the reforms and warning the right and left against opposing them.

—Privately, but at a high and credible level, warn the right in even stronger terms not to interfere with the reform process.

—Suggest to OAS/SYG Orfila that he visit El Salvador to demonstrate support and look for ways in which the OAS might assist in the reform programs or otherwise help the JRG.

—Identify and try to pre-empt potential sources of support for the extreme right in the US, particularly in congress and among business interests.

9. Dealing with the left: Efforts to neutralize the opposition from the left could take a variety of forms. The JRG might ask the Archbishop to use the church's contacts with the left to attenuate efforts to disrupt reform. It might go a step further and also ask the Archbishop to broker

⁴ In telegram 1719 from Panama City, February 24, Bowdler and Pastor wrote to Vance, Brzezinski, Cheek, and Luers: "In five hours of conversations Saturday [February 23] night, Bowdler, Pastor, and Moss agreed ad ref with Torrijos and his aides on the need to strengthen the Junta in El Salvador and to promote a dialogue which would include all groups from the extreme left to the armed forces and the private sector. The dialogue would be aimed at getting a moratorium on violence, an agreement on a program of reforms, and an agreement on a structure which would allow broader political participation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870108-0453)

direct consultations between the JRG and the extreme left organizations. Charge Cheek will pursue these courses with the JRG and directly with the archbishop as appropriate. We might also from Washington take these steps:

—Accept Torrijos' offer to host a meeting at which US officials could talk to leaders of the far left. Prior understanding would have to be reached with Torrijos for both of us to urge the leaders to collaborate with the reform effort and halt violent tactics. (We would only do this if we get a credible explanation of the ACAN-EFE story from Torrijos.)⁵

—Failing this, we should seek to establish contact with the left through alternative channels, such as having Ambassador Pezzullo urge the Sandinistas to use their influence with the Salvadoran extreme left to the same end, or contacting Fidel Castro for the same purpose.

10. The assumption throughout this process is that we would work closely with the Venezuelans and other potentially supportive governments and the international financial institutions to provide economic and security assistance to reinforce the three elements of the reform package and deal with the economic crisis.

11. For Caracas: We recommend that Ambassador Luers continue his efforts with President Herrera to have the Cardozo Mission go to San Salvador as rapidly as possible. Arrival during the phase one talks would be best but even during phase two it would be helpful. AD and COPEI statements of support for the JRG reform package soon after it is announced would also be especially helpful. Gov may also want to consider sending teams to help in implementing the reforms and in developing a good public relations presentation of the reform program.

12. For Panama: We do not see any prospect of collaborating with Torrijos or Salamin unless they provide a very credible explanation of the ACAN-EFE story. In the absence of such an explanation, we believe Ambassador should limit himself to correcting the record and describing our continuing efforts to block a rightist coup and support a peaceful but fundamental reform program, leaving the door open to a Panama-arranged meeting with leftist leaders if in the future this seemed desirable.

Ortiz

⁵ See footnote 7, Document 414.

418. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 26, 1980

SUBJECT

A Strategy for the Right (U)

I had two conversations on Thursday² and Friday with moderate leaders from El Salvador and Guatemala, which served to reinforce a strong feeling that I have, and which Bill Bowdler and the CIA share: the most immediate threat to US interests in Central America comes from the right, not the left, and that we have barely begun to utilize the influence we have with the right to persuade them to change their approach before it's too late. If the right seizes power in El Salvador, there will be no way for us to prevent a bloodbath of unbelievable proportions (people there are talking about the need to kill 150,000 people) and ultimately a Communist victory. We must prevent the right from seizing power. In this memo, let me provide the reasons why I reached this conclusion, and then a strategy for dealing with this threat. (S)

Background

The violence of the left in El Salvador and Guatemala is either targeted on the military or it's infantile (e.g. occupations). The violence from the right is targeted on the middle, like Mario Zamora of the PDC³ and I fear they may begin aiming for our people, although they will try to blame it on the left. Jim Cheek believes the right has become frantic because they fear that the Junta may finally begin implementing real reforms. In the past week, they have raised the level of violence and assassinations to an unprecedented level, and they tried to buy the army in order to promote a coup. It was only the firm message that we would withdraw all US support if they launched a coup that apparently side-tracked it. The right has not given up; they are waiting for another opportunity. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 37, Serial Xs—2/1/80–4/15/80. Secret. Sent for action. Pastor did not initial the memorandum. Copies were sent to Aaron and Owen. An unknown hand wrote "URGENT" at the top of the page and added "El Salvador" to the subject line.

² February 21.

³ See footnote 2, Document 417.

A young Christian Democrat and businessman (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* from Guatemala) with superb contacts throughout the military came by for a long talk last Friday. He was one of the closest aides to the former President Laugerud and admitted that he was charged by Laugerud to make sure that Lucas won the last Presidential election, even though he lost. The irony, he said, was that he and Laugerud, thought that Lucas would be the most reasonable, moderate, and effective of the three candidates. In fact, he has proven to be unreasonable, stupid, volatile, and has surrounded himself with narrow reactionary brutal sycophants. Lucas himself gave the order for the police to assault the Spanish Embassy. (This, as well as most of his analysis, is confirmed *[less than 1 line not declassified]*). He said that Lucas is totally incapable of understanding the need to undertake reforms, and he despairs of Guatemala's future. He believes the only hope is to replace Lucas or the people closest to him. (S)

He said, however, that the main reason he asked *[less than 1 line not declassified]* to see me was because he was confused about US policy because of our new Ambassador, Frank Ortiz. He said that he personally had been trying to persuade the Guatemalan Army Chief of Staff Rene Mendoza to accept the importance of change, and then in one conversation, Ortiz transmitted a different message to him. When I restated our policy to Guatemala, he was reassured, but left with a second recommendation: that we replace Ortiz. (S)

A Strategy

The right in Central America are driven by ideology and economic interest. An inequality in wealth is perhaps most marked in the region, and the rich appear unwilling to change even a little. The Junta estimates that if they only expropriate farms larger than 1200 acres, they will affect only 310 families, but 70% of the cultivable land. These are the families of the right, who are seeking a coup. They have found nothing but US support in the past, particularly when they scream "Communist." Now, we don't seem to be responding to their "red cape," and they are growing frantic. Still, according to most people, they feel that there are sympathetic ears in the Administration (principally the Pentagon and you) and outside (business, in Congress, Republicans) and that eventually that side will come to their rescue. They also believe that Afghanistan and cold war-like tensions mean that the probability of an early rescue operation has increased dramatically. (S)

We must disabuse them of this illusion quickly. I strongly recommend that we bring up a half dozen civilian and military leaders from the Salvadoran right to Washington for a set of briefings by Vance, JCS, and you. Then, for extra emphasis, we should have another briefing in the Pentagon. We should also brief a wide range of leaders in Con-

gress, the business community, and in the Republican party who they might seek out on their own. As long as the Junta is in power, we remain in a strong political position, domestically and internationally, and I don't think we will have any trouble persuading any conservative Americans (short of total ideologues) of the correctness of our position. To the extent that we use these people on the Salvadorans before the Salvadorans try to use them on us, we will be serving two purposes: conveying a very strong message on the need to change to the Salvadoran oligarchy, a message all the more credible because it is being delivered by "people who understand the Communist challenge," and secondly, we will be protecting our political ass by explaining to potential critics that we have a policy, which makes sense and which they ought to support now. (S)

I have tried this proposal out on Bowdler, Cheek and SOUTHCOM General Nutting, and all support it. (S)

RECOMMEND

If you approve, I will get in touch with JCS and ask whether they'd be willing to do it. If they are, I will try to set up a meeting for Thursday or Friday. I expect it would take one hour of your time, an additional hour for the Pentagon, and some time for fuller briefings by State. I will prepare talking points. Essentially, you will tell them that the only way to prevail over Communism is for them to support the Junta and reforms. They cannot count on us sending in the monies to save their coffee plantations.⁴ (S)

If this session works well, we will set up a similar session with the Guatemalan right.⁵ (S)

The Guatemalan Foreign Minister has requested a meeting with you on March 3 or 4. He is one of the small-minded reactionaries closest to Lucas. Although he is a bore, I believe it would be useful for you to tell him the need for change and the need for Guatemala to support the Salvador Junta and to use its influence to prevent a coup. Therefore, I recommend that you see him on March 3 or 4.⁶

⁴ Brzezinski neither approved or disapproved of this recommendation. Aaron placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin of this paragraph and drew a line from it to the bottom margin and noted: "ZB—I have misgivings about this. It will look like we are plotting with them = not trying to correct them. Still I have no better alternative. I generally agree with Bob's analysis of the short run problem. But *the* longer range (6 week) problem is the left & Cuba. DA." An unknown hand dated Aaron's comments February 27.

⁵ Brzezinski neither approved or disapproved of this recommendation.

⁶ Brzezinski neither approved or disapproved of this recommendation.

419. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, February 27, 1980, 5:15–6 p.m.

SUBJECT

US Policy to El Salvador (U)

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher

Ambassador William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs

Ambassador Robert White, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador

OSD

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

Frank Kramer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Security Affairs

JCS

Lt General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Jack Davis, NIO for Latin America

OMB

Deputy Director John White

Randy Jayne, Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Robert Pastor

Summary of Conclusions

Situation in El Salvador. The weekend assassination of a leading Christian Democrat² and the near coup has apparently galvanized the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 109, SCC 279, El Salvador, 2/27/80. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. The minutes of the meeting have not been found. Pastor sent the summary to Brzezinski under a February 27 memorandum, requesting that Brzezinski send the minutes to Carter for approval under cover of a February 28 memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter. According to the February 28 memorandum, Carter approved the minutes. Brzezinski sent a copy of the minutes to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Jones, and Helms under a March 3 memorandum, noting that the Department's task force should follow up on the items discussed during the meeting and provide a report by March 7. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 32, Meetings—SCC 282, 2/28/80)

² See footnote 2, Document 417.

Junta to try to reach final agreement on the agrarian and banking reforms and the security package by this weekend. Our Embassy in San Salvador is following the negotiations within the Junta closely and is using its influence to help the Junta work together and resolve any remaining internal problems. We are also encouraging the Venezuelans to assist the Junta to develop an effective presentation for its reforms. (S)

After Announcement of Reforms. The reforms will hopefully isolate the oligarchy from the progressive business sector, who are now worried about how far the reforms will extend. The military will need to be tough with the right-wing para-military organizations if it is to gain any credibility in dealing with the left. State will brief sympathetic leaders and governments and encourage them to issue an endorsement of the reforms after they are promulgated, as we will do. The SCC recommends that at that time, we inform the Venezuelans that we deferred sending in the 3-man advance team for the MTT's until the reforms were promulgated. We will urge the Venezuelans and other nations (Spain, Colombia, Peru) to step up their support. The advance team will then go, but in a very low-profile way. We will also suggest that OAS Secretary General Orfila go to El Salvador after the announcement of the reforms, and we will work in the U.S. to try to identify and neutralize potential supporters of the far right. Privately, but at a high and very credible level, we will warn the right in strong terms not to interfere with the reform process. On the left, we will urge the Church to endorse the reforms, and we will ask Father Healey of Georgetown whether he would be willing to deliver a message to the Archbishop from Secretary Vance on your behalf. (S)

Contingencies. If the Junta should fail to reach agreement, we will seek the help of the leaders of Costa Rica, Venezuela, and perhaps Peru to help bring the sides together to negotiate a truce. If the reforms are announced, and violence from the extremes threaten their implementation, then possibly we could ask the OAS for a truce and a dialogue, along the lines sketched in the plan developed by Bowdler and Pastor. The SCC agreed that we should not deal with Torrijos at this time. (S)

Economic and Security Assistance to El Salvador. Secretary Vance said he would prefer to seek additional PL-480 funds for El Salvador by reprogramming from Latin America and elsewhere, but the SCC agreed that Henry Owen would review the PL-480 proposals, with the participation of AID and USDA, and make recommendations to the SCC. CIA, State, and DOD are still working on a proposal for a multinational intelligence center, but no decision will be made until the proposal is completed and transmitted to the NSC. An advance team will be sent to the Gulf of Fonseca soon to develop a plan for cooperating with the Navies of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua for interdicting illegal

arms shipments. This team will go only after we consult with the three governments, and after the team has been fully briefed by State. (S)
[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

**420. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, March 1, 1980, 2325Z

1557. For Assistant Secretary Bowdler and Robert Pastor of NSC.
Subj: Next Steps in the El Salvador Situation. Ref: State 050823.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Our Feb 25 assessment of where we stood in El Salvador (reftel) has been proven correct, following the strategy we outlined for this decisive week, we have apparently succeeded. Barring any last minute disaster, the agrarian reform will be announced on Monday³ and the banking reform within the next few days. Concurrently the JRG will undertake a number of social order measures the extent of which will depend upon the nature and degree of violent opposition that threatens the reforms.

3. Both the PDC and the military components of the JRG can be justifiably proud of their accomplishments this week. We can take some satisfaction from the critical role we played both in helping them to resolve their differences and in defending them against their enemies. The three of us—Military, PDC, and USG—have further developed and strengthened relationships among ourselves which should serve us well in the difficult days ahead.

4. As we move into phase two next week, I believe the assessment in para B of reftel regarding major new problems we will confront remains valid and that most of the measures which we contemplated taking in paras 8 and 9 are essential. If the second phase presents new challenges to us, clearly it also will offer important new opportunities. The JRG can at last break out of the corner it has been confined to since Oct 15 and can stop cowering under heavy attacks from left,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See Document 417.

³ March 3.

right, and even center. New vistas should now open up for the JRG, giving it more room to deal with both the left and the right. With improved prospects of survival, better unity born of successful decision-making and enhanced authority from restoring a semblance of order, the JRG may be able to get off the defensive and take some offensive measures of its own.

5. Our unfailing support for the JRG has confined us to the same corner with the PDC civilians and the military. As the JRG breaks out we too will be able to move out and take some new initiatives, playing a stronger and more positive hand than heretofore. In this second phase, the main arena of our effort will continue to be here in El Salvador. We will therefore have to continue to rely principally on our mission in El Salvador to carry out our policy, supported by Washington and supplemented at critical moments by measures such as the spokesman's forthright anti-coup statement of Feb 22.⁴ Thus the primary focus of SCC deliberations should continue to be what the USG itself can and should do here in El Salvador, although there will be opportunities for and indeed the need to secure participation by other countries and international organizations, the decisive measures will be those that we take here directly with the military and the PDC as well as with reachable elements of the right and left.

6. As reported in various telegrams (mostly Nodis), I have already initiated some elements of the phase two strategy which we agreed upon in Guatemala. In discussions with JRG members, the military High Command, and the PDC leadership, I have outlined to them our ideas for capitalizing on new opportunities to deal with the left and the right. All have generally concurred with our assessment and with going forward with some of the more important measures contemplated. With JRG and PDC blessing, FonMin Chavez Mena has had several positive contacts with key elements of the private sector including some of the more enlightened members of the oligarchy. He had a good luncheon meeting with the ANEP leadership on March 1 and the JRG minus Dada Hirezi will meet with a private sector group on Monday evening to brief them on the reform measures and try to enlist their support or at least their acquiescence. Chavez Mena also had an exploratory session with the Archbishop who agreed to put in motion a contact with less extreme elements of the far left, Gutierrez and Majano (who himself has had some contact with the FAPU) concur in the need to try to deal with some elements of the left. I believe they can be counted on to support and participate in this effort if it bears fruit. Some other elements of the military, particularly the High Com-

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 417.

mand, are less sanguine about prospects for dealing with the left but USG support for this should give them the assurance necessary to go along. Thus I believe we may be able to bring the JRG together with the left without having to employ outside intermediaries as contemplated in para 9 ref.

7. In addition to the measures suggested in ref and to the post-reform announcement statements by US and others (proposed to you this morning in SS 1554),⁵ I recommend that we take the following steps:

—Bring in the MTT advance team on Sunday March 9 to be followed by the main party on Sunday March 16;⁶

—Sign the FMS credit agreement as soon as congressional requirements are fulfilled and proceed with the helicopter offer as soon as possible;

—Quickly identify agrarian reform related projects for immediate financing;

—Begin laying plans for Junta trip to Washington and meeting with the President in late March.

Cheek

⁵ In telegram 1554 from San Salvador, March 1, Cheek reported that the JRG had established a timetable for announcing their reform decrees and suggested that U.S. public statements of recognition be prepared in advance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1724)

⁶ According to a March 4 action memorandum to Vance from Bowdler, Vance had requested Bowdler's views on Cheek's recommendations regarding MTTs to El Salvador. Bowdler endorsed Cheek's approach and provided a detailed scenario that included the dispatch of MTT following approval by the Chief of Mission in San Salvador. Vance approved proceeding with the scenario. (Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Nicaragua/El Salvador Working Files, Lot 81D64, Misc. Memoranda, 1980)

421. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, March 7, 1980

SUBJECT

Security Assistance for El Salvador

We have stopped all further action on the MTT teams unless the necessary multinational effort can be assembled.

You indicated that you had no objection to our sending riot control equipment to El Salvador. We have in fact done this last November in the amount of \$212,000.

This morning² in our discussion of the MTT's we did not address in detail the question of the military equipment (\$4.5 million of FMS) we were planning to send to El Salvador to help them combat infiltration of men and equipment from other countries (principally across the Honduran border) and to deal with mounting guerrilla action inside the country. I would appreciate a clarification of your views on this aspect. The categories of equipment—mostly communication and transportation—that we planned to send are the following:

- radios
- generators and power supplies
- miscellaneous commo gear
- ambulances and trucks
- protection masks
- night vision devices
- bullet proof vests
- hand grenades and grenade launchers

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 123, Vance, Miscellaneous Communications 1/80–4/80. Secret. Carter initialed the top of the memorandum.

² Reference is to Carter's March 7 foreign policy breakfast that took place from 7:33 to 9:31 a.m. and was attended by Mondale, Vance, Brown, Cutler, Jordan, Donovan, and Brzezinski. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) Brzezinski wrote to Pastor in a March 7 memorandum: "We should help to restore the Archbishop's radio station. Perhaps AID or DOD can help. The MTT is not to go into El Salvador unless other Latin Americans go in with them. In the meantime, the Salvadorans can go to Panama and meet with them, if that is helpful to the Salvadorans. Please coordinate with State and Defense." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 3/1–15/80)

Recommendation:

That we proceed with this equipment except for the hand grenades and grenade launchers.³

³ Carter indicated his approval. Brzezinski returned the signed and approved copy to Vance under a March 8 memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80)

422. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, March 12, 1980, 0241Z

65128. Rome for the Vatican office. Subject: Letter to Archbishop Romero from Secretary Vance. Refs: A) San Salvador 1122 (Reftel);² B) San Salvador 1556.³

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Below follows the text of the Secretary's reply to Archbishop Romero's letter to the President of February 17.

3. We agree with the suggestion contained reftel that we inform the Archbishop that we intend to make the letter public but that we offer him the opportunity to do so himself. Please inform the Department what he chooses.

4. Begin quote: Dear Archbishop:

The President has asked that I respond to your letter of February 17 regarding the situation in El Salvador and expressing your frank views on United States assistance to the Revolutionary Junta of Government. We are pleased to see confirmed that you and the President have many goals and concerns in common. As you note, the advancement

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800126-0329. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Managua, Caracas, Bogotá, San José, Guatemala City, and Rome. Drafted by Wilson; cleared in ARA, ARA/CEN, S/P, HA, NSC, and S/S-O; approved by Vance.

² See footnote 2, Document 416.

³ In telegram 1556 from San Salvador, March 1, the Embassy included revisions to the text of the reply to Romero's letter to Carter. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800108-0455) A signed copy of Vance's letter to Romero, dated March 11, is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80.

of human rights has been and remains one of the principal foreign policy goals of our government and I assure you that it underlies every aspect of United States policy toward El Salvador.

The Revolutionary Junta of Government has shown itself to be moderate and reformist. The United States, dedicated by tradition and long practice to democratic principles, is concerned about El Salvador's grave political crisis and stands ready to contribute to peaceful and progressive solutions. We believe the reform program of the Revolutionary Junta of Government offers the best prospect for peaceful change toward a more just society. We therefore have responded to the Junta's request for our assistance to help achieve its goals.

The vast bulk of our contemplated assistance in support of the Junta's reform program is economic. We plan to make available to the Junta this year approximately \$50 million of urgently needed economic assistance that will be directed toward the most needy to create public works employment, to feed the hungry, to improve health, education and housing, and to support the agrarian and other reforms.

We understand your concerns about the dangers of providing military assistance, given the unfortunate role which some elements of the security forces occasionally have played in the past. As we consider any request for such assistance, I can assure you that whatever military assistance may be provided will be directed at helping the government to defend and carry forward its announced program of reform and development. We are as concerned as you that any assistance we provide not be used in a repressive manner. Therefore, any equipment and training which we might provide would be designed to enhance the professionalism of the armed forces so that they can fulfill their essential role of maintaining order with a minimum of lethal force.

I believe there is no real contradiction between proper law enforcement and respect for human rights. We will use our influence to avert any misuse of our assistance in ways that injure human rights of the people of El Salvador and will promptly reassess our assistance should evidence of such misuse develop, however, we hope that you will agree that a less confrontational environment is necessary to implement the kind of meaningful reform program you have long advocated.

I thank you for sharing your concerns with us. Your views have been carefully considered by the President and me and will continue to be. I believe we are all committed to the advancement of human rights and democratic principles. We share a repugnance for the violence provoked by both extremes that is taking the lives of innocent people. We deplore the efforts of those seeking to silence the voices of reason and moderation with explosives, intimidation and murder. The great moral authority of the church, and your uncompromising defense of human rights and dedication to nonviolence, place you in a unique

position to use your influence with other people of goodwill in a cooperative effort to quiet passions and find peaceful solutions.

The United States will not interfere in the internal affairs of El Salvador. Nevertheless, we are gravely concerned that the threat of civil war in your country could endanger the security and well-being of the whole Central American region. We shall continue to do what we can to respond to the legitimate requests of the governments of the area in their efforts to correct economic and social injustice and promote respect for democratic procedures and the rights of the individual.

I wish you every success in carrying out your heavy pastoral responsibilities and the new demands that the threat of civil war has imposed upon you. You have a major role to play in helping your fellow countrymen find peaceful solutions to their problems. May God give you wisdom and strength in this difficult task.

Sincerely,
Cyrus Vance
End quote.⁴

Vance

⁴ In telegram 1949 from San Salvador, March 15, the Embassy confirmed delivery of Vance's letter to Romero and reported that Romero "said it represented advance in U.S. thinking." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800133-0438) In telegram 1953 from San Salvador, March 17, the Embassy reported, however, that in his March 16 homily Romero summarized the text of Vance's letter: "Archbishop's limited comment on the letter was somewhat negative." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 3/16-31/80)

423. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, March 12, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador (U)

This afternoon I learned from DOD that Secretary Brown and General Jones will support your recommendation to ask the President to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 3/1-15/80. Secret. Sent for action.

reconsider his decision not to send in the MTT's. I have been pressing Bowdler and Tarnoff all day to get the Secretary on board, and finally Bill met with the Secretary late this afternoon, but found him just as non-committal as ever. (S)

Sensing that Vance would not commit himself, Bill tried to persuade him to accept a compromise 3-step plan: (1) To send in two 2-man teams for two weeks to survey what the Salvadorean military can use in terms of communication and transport equipment. (Despite DOD's pledge that they could send FMS equipment immediately, State was informed today that it would be necessary to send these two teams first for a 2-week period.) (2) After that, the equipment (\$5–\$7 million) should be sent in over a two to three month period. (3) Go in with the MTT's to train the military to use the equipment. Vance accepted the idea, and asked Bowdler to draft a memo from him to the President, asking the President to approve the 2-man teams. (S)

Bowdler clearly does not like this 3-step plan, but is constrained from arguing otherwise. I think it is a crazy idea, myself. It means that we won't even consider MTT's for three months. A recent intelligence report suggests great concern about a rumor that we will not follow through with our MTT's. I predict this will spread like wildfire if the news gets out, and our credibility and resolve will be seriously questioned. Given the President's concerns, I think the central question we should be asking is how can we get the junta to reduce military and right-wing repression, which has increased dramatically in the last couple of weeks. I believe that we could probably use the MTT's to do that, and we can strengthen our hand even more if we instructed Ambassador White to seek a confidential meeting with the junta and indicate our reluctance to allow the MTT's to go in unless we could be assured that the junta intends to crack down on right-wing repression.² (S)

I don't think we have a lot of time; I am sure we don't have three months, but I recognize why you must go to the President with the combined recommendation. Jim Cheek will be returning Wednesday evening³ from El Salvador. Let me recommend that we schedule an SCC meeting for Thursday to get an up-date and briefing from Cheek and to discuss ways we could use the MTT's to minimize the repression from the right. If you could hammer out a combined recommendation at that meeting, then we could send in a memo after it. If you cannot get Vance to come around, at least you could use the opportunity to

² Aaron wrote in the margin next to this sentence: "[unclear] Way to do it. We ought to get White's recommendation."

³ March 12.

bring you and Harold Brown up to speed on the issue, and perhaps you can have Brown raise it at the Friday breakfast again. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That we schedule an SCC meeting on El Salvador to get an update briefing from Cheek. (If you approve, I will ask DOD to begin work on a strategy for the MTT's to reduce the repression in El Salvador.)⁴ (S)

⁴ Aaron wrote at the bottom of the page: "Seems reasonable but we should get White's suggestion too." Brzezinski indicated his approval. He also drew an arrow from Aaron's comment pointing to his own handwritten note: "Get White's input." For White's report, see Document 424.

424. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, March 13, 1980, 1730Z

1886. State for Bowdler, NSC for Pastor. Subj: Assistance to GOES; Timing and Composition. Ref. Brown-Dion Telcon 3/12/80.²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Despite brief time here,³ I have gained several impressions about situation that I would like to record. First, the Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) is composed of honorable men who are committed to finding a moderate solution and recognize that our support will be key to survival of non-Communist society in El Salvador. Second, they face two formidable enemies in the ultraleft terrorists bent on provoking security forces into mindless reprisals against the masses leading to popular insurrection and the ultraright terrorists who are carrying out inhuman reprisals against center-left aimed at total polarization, ouster

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1701. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

² No record of the telephone conversation between Brown and Dion has been found. See Document 427.

³ In telegram 1857 from San Salvador, March 12, White reported that he had presented his credentials to the JRG on March 11. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800126-0310) Brzezinski's March 12 memorandum to Vance reported that Carter had read White's telegram and "commented that within a few days he would like Ambassador White's personal assessment of the situation." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80)

of moderates from JRG and civil war to implant repressive dictatorship. I cannot emphasize too strongly that immediate threat is from ultra-right; it must be defeated before JRG can begin to detach accessible left from foreign trained leftist terrorists.

3. It is clear to me that enactment of the agrarian and other reforms has strengthened the JRG significantly. Even Minister of Defense Garcia publicly pledged support to the Junta and to reform program in an effective TV broadcast the evening of March 11. The limited state of siege⁴ has calmed the country by removing from the newspapers, radio and TV the inflammatory calls to insurrection from the extreme left [garble—and extreme] right.

4. This sudden burst of effectiveness has caused the revolutionary left to break stride and falter. There has not been a major incident from the left in over two weeks, apart from a disastrous attack on guardia barracks that left 15 attackers dead and one guardia wounded. These same two weeks have seen a quantum leap in violence from the right. Each day the toll mounts with the brunt of the violence falling on the left wing Christian Democrats, on the Socialists (MNR), Orthodox Nonviolent Communists (UDN), and on the more moderate leaders of the popular blocs. The strategy of the right is clear: (1) destroy the accessible left, those who might be open to an appeal to reason from the JRG and could potentially be persuaded either to support or at least not violently oppose the Junta's reform program; (2) demonstrate the impotence of the Junta and the tolerance of the armed forces for savage reprisals by the ultraright, thereby radicalizing the moderates and insuring denunciations of the government from the archbishop and other popular leaders; and (3) convince the armed forces that its only hope of survival as an institution is to return to its traditional alliance with the oligarchy, especially those who are bankrolling the rightwing violence.

5. The Human Rights Commission of El Salvador published a statistical table yesterday showing the January and February figures for deaths caused by the left at 73 and by the right at 330. The source may be biased and its figures somewhat suspect but they are all we have and most people believe them. It is instructive to note that this Mission has never kept such a tally and when I requested one yesterday

⁴ In telegram 1719 from San Salvador, March 7, the Embassy reported that the JRG had suspended certain individual rights on March 6 after announcing its agrarian reform decree. The Embassy noted: "It is not a declaration of martial law but it is locally being called a 'state of siege' because of any suspension of constitutional guarantees is commonly referred to by that term in this country. A more precise characterization, however, would be a 'limited state of siege.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800117-0207)

at our staff meeting there were strenuous objections from some quarters. This introduces a separate but related problem.

6. This is unquestionably the most disciplined diplomatic Mission I have ever seen and a good share of our problems in El Salvador arise directly out of the mixed signals we have been sending to the various political actors here, especially to the armed forces. I am morally certain that if Jim Cheek had not taken charge when he did and if he and Mark Dion had not engaged in a marathon effort to untangle the mass of miscues and misreadings about our position, notwithstanding the Department's firm and public rejection of a rightwing coup,⁵ we would now have an intractable rightwing Junta in place and good prospects for a civil war. Over the next several weeks we will speak here with one voice or see some of our speakers depart. I will be meeting over the next few days with each member of the Junta individually and with MinDef and commanders of each of the security forces. One of my main themes will be the need to rein in the rightwing terrorism hard. It would help if Washington agencies, specifically CIA and DIA, gave clearest and most forceful instructions to their representatives that U.S. policy does not countenance a rightwing solution and that every opportunity must be sought to denounce rightwing violence that threatens to radicalize the country irretrievably.

7. To return to the overall analysis, let me say that I perceive a substantial group within the armed forces, especially in the High Command, that will never accept civilian leadership and who will attempt to undermine all movement towards democracy. This group wields important power and several of its members not only tolerate assassinations and bombings but probably actively encourage the rightist terrorist squads.

8. The rationale for us to provide this government with Military Training Teams (MTTs) is not as many opponents claim, a military solution to a political problem. The policy is designed to buy time for the government to broaden its appeal all across the political spectrum to the point that it will have sufficient strength to reform the military and then turn to the real task, the elimination of the threat from the extreme left. There are, however, several problems with that rationale.

9. First, it will do nothing to eliminate or discourage the threat of another coup attempt—an attempt which I believe will certainly come sooner or later. In fact, I believe the arrival of the MTTs will be interpreted by the rightist officers as USG support for the armed forces as presently constituted. The rightwing terrorists will not be disciplined because we will have committed our support already without demand-

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 417.

ing action to end the assassinations and bombings. With the USG “in the bag”, the rightwing officers will begin to press again for the ouster of Col. Majano and the PDC. In fact, we could easily find ourselves with a coup in progress while the MTTs are here.

10. [garble], the extreme right is desperate and it may well be pushing sympathetic elements in the military to move against the progressive members of the Junta right now. This may well be the wrong time for the right to do so. It is only human to try to postpone a crisis but I believe it is perfectly logical to argue that an attempted rightwing coup in the near future would have an odds-on chance of failure. A failed coup could increase the support for the government from the moderate left and moderate right, meanwhile providing the military an opportunity and a strong rationale for cleaning house. At least one senior officer, Col. Carranza, has got to go and the sooner the better.

11. It might be possible to stave off a showdown but it is a fact that a total incompatibility exists between this reform government and the outlook and tactics of the Salvadoran military forces as presently constituted. If we back this government we must accept that eventually the “institutionalists” in the armed forces will move to destroy the influence of the progressive younger officers like Majano. The result could easily be internal upheaval, beginning with the armed forces and spreading to the society at large. In my judgement, to permit a rightwing coup or even a veiled ouster of Col. Majano “in the interest of efficiency” could well provoke a split in the armed forces, a bloody civil war ending in defeat for the right, and, ultimately, another country gone the way of Nicaragua.

12. What should we do to avoid this? The first thing is to be very careful about who we strengthen in the military and what signals we send to the right, which at the moment is angry and confused from the bomb squads of Major D’Aubisson through the bankers and brokers and landowners to the shopkeepers and secretaries and housewives. We cannot afford to suggest to these people, most of whom can be recruited into a moderate solution once the terror squads are crushed, that we just might be up for a rightwing alternative.

13. Another argument is that everyone to the left of Pinochet will begin shouting about U.S. intervention and lump our MTTs with the rightwing murder incorporated that is operating so freely in Salvador. We could take that sort of smear a lot better when the reforms are well underway and the ultraright has begun to phase out under JRG pressure and erosion of its financial base among the former bankers and landowners. That is another argument for holding off.

14. But don’t we owe the armed forces delivery on our MTTs because they were promised to the institution in order to head off the

coup? I am not persuaded that we owe a debt to anyone for not overthrowing a duly constituted government to which he has sworn allegiance. However, I do believe we need to show willingness to identify ourselves with the JRG and the armed forces here to the extent that the assessment teams need to be brought in fast, the helicopters should be offered immediately and the FMS/IMET must begin to be available. But the MTT instructors are a different matter. We have got to get the rightwing terrorism, the excess use of force and the brutal indiscipline of the security forces under control, in my view, before we commit our prestige so frontally as to send in armed U.S. training teams.

15. As for economic aid, I would hope we would establish where Central America and El Salvador stand on our order of priorities and then get the programs funded and moving accordingly. We have to have ESF money and people to support the agrarian reform or it could end in chaos as peasants slaughter the farm animals to keep their families alive. We have got to be able to get guarantees for raw [garble—materials?] shipments here or the factories will close and put many more thousands of unemployed at the disposition of the FPL, ERP and FALN. Let's stop filling the terrorist recruitment pool and get ExIm to start the insurance coverage up again. We should be thinking seriously of an employment program on the WPA/CCC model. It will cost money. However, in this way we may be able to head off a disastrous leftist takeover here. But the symbol of U.S. assistance, I would argue, at least at the outset, has got to be the loan signing ceremony, not the green berets arriving on a C-130. We can perhaps bring the MTTs in quietly when the current heat is off but not in an atmosphere of rightwing mayhem to which the military fails to respond.⁶

16. Lastly, this Mission needs urgently the personnel approved by the last SCC meeting.⁷ If we are to get our message out and our programs in, we must have prompt action.

White

⁶ In a March 13 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor noted that White had spoken to him that afternoon while he was drafting the cable. Pastor commented that White told Pastor that he "regretted sending" the telegram "since he was not there long enough to have sufficient meetings to make the judgments we requested." Pastor added: "I think he underestimates the degree to which his predecessor (Cheek) committed the U.S. to sending these guys in, and he underestimates the fact that the MTT's can also be a *positive instrument*." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80)

⁷ See Document 419.

425. Summary of Conclusions of a Mini-Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 13, 1980

1. *Cheek's Report.* Jim Cheek, our Charge in El Salvador for the last two weeks, reported that the main reason the U.S. had been able to prevent a military coup and persuade the military to accept the agrarian and banking reforms has been their expectation that the U.S. would only provide military training teams (MTT's) after reforms. The Christian Democrats (PDC) had initially balked when we suggested MTT's in January, but now they view them as essential for demonstrating U.S. support for the reforms and also for them. In the process of negotiating the reforms, both the PDC and the military have come to rely on us for mediating differences, and the PDC see the MTT's as a way to increase their own influence (through us). Moreover, the 36-man team will train the army, which is more supportive of reforms and opposed to the repression, than the Treasury police or the security forces and so the MTT's will help us to strengthen the hands of those who are more willing to curb the repression. Cheek said that it will be very difficult to maintain our credibility with the Junta if we backed away from our pledge to send in the MTT's after they fulfilled their pledge on reforms.

2. *Sending in MTT's.* Cheek believes that the most serious debate over the MTT's occurred last month, before the reforms. The Archbishop and the left will, of course, criticize us if and when the MTT's

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCM 116, El Salvador, 3/13/80. Secret. An undated and unsigned note indicates that Brzezinski hand-carried the summary of conclusions to Carter on March 14. (Ibid.) In a March 13 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor forwarded the summary of conclusions and a memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter requesting that Brzezinski sign the memorandum and forward both to Carter in advance of Carter's February 14 foreign policy breakfast meeting. (See footnote 2, Document 426) Pastor also wrote: "You may want to mention to the President several points I made in my memo to you of today; we are talking about 36 military trainers in El Salvador, which is greater than the Cuban contingent in Grenada. The Cuban military contingent in Nicaragua is 200—twice as much as all our military advisers in Latin America. You may also want to clarify at the breakfast that we will still provide helicopters to El Salvador." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCM 116, El Salvador, 3/13/80) Reference is to a March 13 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, in which Pastor recommended that the mini-SCC should re-affirm the decisions to "send in MTTs to El Salvador; provide helicopters on a no-cost lease basis and FMS to El Salvador; and make sure the program to Honduras is progressing well." (Ibid.) In a March 14 memorandum to Turner and Carlucci, Davis briefly summarized the March 13 mini-SCC and noted that Aaron chaired the meeting which was attended by Pastor, Christopher, Bushnell, Cheek, Jayne, Pustay, Kramer, Davis, Carlucci, and other CIA officials. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 18: (SCC) El Salvador)

go in, but he does not think it will be that controversial. We discussed whether we should adopt a high or low profile when they arrive, and Cheek said that one of the purposes of sending them is to let the extreme right and left know we're there and to send a clear message that we support reforms and oppose terrorism of all kinds. To get this message out, we might want to consider sending the leaders of the MTT's to one of the large farms that has been divided and given to compesinos. We should not react, but rather openly explain that the purpose of the MTT's is to train the army to deal with the extremists of left and right by using the minimum lethal force. It is also very important that we make clear to the Junta and the military that we will not be prepared to continue giving military aid unless there is a clear sign that rightist violence would be reduced soon.

**426. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to
President Carter¹**

Washington, March 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Security Assistance for El Salvador

We are faced with the need to give the Salvadoran military some encouragement for opposing the rightist coup two weeks ago and firmly supporting the reform program of the Revolutionary Junta of Government (JRG).

We had planned to do this by sending MTT's and providing FMS equipment. You asked that the MTT's not be sent unless the necessary multinational effort can be assembled. You did authorize us to proceed with the FMS equipment except for lethal items.

We are preparing an FMS loan agreement to be offered to the JRG, enabling them to finance the transport, communications, and other non-lethal equipment. DOD now estimates the value of this package at \$5.7 million. Since the Long Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee has indicated a desire to hold public hearings on security assistance to El Salvador and Honduras, we will not proceed to signa-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80. Secret.

ture of the FMS loan agreement and delivery until these hearings are completed.

To determine the precise type and quantities of communications equipment and motor transport needed by El Salvador, our Military Group has asked for two two-man survey teams, one in each of these key areas. The teams would be in El Salvador for about two weeks. Such teams are common practice in our security assistance programs all over the world. They will have very low public visibility but will serve to convey the message to the Salvadoran military that we support them in their cooperation with the JRG. This is important to maintain our credibility and leverage with the military.

Recommendation

That you approve two temporary two-man survey teams for communications and motor transport.²

² Brzezinski indicated approval and wrote: "for the President ZB (breakfast 3/14)." Carter's March 14 breakfast meeting, which took place in the Cabinet Room from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., included Mondale, Vance, Brown, Brzezinski, Cutler, and Donovan. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) In a March 14 memorandum to Aaron and Denend, Brzezinski reported on Carter's decisions at the breakfast, writing: "*El Salvador* Okay to send two 2-man survey teams; wait to hear from White on MTT. (Pastor)." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 3/1–15/80) See Documents 423 and 425.

427. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, March 16, 1980, 2034Z

70429. Subject: Strategy in Coming Weeks for El Salvador. Reference: San Salvador 1886.²

1. (S-Entire text).

2. We have considered reftel which outlines your views on a number of subjects. With regard to the policy issues raised we believe it useful to give you a statement of our current policy goals which you should be pursuing as well as suggested strategy and tactics for achieving these objectives.

3. To review—Since October 15, 1979, our policy has been to urge the Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) to take effective action to deal with the immediate political and security threats to its existence posed by the extreme left and right, and, having contained these, move on to restoration of constitutional government as rapidly as possible.

To meet the political threat we have pressed the JRG to enact and implement the agrarian and other basic reforms and to meet the security threat we have supported its taking measured emergency security measures and improving the professional capability of the armed forces. These original goals of our policy have now been largely realized: The reform process is now successfully underway and reasonable emergency security measures adopted, and plans made to enhance the professionalism of the armed forces. We have contributed significantly, possibly crucially, to achieving these goals by giving the JRG strong and consistent political and moral support; by defending the Junta against its enemies, including from a threatened rightist coup; by helping to maintain the unity of the JRG's civilian (PDC) and military components and serving as an effective broker between them; and by committing ourselves to furnish significant economic and security assistance.

4. We are now moving to a new phase in which our priority policy goals will be:

—Successful implementation of existing reforms and promulgation of the remaining reforms.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 3/16–31/80. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² See Document 424.

—Effective curtailment of violence from both extremes, but particularly from the right which currently is of most immediate concern.

—Elimination of repression emanating from the armed forces, particularly from the security forces which are the greatest offenders.

—Broadening of the JRG's base of popular support to include participation in the reform process by the private sector and more moderate elements of the left.

—Neutralizing of the extreme left by continued successful implementation of reforms which deprive the guerrillas of popular support and by judicious use of military force which will defeat the extreme left as a credible military threat to the JRG.

5. Our strategy to achieve these policy goals calls for the USG to:

—Continue to provide strong political and moral support to the JRG, including inviting representatives of the JRG to visit the United States soon to meet with high officials of the USG and international organizations and possibly including a meeting with President Carter.

—Maintain our very high level of influence with both the armed forces and the PDC;

—Use this influence to play our ongoing and essential broker role with a view to strengthening the civilians vis-a-vis the military and strengthening the more progressive army vis-a-vis the less reliable security forces;

—Fulfill our commitments to furnish economic and security assistance, with the clear understanding that these programs continue to be conditioned upon meaningful efforts by the PDC and the military to achieve the above goals;

—Support JRG efforts to obtain needed economic resources from the International Financial Institutions (IMF, IBRD and IADB) and from friendly donor countries;

—Support JRG efforts to obtain military assistance from potential donor countries, particularly from Venezuela and Peru which currently offer the best prospects.

—Encourage the JRG to request international political and moral support for its program and recognition from the OAS, the Andean Pact, Mexico, Central American Countries, the U.N. and U.S., non-governmental groups.

6. The tactics which the Mission in San Salvador employs in carrying out this strategy and in pursuing our policy goals will be left largely to you to determine. However, the following are some specific initiatives which we recommend the Mission undertake immediately, if it has not already done so:

A. You should press the JRG to begin at once its simultaneous approaches to elements of the left and right to seek their support and

participation in the reform process. The current attacks on the moderate left demand that the JRG authorize the PDC to initiate contacts with the left before they react to this violence by becoming more radical, and more remote from the JRG. The PDC was reportedly arranging for the Archbishop to broker contacts with the popular organizations; we hope they are pursuing this and that Majano and Gutierrez firmly support these efforts. If some outside broker would be useful, please recommend. The JRG should also be moving to garner popular support from elements on the right since this is now facilitated by promulgation of the reforms. Earlier PDC contacts with ANEP and other private sector organizations should be vigorously pursued, and the Mission should support these efforts in its own contacts with these organizations. The PDC should also explore whether some of the middle-class-supported political groups such as the FAN could now be turned around. And you should ask how we could be helpful to these efforts. You should ensure that the military fully accepts PDC approaches to the left and that they assist its approaches to the right. The military will have to play the major role in reducing the repression, and you should concentrate your efforts on persuading them to do this.

B. In connection with the foregoing there are two steps which in our judgement the JRG might initiate now which should assist in the consolidation of its position. These are: (1) initiation of a political process which could involve all groups wishing to work toward a peaceful solution of the crisis and (2) reform of the security structure in ways which will achieve separation of police functions from the military without decreasing their effectiveness. With regard to the political process it is probably too early to think in terms of a constituent assembly to review the constitution and launch a return to constitutional government. But the JRG could begin now to revise the electoral code through a mechanism that would be open to all major groups, including those on the far left, and which could draw international support in the form of electoral experts from acceptable countries like Venezuela, Peru and the Dominican Republic, possibly under international auspices.

C. All elements of the Mission should use their influence with the JRG, the PDC and the military to get them to deal effectively with repression emanating from the security forces and violence of the extreme left and right, which threaten the reform process and damage the international standing of the JRG. The military must be made to sever their remaining relationships with the extreme right and to move vigorously to halt violence from this quarter. You should impress on the military that their generally perceived tolerance of rightist violence has a particularly damaging effect on our ability to furnish them military assistance.

D. With regard to military assistance, you should inform the JRG and the armed force High Command that:

—We expect to proceed with implementation of our \$5.7 million FMS credit program as soon as reprogramming consultations with the Congress are completed, hopefully next week. We anticipate being able to expedite delivery of many items purchased under the program.

—Per septel, we will shortly be sending special military survey teams of 2 to 4 persons to augment on a TDY basis the military group's capability to assess the requirements of the Armed Forces for transportation and communications assistance.³

—Per septel, we are also authorizing you to begin immediately to execute LOA's for purchases of high priority equipment using the \$428,000 remaining from the FY 77 FMS credit.⁴

—In view of the current uncontrolled high level of violence and the absence of any significant presence in El Salvador of military advisors and/or trainers from some other country or countries we are withholding implementation of the planned MTT program for the time being. Meanwhile, out-of-country training under our IMET program can proceed.

E. The Mission should continue closely to monitor implementation of the agrarian and other reforms, identifying problem areas and suggesting ways in which we might assist. The AID Mission should continue to place top priority on efforts to channel assistance to the agrarian reform.

7. Given the high level interest in your Mission, and the importance we attached to your recommendation that we re-consider all the elements of our military package until repression is better controlled, we ask that you rapidly extend your contacts and discuss individually with members of the Junta how we could be helpful to them in dealing with the extreme left and right. In addition, we would appreciate your evaluation of whether, and if so, how the MTT's could serve as a positive instrument in the pursuit of the objectives described above. We recognize that some will continue to criticize our military assistance—both equipment and men—no matter what, but we would like from you at an appropriate time your evaluation whether the benefits of the MTT's could out-weigh the costs of the criticism.

Vance

³ Telegram 68628 to San Salvador, March 15, noted the approval of equipment survey teams. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800132–0273)

⁴ Telegram 72290 to San Salvador, March 19, instructed the Embassy to inquire whether the Salvadoran Government wished to make immediate use of an unused FY 1977 foreign military sales credit of \$428,000. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800139–0381)

428. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, March 21, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador: Ambassador White's Assessment (S)

You requested an assessment of the current political situation in El Salvador from our new Ambassador and after about a week, he has produced a veritable encyclopedia.² Let me summarize it, and then offer some comments:

—El Salvador is not in imminent danger of being lost and, if we use our power correctly, the chances of success are very good. The U.S. has a critical role to play; but to play it successfully, we will need increased economic aid, more and better personnel (for reporting and analysis), and non-lethal FMS and IMET. He recommends against sending MTT's or helicopters until the worst rightist violence has ended.³ (S)

—The military is the key, but it is an open question whether the younger officers can muster sufficient leadership, conviction and force to reform the military and eliminate the officially sponsored and tolerated violence. (S)

—The major, immediate threat to the existence of the JRG is right-wing violence, which either emanates from elements of the security forces or is tolerated by them. To end this, he believes Col. Majano must build up a corps of progressive officers who gradually acquire enough power to force out the commanders of the security forces. (S)

—The Cubans are providing some training and weapons to guerrillas but their role is marginal. The long-term threat comes from nearly 5,000 Marxist guerrillas, but in order to succeed in eliminating this threat, the JRG will have to successfully implement the reforms and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80. Secret. Sent for information. Carter wrote "Zbig J" at the top of the page. Pastor sent the memorandum to Brzezinski under a March 21 covering memorandum indicating that he had responded to Brzezinski's request to summarize White's cable (see footnote 2 below) and provide his reaction to it. Pastor requested that Brzezinski sign the memorandum and sent it to the President.

² Reference is to telegram 2038 from San Salvador, March 19, in which White provided his assessment of the situation in El Salvador. On March 21, Denend wrote on a copy of the telegram: "ZB—White argues *not* to send the MTTs or the helicopters." Brzezinski wrote to Pastor on the copy of the telegram: "RP—Reaction? *Key pts?* Need 2p. summary for the P." The telegram was resent, as WH80351, from the White House Situation Room to Camp David for the President on March 22. (Ibid.)

³ Carter underlined the portion of this sentence that begins with "against" and ends with "ended."

attract moderate leftist groups. The Archbishop will be key to the latter. (S)

White concludes that our present course of supporting a moderate solution is actually our only option. In his words, the alternatives are a Marxist victory, which he considers “unacceptable,” or a rightist purge, which he thinks can only be a short-term transition to a Marxist victory. (S)

I’m sure we all agree with the Ambassador’s principal conclusion: to support the current government. The problem with his assessment is that it sounds too much as if he wrote it all before arriving in El Salvador.⁴ In actual fact, he has not had much opportunity yet to talk with key actors in El Salvador. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend that we respond to White along the following lines:

—That you have reviewed his report and agree that the current government represents the “moderate solution,” and we will continue to play an important role supporting it. That you would value his assessment again after he has had an opportunity to talk to all the key actors. (S)

—That State will expedite the transfer of highly qualified personnel to our Embassy in order to improve its reporting, operating, and analysis. (Reporting from the Embassy is currently inadequate, and there are too few people to make the contacts necessary for us to have a good picture of the evolving political situation.)

—That we will expedite the flow of FMS and IMET, but will withhold action on the MTT’s and helicopters because of the military’s tolerance of repression. Ambassador White should try to use the MTT’s and helicopters as instruments to persuade the military to bring an end to the right-wing violence. (S)

—That he should continue to encourage Salvadorean leaders to seek support from other countries besides the U.S. (S)

—That we have already expanded aid levels for El Salvador to a level which demonstrates our willingness to help. We are prepared to consider further specific requests, but not to provide a blank check. The problem right now is not money but a lack of order. The World Bank is prepared to be helpful, but the violence precludes it at this time. (S)

⁴ For more on White’s arrival in El Salvador, see Document 424 and footnote 3 therein.

—That Ambassador White should develop a specific strategy for stopping rightist violence. (S)⁵

⁵ Carter wrote at the bottom of the page: “Zbig—These points are ok but I do not desire to write the Ambassador. J.” Brzezinski’s March 25 memorandum to Vance noted that Carter had accepted the recommendations and that Vance should inform White. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 3/80) In telegram 82782 to San Salvador, March 28, the Department informed White of the recommendations. (Ibid.)

429. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, March 25, 1980, 2100Z

2178. Subj: (C) Some Thoughts on the Archbishop’s Assassination.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. In death the Archbishop has become an even more important figure in El Salvador than he was in life.² His assassination has shaken the JRG badly.³

3. In a fragmented political situation characterized more by distrust of government as an institution than by expectations of improvement, the JRG survives because of lack of an effective opposition. But Romero

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800158–0307. Confidential. Sent for information to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Lima, Managua, Panama City, Quito, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINSCO Quarry Heights, and DIA.

² In telegram 2117 from San Salvador, March 23, the Embassy reported on Archbishop Romero’s March 32 homily: “After a week of mutual accusations between El Salvador’s military forces and the Church, the Archbishop emphasized in his March 23 homily that he personally has no political ambitions, that he is carrying out the Church’s policy as expressed in various conferences, and that the only possible answers to this country’s problems are Christian solutions rather than those of any particular group.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800149–0028)

³ In telegram 2145 from San Salvador, March 25, the Embassy reported independent reports that Romero had been shot by an unknown assailant while he was saying mass, noting that “the Archbishop reportedly died at a hospital a short time later.” White commented: “It would be difficult to exaggerate the impact this assassination will have on this country. The Archbishop was the spokesman for the poor and oppressed. Their righteous anger may prove uncontrollable.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800150–0664) Telegram 2146 from San Salvador, March 25, confirmed Romero’s death and reported that the JRG was meeting in an extraordinary session to “agree on measures to meet the crisis.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800150–0665)

the martyr could provide the extreme left with exactly that symbol and rallying point without which it may never be more than an embittered and increasingly violent minority.

4. The clear danger to the JRG and US interests in El Salvador is that the extreme left will take possession of the Archbishop's popularity and moral authority, now magnified by violent death. He sympathized with the left; he encouraged it; he criticized its enemies. If it succeeds in taking up his mantle, the extreme left will have a powerful political symbol, perhaps capable of uniting sizeable groups of the poor, the moderate left, and the religious community. The JRG has reason for its nervousness.

5. Most frustrating from our point of view is the inability of the JRG or the PDC to stop this process. They stand discredited by his lack of faith of them, and by their connection with the security corps, a favorite target of his criticism.

6. So it is up to the extreme left to capitalize or fail to capitalize on Romero's death. There is no particular reason to believe it will succeed. Political wisdom demands a course of action which it probably cannot manage in this time and place: a show of restraint, of measured response to national tragedy.

7. With his advocacy of non-violence and christian solutions, the Archbishop probably had a great deal less in common with the extreme left than either he or they believed. The next few days will show whether it is able to identify his aims with its own.⁴

White

⁴ Officials attending a mini-SCC meeting on March 26 discussed Romero's assassination. The summary of conclusions noted: "Radical Jesuit priests are working with leaders of the extremist groups to plan a spectacular procession, perhaps involving 200,000 people, for the funeral of the Archbishop this weekend. The extremists will probably try to use the demonstration to spark violence and perhaps an insurrection, along the lines of what the Sandinistas did after the assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. We will consult with the Vatican on future developments, and consider sending a mission to the funeral. We will brief the group, and perhaps consider having them take a message from Secretary Vance." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCM 117, Jamaica, 3/26/80)

430. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, April 4, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador and the Military (U)

At the very moment when you were suggesting to Bob White that he meet with the top military officers when he returns, Jim Cheek was doing it.² (We asked Jim to spend this week in Honduras and give us an analysis of what we should be doing there. Before returning, we suggested he spend a couple of days in El Salvador while Bob White was up here.) I suggest you read the summary of the attached cable.³ Jim met with all the top military leadership except Majano. Their meeting was extremely successful, and the military said all the right things about trying to reduce the repression. In addition, they informed us that the Junta intends to implement the "land to the tiller program" and several other actions to reduce the violence. (C)

If the military are really as interested in reducing the repression as they claim, we have made unbelievable progress; however, I am skeptical. Nonetheless, Cheek's forceful presentation will undoubtedly serve to further sensitize them to our concerns over the repression. (C)

Follow-Up of Yesterday's Meeting

1. *ABC film on Archbishop's funeral.* I spoke to Len Lefkow, and he said he would get the ABC news footage and make sure ICA distributes it throughout Latin America. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 4/80-7/80. Confidential. Sent for information. A copy was sent to Brzezinski. A stamped notation indicates that Brzezinski saw it. Brzezinski wrote at the bottom of the page: "good. ZB." Aaron wrote at the top of the page: "ZB—Good status report! DA."

² Pastor sent an April 3 memorandum to Aaron in preparation for Aaron's meeting with White that day. Pastor wrote: "Bob has a very strong antipathy toward the military, which I can well understand, but in the present situation in El Salvador, unless he is willing to work very closely with the military, we will find our ability to influence events significantly reduced." (Ibid.) No other record of Aaron's April 3 meeting with White has been found. For Cheek's meeting with the military command, see footnote 4 below.

³ Attached but not printed is Cheek's report in telegram 2418 from San Salvador, April 3. The Embassy reported that Cheek and other Embassy officials had met that day with the Salvadoran military High Command (except Majano). The command confirmed that the "land to the tiller program, granting 150,000 peasant families land they currently work, will be announced as soon as groundwork is completed." For the announcement of the agrarian reform program, see footnote 4, Document 424.

2. *Letter from Harold Brown to Colonel Garcia.* Bob White will be drafting this letter and I will clear it with you before sending it to Defense. (C)

3. *FBI in El Salvador.* After further discussions with Bob, we agreed that there is no sense bringing the Legatt up from Panama to El Salvador, if Vance and Webster are not going to permit any follow-up, i.e., letting the FBI help the Salvadorans. So we recommend dropping this idea.⁴ (C)

4. *Invitations to the Pentagon.* Bob agreed to prepare a list of military people, whom he will recommend for DOD to invite up here for briefings. (C)

5. *Border problem.* I will speak to Bowdler about the possibility of using Vaky to help solve the border dispute, but I think we probably should wait until the next round of negotiations (scheduled for next week) between the Foreign Ministers of Honduras and El Salvador. (C)

6. *Scheme for a general transfer.* As you will see from the attached cable, the military have already thought of this idea, although not exactly along the lines Bob had in mind. They intend to rotate local military commanders in order to break traditional ties with ORDEN (right-wing paramilitary group). This will be very effective. The next step will be for Bob to propose his higher level version of that idea. (C)

7. *Pre-empting an Alternative Junta.* The establishment of the “Democratic Front” on April 2 with Christian Democratic-defectors in the public positions, but the leftists in control is exactly what we feared.⁵ I spoke to Bowdler, and he agreed to have a cable sent to all appropriate posts to instruct our Ambassadors to use every method they can to preclude the kind of international support which would throw the JRG irrevocably on the defensive.⁶ I also worked on a cable to go to all

⁴ Telegram 2280 from San Salvador, March 29, reported that the JRG had requested a team of FBI agents to help investigate Romero’s assassination. (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, PRC 120, Central America, 8/2/1979) According to an April 2 memorandum from Pastor to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor, Brzezinski, and Aaron all supported the proposal, while Vance and the FBI opposed it. (Ibid.)

⁵ The *New York Times* reported that on April 2, “leftist political parties, unions and professional groups announced” the formation of the “new Democratic Front” which they considered to be “a broad-based coalition to oppose the ruling military-civilian junta in El Salvador.” (“Leftists in El Salvador Form a United Front to Oppose the Regime,” *New York Times*, April 3, 1980, p. 10)

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 431.

leading Social Democratic leaders calling them to task for their behavior at Santa Domingo.⁷ (C)

⁷ Telegram 89466 to multiple Latin American and European diplomatic posts, April 5, noted that the Socialist International (SI) conference in Santo Domingo, March 26–29, “from the first day to the last was an outpouring of hostility to the United States’ role and policies in Latin America.” The Department reported that SI had accused the governing Junta of implementing “a political scheme of slaughter by reform,” accused it of complicity in the Romero assassination, and rejected “the North American intervention that includes the intent of involving other governments.” The Department stipulated a series of *démarches* to conferees in response. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800170–0141) Aaron wrote at the bottom of the page: “good follow up.”

431. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, April 12, 1980, 1830Z

2613. Pass White House. Subj: Efforts to Divide the Military. Ref A. State 94375,² B. San Salvador 2510.³

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Discussions over the last two days with all Junta members except Majano (absent) and Avalos (irrelevant) as well as with Minister of Defense Garcia, Minister of Agriculture Orellana and shadowy political operators have convinced me that the effort to divide the military is neither far advanced nor likely to prosper. What we are seeing is not

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1621. Secret; Immediate; Nodis

² In telegram 94375 to San Salvador, April 10, the Department instructed White to meet with members of the Junta and discuss the concern that the extreme left was working “to divide the armed forces by wooing Majano and other disaffected officers.” The Department also asked White for his “assessments and any recommendations for additional steps to counter leftist efforts to gain legitimacy, broaden their political support and generate internal dissension and division within the armed forces.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 4/80–7/80)

³ In telegram 2459 from San Salvador, April 8, the Embassy relayed a report that Majano was no longer participating in the JRG and was working to restructure the military government by seeking the resignations of Gutierrez, Garcia, Carranza, and about thirty-five senior officers. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1636) In telegram 2510 from San Salvador, April 9, White reported that he had been unable to contact Majano. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 4/80–7/80)

a move by the extreme left to divide the armed forces but a strategy of right-wing politicians (Ulises Flores in particular) to head off further steps in the reform program by taking advantage of the gullibility of Col. Majano whom Flores et.al. dominate intellectually. Just exactly what this strategy is and to what extent it has influenced Majano I will not be able to ascertain until I have had a chance to speak with him. (I have requested an urgent appointment with Majano as soon as he returns.)⁴ I believe that Colonels Abdul Gutierrez and Guillermo Garcia spoke accurately when they told us on Thursday (Apr 10) that there are certainly some discontented officers who speak frequently and publicly of the need to restructure the armed forces, but that these men do not have great influence. The acting DATT now has a report from one of the principals among the younger officers who says the “time is not yet ripe” and no timetable has been set for a showdown. I am certain that at this point there is no serious confrontation building against senior officers. Certainly we are far from a coup, as ref B noted in comment. I will counsel Majano along the lines suggested in section C of ref A on his return to San Salvador.

3. As the Department is aware, I have met with Gutierrez and Garcia and discussed all of the points outlined in section DD. For reasons I have stated earlier, however, I did not believe that this was the time for me to urge the dismissal of one or more of the top echelon of the security forces. What must be done first is to strengthen the line of command which should run from the Junta, including the civilians, to the Commanders of the Army and the security forces. I urged this on both colonels at our lunch. Specifically, I told Col. Gutierrez that the JRG should occasionally publicize a direct order to the MOD and Col. Garcia responded immediately that he would publicly carry out such an order. There is some evidence that a new line of authority is beginning to take hold. At a dinner at my house Wednesday night⁵ for Christian Democratic leaders, Duarte and Morales Ehrlich were called to the phone repeatedly to take calls from Col. Garcia regarding a problem that had arisen when off-duty National Guard troops were threatening to enter the National University to rescue a kidnapped trooper being held inside by leftist students. I found it encouraging that Col. Garcia was seeking instructions from the civilian members

⁴ In telegram 2674 from San Salvador, April 15, White reported that he had met with Majano on April 14. White wrote that Majano “is still undecided whether to stay or go but that he will remain where he is for the moment and that he will talk to me before reaching any decision to leave.” White also added that Majano insisted that that several senior military officers must be fired for him to stay and for the reform movement to continue. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1615)

⁵ April 9.

of the Junta and that he took their orders, as did Guard Commander Vides Casanova, to pull the Guard members back immediately.

4. Regarding the totally different question posed in ref A about how to counter the "leftist political initiative in establishment of democratic front," I intend to discuss this with Duarte, Morales Ehrlich, and Chavez Mena at the earliest opportunity. While they will see an advantage to the JRG in taking the initiative to seek a political compromise, they will also worry about the effect a public rebuff would mean, especially by their former friends and allies who have formed the Frente Democratica in an effort to woo the CRM. Our evidence to date suggests that the Frente is being manipulated by the CRM and that its initiative does not amount to much domestically but is aimed at undermining the JRG abroad as a "fascist throwback" opposed by a broad range of non-Communist liberals and even conservative businessmen.

5. I am certain we are going into a period where urban violence will diminish and rural violence increase. The extreme left is using violence and the threat of violence to prevent the campesinos from planting. We have learned that leftist cadres are being shifted wholesale to the countryside to block the planting by force (which also accounts neatly for the decline in urban violence). Government troops will do everything they can to insure that the planting takes place in conditions of security. This was the thrust of the excellent speech on April 10 by Morales Ehrlich (septel).⁶ Armed clashes and mutual accusations of excesses are almost certain over the next two months as government and ultraleft fight for control of the countryside.

White

⁶ Telegram 2635 from San Salvador, April 14, reported on Morales Ehrlich's April 10 speech summarizing the reform program on behalf of the JRG. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800191-0663)

432. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, May 26, 1980, 2245Z

3677. Subj: Updating our Strategy for El Salvador. Ref A. State 70429² B. San Salvador 2038,³ C. State 132366.⁴

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary

A. In recent weeks, El Salvador's Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) has survived another rightwing coup attempt, a threatened split in the armed forces, a pull-out ultimatum by the Christian Democratic Party, a wrenching social change in the form of "land to the tiller" and ultraleft calls for mass violence on May 1, 7, and 20. It has also withstood a foreign propaganda campaign designed to portray it as a militaristic, reactionary regime and to rally international support for the newly-formed Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a coalition of non-Communist groups dominated by the Marxist "coordinadora," the umbrella organization that shelters the three main revolutionary blocs and their terrorist action arms. Meanwhile, a new coalition of private enterprise groups willing to back the JRG has passed through complex negotiations and, given the failure of the ultraright to pull off its coup, may soon emerge as a positive force on the moderate right.

B. Despite a wave of crises—the Archbishop's assassination, his violence-plagued funeral, the D'Aubuisson coup attempt, Col. Majano's arrest of the plotters, the showdown vote in the armed forces, D'Aubuisson's release, the PDC's swallowed ultimatum—the JRG is still in office and the strategy outlined in the two reftels has thus far succeeded in attaining that overriding goal, the survival of a moderate, reformist civil-military coalition government. Other key goals seem close to attainment: the reforms are being implemented that will restructure this society from top to bottom and, as a consequence, the far left is losing its appeal and declining in its ability to muster mass support.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890105–1574. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² See Document 427.

³ See footnote 2, Document 428.

⁴ In telegram 132366 to San Salvador, May 20, the Department wrote to White expressing concern over the political situation in El Salvador and the "fundamental lack of consultation" between the military and the civilian components of the government. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1505)

C. But we seem as far as ever from reducing the violence from the ultraright. On the contrary, brutal murders of anyone suspected of liberal views, even Christian Democrats, produce a harvest of mutilated bodies by the roadside every morning. Security forces excesses against peasant villages have not declined either and in fact seem to be on the increase. Far left violence has declined in the cities but is on the rise in the countryside where all-out efforts are being made to sabotage the land reform and intimidate the peasantry into refusing to plant this year's crops. The national economy is already in serious straits and the failure to plant on a large scale could produce economic collapse. Serious new problems require us to update the strategy of several months ago and new political opportunities that derive from the JRG's sheer survival make it possible to consider electoral plans that might reduce the violence and divert revolutionary pressures into more conventional political channels. This cable assesses the gains to date, proposes modifications in our strategy and suggests short-term tactical moves aimed at advancing our overall interests in El Salvador. Most importantly, this message points out that the chief threat to this government comes not from the extreme left or extreme right but from within the military and particularly from the military High Command. The issue we must confront is who governs: a JRG committed to break with the past, human rights, and a valid process towards democracy; or the military High Command whose leaders are implicated in attempted coups against the JRG, who tolerate or encourage torture and murder on a grand scale, and who want to maintain military control over this country, with a fig leaf if necessary, preferably without it. This attitude is opposed by at least 40 percent of the officer corps of the military. The risks of a split are obvious and there is a real danger that this present division could politically damage Junta leader Col. Jaime Abdul Gutierrez. This state of affairs has obvious implications for when and under what conditions we grant military assistance. End summary.

3. From the outset of revolutionary activity in 1977 until approximately three months ago, the extreme leftists logged victory after victory, gain after gain, until in the eyes of people of El Salvador and the rest of the world their triumph appeared inevitable. The far left's unimpeded advance depended on great measure on the widespread perception that the future of El Salvador offered only two choices: a revolution brought about by the Marxist popular organizations (BPR, FAPU, LP-28) and their terrorist underground elements (FPL, FARN, ERP) in alliance with the Church, the universities and key leftist actors on the international scene or the imposition by force of a repressive and unjust government run by the traditional alliance of top military officers and the very rich. The position of the United States was either misunderstood or subject to misinterpretation. The Church and the

intellectual community convinced themselves that their influence with the left was sufficient to moderate the revolution enough to make it acceptable to the United States. The forces of the right were just as certain that when the choice came the United States would support its traditional allies—the military and the rich.

4. Although the revolution of Oct 15, 1979, was supposed to change radically this political equation by providing a third force, the first civilian-military junta failed (Jan 1980). This failure can be attributed to two interdependent causes: (1) high level military opposition to radical reform and (2) United States' support of the reform program and for the civilians in the Junta was half-hearted, intermittent, and indecisive.

5. The Christian Democrats then joined the military in the second attempt to put together a viable coalition. The second junta was widely regarded as a temporary expedient thrown together hastily by the United States to avoid a complete failure of the Oct 15 revolution. It was not given much chance to succeed. Then it began to appear to the oligarchy that the United States might be serious about backing the Junta and its reform program. The word was passed to the still dominant rightwingers in the military to avert this nightmare by staging a coup. The United States made known publicly as well as privately its total opposition to the coup, and it was postponed until a more favorable occasion. Meanwhile, groundwork was laid by cashiered military officers, led by ex-Mayor d'Aubuisson, in Miami, Washington, and Guatemala to combine political support abroad with rightwing terrorism here to demoralize and destroy Junta II. Before the assassinations and bombings could have their full impact, however, in rapid succession came the government decrees carrying out a sweeping program of export control boards, agrarian reform, and bank nationalizations.

6. The far right, by this time desperate, killed the most important political and moral leader of El Salvador, Archbishop Romero,⁵ with the hope of provoking a violent, spontaneous mass uprising which could be brutally suppressed by the security forces with thousands killed among the far left and the moderates in a campaign to wipe out all rival political leadership and leave the military in firm control.

This, they reasoned, was necessary to save the country from anarchy. It would also end in repeal of the reforms. No mass uprising occurred, in part because the reforms had defused popular discontent and in part because people were sick of violence from psychopaths on the left and the right. The leftwing terrorists discredited themselves

⁵ See Document 429.

by turning the Archbishop's funeral into a bloody circus while the government intelligently kept its troops in the barracks.

7. Having weathered these blows successfully, the government started to take on some semblance of coherence and form. The international press began to recognize the bare possibility that a government capable of giving land to hundreds of thousands of peasants might have the potential to stay in power. The Church, although saddened by the assassination of the Archbishop, foreswore blind rage and began rethinking its position of outright support for the radical Marxists, started taking a more positive view of the reforms introduced by the government and voiced a more even-handed condemnation of the violence from the left as well as from the right.

8. By this point the rich and powerful were thoroughly frightened and increasingly desperate. They collected over a million dollars to sponsor ex-Mayor Roberto d'Aubuisson's second try at putting together a coalition of key officers in the armed forces to overthrow the government and roll back the reforms. Twenty million dollars more were promised to participants if the coup was successful. This time success seemed certain because several members of the military High Command, who had been passing participants the last time around, took an active part and encouraged D'Aubuisson as he circulated through the military camps recruiting officers and men to his case.

9. The coup plotters chose Junta member Colonel Adolfo Majano as their chief target. PDC member Morales Ehrlich, Bete Noir of the oligarchy, was also on their ouster list.⁶ Majano warned the other military members of the Junta, Col. Abdul Gutierrez, of the danger but he was ignored. We again made clear our rejection of any coup or any disguised coup to be achieved by putting in a "reformed" Junta. The coup did not succeed because of our opposition and the opposition of the PDC, but neither had it failed. The plotters continued to meet.

10. Stung by this second attempt against him by his military colleagues, Majano rallied the younger, more progressive officers around him and demanded that the coup plotters be punished. Learning of a meeting at a farm near San Salvador of those involved in the coup, he sent a group of officers loyal to him to arrest the plotters. Twenty-three people, led by ex-Mayor d'Aubuisson, were captured, together with substantial evidence which, if followed up, would implicate not only important civilians but also active duty officers including at a

⁶ In telegram 3087 from San Salvador, May 2, White reported: "rightist officers and enlisted men are seeking to oust Junta members Majano and Morales Ehrlich. Success of this maneuver would probably lead to departure of PDC from government and consequent political isolation of JRG." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 4/80-7/80)

minimum, Vice Minister of Defense Nicolas Carranza, also implicated in the earlier rightist coup attempt in February.⁷

11. The Christian Democrats, tired of providing a civilian figleaf for the military, threatened to resign en masse if D'Aubuisson and the other plotters were not punished. They also demanded that at least one or two members of the military ruling clique be shifted out of the High Command. This played into the hands of the rightwing military officers and even with D'Aubuisson in jail, the coup attempt kept going.

12. The High Command denounced Col. Majano for violating the chain of command by having D'Aubuisson arrested without the approval of the Junta or the Minister of Defense and organized a series of meetings of all active duty military officers that ended in a vote giving Col. Gutierrez operational control of the armed forces by a 60–40 margin. The High Command found a pretext to release D'Aubuisson because they could not risk an investigation and trial that almost certainly would reveal their involvement in both coup plots against the government.⁸ Perhaps more importantly, they hoped to force the Christian Democrats and Col. Majano out of the government, thereby achieving the objectives of the D'Aubuisson coup and perhaps making at least some of them eligible for a share of the oligarchy's proffered twenty million dollars. But the Christian Democrats and Majano declined to play their prescribed roles and, with our encouragement, elected to stay in the Junta and fight the rightists from within.⁹

⁷ In telegram 3269 from San Salvador, May 8, White reported on Majano's May 7 arrest of "seventeen coup plotters led by the right-wing extremist ex-Major d'Aubuisson." White also noted that the JRG was facing its "worst crisis yet." (Ibid.) In telegram 3268 from San Salvador, May 8, White transmitted a "copy of a draft manifesto captured at the time of Major d'Aubuisson's arrest, evidently to be released to the public at the opening of the rightwing coup that was scheduled to begin May 1." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800228–0899) Muskie's May 9 memorandum to Carter described the current crisis in El Salvador regarding the coup plotters and commented: "If the JRG weathers this crisis, it will be strengthened and the extreme right weakened. If the military supports the right and the PDC leaves the government, the prospects for moderate, non-violent solutions would be greatly diminished and we would have to reassess our policy of support for the JRG." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretary, Subject Files of Edmund S. Muskie, 1963–1981, Lot 83D66, Box 3, 1980 Muskie Breakfast)

⁸ In telegram 3287 from San Salvador, May 9, White reported on his meeting that day with Gutierrez and Majano about the arrest of the plotters. White informed them that "action would have to be taken against the captured coup plotters or else the JRG's civilian component would walk out and the outside world would lose all faith in the JRG." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 20, El Salvador: 4/80–7/80)

⁹ In telegram 3376 from San Salvador, May 13, White reported on his efforts to convince Majano to stay in the Junta. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

13. These political events took place against a background of appalling violence which can be explained but never defended. Much of it comes from the far right—death squads and paramilitary elements that have close links, if not complete identity, with the security forces. Counter-terror by the armed leftist guerrillas is aimed both at the rightwing paramilitary groups and at innocent peasants who are being threatened with death, and examples made among them, to prevent planting and thereby undermine success of the land reform, the left's biggest fear.

14. The far left still has guerrilla forces in the countryside but has lost its capacity to muster mass demonstrations in San Salvador. People are afraid. They want an end to the violence. Even sophisticated residents of the capital now see the extreme left as doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist whose total commitment to violence precludes any but a fully Marxist solution to the problems of the country. Giving up on the urban masses for the time being, the forces of the extreme left have shifted their focus to the countryside and are menacing the campesinos to prevent planting, trying to bring about the failure of the agrarian reform and a breakdown of the rural economy.

15. Even worse is the killing by the government's security forces and their rightwing allies, the para-military thugs who threaten and kill with greater barbarism than the far left. To them, this government is a transitory phenomenon. The real power is the military and anyone who shows any sign of independence is tortured and killed. Their reign of terror is also preventing the campesinos from planting and helps create the impression that the reforms are a fake and will end up a failure.

16. There are elements of the military which do not go along with the brutality. They are especially visible in the army. Some of these are effectively carrying the fight to the real enemy—the armed, foreign-trained guerrillas—who are suffering more and more casualties in front-on fights with government troops. This type of military action against armed guerrillas, we of course encourage. But the sickening slaughter of unarmed and innocent people goes on. Death squads, reportedly drawn from the national police, execute young men and women nightly, often after hours of torture. No member of the rightwing paramilitary organizations has ever been arrested. The government is impotent. The High Command disclaims responsibility.

17. Here is the worst dilemma U.S. policy faces in El Salvador. We have achieved considerable success on the political front but at a tremendous cost in innocent lives. Ideologically the extreme left is weak and floundering: The reforms have taken away their program; the legitimate violence by military against armed terrorists has killed many of their best militants; random and selective terror has had its effect

as well; young people know that mere attendance at a university meeting is enough to mark them for torture and death. Those who look on this mayhem with tolerance, believing that the terror will be worth its cost if it prevents people from taking part in rebel activities, leave out a crucial factor. The target of the rightwing slaughter is not only or principally the extreme left but anyone who is against the oligarchy/military combine, including PDC members and their supporters of the present government. At least twenty Christian Democrat leaders have died at the hands of the paramilitary groups.

18. This government can and must succeed—and is succeeding against the extreme left. A political process is now possible that can gain the support of the Church, the private sector and much of the moderate leadership to the right and left of the government. A constituent assembly and elections can be realized regardless of the destructive activities of the extreme left.

19. The success to date against the left does not necessarily mean that it is permanently weakened. With no real issue at the moment, it is temporarily moribund. But should the rightwing military succeed in destroying the Junta and establishing a military government with some “independent” civilian participation, go promptly to work to undo the reforms and kill off the political opposition, then the far left will be the beneficiary of an important transfusion of strength, both from younger political leaders of the Christian Democrats and Army officers. Civil war would soon begin and, fairly soon, would mean the end of all international support for the government. Mexico would break relations; the Andean Pact would condemn its repressive, reactionary policies; Europe would condemn the atrocities. The international organizations devoted to human rights and civilized politics would find the United States guilty of political idiocy if we continue to support a fascist, military GOES. In the end, we would lose anyway and the most fanatic of the leftists would come to power. The crucial problem the United States must face is that without some significant changes in the military this government will eventually fail.

20. In an extraordinary poll of all military officers whether to recognize Col. Abdul Gutierrez or Col. Majano as the Junta member from whom the military would receive orders, Gutierrez won over Majano but Majano received just under 40 percent of the votes. It is clear that Majano has the majority of the younger, more professional officers of all the services and probably can count on the support of most Army as opposed to security forces officers. The fact is that Majano’s units are mostly here in the city and he controls the communications facilities and the artillery as well. He is far from finished if he plays his cards right. Majano’s defeat was organized in part by those who either tolerated or supported the attempted coup. D’Aubuisson’s release has

added another destabilizing factor to the situation.¹⁰ The old guard will not rest until Majano and the Christian Democrats are out and the incipient threat from the younger officers is solved by transfers and resignations. Majano and the younger officers recognize this reality and are planning what to do about it.

21. Here is our dilemma. The primary objective of our policy is to save the military as an institution and bring about basic reforms and a valid process towards democracy. But the military is divided and we are supporting those in the military who oppose what we stand for, oppose what the Christian Democrats stand for, and oppose what at least 40 percent of the military officers stand for.

22. We are handicapped in seeing the problem clearly because of our closeness to Junta strongman Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez. Day in and day out he has proved to be a solid, dependable leader who more than any other Junta member is responsible for the successful launching of the reforms. But at the same time, Gutierrez is becoming identified in the minds of the younger officers as closely allied with the rightwing High Command whom the younger officers despise as politically backward, morally primitive and professionally flawed. This has the effect of causing a destructive rivalry between Gutierrez and Col. Majano, when in reality the two men are both progressive, professional military men committed to the same program for El Salvador as in the United States.

23. If we do not confront this problem and come to a logical answer, we run the substantial risk of a split in the Junta and a split in the military with potentially serious consequences. If it comes to a confrontation and the younger officers win out, which is entirely possible, we would lose Gutierrez and his steadying hand, plus a substantial number of valuable, conservative but basically apolitical officers; if the younger officers lose, Majano would leave, the Christian Democrats would leave,

¹⁰ In telegram 3410 from San Salvador, May 14, White reported that D'Aubusson and others arrested for coup-plotting had been released on May 13. White commented that "Majano has been struck a serious blow bringing into question his ability and willingness to continue on in the Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800239-0297) In his May 16 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor noted: "The Christian Democrats (PDC) have apparently decided to remain in the GOES despite the release of the coup plotter D'Aubusson, on the rationale that their exit would worsen the situation. Napoleon Duarte told Ambassador White that this latest development had left him feeling 'used, battered and deceived.' Duarte is convinced now that Vice Minister of Defense Carranza has important links with the extreme right, and exercises the real power of the High Command. Whether Colonel Majano will agree to stay on in the Junta is now very much in doubt. White plans to talk to him today. White communicated our great displeasure with the release of D'Aubusson through our Milgroup who informed the Defense Minister that we are suspending for the time being a decision on helicopters and MTT's." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4/80-8/80)

and the country would be back to the status quo ante and the left would take on new life.

24. What do we do, first about the rightwing coup plotters in the military who, by no coincidence, are also guilty of winking at rightist repression? The key to success for us is not complicated but it is difficult. We must begin by recognizing that Col. Abdul Gutierrez and Col. Majano are not philosophical enemies but allies. They are in opposition to one another only because the High Command represents the real power and is able to play the two Junta colonels off against each other. So long as the High Command stays together the Junta cannot impose its will on the military establishment. Therefore, we must cause a realignment in the High Command. We have to insist on the transfer of Vice-Minister Carranza to some overseas post right now and call for the abolition of the notorious Treasury police who although they number less than five hundred, are a symbol of all that has been evil in this country and must be changed.

25. These two actions, which call for coordinated initiatives on our part here and in Washington, will make clear that military officers cannot indulge in coup plotting (as Carranza has twice) with impunity and that the future belongs to those who want a professional military establishment free from political alliances with the extreme right. We must make crystal clear once and for all that we see no salvation but rather civil war and defeat on the far right. If something very close to this does not take place, and soon, we will have more plotting and counter-plotting as well as an upsurge in popular revulsion against the JRG and the result will be the failure of this government and defeat for U.S. policy in this small but important country.

26. We must confront this issue and decide how we are to proceed before we can come to an intelligent decision whether to move forward with military assistance in an important way. Trucks and communications equipment are one thing, helicopters and mobile training teams are quite another. Before we commit ourselves to this kind of program with all it implies, we must be clear on who we are supporting and why and where such a decision will take us.

27. Next, on the political warfare front, we should cut all ties, real or perceived, with the ultraright in this country immediately. D'Aubuisson's visa denial under 212(A)27 should be announced in Washington as soon as possible. He is a dangerous terrorist and perhaps the worst immediate threat to our interests in this country. For similar consideration, I will soon submit a list of those who led the demonstration against the Embassy, who called on the Marines to desert, and who

attempted to keep me prisoner in the residence.¹¹ I recommend that the FBI, IRS, and INS give special attention to the gang of rightwing fanatics who have made Miami their headquarters, who are transferring vast sums of money out of this country and who publish lists of U.S. Government officials they accuse of being Communists. These people are dangerous and should be taught that they cannot carry out their plots in our country with immunity.¹²

28. What can we do to divert the political struggle into more conventional political channels, reducing the level of violence and delivering the enfeebled left another political blow? The coming weeks are likely to see even more violence from the extreme left, coupled with efforts by the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) to broaden its support and isolate the JRG. Operating on a narrow political base, dependent on consensus within the armed forces, and burdened by economic crisis, administrative incompetence, and security force heavy-handedness, the Junta will continue to be severely tested. The extreme left's continued fragmentation and inability to generate broad popular support will hopefully provide a measure of relief, nonetheless.

29. Despite more severe problems, and if requisite external financial and political support can be obtained, it may be possible for the Junta to gather strength: traumatic reform efforts have now reached a plateau, coup planners in the military have been rebuffed for the time being, Junta/Cabinet functionaries may improve as a result of personnel restructuring, and there are promising signs of a possible government-private sector rapprochement.

30. In the coming weeks, we propose to promote three political objectives here: (a) a rapprochement between the JRG, the private sector, and moderate elements not represented in the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). This effort might lead to formation of a reform and election-oriented "democratic alliance" (*Alianza Democrática*) incorporating private sector representatives with PDC members of the government and thereby creating a political alternative to the FDR; (b) new Washington backed pressure on the military High Command

¹¹ In telegram 3313 from San Salvador, May 12, the Embassy reported on a "crowd of rightist demonstrators" at the Ambassador's residence who placed loudspeakers to announce that "the U.S. Ambassador was a prisoner and would not be permitted to leave his residence until the government released ex-Major D'Aubisson, leader of the failed coup." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800234-1214)

¹² In his July 2 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor noted that he had alerted the Immigration and Naturalization Service that D'Aubisson, who had been denied a visa, was holding press conferences in Washington and would be at a meeting in Congress. Pastor's call prompted D'Aubisson's arrest and subsequent deportation. Brzezinski wrote in response: "good." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 6/80-7/80)

to make required institutional changes in the security forces to place them under tighter discipline and control in order to minimize repression; and (c) formation of a committee—as an outcome of the church-sponsored national dialogue or the Alianza Democrática exercise—to work up and negotiate “rules of the game” to govern an election for a constituent assembly within a reasonable time period.

31. Internationally, the Department could simultaneously undertake strong lobbying with key foreign states pointing to the JRG’s successes to date and prospects for progress in the above three areas to argue against writing off the Junta. It would be particularly helpful if the European governments would reopen their Embassies. This lobbying effort could also lay the groundwork for broadened support, particularly in Europe and Japan, for seeking extensive international financial assistance that will be needed here.

32. I believe thought should now be given to supporting and perhaps stimulating a political timetable that is already under consideration within PDC and those [garble] is to normalize and, hopefully, civilize political activity in El Salvador. The immediate objective would be to link the JRG and all the moderates in the country behind a political movement with real national purpose. There is an obvious U.S. interest in strengthening and broadening the moderate forces of the center here. The various crises of the last three months may be working in our favor. As noted above, the traumatic impact of the Romero assassination, plus attendant and independent violence since have stimulated a widespread call for the end of bloodshed and political mayhem. Various groups including the Church, civic and private organizations, as well as, we estimate, the vast majority of Salvadorans, are looking for ways to replace murder and fear with national conciliation and dialogue.

33. We believe a political plan can now be considered that would incorporate the following elements:

—Announcement of a definite timetable for a return to elected civilian rule, perhaps by mid-1981. (Junta member Morales Ehrlich commented to us recently that 1981 would be about the maximum life span of the JRG.)

—As a first step a national referendum (as PDC leader Alvergue has suggested) under international observation to:

A) Stimulate broad support for the reformist thrust of the government from El Salvador’s “silent majority”;

B) Condemn and isolate the violence;

C) Endorse the political timetable.

(As an alternative, Duarte has suggested municipal elections—especially since the PDC now controls most municipalities—as a first

step but other PDC leaders are concerned that local intimidation by the left could produce some undesirable electoral results.)

34. In either case, the next step in the process would be the election of a constituent assembly to incorporate revolutionary change in the country's basic law and set new directions and responsibilities for an elected government. All political groups would be permitted to participate, including the extreme left and right. (The fact that some elements, especially on the left, would boycott such an assembly and probably try to disrupt it could isolate them even further from the national mainstream.) The election of the assembly would serve as a test of national sentiment and relative political strength (perhaps answering the interesting and much debated question of how much support the PDC still really enjoys); it would also be a forum where moderates or the right and left might be able to hammer out a consensus in the interest of mutual survival.

35. Finally, the assembly would complete its work within the timetable established in the referendum and would turn the government over to a civilian regime either through presidential/legislative elections or by "constitutionalizing" itself and selecting a President from its own membership. This scenario, of course, assumes a number of things:

—That military can be convinced that the transfer of government is the best means to assure the protection of their institution and survival of a nonCommunist state. The military will remain the single most important political force here but might prefer to be somewhat less in the spotlight, serving instead as "guardian" of national reforms. They would obviously have to offer the strongest commitment, in word and deed, to a fair election process.

—That violence can be brought down to "acceptable" levels so that the referendum and constituent assembly processes can be carried out with a fair degree of national participation (the referendum vote would be the initial test of this)

—That a significant degree of international support and endorsement for the plan can be won, especially from some of the other Central Americans and the democratically oriented Andean group, as well as the U.S. and perhaps the OAS. This would blunt momentum of the "international front" of the extremists organizing to overthrow the JRG by means of international opprobrium.

36. We believe that we should begin to consult informally with civilian and military members of the government as well as with moderate forces and institutions (the Church will be particularly important) about how such a blueprint could be designed and then sold to the nation. We believe the time is approaching when some sort of consensus on the broad outlines of El Salvador's future is beginning to jell. Alternatively, to permit the JRG to drift politically or even think about how

to deal with the sort of rightwing Junta we have been threatened with twice in the last three months will only worsen, not end, the violence and complete the radicalization of Salvadoran society.

White

433. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 1, 1980

SUBJECT

Helicopters for El Salvador (S)

In the memorandum at Tab A, Ambassador White and Warren Christopher recommend a strategy for encouraging the Salvadoran government to improve its human rights performance. According to their strategy, with which I concur, we will begin training Salvadoran helicopter pilots, and inform the GOES that if certain steps are taken to reduce the excessive use of force by the military by the time the pilots complete their training, we will lease six helicopters on a no-cost basis. (S)

Warren also recommends that in view of Congressional sensitivities, we inform interested Congressmen of our plan. These notifications will be strictly limited to those who have a sincere interest in being helpful and will hold the information in strict confidence. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the strategy outlined by Christopher and Ambassador White for using helicopters to encourage the Government of El Salvador to undertake necessary steps to reduce the violence.² (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 18, El Salvador, 4–12/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter initialed the top of the page and wrote: "Zbig."

² The President neither approved or disapproved of this recommendation.

Tab A**Memorandum From Acting Secretary of State Christopher to President Carter³**

Washington, June 28, 1980

SUBJECT

Helicopters for El Salvador

As you instructed,⁴ Ambassador White has developed a plan to use mobile training teams and helicopters as inducements to try to persuade the Salvadoran military to bring an end to right-wing violence and the excessive use of force by the armed forces.⁵ Specifically, Ambassador White has recommended that he be authorized to inform the El Salvador junta that:

—the United States is prepared to lease six U.S. Army UH-1H helicopters to El Salvador;

—this offer is made on the understanding that the military will take specific measures to reduce and effectively bring under control the violence participated in by elements of the military;

—as evidence of our good faith, the necessary training of Salvadoran pilots will begin (at schools in Panama or the U.S.) as promptly as students can be identified. The training will take approximately two months;

—provided the military take specific measures that effectively reduce indiscriminate violence for which they are responsible or with which they are associated during the next two months, the helicopters would be delivered as soon as the training is completed.

The Ambassador also recommends that a small survey team from SOUTHCOM be brought into El Salvador for a few days to assess the type, amount, and optimum location of helicopter training required, and that a three-man logistics and maintenance support team be assigned to the Military Group for approximately one year.

This approach is sensible. The military urgently need to control the violence and this gives us some leverage to induce them to act. We

³ Secret; Sensitive. Christopher was Acting Secretary while Muskie met with ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur June 27–29.

⁴ Carter underlined the portion of this sentence beginning with the word “specific” and ending with “period” and wrote at the bottom of the page: “What kind of measures? By whom & how can they be quantified & assured?”

⁵ White sent his recommendations in telegram 4165 from San Salvador, June 16. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800293–0940)

have available the necessary funding. Approximately \$2.1 million in FMS credits and \$200,000 in IMET grants, already allocated to El Salvador in the FY 80 and 81 budgets, will be required to support and maintain the helicopters. DOD also concurs with Ambassador White's recommendation.

In view of Congressional sensitivity with respect to both the use of the leasing authority and our policy towards El Salvador, it will be important for the success of this action and of our pending aid legislation that we first advise concerned Members of Congress of our intentions. Subsequently, if we conclude that the human rights situation has improved sufficiently to warrant going ahead with the helicopters, we will inform you and then consult formally with Congress in advance, as we are committed to do.

Recommendation:

That we inform interested Congressmen of our plan, and then authorize Ambassador White to offer the helicopter leases and related training that he has recommended, on the understanding set forth above that the military in El Salvador take specific measures that effectively reduce institutional violence and result in discernible progress toward bringing it under control during the training period.⁶

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 428.

434. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 1, 1980

SUBJECT

Helicopters for El Salvador (S)

In response to memoranda which Christopher and I sent you on July 1, recommending a strategy for using the transfer of helicopters to encourage the Salvadorean military to improve their human rights performance, you asked for more specific measures to judge human rights progress. (Those memos and your comments are at Tab B.)² State consulted with Ambassador White and appropriate agencies and prepared an answer to your question (Tab A). (S)

The memo suggests the following strategy: Ambassador White should inform the Junta that we are prepared to begin training Salvadorean helicopter pilots immediately. If there is specific improvement in the performance of human rights in two months, when the training is completed, we will lease six helicopters on a no-cost basis at that time. White should try to elicit specific criteria for judging human rights performance from the Junta, using the five steps described on page 3 of Tab A to guide the discussion. (S)

State argues that it is probably unrealistic: (a) to expect the Junta's agreement on *all* these criteria, (b) on any more *specific* criteria, or (c) even for there to be much *tangible* progress in this area. Whether or not that assessment is correct, I believe that the helicopters represent a significant enough "carrot" that the Junta might bite, and perhaps agree to tangible criteria. We ought to aim for specific targets. Steps #A, B, and C provide specific criteria, but #D and #E are a bit too general. In steps #D and #E, we should ask the Junta for signs of progress, like reassigning Col Carranza abroad or establishing special courts to try leftists or rightists suspected of being involved with violent acts. Perhaps, an international tribunal could help try these people; it would certainly enhance the credibility of the trial. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 8-11/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter initialed the top of the page and an unknown hand wrote August 5 below his initial. Pastor sent the memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter to Brzezinski under a July 25 covering memorandum. (Ibid.)

² Tab B is not attached. See Document 433.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That you approve the strategy and the steps described on page 3 of State's memo as the criteria necessary to conclude after two months that the Salvadorean government is committed to trying to halt human rights violations. We will begin training helicopter pilots immediately.³ (S)

Tab A

Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Tarnoff) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)⁴

Washington, July 17, 1980

SUBJECT

Decision on Helicopters for El Salvador: Specific Steps to Control Violence

Discussion

If the President approves the helicopter proposal for El Salvador, we will brief concerned members of Congress on our plan and then instruct Ambassador White to reach an understanding with the Military High Command on specific measures they will take to reduce the indiscriminate violence and excessive use of force involving or associated with the armed forces. First, Ambassador White will seek from the High Command their commitment to improve human rights performance. Then he will suggest to them specific measures which we think would be helpful in accomplishing this objective. He will seek their proposals as to what might be done and obtain their comments concerning our suggestions. In his discussions with the High Command he will seek to work out a mutually acceptable and realistic list of actions to be taken while the helicopter pilot training is underway in Panama and the United States. At the conclusion of approximately 60 days we will evaluate the armed forces performance against this mutually agreed list. If we conclude that there has been sufficient progress towards our objectives we will consult with the Congress and then seek the President's final approval for lease of the helicopters.

Our principal objective is demonstrable progress by the armed forces in eliminating human rights abuses coming from within their

³ Carter indicated his approval.

⁴ Confidential. Carter wrote "OK J" at the top of the page.

ranks. Measuring such progress or even being certain that it takes place may be difficult, however. For example:

—Recent raids on guerrilla bases have turned up Salvadoran military and National Guard uniforms. This substantiates reports that guerrilla organizations, in their efforts to depict the JRG as a repressive regime, are in some operations posing as elements of the armed forces in committing atrocities.

—The guerrilla groups have announced that they plan a major offensive against the JRG forces within the next two months, and recent reports of an increased clandestine flow of arms and ammunition to the guerrillas from abroad add credence to these announcements. Unfortunately, the launching of such an offensive by the guerrillas will inevitably increase the high amount of killing by all sides, including the military, and worsen the human rights situation.

—The extreme left and some of their supporters abroad are systematically spreading disinformation about official repression and USG involvement with it. This campaign has had some success, particularly in the U.S. and Western Europe. We can expect the leftists to step up their propaganda to counter any efforts by the armed forces to improve their human rights image. U.S. provision of helicopters, regardless of the justification for such a decision, will be used effectively in such disinformation efforts.

Given these factors, we will have to base our judgment of the High Command's performance, prior to our decision to make the helicopters available, primarily on their performance in carrying out the specific measures that they agree with us to undertake. The JRG may not be able to reduce the general level of violence. We do expect, however, that it will take measures effectively reducing indiscriminate violence by the security forces.

Specific Steps to Discuss with the High Command

Steps which Ambassador White will suggest during his discussions with the High Command are listed below. He will also seek proposals from the High Command. We anticipate that some combination of our proposals and theirs would form a mutually agreed list against which their performance could be evaluated.

Steps we will propose for consideration are:

A. The High Command should issue a specific directive making clear JRG and High Command policy regarding indiscriminate violence and human rights violations, and should discipline violators. In particular, the directive should repudiate the summary treatment of suspected terrorists, including their abduction, torture and execution. This step will be specifically susceptible to confirmation and monitoring.

B. Improve command and control over anti-subversive operations to assure that they are conducted in accordance with this directive,

and conduct training aimed at increasing professionalism, respect for human rights, and ensuring compliance with the directive. We would expect to be able to monitor and assess progress on this.

C. Identify those areas of the country where official violence and abuses are reportedly at a high level, and transfer out of these areas responsible military personnel and units possibly involved. We should be able to see specific examples of this during the next two months.

D. A commitment from the top military officers that they intend to do all possible to clamp down hard on extreme rightists including those still in the military. Since the implementation of this is a sensitive internal matter within the armed forces, we should leave specifics to them. However, Ambassador White will make known the symbolic importance of restraining those, such as Col. Carranza, most suspected of collaboration with the extreme right. Measuring “progress” on this issue will be difficult.

E. Since one of the key problems has been the judicial system’s inability to successfully prosecute leftists or rightists suspected of being involved with violent acts, Ambassador White should raise with the JRG and the High Command the problem of intimidation that individual judges face, and urge urgent action to correct this situation. It may be possible to see some evidence of action in this area, but like (D), it will be difficult to monitor.⁵

Peter Tarnoff

Executive Secretary

⁵ In an August 8 memorandum to Muskie, Brzezinski informed him that Carter had approved the strategy for helicopters for El Salvador. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 8–11/80) Telegram 210613 to San Salvador, August 9, instructed White to proceed according to the approved strategy. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1491) For White’s subsequent report, see Document 435.

435. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, August 23, 1980, 1700Z

5810. Subj: (S) Ambassador and COMUSMILGP Presentation of Helicopter Proposal to JRG and High Command, August 21. Refs A) State 210613 B) San Salvador 4575 C) COMUSMILGP ES 282100Z May (State Cite 3723) D) COMUSMILGP ES 081630Z July IP (State Cite 4680).²

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary. In a meeting with the JRG and the High Command August 21 the Ambassador and COMUSMILGP presented the USG offer to lease six helicopters to the GOES. The terms of the U.S. offer provoked some mixed reactions. The two month period during which progress in human rights would be measured was an especially difficult pill for the GOES. The goals of the U.S. proposals were lauded; the appearance that the GOES would be succumbing to USG dictates was deplored. Nevertheless, the meeting was generally positive and we expect a positive response to our offer. End summary.

3. The Ambassador, COMUSMILGP, and PolOff met August 21 with the entire JRG and the members of the High Command. The purpose of the meeting was to explain to the GOES the USG proposal for the lease of six helicopters to El Salvador.

4. JRG member Duarte opened the meeting, indicating simply that the Ambassador had requested it in order to discuss a military related subject. He turned it over to the U.S. representatives for their presentation.

5. In his initial remarks the Ambassador summarized the state of US-GOES relations complimenting the Junta and the military for their role in insuring that the general strike failed and stating his conviction that international opinion was changing in a positive fashion both for the government and for US policy. He indicated continuing U.S. support for the JRG and its policies of carrying out reforms and democratization. The Ambassador also noted the serious problems created in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1480. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINSCO Quarry Heights, and the Secretary of Defense.

² See footnote 5, Document 434. In telegram 4575 from San Salvador, July 3, White provided further explanation of his recommendation to provide six helicopters to the Salvadorans. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800320-0746) References C and D had not been found.

that relationship by the continuing violence of the extremist right which is perceived internationally to be—and often actually is—condoned by elements within the military. The failure of the GOES to put an end to that violence is the principal obstacle to greater cooperation between the two governments.

6. COMUSMILGP followed by reading a statement which contained the USG offer to provide the helicopters, training and spare parts. His statement also contained the points made in ref A and the five USG conditions to the lease of the aircraft.³ He continued by suggesting a series of measures which the GOES could undertake and which would serve simultaneously as the means to limit violence and the means to measure the success of the GOES in meeting the five U.S. conditions. COMUSMILGP concluded by reading the timetable for implementation of the lease (see ref A). A document containing COMUSMILGP's three statements, his suggested code of conduct and his assessment of the MOD and public security (see refs C and D) was given to each official present.

7. Duarte responded to the U.S. proposal. He indicated that in the U.S. document there are some good ideas on human rights; he also said that he saw no problem working with the U.S. to solve the human rights problem. However, some of the proposals made were unacceptable. The "trial period" of 60 days during which the U.S. would evaluate progress made was particularly galling. Duarte claimed that the U.S. was saying that only "if you are good boys will the helicopters be provided."

8. Duarte continued by saying that "abuses of authority" existed and were destroying some of the JRG's work. He said that the JRG and the High Command were currently working on improving the human rights picture in El Salvador. U.S. should not doubt that the GOES would comply with its part of the agreement. (Comment: In essence, Duarte was complaining not so much about the conditions themselves as the USG insistence on measuring performance over a sixty-day period. End comment.)

9. The Ambassador then indicated that he did not think that the two positions were that far apart. He repeated the five conditions and pointed out that those were the only requirements that came from Washington. (Duarte had taken issue with one of COMUSMILGP's recommendations as if it also had been a condition.) The Ambassador noted the private nature of the accord between the two governments. He emphasized the need for progress in the five areas cited and said

³ See Tab A, Document 434.

that in his opinion the JRG and MOD were already committed to all of points listed but that in some of the areas progress was imperceptible.

10. Duarte responded by saying that he saw a political problem with the fourth condition, that one which requires that the High Command deal toughly with extreme right wing elements including those in the military. He said it was obvious who this referred to—the D'Aubuisson sort. He went on to say that no act of extremist violence, whether of the right or the left, should be tolerated. He seemed, then, to agree with the basis of the fourth point and, apart from the political problem that he saw with that one, he voiced no objections. (Comment: This was a deliberate tactic on Duarte's part to point up the problem of right wing extremism in the military. End comment.

11. JRG member Morales Ehrlich asked whether the five conditions would be labelled as conditions when the proposal reached Congress. In response the Ambassador indicated that the JRG's successes in the five areas would be emphasized over the conditional aspect of the agreement. What we want, he said, is to have a factual response to criticism when we agree to provide the helicopters.

12. Col. Majano spoke up saying that he saw Duarte's preoccupation as centering around the political repercussions of the agreement. That problem could be obviated if this were to be a private, "gentlemen's agreement." Like Morales Ehrlich, however, he was concerned that the presentation before Congress would cite the conditions and acknowledge that the GOES had acceded to them. On the whole, however, Majano was favorable toward the proposal, saying, in effect, that he was in agreement with the goals and measures listed in the document.

13. Defense Minister Garcia had a different reaction. He claimed that while the human rights goals in the U.S. document were good ones Salvadoran "idiosyncracies" were not being taken into account. (By "idiosyncrasy" Garcia means that all abuses of authority by the military are handled quietly and "in house".) He agreed that there have been abuses but didn't think it a good idea to "proclaim" the fact. He seemed to think that there was no point in it. Those that looked upon the JRG as repressive and the left as progressive, who cited as "casualties" the army's dead but saw the dead on the left as "assassinated" were already convinced and the U.S. proposed measures would do little to change that.

14. Garcia personally vouched for the efforts that are being made by those present (i.e., the JRG and the High Command) on behalf of human rights. He claimed that the U.S. recommendations are being carried out. However, it was one thing to carry out these things voluntarily and another to have them enforced by another country. The country's dignity was offended and while they—the JRG and High Command—might be able to overlook the offense the rest of the country might not.

15. At this point the Ambassador pointed out that some progress has been made in human rights in El Salvador. However, the reality is that much more needs to be done. Concentrating their efforts on the five areas mentioned would demonstrate to the U.S. that the government was serious about bringing violations under control. He pointed out that while the military is entitled to its special idiosyncracies, putting the JRG into international disrepute by condoning acts of violence seemed extreme.

16. Col. Gutierrez continued the conversation by saying that they understood the motives for the conditions. All of the proposals, he said, “are things which we should be doing”. He especially liked the COMUSMILGP’s code of conduct. But Gutierrez went on to say that he would like to consult with his officer corps. The risk of misinformation and misinterpretation is great, he said, and so before agreeing to the proposal he would like to inform them and ask for their reactions.

17. Gutierrez ended by saying that they (the GOES) would have much preferred a “more frank assistance” and “a vote of confidence in them by the U.S.”

18. Col. Vides Casanova asked why the U.S. was so insistent on dealing toughly with the right extremists and not with those of the left. He indicated that some people of the right have done more to resolve the country’s problems since the October coup than those on the left.

19. The Ambassador told Col. Vides that there was a misunderstanding. Liberty of expression is not at issue; people should have the right to think in any way they choose and to act within the law. What they do not have a right to do is to commit acts of terrorist violence. For example, he asked when the last time was that an ORDEN militant was punished. No one came up with an answer.

20. Duarte then used the occasion to do some straight talking to the military. He said that what was under discussion were those individuals who are part of the military and who are committing terrorist acts. He thought that it was understood by the High Command that they should put a stop to these unjust, violent acts.

21. Duarte went on to make four points. He said Col. Gutierrez’ idea of consulting the officers was a good one. That discussions were necessary to develop the means to make the “points”—the U.S. conditions—realizable. He suggested a public act in El Salvador with a U.S. General present to announce the agreement. Finally, he said that he still saw a danger in the interpretation of the agreement. He said that this conditional assistance, with its suggestion of U.S. interference in the internal affairs of another country, could be negative for both the U.S. and El Salvador.

22. Duarte summarized. Two things were necessary: measures to put the proposals into practice and measures to deal with the political problems faced by both governments.

23. Col. Majano pointed out that in October 1979 the military had publicly stated that there were faults in its own institution. Majano was in effect responding to MOD Garcia and to the need to reform the military as stated in the October 15 revolution. Any member of the armed forces who has unauthorized dealings with extremist groups of either the right or left should be disciplined, said Majano. The problem is one of balance ("Equilibrio").

24. Majano made a second point. Everything presented he viewed as "correct" but he noted that the public presentation could be a problem. He viewed the crucial question as how to solve Washington's problems while at the same time not giving the appearance that El Salvador succumbed to a political set of conditions.

25. Air Force Col. Bustillos reflected on the offer and compared it with a previous U.S. offer of 5.7 million dollars of military assistance. The international reaction, he said, was very bad. The reaction to the helicopter agreement would be as bad or worse and would provoke increased assistance to the left from Cuba or the Soviet Union. Implicit in Bustillo statement was the view that the U.S. was giving little and demanding a lot.

26. Duarte ended the meeting by saying that Bustillos' thesis was valid but that it was less important now than it was two or three months ago. In the interim the JRG and the armed forces have gained the backing of the people. Whatever aid the left receives will be of little use to them as they have lost the people's support.

27. Duarte continued by saying that the problem that the U.S. sees is that the process of democratization and program of reforms will stop short of its goals. He sympathized with the U.S. concern. He thought that to ensure that those goals are realized the military should rededicate itself to the political definition of October 1979. He said that political conscience must be developed throughout the armed forces. The High Command may see things clearly but clear signals must be sent to all elements of the military.

28. Comment: While we did everything we could to soften the presentation, there was no way to disguise that the deal consisted of helicopters in exchange for a measurably improved performance in determined areas over a fixed time span. Duarte has no real objection to this and in fact assured me later that the whole problem would be worked out satisfactorily. Duarte led off as he did in order to preclude a stronger reaction from the conservative members of the High Command.

29. The real danger here is that as the military discuss our proposal the whole matter will become public and interpreted in such a way that it will appear that the United States is imposing conditions and affronting the sovereignty of El Salvador. On the other hand, at this point just about any meeting on any subject that involves the entire military will probably benefit our overall policy. It is past time that progressive and conservative officers met on a subject that does not have directly to do with causes of internal dissension and will provide the opportunity for a full airing of views. Our hope, of course, would be that this would result in some reconciliation between the various factions.

White

**436. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, September 4, 1980, 1945Z

6122. Subj: JRG Member Duarte on Decisive Juncture for GOES.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Summary: The three civilian members of the Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) have despatched a telegram to all headquarters and officers of the Salvadoran armed forces in effect conditioning continued civilian participation in the Junta on military acceptance of the principle that the Junta is the supreme political authority of the nation and that the Defense Ministry will clear its orders with the Junta hereafter. Cols. Majano and Gutierrez did not sign the telegram; Majano objects to its reaffirmation of order number 10 shifting his supporters out of command positions; Gutierrez has agreed to civilian rule only if a majority of his fellow officers signify their acceptance of the Junta's supreme authority. A poll of the armed forces may be taking place; a general assembly of officers may be called to discuss this unprecedented civilian approach to the officer corps and its implications. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800421–1088. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Immediate to Bogotá, Caracas, Guatemala City, Lima, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, San José, Tegucigalpa, USCINCSO Quarry Heights, and DIA.

3. I met morning of Sept 4 at breakfast with JRG member Napoleon Duarte, who briefed me on developments of the last few days. The crisis is far from over. The three civilian members of the Junta recognize that this is a decisive juncture in the democratization process and that they must stand firm against all military factions which would disrupt the civilian/military cooperation that is the only solution to the country's problems. The three civilian members of the Junta will insist that power be vested in the Junta once and for all.

4. To this end the civilians drafted a decree that embodied three points:

(A) That all general orders issued by the Ministry of Defense must receive prior approval of the JRG acting in its capacity as Commander in Chief of the armed forces.

(B) That the Junta appoints Col. Jaime Abdul Gutierrez as the Junta member who will exercise communication, coordination and control over the Ministry of Defense, and

(C) Ratifies General Order No. 10. (The order issued by Gutierrez at the instance of Garcia and Carranza transferring out of positions of power many of the supporters of Col. Majano.)

Col. Gutierrez refused to sign this decree because he objected to provision (A) which he believes diminishes his authority. He stated, however, that if his fellow officers support it he will agree. Gutierrez accepted points (B) and (C). Col. Majano refused to sign because he believes Order No. 10 to be politically motivated and prejudicial to the good order of the armed forces. Majano specifically accepts points (A) and (B).

5. The three civilian JRG members visited the Santa Ana military headquarters, i.e. a key Majanista unit, the evening of Sept 3 and called for its support of this decision. At 1:00 a.m. Sept 4 a telegram was dispatched to all military units in the country asking for full support of all officers behind a reaffirmation of the constitution, the armed forces proclamation of October 15th, the agreement of November 9 between the PDC and armed forces and a decision to vest all decision-making power, military and civilian, in the hands of the Junta as a whole. The telegram says that only by this means can parochialism be overcome within all sections of the government and threats to the unity of the reformist movement be overcome. Translation of the cable follows by septel.² Duarte stated that while the cable does not make threats, refusal of a majority of the officer corps to support this measure will result in the resignation of the three civilian members of the government with all that their departure would imply.

² Telegram 6127 from San Salvador, September 4, included the text of the telegram sent to the Salvadoran military commanders on September 4. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800422-0071)

6. Duarte believes that a majority of the officer corps can be secured in favor of the decision embodied in the resolution above and that Col. Gutierrez will accept such an outcome. He is afraid that Col. Majano will not go along, however, and will thereupon resign from the Junta. If Majano resigns, the contingency plan is to dissolve the Junta and make Duarte President of the republic. At this juncture, all Cabinet Ministers will be asked to resign and a new Cabinet will be appointed by Duarte to implement the reforms in an atmosphere of discipline and professionalism and with clear civilian control over the military establishment.

7. Comment: Duarte is obviously “going for broke” and he believes that the survival of the military as an institution will demand that a majority of the officer corps accept civilian control. He recognizes that the Majano faction, perhaps some fifteen percent of all officers, will reject the proposal and may eventually depart. By the same token, the Carranza faction, perhaps including Col. Garcia, will also reject civilian rule but will probably not resign. They will have to recognize that a disciplined military establishment rules out the kind of repression they have practiced with so much damage to the reputation of the JRG. These conservative officers can expect to be transferred out of positions of authority unless their conduct changes. I agreed with Duarte that the civilian members of the Junta must act now to take control of the entire government and end the “parallel command structure” that has existed since October 15th. I cautioned him that my approval was tentative at this stage pending consultations with the Department but that I personally could see no alternative course of action that would not produce even worse consequences. Over the next months far worse would be Majano’s angry departure in the face of what will be seen abroad, and understood here, as a rightwing coup. The civilians could not continue as a facade for such a sharp shift to the right and eventual reversal of all the progressive measures instituted so far. If Duarte succeeds we will have a real government with authority over military as well as civilian matters.³

White

³ In his September 5 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor noted: “The junta is almost through its worst crisis, stronger than ever. After Gutierrez ordered the reassignment of Majano’s key supporters, Majano, who represents the progressive wing of the armed forces, retreated to his barracks, and a fight appeared imminent. Duarte, the leader of the Christian Democrats, formulated a proposal, which would unequivocally subordinate the military to the junta, and although both Majano and Gutierrez opposed the proposal, Duarte went over their heads and polled all the military officers. Unbelievably, 80% supported Duarte. Gutierrez has now accepted the proposal, and if Majano buys it, it will represent a dramatic breakthrough in El Salvador. White has done a superb job.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4–8/80)

437. Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Kramer) to Secretary of Defense Brown¹

Washington, September 5, 1980

SUBJECT

Nutting Message on El Salvador (U)

(S) To define US policy toward El Salvador, the critical issue thus far has revolved around the perception of the threat. There are two fundamentally different perceptions as to the nature of the problem:

—One view (generally speaking, that of the Ambassador) is that the left cannot win unless, first, a right-wing government takes over and polarizes the population. This view holds that the leftist military threat is not that significant, that outside support of the left is minimal (especially outside Cuban support) and that the key is getting the government (junta) to hold the right down.

—The second view (generally speaking, that of DOD, the Intelligence Community, and some of State) is that, while the right poses an immediate threat, the left also poses a serious threat even in the absence of a take-over from the right. Generally speaking, this view is much more concerned about the leftist military threat, including outside support (especially Cuban), and argues that an important aspect of giving the government (junta) more time is to take steps against the left and their outside support. This second view is what is meant when there is discussion of the need for a “regional” approach.

(S) Given these divergent views, we have seen two generally competing strategies emerge. The Ambassador’s strategy is to press the military as much as possible and to encourage the civilian members of the junta to take effective control of the government. This view has held sway. The other view has been that we should offer some more support than we have been doing to the military. To some extent the recent offer of helicopters was a compromise between the two views,² although the Ambassador probably placed more emphasis on the human rights conditions associated with the offer and others probably placed more emphasis on the value (both military and political) of providing helicopters to the military.

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, FRC 330–82–0263, El Salvador 1979. Secret. Sent through Komer, who did not initial the memorandum.

² See Document 434.

(S) Now, the recent strengthening of the right wing military has made the Ambassador's concerns seem more pressing, but, again, this in no way diminishes the actual strength of the guerrillas. For the moment, however, we may be able to escape the dilemma of seeming to support only the right if we go forward with additional military support as Nutting has suggested, because it now appears that the right wing military, although eliminating some of the left wing military's positions of power, will concomitantly accept the preeminence of the civilian members of the junta. Furthermore, our MILGP commander believes that the helicopter offer will be accepted some time next week.³

(S) In light of these developments (if, indeed, they come to pass) and given the strength of the guerrilla threat, we think it would be well worthwhile to have high level policy makers debate the value of increased military aid to the junta. Dan Murphy and I have been working on some proposals which we are forwarding to you through Bob Komer.⁴ We suggest that you send these to Dr. Brzezinski and Admiral Turner for their consideration and that an SCC meeting be scheduled relatively soon to consider them. The proposals are fairly far reaching and the situation in El Salvador is sufficiently volatile that such support may become undoable. Nonetheless we believe that it is important to consider proposals of this sort.⁵

Franklin D. Kramer

*Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
International Security Affairs*

³ Attached as Tab A, but not printed, is Nutting's September 4 message upon which Brown wrote "9/4 RWK/DEM—Please evaluate & suggest course of action. HB."

⁴ Attached but not printed at Tab B is an undated working paper entitled "El Salvador: Dealing with the Security Situation," prepared by McClain, Tracy, and Menges.

⁵ An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the page: "The Nutting message (Tab A) action recommendation is that we present the El Salvador interagency group with a significant military package. Such a proposal was made on 20 Aug (see Tab B). The proposed memo from you to Brzezinski/Turner would put the dialogue at a higher level." For Brown's response, see Document 439.

438. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, September 9, 1980, 2140Z

6248. Subj: (C) Duarte Describes Resolution of Political-Military Crisis.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. Duarte and I had breakfast morning of Sept 9, and I heard his description of how the crisis has been resolved, at least temporarily, that threatened the survival of the Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG). He gave me a xeroxed copy of the document signed last evening by all five members of the Junta which vests authority over the armed forces in the Junta, names Gutierrez as the link with the Ministry of Defense and ratifies Order #10 of September 1.² He said Majano resisted signing until two conditions were met: that "injustices" to his followers be rectified and that Colonels Garcia and Carranza be forced out of their posts in the Defense Ministry. The second condition was rejected but the first was accepted in that changes will be made in some of the assignments and the Junta will announce that "injustices" have been rectified. Col. Gutierrez accepted this compromise and both officers signed the document. Before signing, Majano announced that he would resign thereafter. Following a long series of entreaties and much persuasion, he retracted this statement but reserved his right to take future action as he saw fit.

3. I spoke to Duarte about the possibility of sending some of the young officers to the United States for training courses. He was grateful for the offer but said that frankly he was opposed to such a move because some 30 officers are involved and Majano wants all of them to go to the U.S. for three months or so. Duarte said that moving them all out of the country would constitute a golpe, in fact as well as in perception. He felt it was important for most of them to be assigned to posts here where their drive and expertise would make them useful to the political and military aims of the JRG. Duarte said he would have no objection to several of them going abroad but that to lose all 30 would be a serious reverse for the government. I told him that we

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800430-0219. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Telegram 237975 to San Salvador, September 6, instructed White to support the imposition of civilian control of the Salvadoran military. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 8-11/80)

² Telegram 6257 from San Salvador, September 10, included an informal translation of the decree. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 8-9/80)

were thinking of not more than five or six. (Col. Gutierrez called later to ask if four young officers could be accepted for training—see septel.)³

4. The plan now is for all five JRG members to visit each major cuartel and military unit, to explain the understandings reached and to call upon all officers to subscribe to a new line of action for the armed forces. Duarte believes that this move is critical. All officers of the armed forces must be persuaded to subscribe to a new role for the Salvadoran military that would put them squarely on the side of democratization, human rights and honesty. In order for the military to survive as an institution, repression, excessive violence and corruption must be eliminated from the armed forces. The October 15 manifesto must be made meaningful to the officer corps and each officer must subscribe to its goals and objectives. The Junta as a whole will now appeal to the officer corps to assume the obligations in the October 15 proclamation, to bring an end to official violence and to root out corruption in the armed services.

5. Duarte expressed deep reservations as to whether Majano will participate in this endeavor even though Majano is totally identified with the course of action proposed. He is stubborn and unpredictable, almost innately unsuited to cooperating in a team effort, and sufficiently opportunistic to be reluctant to over-identify with a Junta that may not last. If Majano backs out or if the officer corps does not subscribe to the new line policy proposed, the Junta will convoke a general assembly of officers (“congreso military”) and present the issue squarely: subscribe to the philosophy of democratization or the civilian members of the Junta will resign. Clearly this will bring on a new crisis with unpredictable consequences. That the very survival of the military as an institution is at stake must be made clear to the officer corps. It will be impossible for civilians, or at least for the PDC, to remain in a government backed by undisciplined, corrupt and violent military forces. The excesses of some elements of the military must be ended or the government cannot survive.

6. Duarte made it very clear that he was prepared to press this issue to a resolution even if a crisis should produce a right-wing regime of conservative military officers with a fig-leaf representation of rightists businessmen. That such a regime, a reincarnation of the Romero gang, would have no chance of survival in a radicalized country is a threat he is prepared to face. Thus the compromise which has ended the latest crisis in the JRG may prove a temporary respite because the underlying issue—who will control the armed forces and to what end—has still not been decided. The next several weeks will be as critical in

³ Not further identified.

El Salvador as October 1979 when the first steps were taken on the road toward basic social, economic and political change. That journey must be completed.

7. I am meeting with Col. Majano this evening and Col. Gutierrez tomorrow morning to explain the importance of their participating wholeheartedly in this new endeavor to fulfill the promises of the October 15 declaration.⁴

White

⁴ In telegram 6284 from San Salvador, September 10, White reported on his September 9 meeting with Majano and his September 10 meeting with Gutierrez, writing in summary: "The Revolutionary Governing Junta (JRG) has survived another great crisis and our hopes for a moderate outcome in El Salvador have been reinforced, not by the crisis itself, which only evidences the internal strains within the JRG, but by the decisive performance of the civilians in the Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800435-0984)

439. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, October 8, 1980

SUBJECT

Countering the Insurgency in El Salvador (U)

(S) The recent CIA assessment of the situation in El Salvador (attached) makes it clear that, while the radical left has recently been weakened in the political arena, progress in the armed struggle between insurgents and El Salvadoran military forces is less encouraging.² This trend is disturbing, for if our policy of support for the current govern-

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 24, Meetings—Muskie/Brown/Brzezinski, 10/80-1/81. Secret. Copies were sent to Muskie and Turner. Brzezinski wrote to Pastor at the top of the page: "RP review, comment for me, and place on SCC agenda. ZB." An unknown hand dated these comments October 10.

² Not attached. The intelligence assessment entitled "The Guerrillas in the Salvadoran Equation" is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 86, Sensitive XX: 10/16-31/80.

ment is to succeed, we must have a coordinated strategy that pursues military as well as political and economic success.

(S) To this end, the President has approved and we have provided non-lethal military equipment to improve the communications, mobility, and medical capabilities of GOES forces, and we have deployed several small technical assistance teams to assist in the related fields of logistics, vehicle maintenance, communications, medical service, and information and public relations. As you are aware, Ambassador White is working out terms for an offer of six UH-1H helicopters.³ Despite these measures, I have become increasingly concerned that we may not be providing enough of the right kind of security assistance. The attached report and other recent events reinforce my concern.

(S) For almost nine months, we have deferred the deployment of the military training teams (MTTs) which would train each of the El Salvadoran Brigades. These teams are already formed and are prepared to move on short notice. This training is essential to develop the military skills, professionalism, and confidence necessary to meet the growing insurgent challenge, and to enhance the prospect for cultivating the support of the civilian population. These teams would not serve as combat advisors and their assignment in-country would be of finite duration, probably no longer than two to three months.

(S) There are several other security assistance measures that would be especially appropriate now in response to the threat faced in El Salvador.

—We should provide specialized training in border patrol, intelligence collection, and special operations to help develop capabilities for disrupting the flow of arms and improve basic counterinsurgency techniques. (This would be similar to the teams successfully deployed to Honduras earlier this year.)

—We should replace ordnance and other equipment lost or expended in hostile action. An ordnance survey team should be dispatched to El Salvador immediately to determine the specific require-

³ In telegram 6574 from San Salvador, September 23, White reported that he and Cummings had met with the JRG on August 21 “regarding human rights problems and the conditions for leasing six U.S. Army UH-1H helicopters to El Salvador.” White commented: “It seems to me prudent to set the plan in motion quickly to bring the six helicopters to El Salvador,” and added that the JRG’s “drafting committee will soon complete and the Junta will present us reworked conditions that I feel sure we can accept.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 8–11/80) In his October 14 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor noted: “State finally sent guidance to White instructing him to try to persuade the Junta to improve on the ‘Code of Conduct’ decree (punishing armed forces for human rights violations), but also at the same time informing them that helicopter training can proceed.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4–8/80)

ments and we should be prepared to respond with required materiel, especially that which will bolster the GOES armed forces' quick-reaction capability.

—We should extend the small-scale, military technical assistance team concept to other areas in the public, nonmilitary sector. These civic action teams (of three to four men) could be formed to provide assistance in such areas as public health, road building, agriculture and, thereby, help to counter the rising influence of guerrilla groups in the countryside.

—We could commence covert action planning to expand upon that already authorized by Presidential Finding,⁴ and which provides specifically and selectively for:

—The interdiction of arms supply to and within El Salvador and region-wide.

—The identification, infiltration, and public exposure of the Cuban covert action structure, personnel and plans.

—An expansion of current efforts to infiltrate political and insurgent groups supported by the Cubans.

—A broadening of existing programs in the broadcast and propaganda area, to dramatize Cuban subversion in the region as a whole and in El Salvador in particular.

(S) All of these measures are designed to assure the success of a moderate outcome in El Salvador by containing the insurgency, so that the current government may consolidate its agrarian and other reforms. With the exception of the MTTs for the brigades, all can be provided on a low visibility basis, and even the MTTs could be reduced in size to limit somewhat their visibility. While the deployment of U.S. military personnel to El Salvador is a politically sensitive issue, visibility of U.S. personnel can be successfully minimized by restricting the size of any training teams deployed to six or fewer specialists and by ensuring that such teams avoid any activities which could be construed as combat advice.

(U) Frank Carlucci is aware of the substance of this letter and he joins me in urging your support for these initiatives and their review at an early SCC meeting.⁵

Harold Brown

⁴ See Document 398.

⁵ In an October 16 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor suggested that, in response to Brown's recommendation, a SCC was not necessary "at this time." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4-8/80)

440. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, October 19, 1980, 1600Z

7224. Subject: Meeting Between Colonel Garcia, Salvadoran Minister of Defense, and NSC Staffer. Ref: (A) Blacken/White Secure TelCon 10/17, (B) Dion/Blacken Secure TelCon 10/18.²

1. S-Entire text.

2. The uncoordinated and wrongheaded decision of NSC staffer Robert Pastor to meet with Minister of Defense Garcia threatens to undo what we have gained in El Salvador over the last six or seven months. I insist that the meeting be cancelled immediately and I request that the Secretary be informed of my views.

3. The political history of El Salvador over the past year is in large part the struggle of the civilian-military government representing the forces of change to gain control over the military establishment and specifically to force Colonel Garcia to end the violent repression of the security forces against non-combatants. I find it incredible that the first White House audience conceded to a Salvadoran Government official is to the Minister of Defense who, fairly or unfairly, has come to symbolize repression and military continuismo in El Salvador.

4. As is clear from our reporting (SS 7066 and others)³ we are at a tense and delicate stage here with coup plotting from the right taking on dangerous proportions. We are doing our best to move with tact, discretion and skill to diminish this threat and I believe we are making progress but if the Pastor-Garcia meeting takes place it will be interpreted here as Carter administration backing for a move to the right.

5. What progress we have made in El Salvador over the last months can be attributed in large part to the impact of the U.S. Government speaking with one voice. For Garcia and his coup-plotting friends in Miami to gain entry to the White House behind the back of the American Ambassador will seriously undercut my ability to influence events at this critical juncture.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 10/80. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Brzezinski wrote to Pastor at the top of the page: "RP Reply sent? ZB." Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² No records of the telephone conversations between Blacken and White and Dion and Blacken had been found.

³ In telegram 7066 from San Salvador, October 10, the Embassy relayed reports of a possible right-wing coup timed to "capitalize on the expected (by the right) election of Ronald Reagan November 4." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800485–0286)

6. I also find it bizarre that Pastor feels entitled to respond to my careful objections with the casual announcement that his decision is irreversible and he will be incommunicado for the weekend. Moreover, I am unimpressed by Pastor's statement that the meeting will be secret and that he will take a hard line with Garcia.⁴ The objective of the coup plotters in Miami who are behind this initiative is to get Garcia a meeting at the White House. What is said at the meeting is irrelevant. The day after the meeting the word will be all over El Salvador that Garcia bypassed the Embassy and got a hearing at the White House. Garcia's Washington visit must be cancelled. If, after Garcia returns to El Salvador, there is a considered policy decision to bring Garcia to Washington, then I will of course follow instructions and arrange the meeting.⁵ But to have Pastor decide on his own to give Colonel Garcia a great political boost on the eve of what may be a right wing bid for power is just plain crazy and I have the obligation to say so.⁶

White

⁴ In his October 20 memorandum to Brzezinski, October 20, Pastor wrote: "I drafted a response to White's intemperate cable, but was then persuaded by State to delete my expletives. I understand that White's deputy felt that it would be good idea for me to meet with Garcia as did most people in State." Pastor also noted White's concern about sending mixed signals to El Salvador and that Menges "told a group of Salvadoran businessmen that he was a White House adviser and that he eliminated the left without concern about human rights." Pastor added a handwritten note: "The reply to White should be sent tonight. [See footnote 5, below] One person in State said he thought I was right not to go ahead with the meeting as White would have leaked it." Brzezinski wrote at the bottom of the page to Dodson and Pastor: "CD/RP *We should drop Menges, if he is a consultant.*" (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 10/80)

⁵ In telegram 280504 to San Salvador, October 21, the Department wrote to White explaining that decision for Pastor to meet with Garcia "was not uncoordinated, it made by Pastor and Cheek after consultation with Jim Cheek and John Bushnell, and they agreed to consult you." The Department also noted that "although State and NSC agreed that the meeting could be useful it was cancelled at Pastor's initiative because he thought a leak concerning it would be unnecessarily harmful at this time." Finally, the Department instructed White to meet with Garcia and to stress U.S. concern about "right-wing violence and abuses coming from the military" in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1411)

⁶ In telegram 7321 from San Salvador, October 22, White noted that he would see Garcia "as soon as I believe it prudent to do so," and commented that "it is the wildest kind of self-deception to think that we can influence importantly events here until after our election outcome is determined." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137-1415) In telegram 7470 from San Salvador, October 27, White reported that he had met with Garcia and Carranza that morning and "they protested that the military are not connected with rightist terrorism and insisted that everything possible was being done to reduce violence from the right as well as the left." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800515-0163)

441. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, October 24, 1980

SUBJECT

Mini-SCC on El Salvador (U)

I strongly recommend that we delay in calling for a mini or a regular SCC on El Salvador until we receive specific recommendations and a report from DOD's survey team, which is there now, and until CIA does an analysis of Harold Brown's covert action recommendations. An SCC before then would not be productive, and indeed, could be counterproductive since these are extremely controversial issues, and I don't doubt there are people in State who would try to embarrass us if they felt that these issues could be decided before the election. I think it would be a mistake to do it before. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, I recommend that you send the memo I drafted at Tab I² to the DCI for him to assess Harold Brown's recommendations and tell us what they are already doing.³ (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCM-160, El Salvador, 1/6/1981. Secret. Sent for action.

² Tab I, attached but not printed, is an undated, unsigned memorandum from Brzezinski to Turner, requesting Turner's comments on Brown's October 8 memorandum to Brzezinski. (See Document 439)

³ Aaron indicated his approval and wrote "ok" along with his initials. Denend added a handwritten notation to Brzezinski: "ZB: This item is already on next week's MBB agenda. Why don't you have the attachment retyped to ask for the DCI's opinion, say, by COB Tuesday? LD." Denend also wrote on October 27: "Tasking given orally to Jay Rixsee." For the Central Intelligence Agency's response to Brown's October 8 memorandum to Brzezinski, see Document 442. At the October 30 meeting among Muskie, Brown, and Brzezinski, the three principals discussed policy toward El Salvador. According to Muskie's handwritten notation on Bartholomew's October 29 memorandum to Muskie, which contained an annotated agenda for the meeting, the three agreed at the meeting to hold a PRC on Latin America followed by an SCC on El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretary, Subject Files of Edmund S. Muskie, 1963–1981, Lot 83D66, Box 3, Muskie/Brzezinski/Brown Lunches, Oct.–Dec. 1980) No other record of the October 30 meeting has been found.

442. Memorandum From the Acting Chief of the Latin America Division, Central Intelligence Agency ([*name not declassified*]) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, October 28, 1980

SUBJECT

Countering the Insurgency in El Salvador

1. The DOD Memorandum dated 8 October 1980, which is directed to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, follows an earlier DOD memorandum of 9 September 1980, also entitled "Countering the Insurgency in El Salvador", which was directed to the Deputy Director of this Agency and to which we replied on 22 September 1980.² The suggestions contained in our 22 September reply are still valid; most of them have been incorporated into DOD's 8 October proposals.

2. We agree with DOD that additional security assistance is needed in response to the insurgency threat in El Salvador and fully support the first two measures proposed: (a) "specialized training in border patrol, intelligence collection, and special operations to help develop capabilities for disrupting the flow of arms and improve basic counter-insurgency techniques"; and (b) replacement of ordnance and other equipment lost or expended in hostile action" and the "dispatch of an ordnance survey team to El Salvador".

3. We also endorse the extension of the small-scale technical assistance team concept to such areas as public health, road building and agriculture. We acknowledge that the assignment of U.S. MTTs to El Salvador is politically sensitive and will constitute a target for leftist propaganda worldwide. The DOD proposal incorporates our previous suggestions for reducing the visibility of these teams.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 12, Folder 9: Latin America. Secret. Sent through Carlucci and the Acting Deputy Director for Operations. Carlucci did not initial the memorandum; [*name not declassified*] concurred on the Acting Deputy Director for Operations' behalf on October 29. Portions of this memorandum were reprinted under the subject heading: "DCI comments on DOD memorandum of 8 October 1980, Subject: Countering the Insurgency in El Salvador," in the Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 24, Meetings—Muskie/Brown/Brzezinski, 10/80-1/81.

² For Brown's October 8 memorandum, see Document 439. McGiffert's September 9 memorandum to Carlucci is attached but not printed. Also attached but not printed is Carlucci's September 22 memorandum to McGiffert.

4. We support programs to carry out activities authorized in the Presidential Findings on El Salvador and Honduras. With regard to the DOD specific covert action proposals, we have the following comments:

—Programs supporting the interdiction of arms supply to and within El Salvador and the region as a whole. A training program for Salvadoran security forces is underway and DOD has trained Hondurans in border surveillance, helicopter maintenance and use of helicopters in counterinsurgency operations. Our proposal for improvements in airport security, customs and immigration inspection, identification of false documentation, executive protection and bomb disposal has been accepted by Honduran authorities and training will begin late this year or early in 1981. Since Guatemala's classification as a human rights violator prevents the U.S. from supplying either the training or the equipment needed for such operations, the application of a region-wide arms interdiction program will be difficult. We would, however, welcome any assistance which DOD can provide in this area.

—The identification, infiltration and public exposure of the Cuban covert action structure, personnel and plans. This is one of our major targets and we are actively engaged in operations to achieve this end.

—Expansion of current efforts to infiltrate political and insurgent groups supported by the Cubans. We are actively engaged in efforts to penetrate Cuban-supported groups.

—A broadening of existing media programs to dramatize Cuban subversion in the region as a whole and in El Salvador in particular. This is one of our primary goals and we are working toward orchestrating a regional campaign which will emphasize positive actions by the Salvadoran government in contrast to the negative, subversive role of the Cubans.

5. Because we are actively engaged in efforts to provide selective training to indigenous elements engaged in arms interdiction, and in activities to identify, infiltrate and expose Cuban subversive actions in the area, we believe that any DOD operations in these fields should be undertaken only after they have been coordinated [3 lines not declassified]

6. This Agency welcomes increased DOD participation in operations designed to strengthen the JRG in El Salvador and to help turn the tide of rising Cuban-supported insurgency in Central America.

[name not declassified]

443. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 6, 1980

SUBJECT

Issues Requiring Presidential Decision Before January 20, 1981 (U)

The issues which either should come to the President for review or will, include:

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

3. *Lethal Military Assistance to El Salvador*. I believe the situation in El Salvador will change very rapidly during the next three months, and our ability to influence developments there will decline sharply. Unless the Reagan people clarify their position, the right will force the moderates out of the Junta and out of El Salvador, and a bloodbath will occur.² I believe the granting of lethal military assistance could precipitate this. I would have recommended going ahead if Carter had won, since the credibility of our strategy would have been enhanced. Now I am not so sure it's either necessary or a good idea. We do have an obligation to review the Salvadoran government's human rights performance, and if the government satisfies the criteria set by the President, we should make a decision (around December 15–20) to go ahead with helicopters. I doubt that the Salvadorans will satisfy the criteria, and if that is the case, I don't believe that a decision is necessary. (C)

The Salvadoran Junta has been extremely successful over the last year because it has pursued the correct political strategy of moving toward the middle and pre-empting the left by its reforms. Our feeling has long been that if the Salvadoran military pursues the correct *political* strategy, then US military assistance would not be that important or necessary. Conversely, if they did not pursue the correct political strat-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Agency File, Box 19, State: 7–12/80. Confidential. Sent for information. The memorandum was stamped: "ZB has seen." An unknown hand wrote: "11/10/80," next to the stamp.

² In telegram 7743 from San Salvador, November 5, White reported that "the landslide victory of Governor Reagan has convinced the private enterprise sector that the United States will, if not support, at least not oppose a restructuring of the ruling Junta." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 11/80) An unsigned memorandum entitled "Situation Room Checklist," November 6, included a summary of telegram 7743. Aaron underlined the last sentence: "The need for guidance from the transition team is important and urgent," and wrote "no" in the margin along with his initials. (Ibid.)

egy, no amount of US military assistance would help. Between now and January 20, the Salvadoran military frankly will not even be able to absorb the FMS materiel that we have promised them. I don't think we need to provide any more, and indeed, to give more could send the wrong signal—that we don't mind if they revert to the old repressive strategy. DOD has two missions there now to determine additional requirements, but frankly I don't think the issue of lethal military assistance need be addressed in the last three months of the Carter Administration.³ (C)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to El Salvador.]

³ In a November 12 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski described various presidential administration transition issues and included El Salvador policy in Category 1, which involved "issues in which our decisions could be affected by the views of the incoming Administration." An attached memorandum from Muskie to Carter, November 10, noted: "Conservative elements in El Salvador are using our election results as a pretext for moving against Col. Majano and the Christian Democratic members of the Junta. Such changes would diminish even further the limited appeal of the Junta in El Salvador and abroad. Unless the incoming Administration resists overtures from the far-right and signals support for the Junta, there will probably be a rightist coup before inauguration day with a consequent polarization in El Salvador and constriction of U.S. policy options." Carter wrote in the margin: "Continue to express our support for Junta." Muskie also noted in reference to the budget: "We should decide whether to supply urgently needed but controversial military equipment and possibly increase aid to the Junta to help cope with the worsening economic situation." Carter wrote in response to this and other foreign assistance proposals: "Repubs may help us." (National Archives, RG 59, Office of the Secretary, Subject Files of Edmund S. Muskie, 1963–1981, Lot 83D66, Box 2, State/NSC Relations)

444. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, November 24, 1980, 1712Z

313007. Subject: Bilateral Meeting Between the Secretary and Salvadoran Foreign Minister Chavez Mena.

1. Secret-Entire text

2. The Secretary met with Foreign Minister Chavez Mena at 5:00 pm on November 19. Also present were Ambassadors Bowdler and White.

3. The Secretary opened the conversation by asking for the Foreign Minister's assessment of the situation. He assured the FonMin that the problems of El Salvador were a matter of concern to the highest levels of the USG.

4. The FonMin responded with a tribute to the USG policy toward El Salvador. He said that his primary concern at the moment was the violence from the right and the possibility of a right wing coup. He said he needed more economic support from the US and international agencies. The economy was not doing well, he explained, because of the government's own inefficiency and because of the violence from the left and right. He added that there is a growing fear that a right wing faction in El Salvador may try to destabilize the government and reverse what has been accomplished during the transition period in the United States.² He added that the only hope for the left lies in a right wing coup.

5. The Secretary stated that he would communicate these concerns to the incoming administration. He said that he was sure that the Reagan administration would not want to shift to the right adding that they would, however, want to have the facts straight before coming to any decision.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800563-0312. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information Priority to all American Republic diplomatic posts. Drafted by White; cleared in S/S-S, S/S-O, and S/S; approved by Bowdler.

² Pastor's November 12 Evening Report to Brzezinski noted that White had reported that the "center/right and far right maneuvering" had increased and the objective of both groups was to "oust Majano." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4/80-8/80) In telegram 7992 from San Salvador, November 16, White reported: "Four of the five top leaders of the military services, often referred to as the invisible government of El Salvador, told me today that they will not permit a rightist coup and that, while they dislike and distrust Col. Majano, they will not try to drive him out of the Junta." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800549-0958)

6. The Secretary asked if the Foreign Minister would not also want the US to reassure other governments of the true intentions of the government of El Salvador.

7. The FonMin accepted the Secretary's offer with thanks adding that in order to do an efficient job in public relations the GOES has to become more efficient and conduct itself as a real government. At this point, the Minister said the government does not have total control over the military but cooperation and understanding between the civilian and military components are improving. Chavez Mena affirmed the government's intention to continue to move effectively against the leftist subversives at the same time holding out to the more moderate left the opportunity for dialogue and mediation.

8. Secretary Muskie stated that coincidentally he was meeting with the German Foreign Minister the next day and would relay the substance of the conversation to the FonMin. He also promised to explain the reality of El Salvador to the European Foreign Ministers when he meets with them next month at the NATO conference.

Muskie

445. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 26, 1980, 11:55 a.m.–12:05 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Robert Pastor, NSC Staff Member

Napoleon Duarte, Member of the Junta of Revolutionary Government (JRG) of
El Salvador

Fidel Chavez Mena, Foreign Minister of El Salvador

President Carter welcomed Duarte and Chavez Mena to the White House and said that he admired Duarte's courage and his leadership and that we supported the Government of El Salvador in its struggle to promote important changes in that country, and to resist terrorism from both right and left. The President said that he would be glad to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/1–10/80. Confidential. The meeting took place in the Oval Office of the White House.

help in any way he could, and he would personally raise the matter of El Salvador with President-Elect Reagan. If Duarte had any specific points he would like for the President to make with President-Elect Reagan, he would be glad to receive them. (C)

Duarte thanked the President for his kind offer, and said that he strongly supported and admired the President's human rights policy, and felt that the President had done important things with his policy, not only in El Salvador, but throughout Latin America. Duarte then asked if he could raise three matters with the President. First, he asked for economic aid to El Salvador, since economic conditions are increasingly desperate. (Note: Later, in a conversation with Robert Pastor, Duarte pointed out that what Salvador needs specifically are dollar deposits in their banks, or fast-disbursing aid. He said that foreign exchange is so short that it was difficult even for him to fly to the United States.) Secondly, Duarte asked whether the U.S. would be able to provide helicopters to El Salvador during this very critical period. (C)

President Carter asked Robert Pastor what the status was of our provision of helicopters. (C)

Robert Pastor said that we had discussed the provision of helicopters with the Junta some time ago, and both sides agreed to a set of conditions with regard to their human rights performance, which would permit the provision of helicopters. At an appropriate time we will assess whether such conditions were met and decide whether to go ahead with the helicopters. (C)

The President asked whether Harold Brown would be making this decision, and Pastor said that the decision would be for the President. (U)

The President asked Pastor to get in touch with the State Department and the Defense Department and expedite the decision-making process so that he would be able to review this soon.² In speaking to Duarte, President Carter said that he is not promising that he would go ahead with the helicopters, since he would want to review the

² In telegram 316092 to San Salvador, November 27, the Department noted that, following his November 26 meeting with Duarte, Carter asked the Department of State "for a recommendation by early next week as to whether the helicopters should be delivered" to El Salvador. The telegram asked for White's assessment. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmitt, Arms Transfers/Country File, Box 18, El Salvador, 4/80-12/80)

conditions and make an assessment first. But he would expedite the process.³ (C)

Duarte also asked the President whether he would be able to participate in the Central American Summit Conference in Honduras which would be a continuation of the discussions related to the Honduran-Salvadorean border dispute. He said that heads of state from the region and from neighboring democratic countries would also participate. (C)

President Carter said that he supported such an effort, but he did not think he would be able to attend the Conference. However, he would be prepared to designate someone to go. (C)

Duarte thanked the President for the opportunity to meet with him. The President said that it was his pleasure to meet with Duarte, and he wished him well. (U)

³ In telegram 8281 from San Salvador, November 27, White noted that there was "unquestionably military justification for supplying helicopters" as the military had only three functioning helicopters. White also cited "humanitarian justifications such as the supply of refugees and the evacuation of wounded" as well as an "economic justification in that the future of this country depends on gathering the harvest and the provision of helicopters would substantially increase the capability of the armed forces to provide that protection." However, he wrote, "there is no way that any objective observer could state that the government has complied with the five steps we proposed to the JRG to reduce and effectively bring under control the indiscriminate violence and excessive use of force which has characterized the role of the security forces." (For the five steps, see Tab A, Document 434) White recommended "an interim diplomatic step" to seek international support for the offer made by Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador to mediate between the JRG and its leftist opponents." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880137–1398) For information about the Bishops' conference, see telegram 7319 from San Salvador, October 22; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800512–0467.

**446. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the
Department of State¹**

San Salvador, November 30, 1980, 2057Z

8332. Dept pass Mexico City for the Secretary and Asst. Sec. Bowdler.

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Junta member Napoleon Duarte, Foreign Minister Fidel Chavez Mena, and I had a three-hour session yesterday afternoon and evening (Nov. 29). Duarte reluctantly admitted that security forces participated in the assassination of the FDR leaders.² He hoped to use our position on the helicopters to put an end to the division of authority between the Junta and the military High Command. He did not say so explicitly but I believe he will try to get the approval of the military to concentrate all the power of government in the hands of Napoleon Duarte. He hopes to achieve the punishment of a few of the civilians involved and the expulsion from the military of those who participated in the assassination of the FDR leaders but this is clearly a secondary aim. It is Duarte's strategy to increase his authority by continuing to cover up for the military's wave of killings thereby winning their gratitude and confidence.

3. Chavez Mena does not believe this plan will work. He stated that those who are guilty of the murders must be tried and punished. Otherwise the world will perceive the Christian democrats as nothing more than a facade behind which the security forces kill with impunity. He believes that the right wing civilians incorporated into the FAN (Frente Amplio Nacional, D'Aubuisson's Group), in league with a large number of the security forces, will now begin to kill left wing priests and Christian Democrats. He did not quite say that the killings were being done with the authorization of the military High Command but he clearly implied that at least some of them agreed in principle with the FAN strategy and would continue to protect the guilty. Chavez Mena is discouraged and, unusual for him, a little afraid. He clearly regards our holdup of the helicopters as unimportant unless it is backed up by sterner stuff. It is obvious that he regards Duarte's plan to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 8-11/80. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² In telegram 8301 from San Salvador, November 28, the Embassy reported the assassination of four Democratic Revolutionary Front members. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 11/80)

end the division of power between the Junta and the military High Command as illusory and a device to advance the ambitions of Duarte at the expense of the Christian Democratic Party.

4. As the conference was about to break up, Junta member Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez telephoned Chavez Mena. Chavez Mena explained to Gutierrez something of what was taking place and soon after, Duarte and Chavez Mena departed en route to the house of Gutierrez and a conference with Gutierrez.

5. The discussion with Duarte and Chavez Mena was useful and necessary but it will have one signal disadvantage. When I meet tomorrow (Monday) with the four Junta members (Majano is in the United States) and the Minister and Vice Minister of Defense plus the National Guard Commander (I hope to be able to limit the attendance to those seven), it will be like facing murderers row with no infield or outfield behind me, each participant will know exactly what I am going to say. They will already have their strategy prepared. It will take me less than five minutes with the maximum padding to present our demarche and it's thinness will be obvious. My guess is that the first response will be from the military spokesman who will tell me politely what the United States can do with its Phantom helicopters and to please stop interfering in the internal problems of El Salvador while they take care of their own problems in their own way. The underlying premise will be that on January 21 they will receive helicopters and other military assistance without having to listen to anymore moralizing.

6. Thus, I need more ammunition if our policy is to have any chance of success. Concretely, I need authorization to say that unless prompt and satisfactory action is taken (a) military assistance will be suspended and (b) the Military Training Teams will depart. In addition, I need a joint statement out of Washington of intent to carry on the broad lines of the present policy beyond January 20, specifically including a reaffirmation of the emphasis on human rights. If the last requirement is impossible to obtain, then we have one other tool available which would improve dramatically the chances of success. During the early moments of the conversation of yesterday, Duarte asked me when we could sign the agreement on the pending twenty million dollars of ESF. When I responded that I had received instructions to hold up signing the loan (telephone call from Deputy Office Director Brown to me of November 28),³ for the first time I saw Duarte and Chavez Mena lean forward, listen intently and take what I had to say seriously.

³ Record of the November 28 telephone call between Brown and White has not been found.

This government cannot last a week without our economic support and specifically cannot last without the \$20 million ESF and our lobbying in its favor with the IMF, World Bank, etc. Seven weeks may be a short time in the life of some governments but it is forever in the life of the Government of El Salvador. It is of vital importance that I have these assets in hand tomorrow when the meeting takes place.

7. In my judgment, we must use all the leverage we have to support the democratic elements of this government, military as well as civilian, and give ourselves a solid probability to make our policy work.

8. The success of our policy in El Salvador has an importance that transcends the boundaries of this country. In capsule, our policy is to assist this government to carry out basic reforms, bring the rightist violence under control. Convince the rational left that violence is unnecessary and that their best hope is to participate in the political process promised by the JRG culminating in elections by 1983 or perhaps before.

9. Over the past year, two right-wing coups have been attempted and frustrated. A third right-wing coup attempt is now under way. If the barbaric killings of the FDR leaders does not succeed in breaking up the present government, then tomorrow they will kill a high Church figure such as Msgr. Ricardo Urioste or a leading Christian Democrat such as Junta member Jose Antonio Morales Ehrlich. And the toll of the young people killed every day by the security forces will continue and increase.

10. The left can count on the support of at least 25 percent of the population. Most of these people will willingly support a reform government such as the JRG if it can put an end to the repression. Our strategy has been to put maximum pressure on the military to cease the repression and seek to establish a dialogue between the government and the leadership of the left. By killing FDR leader Enrique Alvarez, the right-wing civilians and hard line security forces have challenged that policy and have announced that extermination is the only answer.

11. I think it is still possible to frustrate this third rightist coup attempt but we cannot succeed unless Washington adopts measures that have sufficient bite to make them felt. What is at stake in El Salvador is the nature of the government which we are supporting. It will either be a government of moderates, or a government in which the extreme right acts with impunity behind a moderate facade, or one run openly by the extreme right. At this moment the second possibility appears both most likely, and most dangerous for our policy. We could well find ourselves in the position of championing a regime which talks like a democracy and acts like Bolivia. We have a clear chance now to avoid some even more painful choices later, and I believe we must use all our resources to influence the choices that will be made here in the next few days. At a minimum we must achieve the expulsion

from the armed forces of the middle-level officers who are responsible for the killings and a rededication of the officer corps to professionalism and a code of conduct. I believe the Christian Democrats, the Church, and moderate elements in the military would rally behind such changes.⁴

White

⁴ In telegram 317787 to San Salvador, November 29, the Department instructed White that, due to the assassination of the FDR leaders, the Department would withhold further action on the helicopters “until we can more fully assess the implications” of the killings. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 21, El Salvador: 11/80) In his December 1 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor noted that White “asked us to concur in his strategy of telling the Junta and High Command that we will cut military and economic assistance if they do not punish the security forces, which he believes were responsible for the deaths of the leftist leaders. Bushnell and I agreed that we would not further our interests by empty threats, and suggested that he merely tell them that we are reviewing our entire relationship, and explore their views about what they intend to do.” Pastor also noted: “Duarte is clearly trying to use this incident to further centralize control, and Bushnell and I think we ought to back him, but White disagrees, preferring the alternative of an outright confrontation, even if its effect is to further polarize the situation.” Pastor recommended that a PRC or SCC address the issue. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 55, Evening Reports: 4/80–8/80)

447. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 4, 1980

SUBJECT

El Salvador at the Foreign Policy Breakfast—December 5, 1980 (C)

First, let me suggest that the many and complex issues which relate to El Salvador would best be addressed at an SCC, where those of us who have been following developments there closely can ensure that

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Subject Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/1–10/80. Secret. Sent for information. The memorandum was stamped: “ZB has seen.” An unknown hand wrote “12/05/80” next to the stamped notation.

decisions are not made on erroneous information. For example, in a cable on November 30, Ambassador White said that Duarte “reluctantly admitted that security forces participated in the assassination of FDR leaders.”² Based on this cable, our Ambassador to Mexico City made a statement to the press that he believes the killings were done at the direct order of the Junta. It turns out that after serious questioning by the State Department, White admitted that Duarte had not said what he reported, but rather just acquiesced in White’s assertion that security forces were involved. That is an important datum. (S)

Nonetheless, expecting that you will discuss the issues at the breakfast, let me summarize. The central issues for U.S. policy to El Salvador at this time are who should we support, what do we want to gain from the military high command, and what are we prepared to give? The right-wing, with the acquiescence of the high command, is trying to squeeze out what remains of the middle (the Christian Democrats, Majano) and exterminate the left. They are encouraged by Reagan’s election and believe that even though Reagan might not like the killings, he will still support them. The right have already been able to put a stop to the land reform; the Junta has been unable to give title to the farmers, and the farmers and their organization may soon leap to the left. This doesn’t bother the right who feel that they can win by a military solution like they did in 1932. I think they’re wrong—morally and practically. (S)

The Christian Democrats (PDC) are pressing the military to punish the perpetrators of the Thanksgiving assassinations. Bob White’s current strategy is to suspend all assistance until we see a desirable outcome emerge from this debate.³ I would recommend that we not only allow the PDC to use our implicit “stick,” but that we also give them some new “carrots” to use with the military.

I would recommend we tell the PDC that if they can get three items from the military, then they can assure the military of an immediate delivery of helicopters, a start-up of economic and military aid, and the signing of FY 81 FMS agreement. What do we want? Three items: (1) arrest and punishment of all the officers involved in the

² See Document 446.

³ Under a December 4 note, Denend sent Pastor a portion of Muskie’s December 3 Evening Report for Pastor’s information. The report noted that White had met with the JRG and officials at the Ministry of Defense to inform them that the United States was reviewing policy toward El Salvador “as a result of the killing of the leftist leaders.” In addition, the United States was “holding up on new assistance to the JRG (signing the pending \$20 million ESF and \$5 million FMS agreements, proceeding with PL 480 and CCC credits and expediting a decision on the helicopters).” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 12/1–10/80)

killings, including Major D'Aubisson; (2) the sending of Caranza, Moran, or one of the other of the High Command identified with the repression abroad as an Ambassador or whatever, and (3) the implementation of the agrarian reform (phases I and III) by giving title to the farmers. These three steps are in the interest of the Junta; with them, the Junta could prevail. In addition, we need to get Reagan to make a statement which makes just two points: he favors the long-needed reforms in the area, and he opposes right-wing as well as left-wing terrorism. If he could also say something positive about the Christian Democrats and their importance to the Junta, that's gravy, but doubtful. At this moment, the opposite is happening: an ex-CIA agent who has been writing for the Heritage Foundation on how bad we have been is in El Salvador, ostensibly delivering a message from Reagan that his policy to El Salvador has not yet been formulated (a powerful message in itself).

*An SCC is essential, but I would also try to strengthen the PDC's hand as soon as possible.*⁴

⁴ In telegram 8480 from San Salvador, December 4, the Embassy reported that three U.S. citizen nuns and one U.S. citizen lay missionary had been murdered. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800580–0282) In a December 5 statement to the press, Department Spokesman Carter noted the killings and stated that “pending clarification of the circumstances of the killings we are putting a hold on all economic and military assistance commitments.” (Telegram 322499 to San Salvador, December 6; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800581–0874; also see Juan de Onis, “U.S. Suspends New Aid to Salvador Till American Deaths are Clarified,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1980, p. 1) In a December 5 memorandum for the record, Brzezinski recorded the decisions taken at the December 5 foreign policy breakfast meeting attended by Carter, Mondale, Brown, Christopher, Watson, Powell, and himself. He noted: “El Salvador: Hold on aid flow and withdraw MTT; send emissary to assess situation immediately; announce foregoing and denounce killings of U.S. missionaries.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 93, Foreign Affairs Breakfast, 1977–1981) No other substantive record of the meeting has been found. In a December 5 memorandum to Brzezinski and Aaron, Pastor noted that Bowdler and Rogers were going to El Salvador “on a mission which will be wide open to misinterpretation.” He commented: “I pray that the public announcement will not inadvertently precipitate that which we are trying to avoid—the break-up of the Junta.” (Carter Library, Vertical File, El Salvador)

448. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 11, 1980

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on El Salvador, December 11, 1980–3:00 p.m. (U)

The two purposes of the Bowdler/Rogers mission were: (1) to make sure that the Salvadoran Government (JRG) would conduct a genuine and serious investigation of the assassination of the American Sisters, and (2) to lend our full support to those Christian Democrats and military in the government determined to gain control of the security forces and reduce right-wing terrorism. The purpose of the SCC is to review their report, and to decide whether and when we should continue our aid to the government. In a cable, Bowdler posed the question for the SCC very well: “. . . how to use our influence to help induce the necessary changes (in the Junta and in the military high command) without forcing either a collapse of the ruling coalition or otherwise accelerating the process of deterioration.” The agenda is at Tab A.² Bill's cable is at Tab B; it remains the best analysis of the status of the negotiations.³ (S)

We are at a delicate moment. Our announcement to suspend aid has shaken our friends in the country and the democratic supporters of the JRG abroad. Of course, that in part was our intention, but the longer we wait to restore aid, the more we risk that we could destroy the ruling coalition, and certainly the economy. I therefore believe that the SCC should conclude with a recommendation to restore economic aid, but to defer military aid until the satisfactory resolution of the political negotiations between the Christian Democrats (PDC) and the military. (S)

I. *The Bowdler/Rogers Report.* You should ask Rogers to summarize the report. It concludes that the JRG intends a genuine and serious investigation of the death of the Nuns, but in order to ensure that this occurs, we will need to monitor it closely and provide support,

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 33, Meetings—SCC 354, 12/11/80. Secret. Sent for information. The memorandum was stamped: “ZB has seen.”

² Tab A, an agenda for the SCC meeting on December 11, is attached but not printed.

³ Tab B, telegram 7720 from Tegucigalpa, December 10, was not attached. It is in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890005–2184.

particularly from the FBI. That is why Webster has been invited. We will have a difficult time convincing the Catholic Church that the JRG's investigation is sincere, and you should ask Bill Rogers what additional steps we should take to convince them (and us). (S)

II. *Political/Military Crisis*. You should ask Bowdler for an update on the status of political negotiations, and you should also ask him for a description of our minimal conditions for restoring aid. These should relate to our *four objectives*:

(1) To reduce the right-wing violence; to gain greater control of the security forces; and to avoid the perception that the JRG has shifted sharply to the right. (S)

(2) To assist the JRG in its struggle against the leftist guerrillas. (S)

(3) To assist the JRG to implement the reforms (in particular, to give Titles to the peasants) and to restore the economy. (S)

(4) To reiterate the JRG's willingness to dialogue with the moderate political left. (S)

These are our general objectives. More specifically, we need a dramatic and tangible restructuring of the military high command, including the dismissal of several of the leaders of the security forces (e.g., Carranza or Moran) who are most clearly associated with the repressive right. This needs to be done to end the para-military violence, to gain international support, to cover our domestic flanks, and to deprive the Salvadorean left of new strength. This is particularly important in light of the dismissal of Majano. Second, we need them to follow through on their promise to investigate, arrest and punish those in the security forces and in right-wing groups who participated in the killings. Third, we need them to give title to the campesinos. The AFL-CIO which has been working on the land reform, tell me that unless titles are given soon, the peasant organizations and their leadership will defect to the left. In my opinion, these should be our minimal conditions, but Bowdler should comment. (S)

III. *U.S. Policy*. I believe their report gives us sufficient reason to announce that we intend to restore *economic aid*, and we should do that after the Christian Democrats give us the green light. Let them use it to maximum effect. With regard to the *security aid*, I think we should let the *pipeline* continue to flow, but we should hold up on signing the *FY 81 agreement* until the negotiations are satisfactorily concluded and there is better reason to believe the investigation will have results. *Helicopters* should only be given if all of our conditions are met. I think it will be a terrible mistake to send *MTTs* to El Salvador at this time or any time in the near future; they will give us many more problems than they can possibly help the Salvadorans. We should continue and perhaps expand our training in Panama instead of *MTTs*. I understand

that DOD does not believe that we need *lethal military equipment* at this time, but you may want to check that. (S)

IV. *Consultations.* We made a serious mistake to unilaterally announce last week's decisions without consulting anyone in the U.S., in the Junta or abroad. We should take special care to try to consult this time so as to multiply the impact of our decisions and to reduce possible criticism. We need also to brief Congress. (S)

V. *Statement.* After seeing the report, I will draft a suggested public statement which you may want to use at the meeting. I will have that ready before the meeting. (U)

I have just received two additional documents:

—The draft report of Bowdler/Rogers (Tab C),⁴ which describes in great detail their investigation into the murders of the American Sisters. You may want to skim the summary and recommendations (pages 11–20). Only State has seen this draft; the final report awaits Bowdler's examination when he returns later this morning. (S)

—A background paper prepared by the State Department (Tab D)⁵ is quite startling in its explicit indictment of the security forces for "much and perhaps the majority of the violence." I understand that this paper is the product of an all-night battle between ARA and HA and a determination by S/S was made to get a paper out. Even the Rogers report only refers to "circumstantial evidence" of security forces' involvement; I cannot understand how the State Department could indict and convict based on the same evidence. But the thrust of the paper is that the security forces are the main problem, and I understand Bowdler agrees with that totally. I also think there is a good [deal?] of truth to that statement. (S)

⁴ Tab C was not attached. The full report entitled "Report to the President of Special Mission to El Salvador" is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 12/13–19/80. In telegram 8561 from San Salvador, December 8, Rodgers and Bowdler sent an initial report about their activities in El Salvador. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880136–1869) Carter wrote on another copy of the telegram: "Zbig—Hold SCC—Advise me," and signed his initial. Denend wrote below: "12/9 Scheduled for Thursday 9:30." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80–1/81)

⁵ Tab D was not attached. The undated "El Salvador: Background Paper" is in the Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCC–354, El Salvador, 12/11/80.

449. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 11, 1980, 3–3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

El Salvador (U)

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher

Ambassador William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
William Rogers, Special Presidential Mission to El Salvador

OSD

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

Frank Kramer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security
Affairs

JCS

Lt General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director

Jack Davis, NIO for Latin America

FBI

Edward J. O'Malley, Assistant Director, Intelligence Division

IDCA

Thomas Ehrlich, Director

Ed Coy, Assistant Administrator Acting, Bureau for Latin America and the
Caribbean, AID

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Robert Pastor

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to El Salvador

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by asking the two emissaries to report on their mission to El Salvador, and on their conclusions and recommendations. He said that the group should also consider how

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 33, Meetings—SCC 354, 12/11/80. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Pastor sent the minutes to Brzezinski under a December 21 memorandum requesting that he approve the minutes for record purposes. Brzezinski approved on December 23. Pastor also noted that White had not yet met with Duarte, regardless of the SCC's decision. Pastor added: "Of course, his instructions have changed dramatically since then, and Duarte has been out of the country during most of this period." (Carter Library, Vertical File, El Salvador)

we can make clear—for the public, the country, and the region—what our objectives are. (S)

Rogers said that in their inquiry into the murders of the three nuns and the lay worker,² they of course were not able to identify the guilty parties, but they did do a survey, and found that there was circumstantial evidence of possible low-level involvement by the security forces; no evidence of high-level involvement. More important, the government agreed to establish an Investigating Commission composed of one civilian and three military people, and that they gave positive assurances that they would pursue the case to the satisfaction of the United States and the Church, the two aggrieved parties. *Rogers* said that he had urged them to accept the seconding of outside experts, and that they agreed to that, and that an FBI agent is there now. There is also a good possibility of others—perhaps one or two representatives from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, who will be allowed to observe and monitor the investigation. We have no illusions about what will happen, but to the extent that the FBI agents and the Inter-American Commission observers can watch over the investigation, we are more assured that it will be a genuine and a serious one. (S)

In answer to a question from Dr. Brzezinski as to whether the killings were political or done just by thugs, *Rogers* said that they were political to the extent that Catholic workers had become targets of considerable hostility by right-wing and security forces. This is manifest in the threats which many church groups are getting in El Salvador. Secondly, the Sisters had just returned from Managua, not a popular place among the security forces. Finally, they had arrived on the eve of the funeral of the Revolutionary Front leaders. (S)

With respect to the capacity of the Junta to control security forces and to implement reforms, *Rogers* said there is a real possibility of changes in the executive structure, with Duarte being appointed President of the Junta. In answer to a question from Dr. Brzezinski about when the changes will occur, *Ambassador Bowdler* provided a full briefing about the current situation in El Salvador. The Junta is currently experiencing a serious crisis of confidence, which is characterized by decomposition of authority. This is because the Junta is not functioning well and because the level of violence is high, with an appreciable input from the security forces. In addition, the economy is doing very poorly. The assassination of the six leaders of the Revolutionary Front and the four Sisters are merely symptoms of this basic problem. However, these two events have brought the crisis to a head for the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). The Christian Democrats have decided to

² See footnote 4, Document 447.

provoke a showdown with the military because they find it difficult to be able to continue in the government unless there are important changes. There are two issues: the restructuring of the Junta to give greater effectiveness and efficiency to the government, and secondly, changes in the high command, which will permit reorientation of the military in its strategy to fight the far left. The latter means that the military would not indulge in indiscriminate killings. (S)

Bowdler said that the negotiations are continuing. There is no dispute on the need to change the Junta. When *Bowdler* left, there was pretty much agreement that *Duarte* should be the President, and whether there will be three leaders or one remains to be decided. The Junta change could occur by December 15, or it could occur as early as today or tomorrow. Everyone agrees that it will be done. (S)

Bowdler continued by saying that the other half of the problem is the High Command. The PDC senses that the basic problem is the Minister of Defense and his Deputy, and they are trying to negotiate their departure. They believe that by putting *Gutierrez* as Minister of Defense, that would change things. When *Bowdler* spoke to *Gutierrez* two nights ago, the latter said that he was working on this issue with the High Command, but to be successful, *Gutierrez* believes that he needs the cooperation of *Garcia* and *Vides Casanova*. The Embassy has said that the PDC is still holding firm to its position. If these changes occur, we could look to a definite change about the way that they will deal with the far left. However, *Bowdler* assesses that there is a less than 50–50 chance that *Garcia* will be moved to another post. On this point, *Carlucci* agreed. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether *Bowdler* was assuming that we would be weighing in heavily when he made this assessment. (U)

Bowdler said that the Christian Democrats have skillfully gotten *Gutierrez* to see all six Presidents in Tegucigalpa, and have gotten these Presidents to weigh in very hard with *Gutierrez* on the importance of these changes. He thinks that this will be important in getting the PDC's demands listened to, and it will also reinforce *Gutierrez*' back-bone. *Bowdler* thinks that we ought to let the negotiations play out. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we shouldn't let it be known that if the outcome of the negotiations is good, we will proceed whole-hog in support of it. (S)

Bowdler said that the PDC assumes that to be the case. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should let it be known. Otherwise, some will think our aid is "on-hold", while others think it is cut off. (S)

Bowdler said that the PDC told him that our decision to place aid "on-hold" was helpful to them in the negotiations. They believe they have only two chips to play: a negative chip if they decide to leave

the Junta, and a positive chip of U.S. and Venezuelan support. Bowdler said that he would hesitate to say anything that would lessen their leverage. (S)

Claytor said that you could double their leverage if you give them something more. (C)

Christopher said that that is often the U.S. mentality—try to increase their leverage by conditioning aid, but the PDC may see things differently. (S)

Pastor said that the PDC could not possibly know what the U.S. would be prepared to give if the negotiations turn out to their satisfaction, since the U.S. doesn't even know yet. What we need to be able to tell them with some precision is what they can expect and what our specific concerns are. They cannot know what we will be prepared to deliver, and they certainly don't know what concerns are going to permit us to go ahead, and which concerns will inhibit us from going ahead. In the past, our vagueness has left us room to walk away from our promises, and there is a strong feeling among the Christian Democrats that we have not really fulfilled our promises. Duarte raised the point of the helicopters specifically with the President for that reason. (S)

Bowdler asked whether we might not want to hold ourselves back if the situation shifts dramatically to the right, and the Christian Democrats decided to leave. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that at that point we need to determine what is in our national interest. (C)

Bowdler said that we might have to back away at that point. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that is all the more reason why we should go ahead and give the Christian Democrats maximum leverage now, and we can do this by making our intentions very clear. If we want to save the situation, we ought to do that. (S)

David Aaron said that this is a problem of which we are only one part. Garcia has got to think that if they drag their feet, they'll get a better deal with the Reagan administration. That's why we ought to say that we'll back them. But there is another reason why we should spell out what we would like. It would be used as a yardstick by which to judge the actions of the new administration as well as their concerns. If our concerns are reasonable, it will be an enduring yardstick, and if we're not clear, then we'll lend ourselves to charges that we laid back, for ideological reasons, and let the situation go downhill. (S)

Carlucci said that we need to be clear on what we want. The dismissal of Garcia is too much at this time. Caranza and Moran are much more likely. (S)

David Aaron said that we ought to try to get something which is symbolic, and shows that the situation has not gone to the Right. It

appeared that even Duarte and Gutierrez were ambivalent about trying to take on Garcia. (S)

Bowdler said he doesn't think that we ought to get into details. (U)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we ought to try to agree on a formula that says to the PDC that if you achieve your objectives, then we are prepared to do the following. (S)

Rogers said that we are not really very far from that. The big issue is economic aid—the loan in the Inter-American Development Bank, \$20 million in ESF, PL-480. We didn't really address that issue in our discussions. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said we ought to also look into military aid. (S)

Carlucci said that we cannot really dissociate military from economic aid. For example, if our purpose is to help restore the economy, we will need military aid to protect the harvest. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we could define a framework that says more formally what we expect from the PDC and what we're prepared to give. We would say that we are prepared to provide substantial assistance, if they meet their objectives, and we let them know the specifics. (S)

Bowdler asked what would we do if there were no changes in the High Command. (S)

Pastor said that is precisely the reason why we need to be specific about our concerns. We should not leave them in any doubt, and we should not leave them in any doubt about what we are prepared to do. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that certainly we would prefer that they could do more, but if they cannot do more, then we will still be prepared to go along. (S)

Christopher said that we ought to say that if the PDC accomplishes its purposes, then we are prepared to go out in full support. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed with that. If the PDC is satisfied, then we're satisfied. We will restore economic aid and give all of the military aid. (S)

Christopher ticked off the economic items—the IDB loan, the \$20 million ESF, the PL-480. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should not cut any particular item. We should go ahead with all of it to get maximum political impact. (S)

In response to a question from *Christopher* about what additional economic aid we could be talking about, *Ehrlich* said that they are planning an additional \$28 million of development assistance for FY 82. (S)

With respect to military aid, *Christopher* said that with regard to the pipeline, the trucks have not been stopped. There is an FY 81

agreement of \$5.7 million which he would be prepared to go ahead with. He asked what the MTT's would be doing. (S)

Bowdler said that the MTT for the helicopters is the most urgent. (S)

Kramer said that the MTT for the helicopters would go in in January, and the helicopters would go in in February. *Pustay* said that it would take 90–100 days to train the crews, although the training has already started in Fort Rucker. (S)

Christopher asked about the lethal military equipment, and about whether there was any need for it. (S)

Pustay said that there are some M–79 grenade launchers. *Christopher* asked whether there was any money for it. *Kramer* said that it could be knocked out.” Dr. Brzezinski said, “Then let’s knock that out.” (S)

Pustay said that the MTT’s will need to work in the brigade headquarters, in order to indoctrinate the troops operating in the field on counterinsurgency and PSYOPS. There are 12 men in each team, and 3 teams. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he is prepared to go with that. (U)

Rogers said that it is a question of how long order is going to be maintained in that society. We need to adopt a program for persuading them to adopt a different tactic. (S)

Bowdler said that this is why the change in High Command is so important; if you get some new Commanders, then you will get different behavior. (S)

Carlucci said that there are also some programs that needed to be supported in the intelligence field. *Kramer* said that we also need to do more in border control. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized that we should prepare a recommendation to the President, which has instructions for White to deliver a message to Duarte that if the PDC reaches a political arrangement with the military, which satisfies them as permitting a basis for political stability, and if they informally reached these minimal requirements, then the U.S. will resume aid—to wit, economic and security assistance along the lines we have just mentioned.³ (S)

Christopher said that a nuance needs to be brought into that. The PDC has a very good program, and we should say to them that if their program succeeds, and they reach their objectives, we will support that. (S)

³ In telegram Tosec 10027/329627 to San Salvador, December 13, the Department instructed White to inform Duarte that “if he and his Christian Democratic colleagues reach agreement with the military leadership along the lines of the PDC program,” economic and military assistance would resume. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80–1/81)

Pastor suggested that we need to be honest with our own concerns, and specific as well. Should we really rely totally on whether the Christian Democrats are satisfied by the outcome? (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we needed to support the Christian Democrats. He asked about consultations with the Venezuelans. *Bowdler* said that he could go there anytime this weekend. Ambassador White should go in simultaneously. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked about our public posture. (C)

David Aaron said that we really need to get out a good statement both to make clear what we are trying to do here, and also to explain what we are trying to do down there. We should say that the Presidential Mission has returned and consulted with the President. They have found that all of the principal elements in El Salvador want to restrain right-wing terrorism and make the government more effective, and implement the land reform by transferring titles, etc. All support that, and we are prepared, if progress is made in these areas, to also support it. He suggested that the public statement not be as specific as our private demarche. (S)

Carlucci pointed out that we should also address the investigation *per se*, and *Aaron* agreed with that. *Christopher* said that the statement should start by referring to the investigation, and also mention that we are supplying technical assistance, and that observers from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights might also be participating. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we had basically reached agreement on the formula. He asked again from *Bowdler* whether he understood that it only stood a less than 30–50 chance of success. *Bowdler* said that he was only referring to the ouster of Garcia. (S)

Christopher emphasized that the second half of the statement should make clear that we are not talking about a US formula, but objectives of the Salvadorans themselves. (S)

Rogers asked what the purpose is of making such a statement. *Dr. Brzezinski* suggested that we should, of course, wait a day or two. (S)

David Aaron said that there are two reasons why we need to get such a statement out. Even in the Catholic community, they don't understand our position. A little certainty would reduce this misunderstanding. Secondly, it is important for us to establish some framework for resuming the assistance, both for the PDC and also to show that the US Government is serious about some standards. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said, however, that the statement should not be so rigid. (S)

Pustay asked about the MTTs, and *Dr. Brzezinski* asked whether more than 36 people would be needed. *Christopher* pointed out that

we should be careful about the size of the US military presence. *Pustay* said that perhaps an additional five people would be useful. *Christopher* said that he would be influenced by how well the Salvadoran military did; e.g., if they got rid of Caranza, he would be more enthusiastic about going with more military aid. (S)

Claytor said that we should do more, because they need more. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that 50 men should be the ceiling. (S)

Bowdler said that we deceive ourselves if we think that we will save the situation by putting these MTTs in. If we do, and they continue their same tactics, we will find ourselves in a position of receiving the blame for what they're doing. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that is a good warning. He summarized by saying that all of this is premised on what the PDC will accomplish.⁴ (S)

Claytor said that the helicopters would not be able to arrive before February, and we could therefore always pull that item off if necessary. *Christopher* said if 50 men all went in at one time, there would be some who would suggest that this is like an invasion. *Claytor* said that the biggest risk is sending none in. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that the argument is a quibble. We will put in 50 men, but sequentially and incrementally. *Christopher* agreed with that.⁵ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski ended by saying that the President had expressed an interest in meeting with the two emissaries (and Rogers, Bowdler, Christopher, Brzezinski and Pastor then met with him).⁶ *Christopher* said that the statement would be issued at noon at the State Department the next day.⁷ (S)

⁴ The summary of conclusions of the December 11 SCC meeting noted: "The SCC agreed that we should give our full support to the Christian Democrats in their negotiations with the armed forces. This means that if their objectives—in restructuring the government, changing the high command, implementing the reforms, and opening a dialogue with the Democratic left—are satisfactorily met, then we would be prepared to restore economic and military assistance." (Carter Library, Vertical File, El Salvador) Brzezinski sent the summary to Carter under a December 12 memorandum requesting that Carter approved the summary. Carter approved the summary on December 12. (Ibid.)

⁵ In a December 12 memorandum to Turner, Davis provided a summary of the SCC meeting on December 11. Davis noted that Christopher "seemed very uncomfortable with the plans for augmented security assistance, unless conditioned on substantial evidence of a shift in military policy." Davis also noted that the CIA had shared doubts with Carter "that the Salvadoran military can be brought under effective civilian control any time soon, or that they will substantially alter their indiscriminate tactics in confronting the left." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 18: (SCC) El Salvador)

⁶ For Bowdler and Rogers's meeting with Carter about their mission to El Salvador, see Document 450.

⁷ In telegram Tosec 100022/329484 to San Salvador, December 12, the Department included the press statement, which was reported in the *New York Times* on December 13. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800592-0813; Juan de Onis, "U.S. Lists Conditions for Resuming Aid to El Salvador: Reagan Advisers Criticized," *New York Times*, December 13, 1980, p. 28)

450. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 11, 1980, 4–4:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with the Special Presidential Mission to El Salvador and US Policy to El Salvador (C)

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Acting Secretary of State Warren Christopher
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador William Bowdler, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
William D. Rogers, Former Under Secretary of State and Co-Leader of the Special Presidential Mission to El Salvador
Robert Pastor, NSC Staff Member

The President asked about the situation in El Salvador. (C)

Mr. Rogers said that the situation in San Salvador is quite dangerous. One can hear bombs and weapons-fire during the night and day. (S)

The President asked *Mr. Pastor* if it were true that 9,000 people had died in violence there during the past year, and *Pastor* confirmed that there was such a report, but it was difficult to assess the accuracy of the number.² (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said the SCC had just met to discuss US policy to El Salvador, but rather than get into the specific issues, the SCC will report to the President tomorrow with a memorandum and with specific recommendations.³ However, *Dr. Brzezinski* thought that the President might want to hear directly from *Rogers* and *Bowdler* on their mission. (S)

The President opened by saying that he wanted to thank them both and especially to *Mr. Rogers* for giving up his time to such an important mission. He felt that the mission offered a stabilizing force to the situation down there, and he was confident that the leaders in El Salvador appreciated the mission for that purpose. He asked whether the FBI agents had already been sent to El Salvador to assist in the investigation. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCC-354, El Salvador, 12/11/80. Secret. The meeting took place in the Oval Office.

² In his telegram 7720 from Tegucigalpa, December 10, *Bowdler* presented this figure. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P890005–2184)

³ See Document 449.

Acting Secretary Christopher said that the FBI people have experience and capabilities, which Salvadoran officials clearly do not have, and would assist the investigation. (S)

Mr. Rogers then summarized their mission. He said that he and Ambassador Bowdler had met with the leaders of the Junta, the High Command, and members of the Church and others, and they urged the leadership to begin a full-scale investigation. At that time, the vehicle that the nuns had used had been burned but was still on the road; the police had not taken the vehicle in yet. (S)

The President said the vehicle was probably pawed over. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that the FBI can definitely help. The Investigating Commission in El Salvador assured them that they would leave no stone unturned in their investigations there. (S)

The President asked whether *Mr. Rogers* thought that would be the case. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that we do not have any illusions. There is strong circumstantial evidence of possible involvement by some security forces. There was a patrol outside the airport, and the situation was very tense on that night that the Americans returned. There was a funeral the next morning for the Revolutionary Front leaders who had been assassinated. Two planes had come in from Managua, the second one carrying the American Sisters. Managua is hardly a popular place among the National Guard. The Canadians who were the last ones to see the American Sisters, had their vehicle stopped by the local militia. Finally, the commander of the local militia hastily arranged the burial of the three American Sisters and the lay worker in the mountains, and got the Justice of the Peace to supervise and officiate at the burial by the Civil Guard. At this point *Mr. Rogers* showed the President a map indicating where the bodies were buried. Of more concern was the fact that the Justice of the Peace informed the mission that he had been instructed during the last six months to cooperate with the local militia in supervising and officiating at mass burials, which occurred as often as two and three times a week. (S)

The President asked again whether the Justice of the Peace had been told to do that by the Guardia Civil. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that was the case, and the Justice of the Peace is currently in protective custody by the army, and it is possible he knows the security forces who are involved in the burial. (S)

The President asked whether they would take into custody those who would be found guilty of the crime. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that the government Investigating Commission is currently going to each of the security forces in the area and trying to find out what they were doing at the time. The purpose, of course, was to identify who these security forces were. (S)

The President asked about the attitude of higher officials with regard to this crime and to the violence. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that they had met with the Junta and with the top Command, and all expressed profound sorrow with what had occurred, and assured the mission that they would give the US and the Church—the two aggrieved parties—satisfaction, and that they would follow the investigation to its end, whatever that might be. (S)

The President asked for the mission's assessment of whether in fact this will be the case. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that it is just as well that we have our technicians monitoring the progress of the investigation. It is only that which leads him to expect that the investigation will be a serious and a genuine one. (S)

Acting Secretary Christopher also pointed out that there is a good possibility that one or two members of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission may be invited to monitor the investigation. (S)

The President asked whether the same sort of bloodshed is continuing. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that it was. (S)

The President asked whether Duarte will do anything, and *Mr. Rogers* said that he is the best shot. *Mr. Rogers* tends to be pessimistic. Right now, the government had no instrument of public policy except murder. The prisons are empty, and there is a conspiracy of silence by the security forces not to tell who may have been involved, since perhaps many may be involved. (S)

In response to the President's question about what Gutierrez was like, *Ambassador Bowdler* said that he is a good professional soldier, an engineer, with good instincts. If Gutierrez could really get control of the armed forces, this would be a positive step. Recently, Gutierrez received an overwhelming vote of confidence by the armed forces, but he still depends to a great extent on Minister of Defense Garica and on the National Guard. If Gutierrez could make changes in the High Command, then we could begin to expect changes in the behavior of the security forces. If not, Duarte cannot affect the situation down there. In response to the President's question about the nature of the relationship between Gutierrez and Duarte, *Ambassador Bowdler* said there is no political tie, but there are bonds of respect and confidence both in themselves and each other. (S)

In response to the President's question about whether there is a structure in place to implement decisions, *Ambassador Bowdler* said that the military is composed of approximately 400 officers, which are a tightly knit body which periodically meets to discuss problems and to decide on a strategy. This is a small country, and such a group plays

a very critical role. If Gutierrez were to become Commander in Chief and also Minister of Defense, Ambassador Bowdler said that he feels reasonably confident that we can bring about the kinds of changes necessary to reduce the violence. (S)

The President asked whether Ambassador Bowdler would ascribe most of the bloodshed to the military, and *Ambassador Bowdler* said a high percentage of the killing was being done by the security forces. But it is necessary to make distinctions between the armed forces with 12,000 men, the National Guard with 2,000 men, the National Police with 2,000 men, and the Treasury Police, which in many ways is the most brutal of all. With respect to a question from the President, about whether Moran of the Treasury Police reports to the High Command, the answer was that he does. (S)

In response to another question from the President about whether all of these people would be reporting to Gutierrez, if he became Commander in Chief in fact, *Ambassador Bowdler* said they would. (S)

The President asked whether we should reconsider going ahead with our aid, and *Ambassador Bowdler* said he thinks we should support Duarte and the Christian Democrats, and the President agreed with that. (S)

How successful the Christian Democrats are in changing the military High Command is difficult to know at this time. The changes in the Junta are more likely and easier. (S)

The President asked, if Duarte were appointed President, what role the Junta would play. *Ambassador Bowdler* explained that the Junta would probably disappear, and there would be a Council of State of three members. (S)

In response to a question from the President about how well Ambassador White is doing, *Ambassador Bowdler* said that it is a difficult question. In some respects, he is doing very well. In others, for example, with the press and public statements, he has alienated some of the Christian Democratic leaders. In response to a question from the President about whether he is stable or highly excitable, Ambassador Bowdler said that there is a very difficult ambience in El Salvador at this time. The violence and the threats are very real. But on balance, Ambassador Bowdler said that White had picked up and taken charge of the Embassy and had given it new direction and has heightened their morale. The only real criticism is in some of the public postures that he takes. (S)

The President asked Acting Secretary Christopher to tell White to restrict any further statements. (S)

Acting Secretary Christopher said that he would do it *again*. (S)

The President said that perhaps the way to get the message across to Ambassador White would be to say the President is very proud of

what he is doing, but that it might be better to restrict some of these statements. (S)

Mr. Rogers said that White used to work for him, and he always had a capacity for self-righteousness, which could explode at different points in time. (S)

The President asked whether such a request could conceivably be counter-productive, but said that it should be made. However, in doing it, you should stress that we are very much aware and admire what he is doing there, but to encourage everyone to refrain from public comments. (S)

Ambassador Bowdler said that he spoke to White today and made such a suggestion. (S)

Acting Secretary Christopher made clear that we all felt that he was doing a courageous job. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski pointed out that he would likely be replaced by the new Administration and obviously this has affected him. (S)

Acting Secretary Christopher said that was one of the problems. He said that tomorrow we would forward to the President recommendations on what we should do on foreign aid.⁴ (S)

⁴ Not further identified.

451. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 15, 1980

At the meeting with Muskie this morning,² we discussed the presentation which Ambassador White would make to Duarte later today or tomorrow and the upcoming UN vote to condemn El Salvador for human rights violations—a resolution which calls for ending all military assistance to El Salvador. It is a Cuban-sponsored resolution with

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80–1/81. Confidential. A stamped notation reads: "DA has seen." Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "Talked to P, will abstain, ZB."

² For more information about the December 15 meeting, see Document 452.

clear propaganda objectives but made relevant by the outrage committed against the nuns.) (C)

On the first point, it was agreed, as per the SCC,³ that Bob would announce the resumption of economic assistance. As a practical matter, this will come in several steps so we can maintain some control over it anyway. On the military side, Ambassador White has argued strongly that to simply announce a resumption of military assistance and signing of the FMS Credit would undercut Duarte and give him no leverage with the military elements in the junta to fulfill their promises. The key point here is that the outcome of the negotiations between the Christian Democrats and the military is much more ambiguous than we had assumed it might be. As a result, we do not know whether the military will, in fact, meet the terms we established for the resumption of military assistance—namely, transferring some of the security forces out of the country and pursuing diligently the investigation of the murder of the nuns. (These are not just our demands—they are also the terms which the Christian Democrats sought as well. Nonetheless, the actions to implement this agreement in principle will not come for several days or even weeks.) (C)

As a result, it was concluded that Bob White would make clear our readiness to go forward with the military assistance programs as agreed by the SCC, but we will be looking for implementation of the agreement before our own implementation of this policy. (C)

Muskie feels strongly that, as our first official act following the murder of the nuns, we cannot vote against a resolution condemning the violence in El Salvador. He therefore has come out in favor of abstention with an explanation that we are keeping an open mind on the future of this new government. I argued strongly that this would send the wrong signal to the new government and undercut Duarte, but he was unmoved. (C)

If you feel this is a mistake as I do, you may wish to call him directly. (U)

³ See Document 449.

452. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 15, 1980

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy to El Salvador (C)

Muskie's decision to hold a rump meeting without DOD today in order to change the SCC guidance has set us backwards for at least a day. On Saturday, the Government of El Salvador was significantly restructured, and reaffirmed its commitment to the reforms.² Moreover, the Armed Forces agreed to act "within a framework of legality and justice to investigate, to fine, and to punish all of those who are found responsible for acts of violence and terrorism, especially for the criminal actions occurring during the last two weeks. . . ." These are important words, which require some positive response from us. However, until these words are seen in deeds, we should not turn on all of our aid. This was pretty much the outcome of the Muskie meeting this morning. (Instructions are attached.)³ I agree we ought to support those instructions, but I think that DOD will have real problems with them, and to my knowledge, they have not yet cleared the instructions. (S)

I would recommend the following:

(1) We need to get the instructions out immediately, and for Bob to inform the Christian Democrats that we are announcing the continu-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 12/13–19/80. Secret. Sent through Aaron. A stamped notation reads: "DA has seen," and an unknown hand wrote: "12/23/80." An unknown hand also wrote "URGENT" and "12/16" at the top of the page.

² December 13. For more information about the December 15 meeting, see Document 451. In telegram 8717 from San Salvador, December 13, the Embassy reported that the PDC and the military had reached agreement and that "the military admitted its responsibility for errors and pledged to correct them." The telegram also noted that the new JRG would have four members with Duarte as President, Gutierrez as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Majano as Ambassador to Spain. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800593–0713)

³ Tab A, attached but not printed, is a draft copy of a telegram instructing White to inform Duarte that, in light of the successful PDC/military negotiations, the United States was resuming economic assistance and would continue to deliver military equipment "in the pipeline (principally trucks) which has not been subject to hold." Further military aid would be subject to three conditions: that the JRG carry out the military transfers of human rights violators; that the level of violence by the security forces be reduced; and that the investigation of the deaths of the four U.S. missionaries continue to progress rapidly. This draft copy contains Pastor's handwritten comments. The Department sent the final version as telegram 333735 to San Salvador, December 18. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880136–1967) See Document 453.

ing of economic aid, but that the military aid should await actions taken by the military. (S)

(2) State should announce at noon that we are resuming economic aid. (S)

(3) With regard to the initiative by the left for a dialogue with us, I believe we ought to inform the Christian Democrats, but not follow up until the current crisis is resolved. Bowdler is eager to respond to the left, but I think this would be a serious mistake. We are engaged in a major struggle with the Armed Forces to get them to purge several leading military officers. If these people knew we were beginning a dialogue with the left, they would unify and resist our efforts to purge the right. We need to take one step at a time—starting with the transfer of Carranza and Moran. (S)

I suspect that an SCC meeting will be necessary on this, both to get DOD on board on the instructions at Tab A, and to get the State Department on board with regard to delaying in responding to the initiative from the left. (S)

453. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, December 16, 1980

SUBJECT

Assistance to El Salvador (C)

Attached is a memorandum from Ed Muskie to you recommending that we go forward to inform the El Salvador Government that we will resume economic assistance. This is in response to your instruction to David Aaron this morning. The memo makes clear that we will still be able to control the actual disbursal in order to have a lever on the performance of the El Salvador Government in meeting its self-proclaimed objectives which we also consider to be very important. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 12/13–19/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote at the top right-hand corner of the page: "Zbig. J." An unknown hand wrote: "12/17/80 p.m." below Carter's initial.

Last week, the SCC also recommended to you that military assistance be resumed.² However, since the result of the negotiations between the junta and the Christian Democrats have proven to be ambiguous on several key points—in particular, transfer of officers responsible for the terror—the Ambassador and the Department strongly believe that we should not turn the military assistance tap on full. Defense, on the other hand, is anxious to go forward with a complete program which would include the dispatch of military training teams, follow-through on the helicopters, and signing of a new FY 81 FMS Credit Agreement. (S)

State believes that we should inform Duarte that we are prepared to go forward with these steps if the government, and particularly the military, fulfill the terms of the agreement between the Christian Democrats and the military, as well as the general objectives we have established. (In addition to the transfer of officers, this would include serious pursuit of the investigation of the murder of the nuns, reduction in right-wing terrorism, and the Land Reform Title Program.) (S)

Defense wants the whole military package to go simultaneously with the economic package but is willing to settle for sending the initial military training team of 24–36 men which would be assigned to the three brigades of the El Salvador army. Duarte, on the other hand, has said that the most important bargaining chip for him is the helicopters. (S)

I believe it is important, in principle, to inform Duarte that we are not only resuming economic assistance but that we are prepared to resume all military assistance. However, I agree with State that this should be phased so as to give both Duarte and ourselves the greatest possible leverage on the El Salvador Government and the military to perform. (S)

Accordingly, I recommend that, in addition to the economic steps, Ambassador White be authorized to inform Duarte that

- we are prepared to proceed with military assistance;
- non-lethal materiel in the pipeline would continue to be delivered;
- the helicopter program, with attendant in-country training by MTT's, will go forward promptly as soon as the military has made significant progress in implementing the agreement with the Christian Democrats;

² See Document 449.

—with further implementation, we would go forward with the \$5 million FY 81 FMS Credit Agreement and purchase of \$2.3 million in non-lethal equipment; and

—this could be followed by further MTT training of El Salvadorian armed forces. (S)

(I would rank the MTT's for the El Salvador army last because they are the most visible and will require significant political justification both in Salvador and elsewhere.) (S)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you authorize informing the El Salvador Government of our economic assistance plans along the lines of Secretary Muskie's memorandum.³ (S)

2. That you authorize the Department to instruct Ambassador White to inform the El Salvador Government of our willingness to resume military assistance contingent upon their meeting their own commitments along the above lines.⁴ (S)

Attachment

Memorandum from Secretary of State Muskie to President Carter⁵

Washington, December 16, 1980

SUBJECT

Assistance to El Salvador

With the restructuring of the Salvadoran government announced, we need to address our assistance programs. Our announcement of last Friday following your approval of the SCC's recommendation indicated that the rationale for our hold-up on assistance shifted from the killing of the American women to the anticipated restructuring of the government—a step designed to get at the underlying problem of terrorism originating with the security forces.⁶

³ Carter indicated his approval and wrote in the margin: "I agree w/ State."

⁴ Carter indicated his disapproval and wrote in the margin: "When I'm reasonably sure that they will meet the commitments, military assistance will be approved. J." For the final instructions to White, see footnote 3, Document 452.

⁵ Secret.

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 449.

We know that the Christian Democrats, especially their leader Duarte, pushed hard in the last week's negotiations to bring the security forces under control. The Christian Democrats have accepted a deal with the military. But we do not know all the elements of the deal, nor do we have any guarantee that commitments of the security forces will be carried out.⁷ On the civilian side the changes announced strengthen the most capable civilian administrators and should improve implementation of the reform program. On the military side, no major changes of personnel have yet been announced except dropping one officer from the Junta.⁸ We are told that two of the officers of the High Command associated with violence will be transferred and as many as a dozen middle-rank officers involved in violence sent abroad. The timing is unclear, but not immediate. Transfer of these officers is key to reducing violence from within the military. For the first time the military has publicly accepted implied responsibility for some of the terrorism and agreed to improving its professionalism.

Our economic assistance is more critical, at least over the next few weeks, than our military assistance. The economy of El Salvador is winding down rapidly as violence destroys confidence and all credit from abroad is withdrawn. Without approval of our assistance now, there will be major food shortages (flour, vegetable oil) next month. Without approval of a major Inter-American Bank loan (\$45 million) this week there will not be time to import fertilizer for the next growing season. On the military side additional training in the US is essential before helicopters could be used (and 30 days notice of the lease must be given the Congress). The equipment proposed under FY-81 FMS is needed but not essential. We have not stopped procurement of the trucks under the FY-80 FMS although shipment is not planned for several weeks.

Thus we recommend that we immediately resume our economic assistance including signing the \$20 million ESF loan, negotiating the PL-480 and CCC agreements and voting for the IDB loan. We would announce that, because the restructuring of the government gives promise of reduced violence originating in the security forces, we are resuming this much needed economic assistance without which all the people of El Salvador would suffer. We would announce that military assistance is not being resumed pending further assessment of progress in reducing violence. Our announcement would be appreciated by

⁷ Carter underlined the portion of the sentence beginning with "nor" and ending with "out."

⁸ Carter underlined the portion of the sentence beginning with "no" and ending with "announced."

the Venezuelans—the other major donor—who feel exposed by our hold-up.⁹

Our economic leverage would continue to be large even over the next couple of months. The PL-480 will not be signed for 5–15 days even if negotiations are pushed. It could be stopped any time. In January there is a requirement for more AID development assistance for several community upgrading projects which employ over 15,000 people. By February additional funding for land reform is planned. Thus we can increase economic pressure later if the military related reforms do not develop satisfactorily.

We would also have an early private conversation with President Duarte to explain our position on assistance emphasizing the need for the military transfers to take place to permit resumption of our military assistance. We would work out with him a phased program in which some military assistance would be resumed on transfer of a number of officers and as there is tangible progress in reducing the level of violence and proceeding with the murder investigation. Other items such as the helicopters would be held until further progress is made.

RECOMMENDATION

In short we believe backing Duarte and the Christian Democrats is still the best hope for a reasonable outcome in El Salvador. We believe we need to release economic assistance quickly to indicate that support and avoid economic collapse. Our military assistance would be made available only on a phased incremental basis, as tangible and steady progress is made on military reform and the investigation. We would announce the economic restoration today if you approve.¹⁰

⁹ Carter drew a line in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph and wrote “ok.” in the left-hand margin.

¹⁰ Carter indicated his approval and signed his initial.

454. Memorandum of Notification Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency for the Special Coordination Committee¹

Washington, December 19, 1980

SUBJECT

Additional Funds in FY 1981 for the Covert Action Program in El Salvador

1. CIA proposes a continuation and expansion of its covert action program in El Salvador in a manner consistent with the Presidential Finding of 2 November 1979.² This will require additional funds, bringing the FY 1981 total to \$1 million. This amount can be accommodated with the FY 81 budget amendment for covert action on which Congress has just acted favorably.

2. *Background:* The above-cited Presidential Finding authorizes the provision of resources and training to assist moderate elements in El Salvador to resist the efforts of Cuban-supported and other guerrilla groups to subvert or overthrow the government. At the same time, we are to encourage the government to carry out needed political, economic, and social reforms and to provide training and assistance to Salvadoran intelligence and security forces. In October 1979, the SCC approved \$635,000 for the program, all of which was spent during FY 1980.³ On 6 October 1980 the Chairman of the SCC authorized the continuation of funding at the FY 1980 level of \$635,000, with a statement that the funding level could be adjusted at a later date.⁴

3. *The Situation in El Salvador:* After more than a year in office, the Revolutionary Junta of Government (JRG), composed of representatives of the military and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), continues to fight for its survival. Although it has avoided complete polarization of the country between the right and left, it has not been able to stop the increase in violence. It has instituted a number of important reforms that have greatly diminished the power of the oligarchy, but some additional reforms that might have established a larger popular base for the JRG are still under discussion, while others are too new for the people to feel their full impact. Meanwhile, growing pressures are

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I047, El Salvador, MON, 19 December 1980. Secret. Dodson sent the memorandum to Mondale, Muskie, Brown, Civiletti, McIntyre, Jones, and Turner under a December 24 memorandum. (Ibid.)

² See Document 398.

³ See Document 396.

⁴ Not found.

being created by a deteriorating economy and increasing violence, of which the murder of American nuns is the most recent and critical instance. Our program is believed to have made a substantial contribution to U.S. Government efforts to keep the JRG alive and functioning. Efforts also were made to improve the domestic and international image of the JRG, to promote and publicize significant government reforms, and to improve resistance to Cuban and terrorist subversion while encouraging better protection of human rights in the difficult atmosphere of nearly total polarization.

4. *Program Activities and Expenses in FY 1980 and FY 1981:*

a. Of the \$635,000 approved for FY 1980, approximately [*dollar amount not declassified*] was spent to provide training, training materials and defensive technical equipment to Salvadoran security and intelligence services. [*2 lines not declassified*] Training courses and programs included covert intelligence collection and processing, terrorist incident management, safe search procedures, bomb detection and disposal, protection of senior officials, captured document analysis, and exploitation of defectors. This training is believed to have had a positive effect on the morale and effectiveness of the limited number of units involved. Follow-up training to be conducted in FY 1981.

FY 1980 Cost [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 Cost [*dollar amount not declassified*]

b. The balance of FY 1980 funds were committed to a variety of covert action operations designed to support JRG and assist other moderate sectors to strengthen the political center, attract support away from extremist groups, and generally to promote a more peaceful climate conducive to the holding of the general election promised in 1983. Specifically:

(1) [*1 paragraph (3 lines) not declassified*]

FY 1980 Cost [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 Cost [*dollar amount not declassified*]

(2) [*less than 1 line not declassified*] guidance and support to a propaganda and public relations campaign being conducted by the JRG to improve its domestic and international image. During FY 1980 [*less than 1 line not declassified*] funded the visits of two experts in public relations and political action/propaganda operations who worked directly with senior JRG officials on this campaign. [*3 lines not declassified*] to publicize JRG accomplishments and to help counteract the negative image generated by representatives of the far left and by Soviet/Cuban propaganda. Plans for FY 1981 include the preparation of a documentary film suitable for both television and movie audiences. The film [*1 line not declassified*] and will be replayed worldwide.

FY 1980 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

(3) Substantial funds have been committed to support the PDC. These funds have been used by the party to conduct an extensive campaign to improve the domestic image of the JRG/PDC by explaining and publicizing the government's reform programs. More recently, the PDC has undertaken a major international campaign "to disseminate the truth about the peaceful revolution which is being carried out in El Salvador." The party has now completed a short film and a book called "La Verdad in El Salvador" for use by PDC representatives travelling abroad. A high-level party delegation has already visited five Latin American countries and will be touring Europe in the near future. Funds committed in FY 1980 included a [*dollar amount not declassified*] package program for this international campaign that will extend into FY 1981. Funds requested for FY 1981 will cover the continuation of this international campaign but will also support PDC efforts to rebuild the party's organizational structure and grass roots support in preparation for the election.

FY 1980 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

(4) Funds provided to an important independent labor leader were used to organize democratic labor unions, especially in rural areas where the far left is proselytizing, and to propagandize against the terrorist activities of the far left. Through the efforts of nine full-time labor organizers [*1 line not declassified*] these democratic unions are estimated to have gained about 20,000 new members plus approximately 60,000 supporters of affiliates who have accepted union leadership without becoming formal members. Propaganda has included news segments shown in local theaters as well as newspaper and radio placements. [*4 lines not declassified*]

FY 1980 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

(5) [*1 paragraph (9 lines) not declassified*]

FY 1980 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1981 [*dollar amount not declassified*]

(6) New activities underway or planned for FY 1981 include: the development of a [*less than 1 line not declassified*] propaganda capability to support the objectives of the Presidential Finding [*dollar amount not declassified*] assistance to [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and other business/industrial groups that support the JRG to help develop domestic and international programs to stimulate understanding and support for government programs [*dollar amount not declassified*] and reformation of a [*less than 1 line not declassified*] that would support a

peaceful path to an elected democratic government and attract those with a social democratic government and attract those with a social democratic orientation away from violent groups [*dollar amount not declassified*]

FY 1980 \$ —

FY 1981 \$100,000

5. *Policy Authority*: The activities proposed in this program for FY 1981 are consonant with the proposal reviewed by the SCC in October 1979 and the consequent Presidential Finding. We are notifying committee members of a higher level of spending consistent with the request just approved by the Congress and there are sufficient funds [*1 line not declassified*].

6. *Deadline*: The situation in El Salvador is such that your urgent attention is requested. Please forward any comments to [*1 line not declassified*] by close of business 31 December.⁵

⁵ For more on the ongoing covert action in El Salvador, see Document 456.

455. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, December 26, 1980

SUBJECT

IMET for El Salvador (U)

As per your instructions,² we are continuing US economic aid to El Salvador, but we are holding up the following new military commitments: helicopters; MTTs to go into El Salvador to train helicopter teams, PSYOPs, etc.; and the FY 81 FMS agreement. The pipeline (FY 80 FMS) military equipment (communications and transportation equipment) is going forward. A question has arisen about whether to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 12/20–31/80. Secret. Sent for action. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig—Let State make any announcements so that limits re military are made clear. J." An unknown hand wrote on another copy of the memorandum: "LDXed to President at Camp David 12/26/80." (Ibid.)

² See Document 453.

allow Salvadoran officers to begin training courses planned for early January (in Panama and the US). Specifically, the courses are for 9 Navy, 60 Army, and 18 Air Force officers in Panama, and 1 Navy and 1 Air Force officer in the US. These people have been taken out of assignment and are waiting to begin the courses. The courses for the Army officers were specially designed by us to get them to address the human rights and code of conduct problem. DOD and our mission feel they have been helpful in that regard. (S)

Secretary Muskie believes we should not go ahead with these courses until the rightist military officers are transferred as the military has promised. In effect, this condition would cancel the courses since the earliest we expect anyone to be transferred is December 31, and the officers will need to have orders to leave by then. Harold Brown thinks we ought to go ahead with these courses, especially since we designed them and have been encouraging the Salvadorans to send their military officers. Our suspension of the big items—helicopters, MTTs, and the FY 81 agreement—are the principal sources of leverage. Cutting the courses is only a gratuitous irritant. I agree with Harold. To cancel these courses is to tell all the military that we really don't want *any* relationship at all at a moment when we need to keep pressing them to improve their performance. I think it's fair to view these courses as the training equivalent of the pipeline equipment, which is continuing. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That the training courses for Salvadoran officers in Panama and the US for January be permitted to go forward.³ (S)

³ Carter indicated his approval.

456. Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, December 29, 1980

SUBJECT*Covert Action Operations in El Salvador, September–December 1980*

A. *Situation.* After more than a year in office, the JRG, composed of representatives of the military and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), continues to fight for its survival. Although it has avoided complete polarization of the country between extreme right and left, it has not been able to end the violence. It has instituted a number of important reforms which have diminished the power of the oligarchy, but additional reforms which might have established a larger popular base for the JRG are still under discussion, while others are too new for the people to feel their full impact. Meanwhile growing pressures are being created by a deteriorating economy and increasing violence, of which the murder of American nuns is the most recent and critical instance. During this period, our programs continued to support the JRG, to improve the domestic and international image of the JRG, to improve resistance to Cuban and terrorist subversion while encouraging better protection of human rights, and to promote and publicize significant government reforms.

B. *Operations.* In November a training course was conducted in the analysis of captured documents and in debriefing and handling defectors. We continued to support key agents of influence close to the Junta, to enable key officials to upgrade their staffs and to build bridges to key institutions. In the labor field programs were continued through key labor assets. Our assistance to the PDC also continued during this period, including increased efforts to improve the JRG's domestic image and to initiate an international campaign to disseminate the truth about the government and its programs. The PDC completed a short film and a book called "La Verdad en El Salvador" for use by PDC representatives traveling abroad. A high-level Party delegation visited five Latin American countries using this material and will be touring Europe in the near future. In December, a political action expert made a second visit to El Salvador to assist JRG officials in improving its public relations and media campaigns. Internationally, efforts continued to counter Soviet and Cuban propaganda and to change the negative image of the JRG, especially in Europe. Several journalists from

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, San Salvador, 1973–1980. Secret.

selected countries were sent to El Salvador for on-the-spot coverage of significant local developments.

C. *Impact.* Training courses continued to be well received by the JRG; the skills and expertise gained will undoubtedly assist security forces personnel in their performance and effective handling of operational information and intelligence.

Our efforts to key agents of influence have contributed significantly to keeping the Junta together and functioning in an increasingly difficult and violent climate.

In the labor field our efforts to organize democratic labor unions continued during this period and have made significant inroads into leftist influence in this area. [3 lines not declassified]

D. *Funding Aspects.* In the first quarter of FY 1981 [*dollar amount not declassified*] has been committed to the above programs in El Salvador. The SCC members received a Memorandum of Notification in early December advising of the need for increased expenditures for a total of \$1 million in FY 1981 to further the objectives of this program in El Salvador.²

E. *Problems.* A number of serious problems continue to plague the JRG and its efforts to promote a stable reformist government and contain the leftist forces. The most serious problem is the continuing level of violence and terror both from the right and left. The level of fear, consequently, in all sectors of society continues to be high, so that reforms and other programs cannot move forward smoothly but progress only sporadically. Another serious problem is the deteriorating state of the economy and low JRG reserves. Economic factors have begun to have serious impact on the ability of the armed forces to fight leftist guerrilla forces.

F. *Proposed Activities.* We plan to continue on-going programs, as noted above. [2 lines not declassified] Other plans include: increased efforts to provide effective in-country propaganda; assistance to [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and other business and industrial groups which support the JRG, and efforts will be made to spot and recruit new assets in the labor field in order to maintain momentum already well established for democratic labor. On-going and new programs will be continually reviewed and evaluated to insure they are in accordance with the Presidential Finding, and to effectively assist the JRG to carry out essential political, economic, and social reform programs.

² See Document 454.

457. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 2, 1981

SUBJECT

Military Assistance to El Salvador: Friday Morning Breakfast (C)

Attached at Tab A is a cable which Christopher plans to discuss with you at the Friday breakfast.² It represents a combined recommendation of State, DOD and NSC, that we deploy to El Salvador the advance helicopter MTT and the headquarters MTT once the transfer of a few key military officers (e.g., Carranza) is confirmed, as we expect on January 1. Next, as Duarte follows up his promise to expedite the investigation of the nuns, we shall sign the FY 81 FMS agreement and send the first few helicopters. (S)

The principal motivating force for taking these steps is Duarte's conversation with our chargé on December 30 (Tab B).³ Duarte explains that the military are taking the kinds of steps to reorganize themselves which we have urged, but they are doing it "in their fashion." He said that we would be making a serious mistake (and exposing the Christian Democrats at the same time) if we continue to withhold military aid in the light of the anticipated offensive of the Left and of our diminishing credibility with the military. Duarte makes a very strong, and to my mind persuasive, case for providing the military assistance and supporting him and his party, and I believe that, at the minimum, we ought to proceed with the cable at Tab A and consider several additional steps that might be useful to the PDC. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/1-6/81. Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski handwrote the date on the memorandum.

² Attached at Tab A but not printed is a draft telegram instructing Dion to inform Duarte that the out-of-country IMET training, advance helicopter MTT, and MTT to "deal with guerrilla warfare at headquarters (but not individual MTTs at each field brigade command)" would commence in response. The Department sent the final version as telegram 1000 to San Salvador, January 2. (Ibid.)

³ Tab B, not attached, was telegram 9059 from San Salvador, December 30, in which the Embassy reported on Duarte's views about the "JRG's progress over the last three weeks." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880136-1937) An unsigned memorandum dated January 2 entitled "Situation Room Checklist" noted that Dion "asserts that he did not recommend an immediate full renewal of military aid that would reverse Ambassador White's position of allowing a month hiatus to see if promised Salvadoran steps were taken. Dion said his recommendation was limited to an immediate renewal of IMET only" and asked that White's views be sought before a military aid decision was taken. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/1-6/81)

Harold Brown has sent you a memorandum (Tab C)⁴ which has been overtaken by these new developments. Essentially, he recommends that we take the steps which we are taking.⁵ (C)

⁴ Attached at Tab C but not printed is Brown's December 30 memorandum to Carter entitled "Security Assistance to El Salvador."

⁵ Carter wrote at the bottom of the page: "Proposal approved at breakfast," and an unknown hand wrote: "1/02/81." At the January 2 foreign affairs breakfast, attended by Carter, Mondale, Christopher, Claytor, Brzezinski, and Cutler, the principals discussed El Salvador. In Brzezinski's January 2 memorandum for the record, he noted: "MTT for helicopters and MTT for HQ to go ahead, as per cable which the President approved. Christopher to ask Webster for assessment of what Duarte could do immediately on the investigation of the killing of the nuns, and if we [are] satisfied the President [is] prepared to consider affirmatively the transfer of helicopters. The matter should be put to the President for decision by Wednesday of next week." (Carter Library, Vertical File, El Salvador)

458. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in El Salvador¹

Washington, January 14, 1981, 0114Z

9213. Subject: Military Assistance to El Salvador.

1. (C-Entire text)

2. The President has authorized us to sign the FY 81 FMS loan agreement and proceed with the dols. Five million FMS-financed equipment and training, the entire remainder of the FY 81 IMET training program and the loan of two UH-IH (Huey) transport helicopters.² Under the FY 81 FMS credit program dols 2.3 million is for non-lethal equipment and the remaining 2.7 million is for helicopter-related training and support. The decision was based on a review of progress made in the three areas of concern we outlined to Duarte on December 18, namely: rapid progress in the investigation of the murders of the four American churchwomen, transfers within the military, and reduc-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/13–15/81. Confidential; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to the White House. Printed from a copy that was received in the White House Situation Room.

² For the January 12 SCC meeting and Carter's decision, see Documents 493 and 494.

tion in violence originating from the security forces. The current military situation in El Salvador also figures in the decision.

3. You should inform President Duarte of the foregoing, enabling him to use it to his advantage with the military. In doing so, make the following points:

—The President's decision was based on his judgement that progress has been made, particularly in the investigation of the deaths of the four women and the military's action in transferring officers.

—The President put weight on Duarte's promise that the investigation will continue rapidly and thoroughly in an honest effort to find those guilty of the murders.

—He accepted Duarte's commitment that the IAHRC would be invited to El Salvador to observe the investigation. We are gratified that the invitation was delivered to the IAHRC today. We understand that the Salvadoran Embassy in Ottawa is following up with the Canadian church persons who travelled to El Salvador.

—The President also noted and accepted the commitment of the Salvadoran military to follow through on transfers scheduled for late January/early February.

—On the basis of the above the President decided to go ahead with the military assistance specified in para 2 above.

4. You may inform Duarte that only two helicopters were approved at this time, but that these should help to meet the military's transport requirements as well as to carry out the training of additional pilots. Delivery of the other helicopters (for which GOES does not have trained Salvadoran pilots at this time) and the possibility of additional military equipment is still under review. We anticipate that new administration will have to decide these items.³

Muskie

³ Telegram 320 from San Salvador, January 14, reported Duarte's response to telegram 9213. Duarte expressed gratitude but said that he "did not want military advisers" because their presence would "offend the nationalism of the Salvadorans and lend credence to the charges made by the JRG's enemies that it was a pawn of the United States." White countered that technical training was necessary to avoid accidents and to maintain the new equipment. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

459. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 14, 1981

SUBJECT

Military Assistance for El Salvador

An urgent decision is needed regarding arms and ammunition for El Salvador.

1. The situation in El Salvador has become militarily more critical. In the last several days, the government has lost significant amounts of ammunition (an arsenal in Santa Ana has been blown up, and our MilGroup believes that the government may have as little as one week's supply left).

2. The government of El Salvador has asked us for military assistance on an urgent basis and David Aaron chaired today a mini-SCC on this issue.² All but State were unanimous that it is in the U.S. national interest to provide rapidly some lethal military assistance. All agreed that not to do so could mean that the government forces would be greatly weakened in the next few days and, with supplies to the guerrillas continuing, there is a possibility that the government's control could unravel entirely.

3. You should also know that an additional justification for going forward is the Junta's expected announcement tomorrow to give titles to the campesinos for the land reform—a key concern to Lane Kirkland and the AFL-CIO.

4. If you approve the lethal assistance, DOD informs us that we could send it there in three days, perhaps less if we use stocks in Panama. It is clear that the Cubans and Nicaraguans are in this for a long struggle, and moving to lethal assistance will not deprive the next Administration of any leverage. More aid will be needed in the future.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/16–19/81. Secret. Carter wrote in the top right-hand corner of the page: "Zbig. J." For more on security assistance to El Salvador, see Document 460.

² In a January 15 memorandum to Turner, Davis described the January 14 mini-SCC meeting, noting that Aaron "concluded that U.S. supplies of arms and ammunition (as well as transport helicopters in addition to the two already approved by the President) were probably essential to prevent serious weakening of the Salvadoran Government's position before 20 January" and urged the Department of Defense to seek Presidential action. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 18: (SCC) El Salvador) No minutes for the meeting were found.

5. You should know that Secretary Muskie is very strongly opposed to crossing the threshold of lethal assistance. You are familiar with his arguments, and you may wish to discuss this matter with him further. Let me say, however, that in my view it would be extremely damaging not only to our national interest but to the historical record of this Administration to leave office unwilling to take the hard decision to provide lethal assistance to an essentially middle of the road government, beleaguered by revolutionaries almost openly assisted by the Cubans via Nicaragua. (Duarte may report new evidence on this at a press conference this afternoon.)

6. At stake is essentially the very concept of your policy for Central America: that we resolve long overdue inequities (Panama Canal Treaties, land reform, democratization) but without handing the region over to Castro. I see the provision of lethal military assistance as an integral part of our efforts. Not to do so now and to let Reagan do it next week will simply play into the hands of our critics, in addition perhaps to permitting in the meantime a very adverse outcome on the ground.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the interagency recommendation that the lethal material (list is attached) be provided.³ (For your information, you should know that on the working level State supports the above position, and Harold Brown feels very strongly about it.)⁴

³ Attached but not printed is an undated itemized list entitled "Emergency Military Assistance for El Salvador."

⁴ Carter indicated his approval and wrote "Approved at For Aff Breakfast. J." The record of the January 16 breakfast meeting is printed as Document 495. Telegram 12218 to San Salvador, January 16, instructed White to inform Duarte of the "decision taken at highest level this morning to furnish additional military equipment requested by the Salvadoran High Command with Duarte's support." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) White replied in telegram 430 from San Salvador, January 17, reporting that "Duarte reacted to this information in a matter-of-fact way, observing that the armed forces' primary need was for rifles." Duarte also "reiterated in the strongest possible terms that the Salvadoran Government was in complete charge of the situation and that it would be most unfortunate if any statement by the U.S. Government gave the impression that our military assistance was needed in order to prop up a weak or failing government when the exact opposite was true and everybody here knows it." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/16-19/81)

460. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to President Carter¹

Washington, January 15, 1981

SUBJECT

Security Assistance for El Salvador (U)

(S) On January 10, leftist guerrillas launched their heralded “final” offensive in El Salvador. They have employed newly introduced weapons and have mounted a concerted campaign to quickly overthrow the government. These initial attacks have been intense, widespread and have severely taxed the capabilities of the Government of El Salvador (GOES) to defend itself, and the guerrillas have not pulled back, as reported in the press. I am concerned that the main attack is yet to be launched. While the Salvadoran Armed Forces have largely held their own thus far, they are in dire need of visible outside support to strengthen their resolve and to balance the fire-power equation which, largely because of external support to the guerrillas and our past reluctance to provide lethal equipment, now may be shifting in favor of the insurgents.

(S) In the attack on the 2d Brigade Garrison in Santa Ana last weekend, a sizeable portion of the Brigade’s small arms were destroyed. The last of the GOES helicopters capable of moving troops was shot down on January 11 (only three small reconnaissance helicopters remain operational for the entire country). Guerrilla attacks in Santa Ana, Chalatenango, Zacatecoluca and in Morazan Departments have left some GOES military units isolated and cut off from normal over-the-road resupply. Reports indicate that because of the lack of helicopter lift capability, wounded soldiers and civilians are unable to be evacuated for proper medical treatment. There are also reports that, at the current rate of expenditures, many GOES units have only enough ammunition for another week of fighting. If the GOES is to survive, it requires urgent military assistance.

(S) As you are aware, the GOES has urgently requested that we provide the military items it requires for survival—and on an emergency basis. I have attached a listing of the items they have requested for your information.² As you will note, with the exception of the helicopters (which, however, have been expanded from six to ten), this

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Unfiled Files, Box 130, El Salvador: 1/81. Secret. A copy was sent to Muskie.

² Attached but not printed is an undated list entitled “Emergency Military Assistance Needs.”

materiel is in excess of the \$5 million currently programmed for El Salvador in FY81 and it is principally lethal and exclusively related to the on-going combat. However, the situation in El Salvador is critical and if we wish to prevent the guerrillas from sinking that unfortunate nation into further anarchy, we should respond favorably and rapidly. In addition to the security assistance you approved for El Salvador on January 13,³ I strongly recommend that you authorize shipment of the four additional helicopters we have already identified for El Salvador and that we proceed with provision of the additional materiel they have now requested. In view of the circumstances, this request is modest indeed.

(S) For the reasons outlined above, I believe that the current situation in El Salvador warrants your use of the authority contained in Section 506(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act in providing this materiel. According to our records, you have an available balance of about \$48 million during FY81 from which to draw the approximately \$5 million additionally required to provide this materiel and its emergency transportation to El Salvador. Your use of Section 506(a) authority will also allow our immediate provision of these items from DOD stocks.

(S) Attached is the proposed Determination for you to approve and sign.⁴

Harold Brown

³ See Document 494.

⁴ Attached but not printed is Presidential Determination No. 81-2, January 16, signed by Carter to authorize the furnishing of up to \$5,000,000 in defense articles and services to El Salvador.

461. Telegram From the Embassy in El Salvador to the Department of State¹

San Salvador, January 20, 1981, 1730Z

510. Subj: Past, Present and Future U.S. Policy Toward Salvador's Revolutionary Governing Junta. Ref (A) 80 State 355609,² (B) 80 San Sal 2038,³ (C) 80 San Sal 3677,⁴ (D) 80 San Sal 6284.⁵

1. (S-Entire text)

2. Summary: The moderate government of El Salvador has administered a crushing military and political defeat to the foreign-supported and orchestrated "final offensive" of the local Marxist guerrillas. The long-predicted mass insurrection failed to materialize as did the promised general strike, despite the fevered incitements to revolt by Radio Moscow, Havana and Managua plus the clandestine Nicaragua-based "Radio Liberacion." The people stuck with the government because, despite its flaws, it has brought them the hope that El Salvador's unjust and repressive socio-economic structure will be changed in their favor. The people also seem to understand that Marxist terrorists are just as lethal as the rightist death squads that have victimized them for so long. Our economic assistance here has been massive over the last year and has strengthened the best elements in the Salvadoran Government; our military assistance had been limited to non-lethal equipment intended to strengthen the command structure and limit repressive tendencies in the brutal and corrupt security forces. Now, in response to foreign-intervention, we are resupplying the armed forces to make up the draw-down of their stocks occasioned by the leftists' "final offensive." The Salvadoran armed forces are determined that our last minute military support not take credit away from their victory over a foreign-supplied and trained guerrilla force. We must continue to calibrate our military assistance to El Salvador to strengthen the civilians and moderate military officers in their struggle to control repressive elements in the security forces. The return of rightist emigres associated with death squads and responsible for decades of corruption of the security forces could lead to a rightist-sponsored massacre and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810030-0505. Secret; Immediate. Sent for information to Bogotá, Bonn, Caracas, Guatemala City, Lima, London, Madrid, Managua, Mexico City, Panama City, Paris, Rome, San José, Tegucigalpa, Tokyo, Lisbon, USUN, and USCINCSO Quarry Heights.

² Telegram 355609 was not further identified.

³ See footnote 2, Document 428.

⁴ See Document 432.

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 438.

the recrudescence of the left. In the end, a futile effort to reimpose a discredited and anachronistic socio-economic structure, whatever the level of foreign support or participation, would result in a leftist victory but only after a bloody civil war. We should reflect carefully on this scenario in considering future U.S. policy toward El Salvador. The lesson to be learned from the past year here is that it is unnecessary and even counterproductive to furnish millions in military assistance, to send dozens of military advisors or to sponsor "special operations." What is needed to defeat the Marxist-Leninists in Central America is solid U.S. backing for good government through effective diplomacy—an Embassy speaking with one voice and an aid program that gives a government the tools it needs to better the lives of the people. That is how a democracy fights Communism. And it works. End summary.

3. Unless foreign nations intervene massively and soon, the Revolutionary Governing Junta of El Salvador (JRG) has now defeated the vaunted "final offensive" of the indigenous Marxist/Leninist guerrilla organizations despite heavy doses of propaganda, supplies and training provided by external Communist sources.⁶ The JRG prevailed because the majority of Salvadorans have lost their sympathy for the leftist movement and, while they may not support the government yet, they have done nothing to impede its efforts to suppress the leftist offensive. Moreover, they made the leftists' general strike a total failure despite desperate propaganda efforts abroad to qualify it as a "partial success." Well-armed and trained leftist guerrillas are still able to attack small population centers in scattered areas of the country. But since the widespread and coordinated series of attacks on major cities, including poor areas of the capital, on the night of January 10, the guerrillas have had no success in taking or holding territory for anything more than a few hours, i.e., any takeover is terminated by the arrival of Army reinforcements within a few hours.⁷ Even some Western press sources continue to describe this as evidence that the government does not control the whole territory but the fact that no guerrilla enclave exists and that the leftists were unable to declare a government inside the

⁶ In telegram 410 from San Salvador, January 16, White noted his concern that "our public rationale for providing lethal military assistance to the GOES will include specific pointed reference to the danger presented to this government by the leftist offensive," which would confirm "the thesis" of the FDR/DRU. He added: "In my opinion, the rationale for the renewal of military assistance and the provision of ammunition rests 99 percent on the introduction of sophisticated new weapons of Communist manufacture which have entered into El Salvador from Nicaragua." Pastor wrote at the bottom of the telegram: "The govt is in firm control. We are confident that with re-supplies they will remain in control." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/16-19/81)

⁷ For more information about the "final offensive," see Document 460.

country, as they promised, proves the failure of the main political/diplomatic purpose of the offensive.

4. How did the offensive proceed? For several months the leftist terrorist groups have been threatening a “final offensive, general strike and mass insurrection” that would sweep away the JRG and leave them in control of El Salvador. Under heavy pressure from the Cubans and other Communist backers, the disparate leftist organizations, both the guerrillas and their allegedly peaceful front organizations, were melded first into two large units and finally into one supposedly monolithic coalition. The Farabundo Marti Liberation Movement (FMLN), now headed by Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, is the new holding company for what had been two ostensibly separate organizations that have conducted political agitation and terrorism respectively for the last six months, the allegedly peaceful Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDRL) headed by Dr. Ungo and the armed, terrorist Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU), headed by Cayetano Carpio.

5. Once the umbrella coalition was in place, i.e. in early December, a grand orchestrated campaign of internal and external propaganda began to promise a final FMLN offensive that would be accompanied by mass insurrection. [garble] that used against Somoza’s Nicaragua in which an entire people rose up against a hated dictator who by then had become isolated internationally and internally by a documented series of outrages against the population. Leftist propaganda against El Salvador attempted to capitalize on a series of appalling violations of human rights connected with or directly chargeable to brutal and vicious elements within the security forces which had remained largely out of the control of the JRG. A worldwide campaign of [garble] offered ample evidence of security force excesses that increased the diplomatic isolation of the JRG, especially from such important European countries as Germany, France and Spain. The murder of the American churchwomen in early December, which was certainly the work of the Salvadoran security forces almost completed the JRG’s diplomatic alienation, even from its most important international supporter, the USG.

6. At this point, under intense pressure from the USG, Venezuela and other sympathetic but offended democratic governments, the JRG at last moved to begin to root out the cancer that had so weakened the anti-Communist position in this country throughout the last year. The Christian Democrats in the regime threatened to walk out unless the Ministry of Defense restructured itself in a way that removed from command the worst offenders in the security forces. The PDC also asked that the officer corps pledge armed force commitment to the implementation of the sweeping reform program that had succeeded in weaning public support away from the left so dramatically since its inception in March 1980. Both steps were taken following a consultation

of all military officers. Subsequent renewal of U.S. economic assistance gave the JRG a new lease on life at a critical juncture and its promises to reform the command structure, investigate the deaths of the churchwomen and bring rightist death squads under control renewed hopes here and abroad that a decent reform government committed to democratization could be put back on track before the "final assault."

7. Weeks of mounting and clearly orchestrated propaganda, supplemented over the last two months by large clandestine shipments of sophisticated new war supplies, culminated in the announcement of the great offensive on the evening of January 10th. For several days, the leftist newspaper *El Independiente* had published elaborate instructions telling the population how to participate in the insurrection, e.g., by fabricating molotov cocktails at home, preparing boards full of nails to throw in the streets before the Army convoys, painting death's heads on the houses of suspected government informers, etc. A clandestine radio transmitter located in Nicaragua went on the air several days before the offensive with the same kinds of instruction and incitations to insurrection. Four local radio stations were seized at dusk on Saturday, January 10 and the population was called to arms. Meanwhile, coordinated guerrilla attacks took place in many areas of the country, including an assault on the main Air Force base at Ilopango, a mutiny in the Santa Ana barracks and guerrilla assaults on a long list of small military posts in widespread areas of the country.

8. By 11:00 p.m. the offensive had largely spent itself. There was no mass uprising. On the contrary, the guerrillas received little or no encouragement even in the most impoverished and alienated districts of San Salvador where terrorist incidents have occurred almost nightly over the last year. On Sunday, government control was reasserted in Santa Ana and new attacks were put down over the next several days in a number of other population centers, still with no evidence of public sympathy for the leftist insurgents. The general strikes called for Monday, January 12th, then Tuesday, January 13th and last, Wednesday, January 14th were uniformly ignored by 90 percent or more of the working population. Only two factories were closed in San Salvador on the first day and they reopened at noon; buses were off the streets for several hours. On Monday and Tuesday mornings in response to terrorist threats that they would be burned on sight bus service was restored by mid-morning both days; hundreds of foreign journalists here for the final offensive could find guerrilla attacks under way in remote areas of the country but no evidence of any support for the general strike. Nonetheless, Communist controlled and influenced news organizations, consistent with their earlier propaganda, reported that vast areas of the country including major population centers were under guerrilla control and that the whole country was wracked by

insurrection, general strikes and hand-to-hand fighting. All of this was untrue and ultimately the international news services established what was really happening in El Salvador for readers and listeners not under Communist control.

9. In the midst of the general offensive the United States announced renewal of military assistance which had been suspended following the deaths of the American churchwomen and pending the command shifts, pursuit of investigations and attempt to control rightist violence that the JRG had promised. A further pressing decision for the USG was whether to renew lethal military assistance which had ended in 1977 when the Romero regime refused U.S. military aid in anger over human rights restrictions on its use. The offensive from the left, although of relatively brief duration, was sufficiently intensive to run down stocks of Salvadoran ammunition and other materiel. The most pressing need was for small arms ammunition. On Friday evening, January 17th, I informed Junta President Napoleon Duarte that the United States would renew lethal military assistance in response to the JRG's request for emergency replacement of depleted ammunition stocks.⁸ Duarte accepted the offer with some reserve, asking that minimal publicity be given and that U.S. military advisors not be sent to El Salvador except as technicians performing required pilot or maintenance instruction for the Salvadoran Air Force. Defense Minister Garcia has expressed the same concerns to U.S. officers.

10. Meanwhile, the Salvadoran National Radio, which has monopolized all broadcast time since the opening of the offensive on January 10th, spent this weekend assuring the population that the guerrillas had been defeated unilaterally by the armed forces and reform government which enjoy full public support and are more than capable of defending the national territory. These broadcasts made clear that the JRG had defeated the guerrillas because the public was on its side and that the armed forces needed no outside help in containing the leftist offensive so long as foreign intervention was curbed. The domestic press and radio has made much of evidence of foreign support for the left in the form of captured weapons, including light artillery, and the barrage of propaganda and disinformation from Radio Moscow, Havana and Managua. These JRG broadcasts and stories exploited heavy nationalist chords and seem to have had a strong public impact.

11. Comment: In the last hours of the Carter administration and on the inauguration day of President Reagan, it is important to try to understand why the JRG has succeeded in defeating a concerted leftist conspiracy to seize power in El Salvador. It is crucial to comprehend

⁸ See footnote 4, Document 459.

that this government has given hope to an entire people that the gross injustices and abuses of the last 50 years are coming to an end and that life will improve for the 90 pct of the population who lived here in near feudal servitude until the revolution of 1979. Only ten months ago, vast leftist front organizations could mass as many as 200,000 people in the streets of San Salvador; they could take over government Ministries, foreign Embassies and the National University in utter defiance of an indecisive new regime that promised progress but was inept and weak. It was also violently opposed by the far right from exile in Miami and Guatemala. In the face of brutal attack from both extremes the JRG went ahead with a series of sweeping social reforms that destroyed the power base of the far left and the monopoly position of the far right in this country, perhaps forever. The reforms have saved the center in El Salvador. It was the reforms that made the people break with the left. The reforms resulted in the increasing violence against the people by both extremist groups, and completed the alienation of the masses from both factions. The far right's vicious terrorism against the center as well as unarmed leftist sympathizers blackened the name of the JRG abroad because some of these rightist elements had connections with the security forces. Military and civilian moderates were unable or afraid to break these links. The excesses of the security forces and the depredations of the right-wing death squads threatened to destroy the JRG as a government and to isolate it totally from the rest of the world. Only the crisis provoked by the murders of the FDR leaders followed by those of the American churchwomen reversed this fatal slide toward ruin.

12. Over the last year, the JRG's defeat of three attempted right-wing coups, financed by exiles in Guatemala and Miami and led by their chosen instrument, the psychotic Major D'Aubuisson, helped convince the mass of the population that the JRG meant to continue its course toward democratization, economic/social justice and control of repressive forces in the military. The shifts in the command structure of late December, the renewed commitment to agrarian reform following the brutal murders of Adolfo Viera and his two American advisors⁹ and the renewal of U.S. economic assistance in response to

⁹ In telegram 42 from San Salvador, January 4, the Embassy described the January 3 murder of AIFLD officials Michael Hammer and Mark Pearlman, and the Director of the Agrarian Reform Institute Rodolfo Viera, by gunman at the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador and commented: "No one has been arrested or convicted yet for murders of 9,000-plus Salvadorans and five U.S. citizens." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80-1/81; see also Raymond Bonner, "2 Americans Slain at Salvador Hotel; Aided Land Agency," *New York Times*, January 5, 1981, p. 1.) In telegram 3697 to San Salvador, January 7, the Department instructed the Embassy to inform the Salvadorans "at the highest level" that the assassination of Hammer and Pearlman required a "thorough and complete investigation" and that technical assistance would be available. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D810009-0007)

the JRG's promises to control rightist excess, reassured the population that reforms would be maintained. On the verge of the "final offensive" people still believed this government could be expected to continue to pursue the course that has drawn away support and sympathy from the left and that has isolated the terrorists of the far right and far left as criminal elements bent on overthrowing a moderate responsible government. On the evening of January 10th, when the radio stations were seized and the people called upon to rise, no one spoke up. The leftists have revealed themselves to be irresponsible, foreign-directed terrorists and people know it. They stayed off the streets after dark, not merely in response to the 7:00 p.m. curfew but because they wanted no involvement in the alleged insurrection. People went to work on Monday morning not merely because the government exhorted them to do so, but because they wanted to keep their jobs and help end the economic crisis that the far right and far left have visited on this country.

13. It is common knowledge here that the bombings of factories and offices, killings of labor leaders and technicians, and kidnappings of moderate businessmen and government officials are the work of both the far right and the far left. Vicious gangs of self-ruled terrorists, of the far right and far left, are operating in foreign cities and are sponsoring the destruction of this country in order to rebuild it according to their blueprint when its ruin is total.

14. How should the United States proceed in the face of the success this last week of the moderate forces in El Salvador against the leftist final offensive and last month against a third right-wing coup attempt? Why have rightist terror and leftist insurrection failed to destroy the JRG? We must understand that the complex equation that operates in this country has several potentially explosive components, namely the far right and far left. El Salvador's moderate civilian/military leadership must be supported in its attempt to control extremists on both sides and democratic countries trying to help the JRG should limit their inside participation as much as possible in order to reinforce the moderate tendencies of the JRG. The moderates are succeeding in their struggle to find a peaceful solution without a civil war. We have denied the JRG military assistance on any important scale for the excellent reason that without firm moderate control of the means of repression it would likely be used in condemnable excesses that would bring our country as well as theirs into disrepute. Only about half of the non-lethal assistance in communications and transport programmed for last fiscal year has even reached this country. New lethal assistance has just begun to arrive in response to President Carter's decision of January 16th.¹⁰ The Salvadoran armed forces are completely truthful, therefore,

¹⁰ See Document 460.

in announcing to the people that they have put down a foreign-sponsored, trained, directed and supplied Communist offensive using only their own resources. This is an important nationalist consideration. The reinforcement we are now providing will replace Salvadoran ammunition and materiel used in defeating the leftists over the last week. We should ensure that it not be used in a general campaign to eradicate the left here by harsh "search and destroy" measures.

15. The *matanza* (massacre) so earnestly sought by the far right must be avoided for it would surely bring ultimate victory to the far left guerrillas who are now in defeat because the people have abandoned their cause. To bring back the patrons of right-wing terrorism from their self-imposed exile, to attempt to install them in power once again or to abet their campaign to dismantle the JRG's reform program by installing a military dictator under their tutelage, would be folly on our part. Sooner or later, probably after a bloody regional war, the left would win because Central America's anachronistic structure of decades past cannot be reimposed here by any number of troops, foreign or domestic. El Salvador was on the verge of falling to Marxists-Leninists a year ago because insurrection seemed the only hope for change and progress. A small, willful group of amoral oligarchs and their terrorist accomplices in the security forces had staved off change here for decades at the cost of mounting social tension that finally threatened to blow the society apart. Marxist revolution was just about to take power last year for the simple reason that it seemed the only alternative to the malfeasance and cruelty of the small group which controlled this country. When a group of moderate military officers and progressive civilians seized power in October 1979, the former owners of this country fled in undignified haste to Guatemala and Miami. From there they have sponsored and directed a terrorist campaign against the moderate centrist forces in this country. That campaign has claimed thousands of lives. Their role is well known here.

16. Over the intervening ten months, through sweeping reforms of the economic and social structure, an essentially middle class group of officers and civilians, at great risk to their own lives, has fought to draw the people back. They have fought to detach the masses from a Marxist movement that, in the face of dwindling public support, has resorted to terrorism against the government, and, increasingly, against the people themselves. The terrorists of the right and left have murdered and alienated the population of this country. Unless one or the other of these extremist factions seems on the point of gaining power, the JRG will continue to expand its base among the population and will rebuild the shattered structure of Salvadoran society on a new foundation.

17. U.S. economic assistance in this effort is vital and should be expanded rapidly in all productive sectors of this economy. Military

assistance should continue to be keyed to improvement in human rights performance in order not to strengthen the repressive tendencies of those still in the security forces who respond to direction from rightist terrorists. I would ask the new administration to give the most careful consideration to these concerns and calibrate further U.S. assistance, political, military and economic, as delicately as possible in order to encourage democratic, moderate and progressive forces in this country to save it and the region from tyranny of the left or right.

18. The left here has been defeated. Not one American cartridge was fired and not one cent of lethal American assistance was used. The lesson to be learned from the last year in El Salvador is that it is not necessary to provide millions in military assistance, that it is counter-productive to bring in dozens of military advisors, that dirty tricks are not needed and that in Central America all that is necessary to defeat the Marxist-Leninists is to back good government with effective diplomacy, an Embassy speaking with one voice and an aid program that provides a government the tools it needs to better the lives of the people. This is the democratic way to counter Communism. And it works.

White

Central America Region

462. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 24, 1977, 3:30–5 p.m.

SUBJECT

Latin America

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher

Terence Todman

William Luers

Defense

Charles Duncan

Major Gen. Richard E. Cavazos

Joint Chiefs of Staff

General George S. Brown

Lt. General William Smith

CIA

Deputy Director Enno Knoche

[name not declassified]

Treasury

Anthony Solomon

Edward Bittner

Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Leon Sloss

Commerce

Frank Weil

NSC

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Thomas Thornton

Robert A. Pastor

Overall Approach: Should the U.S. Move Away From the Special Relationship?

Deputy Secretary Christopher opened the meeting by saying that the new Administration had been dealing with many specific Latin American problems—for example, Panama, Cuba, and Mexico—but we had not had an opportunity to develop an overall approach,² particularly with respect to those economic issues which were of greatest concern to the Latin Americans.

Deputy Secretary Christopher suggested that in the light of the changes which had occurred in the last decade that the best overall policy for the U.S. might be a nonpolicy. All agreed we should *carefully* move away from attempting a special policy for Latin America, which

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 38, PRM–17 (3). Secret. Pastor forwarded the summary of conclusions to Brzezinski under cover of a March 25 memorandum.

² PRM/NSC–17, January 26, which directed a review of U.S. policy toward Latin America, and the study prepared in response to PRM/NSC–17, March 12, are scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIV, South America; Latin America Region.

in the past has locked us into a cycle of creating unrealistic expectations followed by bitter disappointments.

We should encourage the nations of Latin America to diversify their relationships with other countries and regions, and we should adopt policies which differentiate, handling specific problems bilaterally and general issues in global or North-South fora. To the extent that regional institutions can contribute to the effective resolution of individual problems, we should also use them.

On the question of U.S. intervention in the hemisphere, Dr. Brzezinski said that we should not react reflexively to Soviet probes, but rather should judge our response by the likely consequences if the U.S. did not intervene. Since Latin American governments are very concerned about their own independence, we should watch their reactions first.

The consensus was that we should not attempt to package our cluster of interests and differentiated policies into a single policy for the hemisphere.

Relationships With Military Governments

The consensus was that the U.S. should adjust its relations with individual countries so as to differentiate according to the kind of regime: warm relations with civilian and democratic governments, normal relations with non-repressive military regimes, and cool but correct relations with repressive governments.

David Aaron suggested joining the two agreed approaches—the movement toward globalism and establishing a closer affinity with democracies—by a Presidential trip to selected democracies, say in Latin America as well as in Africa, Asia, or perhaps Europe.

Aaron also said that if we are going to be sincere about moving toward a global approach, we must make clear that our policies with respect to democracies or repressive regimes must be the same in Latin America as in Africa or Asia. Given the special constituencies in the U.S., that would not be easy. We will have to go out of our way to do that.

Human Rights

The participants agreed that we should try not to have a different policy for the hemisphere than we have for the rest of the world, and we should try to persuade the Congress of the value of not differentiating between regions. We should also explore ways to express our policy on human rights in a more affirmative manner. Also, the Executive should seek greater discretionary authority from Congress so as to be able to make important definitional distinctions. For example, we should define gross violations of human rights as torture or degrading treatment instead of denial of due process. This will mean that seven-

to-ten countries will be in violation rather than sixty-to-eighty. Our influence on trying to mitigate repressive policies abroad is likely to increase proportionately.

Arms Transfers

Leon Sloss from ACDA suggested that we approach the problem of restraining arms purchases on a global basis through both supplier and purchaser arrangements. General Brown and Deputy Secretary Duncan said that if such an approach failed, it was their preference that the U.S. should sell arms to the region rather than the Russians.

Organization of American States

Todman suggested that the U.S. try to strengthen the OAS by seeking the abolition of the Permanent Council and a reduction of our contribution from 66 percent to a level more in line with an equal relationship. Solomon said that any and all efforts to strengthen the OAS have come to nought because the Latins care more about the “perks” than we do and less about “streamlining” it or making it more efficient. The political costs of seeking its abolition are as great as trying to change it, and he therefore was discouraged whether anything constructive could be done.

Cultural and Educational Exchange

Christopher asked whether we should return to a more enlightened and generous policy with respect to cultural and educational exchanges with Latin America. Todman nodded yes.

Conclusion

It was agreed that the new directions recommended at the PRC meeting should be incorporated in the President’s Pan American Day speech.³

³ Carter addressed the Permanent Council of Organization of American States on Pan American Day, April 14. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 611–616) Carter also addressed the United Nations General Assembly on March 17, asserting: “We will put our relations with Latin America on a more constructive footing, recognizing the global character of the region’s problems.” (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, p. 446) The complete version of both speeches are printed as Documents 29 and 33, in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy.

463. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 23, 1978

SUBJECT

Central America: An Emerging and Urgent Issue for U.S. Policy

As the dust blown up by the crisis in Nicaragua settles for the moment, and the mediators try to patch together an "enduring democratic solution," I think it is important to step back and ask ourselves: Can a Nicaraguan-type crisis happen again? And, if so, what are we doing now to prevent similar crises?

The simple answer is that it can happen again, and is likely to in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The conditions which gave rise to the crisis in Nicaragua exist in these countries, only in a more advanced state.

The unique element in Nicaragua is, of course, Somoza, but I believe that his presence meant only that violence and polarization would occur in Nicaragua *first*; not that it won't occur elsewhere. In a few years, if we don't address the underlying problems in Central America, the Nicaraguan crisis of 1978 will seem easy in comparison. *I would urge you to place Central America relatively high on your list of priorities for 1978–1979.*

I. Characteristics Common to the Region

The three Central American countries share (with Nicaragua) the following tragic characteristics:

1. *Political Alignment: Three Groups.* (1) A strong, intransigent military government with little or no popular support; (2) revolutionary guerrilla groups which are predominantly indigenous but maintain ties with the Cubans and with each other; and (3) a relatively weak but hopeful middle, which includes political parties (Christian and Social Democrats), the Church, and small business. Since the middle of the political spectrum in Central America is considerably to the right of that in the U.S., the political middle is generally quite conservative by U.S. standards.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46 (1). Secret. Sent for action. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "a good memo. ZB." Inderfurth and Bartholomew also initialed the memorandum.

2. *Severe Structural Problems.* Economic inequality; rapid population growth; inadequate bureaucratic capabilities; and slow economic growth.

3. *Continued Massive U.S. Presence.* The U.S. influence and presence in this region remains very formidable. The perception of U.S. influence often is greater than the reality but in Central America that is both an asset and liability: it enables us to more easily achieve some of our objectives, but it also stimulates a negative and reactive nationalism among some and a "Fanonian" immaturity among others.²

The U.S. commitment to human rights and democratization is clearly and widely understood. The military governments that once felt they could serve the U.S. interest in stability in whatever way they wanted now feel inhibited from using violence or torture to suppress political opposition or to eliminate guerrilla movements. As Torrijos likes to say, "After Carter, military dictators have to count to 10 before killing someone." Both the democratic opposition and the guerrillas seem intent on taking advantage of this new situation.

4. *Political Polarization.* Government-sanctioned counter-terrorism was the rule before the Carter Administration. Now, the military governments—like Somoza's—have begun harassing the middle. The left has done this as well. Polarization has increased as the middle has been forced to choose sides. If the opposition prevails in Nicaragua, the democratic middle in these other countries may conclude that it is time to throw their fate in with the guerrillas against the government.

5. *Transnational Linkages.* The extremes have obtained help, training, and encouragement from abroad. The military has obtained arms from the Israelis, Argentines, and the international black market. The left is getting increasing help from each other. A recent intelligence report suggests that the Cubans have also decided to encourage local—in this case, Honduran cadres—to assist in training and equipping their comrades, the TP faction of the Sandinistas.³

These conditions combine to present U.S. policy with two major problems, perhaps dilemmas:

1. How do we deal with the fact that the political middle is under attack from the two extremes? What can we do to effectively promote our human rights policy?

² Reference is to Frantz Fanon, an influential anti-colonial theorist and author.

³ Not further identified. An October 17 CIA Intelligence Information Cable reported that Cubans had instructed a high-level member of the PCH to begin preparations for assisting in the training of members of the FSLN's GPP faction in Honduran territory. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 38, Nicaragua Cables: 10/14-22/78)

2. How do we reconcile our goal of wanting to discard a century of U.S. paternalism with a need and an instinct to try to manage events rather than let them manage us?

Regardless of the outcome in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala will continue to be plagued by polarization. The left will harass, and the right will repress, creating more support for the left. The political dynamic is almost inevitable. Moreover, whatever happens in Nicaragua will spill over to its neighbors, and indeed it already has.

II. *How to Tackle the Issues? A Conceptual Framework*

If I may borrow one of your analytic modes, I think the problem of Central America can be best understood by viewing it in three concentric circles:

1. The internal political upheavals in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala.

2. The relationship of those countries with each other and with Costa Rica and Panama. (Dealing not only with the problem of international terrorism, but also with the El Salvador-Honduras border dispute, Belize, and the Central American Common Market.)

3. The larger relationship of Central America to the U.S., Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and the Caribbean.

A. Our *goals* are the following:

1. *Internal Politics in Central America.*

(a) Strengthen the democratic center in each country and the links between these groups in different countries.

(b) Provide an atmosphere conducive to the eventual evolution of democratically-elected governments.

(c) Encourage a more equitable distribution of wealth and the necessary socio-economic reforms which will permit this.

2. *Central America*

Our goals are to strengthen the peace by assisting in the settlement of long-standing territorial disputes and to promote economic cooperation and integration.

3. *Caribbean Basin*

Our goals have been spelled out in the President's Caribbean policy.

The first circle—internal politics in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala—is the most urgent, but we will not have a coherent and positive policy until we have begun to address all three sets of problems associated with each concentric circle.

B. Our *means* for pursuing these goals are considerable. We have relatively large bilateral assistance programs to these small and poor

countries, and a large proportion of the loans they receive from the Inter-American Development Bank are concessional (from FSO) over which we have a veto. This leverage has in the past translated into real influence. For example, our decision to withhold support for a loan to build a hydroelectric project in El Salvador last year led the government to lift the state of siege. Unfortunately, we continue to deal with aid and loans one at a time without any overall strategic approach.

Perhaps the most important source of U.S. influence is simply U.S. symbolic support, including Presidential attention. An expression of interest by the President in the 10-year-old El Salvador-Honduras border dispute encouraged the Hondurans to ratify a mediation agreement in September 1977 (during the Canal Treaty signing in Washington). I would guess that a small touch by the President at a well-timed moment could have a large impact on this area. (We may want to factor into a future review the possibility of a short visit by the President—perhaps as a follow-on to a Mexico trip—to the area, and to stimulate negotiations on El Salvador-Honduras, Belize, or on economic integration to try to reach a conclusion before that. Such a visit would also help to restore some sense of stability to a region still rocking with Nicaragua.)

III. *A U.S. Strategy for Central America*

I think Central America is a powder keg of instability which could blow up and take with it Carter's Latin American policy. The scenario is the same as what may face us in Nicaragua: a choice between supporting an unpopular military dictator or intervening to prevent a Communist take-over. Neither alternative is satisfactory, but in order to face a different choice, we have to begin developing a strategy *now* to mobilize U.S. influence in support of the goals listed above.⁴ We currently have no strategy and are doing nothing positive which contributes to the realization of these goals except in an ad hoc fashion. We are reacting to events at points of relatively little influence; we need to get in front of the political process in Central America rather than get pulled along by it.

I have spoken to Vaky, and he agrees on the urgency of this matter and its great importance, but he doesn't think that his Bureau has the capability of handling it now. He suggested that I work on it with Richard Feinberg of Policy Planning in State. I don't think we can wait, and if there are few people in State who can work on it, we can turn to the Agency *and* to our Embassies for support. Indeed, I think it

⁴ An unknown hand underlined the word "now."

would be very useful to involve our Embassies in this exercise as fully as possible.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That you agree that Central America is an area which requires our urgent attention.⁵

2. That you approve, in principle, my drafting a terms of reference for inter-agency review with Vaky and Policy Planning (Richard Feinberg). The terms of reference will proceed directly from the analytic framework suggested in this memo, but I will send the final version to you for your approval when it is completed.⁶

3. Would you like me to draft a short memo from you to the President on this subject?⁷

⁵ According to a handwritten notation in the left-hand margin, Aaron supported this recommendation and the subsequent one.

⁶ Brzezinski approved this recommendation and wrote: "PRM." Inderfurth wrote in the right-hand margin: "Why not a PRM?"

⁷ Next to this recommendation, Inderfurth wrote: "Alternatively, have Bob reduce this to one page for use in this week's WR as an 'Alert' item." According to a handwritten notation below Inderfurth's comment, Aaron supported this recommendation. Brzezinski indicated his approval of it by writing, "OK. ZB." Brzezinski also wrote: "1 page alert"—RI—WR" beneath the approval line. Inderfurth wrote an additional note to Brzezinski and Aaron: "ZB/DA, I also suggest that Turner be tasked with preparing an intelligence assessment on prospects for instability in Central America. Rick."

464. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 4, 1979

SUBJECT

PRM on Central America (C)

The situation in Central America is growing more and more ominous, and if anything, the attached PRM² should have begun months ago, as we had originally requested of the State Department. The Cubans, in my mind, have clearly escalated their degree of involvement in Central America. Reliable intelligence reports suggest that Castro met for an extended period of time last month with the three leaders of the Sandinistas factions.³ Apparently, he was successful in persuading them to unify their efforts, and the result is an escalation in violence in Nicaragua. (S)

What is more disturbing is that the Cubans are encouraging the Sandinistas to increase their cooperation with the guerrilla groups in Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The time for a more active strategy for the United States in Central America is now.⁴ I have drafted a PRM and it is cleared by State. Vaky requested that I delete a paragraph which requested recommendations on ways the USG, working through international organizations or directly through U.S. organizations like the Federal Election Commission, could assist governments in Central America to manage free elections or, if requested, monitor or supervise them. He asked that I send this item as a separate tasker, and unless you object, I will draft such a memorandum for Christine to send to Tarnoff.⁵ (S)

The State Department has already begun work on the Central America PRM; your signing of the PRM at Tab I will formalize the process.⁶ You will recall that you originally approved a PRM on Central

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46 (1). Secret. Sent for action. Aaron wrote at the top of the page: "Bob—Cut down the PRM to a page and half. DA" and "substance is OK. DA."

² Attached but not printed is a draft PRM on Central America.

³ Not found.

⁴ An unknown hand underlined the word "now."

⁵ Not found.

⁶ Under an April 14 memorandum, Tarnoff sent Brzezinski a copy of the Department's suggested revised text for the PRM on Central America. (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46 (1))

America in a memo I sent you on October 23, 1978 (Tab A); State requested a delay at that time.⁷ Subsequently, the President approved the idea of a Central American PRM in a memo that the Vice President sent to him on April 2, 1979, after his trip to Latin America.⁸ (S)

RECOMMENDATION: That you sign the memorandum at Tab I.⁹ (Tab A should *not* be forwarded.)

⁷ Tab A is not attached. See Document 463.

⁸ Not found.

⁹ Brzezinski neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation. For the final version of the PRM, see Document 465.

465. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, May 2, 1979

SUBJECT

PRM on Central America (S)

At David's request,² I have cut the PRM on Central America in half. It is attached at Tab I for your signature. (S)

Vaky has accepted my suggestion, and is holding a Chiefs of Mission Conference for our Ambassadors to the Central American Governments in San Jose, May 16–18, 1979. I suggested to him that we should directly involve our Ambassadors in the PRM process in order to obtain from them a better sense of the feasibility of different approaches and also to involve them in the policy so that they will be better prepared to implement it. He has asked me to go down with him to the conference, and I think that since this is a National Security Council exercise, and since we have been pressing State to pay closer attention to the problems of Central America, that I should go. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC–46 (1). Secret. Sent for action.

² See footnote 1, Document 464.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That you sign the PRM at Tab I.³

That you approve my travelling to the Central American Chiefs of Mission Conference, May 16–18, 1979.⁴

Tab I

Presidential Review Memorandum/NSC–46⁵

Washington, May 4, 1979

TO

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO

The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Commerce
The Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Special Representative for Trade Negotiations
The Administrator, Agency for International Development
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

Review of U.S. Policies Toward Central America (S)

The President has directed the Policy Review Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of U.S. policy for Central America. Our goal is to develop a coherent set of policies toward each of the countries and toward the region as a whole that will more effectively promote our interests which include the development of democratic societies, the observance of human rights, the ending or diminution of violence and terrorism, and the denial of the region to forces hostile to the U.S. Among the goals leading to the promotion of these interests are the economic and social development of the countries in the region,

³ Brzezinski approved this recommendation and an unknown hand wrote: "ZB signed 5/4/79."

⁴ Brzezinski approved this recommendation. An unknown hand added the following at the bottom of the page: "DA revised Tab I." For more information about the Chiefs of Mission Conference, see Document 466.

⁵ Secret.

increased regional cooperation, the development of a viable, democratic middle in the four northern countries of Central America. (S)

Under the direction of the Secretary of State, a paper should be prepared which analyzes the problems in the countries and in the region, including the impact of the situation in Nicaragua on the region, and the distinctive causes of violence and instability in each country. (S)

The review should discuss specific policies which the USG should consider to each nation and to the region as a whole to further the goals and interests described above. The policies should address regional issues such as economic integration and cooperation, and disputes among countries of the region. It should propose specific policies or positions toward key groups in the region including guerrilla groups, and toward countries outside the region that influence or assist these groups. (S)

The review should include recommendations on how best to involve other countries outside the region, including Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, the Caribbean, Canada, the UK and Israel, in the broad effort to promote the goals described. (S)

The Secretary of State should chair the Policy Review Committee, and the review should be based on a 20-page paper, exclusive of appendices, to be transmitted to the National Security Council by June 1, 1979.⁶ (S)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

⁶ For information concerning the final, revised response to PRM 46, see footnote 2, Document 468.

466. Telegram From the Embassy in Costa Rica to the Department of State¹

San José, May 18, 1979, 2112Z

2098. Department pass all American Republic diplomatic posts except San Jose. Subj: Conclusions of U.S. Chiefs of Mission in Central America.

1. (Secret-Entire text)

2. The following are the major conclusions of the Chiefs of Mission and Charges from Central America, Panama and Venezuela meeting May 17–18 in San Jose with Assistant Secretary Vaky and other Washington officials.

3. The northern tier of Central America is in crisis. Despite country differences, the region is gripped by a polarizing dynamic of violence, repression and radicalization. Pessimism is pervasive, and political uncertainty is unusually high.

4. Three trends in the subregion are particularly worrisome:

—Government leadership is generally mediocre;

—Institutions of all kinds—from public order and social services to press and political parties—are being undermined by socio-economic pressures, human rights violations and terrorism;

—Domestic deterioration and international uncertainties are expanding opportunities for anti-American activities and inviting external intervention.

5. We are part of the problem. Central Americans of all persuasions see us as uninformed, vacillating in our response to developments, and adding to the quicksand around them by withdrawing from the region.

6. The Central American crisis matters profoundly to U.S. security, self-image and values.

7. Our first priority must be to put our own house in order. Whatever policies emerge from the PRM process² should:

—Reverse perceptions of U.S. withdrawal (positive local reactions to this COM meeting demonstrate this can be accomplished in many ways);

—Clarify our objectives (and make clear that no one, least of all Somoza, speaks for us);

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790226–0916. Secret; Immediate.

² See Document 465.

—Broaden our contacts, improving our understanding of left and right extremes as well as centrists and moderates.

8. Once we have reached agreement among ourselves (and this will require closer consultations with Congress), we should move to help address underlying components of the Central American crisis as identified para 4. Without prejudging the PRM process, we believe the long-term challenge centers on the forging of legal/institutional processes capable of expressing greater social and political pluralism in an orderly fashion. Elections, political parties, public administration, and military institutions must all be factored in, as must the regional integration movement and the cooperation of neighboring democracies.

9. The deepest social crisis is that of El Salvador, but the unsettled situation in Nicaragua is the chief political catalyst for regional turmoil. The longer the succession crisis festers in Nicaragua, the greater the breakdown of authority, the greater the spillover of violence, and the greater the likelihood that Cuba will be drawn into a situation beyond either our control or that of our democratic allies.

10. We are preparing regional and country strategies for the PRM that will address these issues, including consultations with Congress, leadership development, institutional linkages, resource needs, and the timing of specific initiatives in particular countries.

Weissman

467. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Aaron), and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, May 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Central America in Crisis: A Priority Challenge for U.S. Foreign Policy (C)

The Central American Chiefs of Mission Conference,² which was held last week in Costa Rica, was a timely and important opportunity to focus the USG's attention on an area in a state of revolutionary ferment. The purpose of the conference was to address the questions described in PRM-46 (on Central America),³ to test the practicality of ideas and proposals originating in Washington (Vaky and I), and give our Ambassadors in the field a better sense of our thinking and a larger role in the policy-making process. All these purposes were achieved; the dialogue in the conference was enormously useful in advancing our thinking on the subject. *I left the conference with a better feeling for the nature of the region's crisis, more specific ideas on ways to tackle them, and a firm belief that these issues are among the most important you, Secretary Vance, and the President will face this summer. Let me explain why.* (S)

After his meeting with Lopez Portillo, Castro is reported to have said that while Cuba will not export revolution to Central America, and it doesn't need to, indigenous forces are steering the region in his direction. As the attached study on Cuba's role in Central America, which I asked the CIA to do, indicates, Castro's statement is a little disingenuous.⁴ Since last fall, and most discernably since the beginning

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 54, PRM/NSC-46 (1). Secret. Sent for information and action. An unknown hand wrote on June 6: "David has copy." Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "RP—I agree with your basic thesis—but need a better sense of the strategy required for dealing with this problem. ZB."

² For more information about the Chiefs of Mission Conference, see Document 466.

³ See Document 465.

⁴ Attached but not printed is a memorandum prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, May 2, about Cuban support for Central American guerrilla groups. In a July 3 note to Pastor, Middleton referred to this memorandum, noting: "This is the document that was leaked to the press." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 13, Cuba: 6/79) Reporter John Maclean quoted portions of this memorandum in a story entitled "Cuba and Panama Giving Aid to Somoza's Foes: U.S. Memo," *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1979, p. 1. See also, John Maclean, "'Cubans all over, U.S. nowhere,' in Caribbean," *Chicago Tribune*, July 1, 1979, p. 11.

of 1979, Castro has stepped up the level and the kinds of Cuban involvement in the region. He clearly has reassessed Cuba's interests and possibilities in the region, and concluded, as he admitted in Mexico, that Central America is ripe for revolution. (S)

Castro's tactics have been to encourage unity among revolutionary groups within each country and cooperation and coordination across borders. He is training more guerrillas in Cuba, passing more arms, spending more time with these leaders than a year before. In March, he spent nearly 48 hours with the leaders of the three Sandinista guerrilla factions in an effort to unify them around a central directorate and a single strategy. He has urged them and other guerrilla groups to tone down their Marxist rhetoric and to recruit support from the middle by setting up broad national front organizations. (S)

Despite increasing domestic and international demands on his time, Castro has decided to redirect his energies to his home turf. He is smart enough to have waited until the "correlation of forces" was moving in his favor. They are moving away from us. Because of that and because of his shrewdness, we will have to double our efforts to promote our interests and prevent one, two, or more Cubas emerging in Central America. (S)

Besides the transnational ties among guerrilla groups, the individual country pictures look extremely grim:

—In *El Salvador*, the military government is running scared with good reason. Unlike in Nicaragua where the source of the conflict is the continuation of a dynasty, Salvador faces a genuine class struggle. Salvador is the poorest, the most illiterate and over-populated country in Central America. A small group of reactionary families control most of the nation's wealth and have kept the military in power to defend their interests (which are defined very narrowly) and to control the masses. The fear of another peasant revolt as occurred in the 1930's when the army slaughtered over 30,000 peasants, is still very real, but the response of the military and the oligarchy is to try to keep a lid on it. The massacre of May 8 is a symptom of this bigger problem; the kettle could blow if the government doesn't find new and credible ways to release the steam.⁵ (S)

—In *Guatemala*, the country is run by a sinister group of army officers, who have been assassinating all important moderate politicians in the country. The extreme left is filling the vacuum created by these assassinations. (S)

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 373.

—*Honduras* is the least sophisticated and developed nation. The military group running the country have promised free elections next year, but they have also proscribed the Christian Democratic party. (S)

—*Nicaragua* is engulfed in a civil war with both Somoza and the Sandinistas still believing they can win a military solution. (U)

Polarization is the dominant political phenomenon as the middle is assassinated, intimidated or driven to the left. As the governments become more repressive, the extreme left gets bolder and we are left without anyone or anything to support. The objective of the PRM is to develop a strategy which will get us back in the game, to steer events towards outcomes more compatible with our interests.

The problem of Central America is somewhat similar to that of Rhodesia in that we find ourselves squeezed between two unacceptable extremes (the Cubans and the South Africans in Rhodesia; the right and left in Central America); Central America is different because it is closer, and we are more exposed. A "loss" to Cuba in Central America will be as fatal to the President's domestic political position as U.S. military intervention would be fatal to his Latin American policy. The PRM is intended to prevent both scenarios. *To succeed, we will need your closest attention in early June—before the Vienna Summit—when the PRM is ready.* (S)

Let me alert you to the strategy which is emerging and sketch some of the decisions that will need to be made. U.S. policy to the region is not understood very well, and the logic (and the law) of our human rights policy is forcing us to abandon the region to the extremes. We need to adopt a more activist policy toward El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and suggest a dialogue in which we would increase the level of our support and assistance (economic and security aid, visitor programs, scholarships, high-level visits), if the leaders agreed to take certain important steps that would broaden the base of political participation in the country (depriving the left of the middle). At the same time, we will increase our contacts and symbolic support for the middle in these countries and in Nicaragua, and encourage the basin democracies (Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Caribbean) to do the same. We are currently trying to identify those political decisions in each country which could most effectively open the system for the middle (defined not just as people, groups, and institutions, but also as a democratic, non-violent process). (S)

To increase our leverage, we should also consider a dialogue with the MDB's and other donors to see whether a Central American Group (modelled on the Caribbean Group) could be established. This would

not only help in coordinating aid policies, but it could give us an additional leverage to use in pursuing the political dialogue. (S)

I would appreciate some feedback on whether you agree with my assessment that Central America deserves high priority, not just in my work but in yours. (U)

468. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Aaron), and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, June 8, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC on Central America—Monday, June 11, 1979, 4:00 p.m. (U)

1. Overview

The PRC on Central America could not be more timely, occurring at the moment when it is urgent for the USG to devise an answer to the central question posed by the PRM (attached at Tab A): Can we find a strategy to preserve and strengthen the middle (groups and democratic process) in a region spiraling downward in violence toward political polarization?² If we fail to construct an effective strategy, we may soon face the prospect of leftist governments in the region or the necessity of US intervention—the first will be unacceptable politically in the US, and the second would toll the death of the President's Latin American policy. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 76, PRC 111, 6/11/1979, Central America. Secret. Sent for information. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it. For the minutes of the June 11 PRC meeting, see Document 469.

² Not attached. The 40-page revised response to PRM 46 entitled "U.S. Policies toward Central America" is in the Carter Library, Donated Material, Papers of Walter F. Mondale, Presidential Review Memoranda (PRMs), Numbers 1–46, Box 97, PRM 46: U.S. Policy Toward Central America, (6/8/79).

The PRM provides a lot to discuss and decide in a short time. In this cover memo, I will follow the proposed agenda for the meeting and propose some specific outcomes under each heading. (U)

2. US Objectives

In addition to the more general US objectives which are listed on page 6 of the PRM and should be ratified by the PRC, let me suggest that you identify several more specific, instrumental objectives or optimal outcomes which could serve as goals toward which we can concentrate our energies and resources.³ These optimal outcomes include:

—Throughout the region, a strengthening of centrist groups and the linkages among them, and a swing toward democratization. (S)

—A resolution of the Honduran-Salvadorean border dispute, progress on the Belize dispute, and a new vigorous phase of regional economic cooperation. (S)

—In *Nicaragua*, an early and orderly departure of Somoza in favor of a broad-based coalition, or failing that, preparatory moves toward a 1981 electoral process in which broad sectors of the moderate opposition will participate. (S)

—In *El Salvador*, a political opening leading to meaningful elections for parliament in March 1980 or earlier, if possible, and the presidency in 1982. (S)

—In *Honduras*, the free and fair elections for constituent assembly (permitting the participation of the Christian Democratic Party) in April 1980, leading to a civilian presidency. (S)

—In *Guatemala*, an end to political assassination, as part of a process creating an atmosphere for meaningful presidential elections in 1982. (S)

The reason why you need to identify these goals is simply that until now, our Ambassadors have lacked purpose in their communications with government officials, and this necessarily has made our

³ The eight objectives listed in the response to PRM 46 (see footnote 2, above) were: "movement toward more open political systems, free elections, and democratic processes; strengthening of centrist and moderate groups and the linkages among them; a diminution in the appeal and power of radical elements and Castro-linked groups; economic and social development which would improve the services and opportunities available to the people, and reduce the vulnerabilities and frustrations that lead to political tensions; renewed momentum toward greater regional economic cooperation and integration as an effective framework to foster modernization and reduce intra-regional tensions, including demographic problems; better observance of human rights, an end to terrorism from both left and right, and a cessation of such practices as political assassination and torture; resolution of the area's international conflicts, especially the Honduras-El Salvador dispute; and a friendly perception of the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with us for larger goals, including strategic considerations related to both the Panama Canal and the hemisphere's security." (Ibid.)

policies seem scatter-shot, incoherent, and inconsistent. With a more specific focus, our Ambassadors could begin altering the mindset of local officials. This would not only improve the prospects of reform in the region, it would also help our image considerably, and thus enhance our influence. (S)

3. Approach and Strategies to the Region

While the thrust of our policies must be directed to national situations, there are, in addition, a number of approaches we must use in all the countries. The PRM is right on the mark when it recommends (p. 8) that we take steps to revise perceptions of US withdrawal, vacillation or disinterest. The logic of our human rights policy is causing us to dissociate from the repressive governments. We can reverse that only if we successfully sell the following formula to Congress and the Central American governments: The US is prepared to raise its profile and get involved in a positive way with economic aid, etc., if the governments demonstrate a commitment to socio-economic reforms and to broadening the base of political participation.⁴ If that formula is accepted, we need to take the following steps:

1. Begin a dialogue with Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Costa Rica and seek to get their support for a common approach, especially to strengthen centrist groups in the region.⁵ Our preference would be to play a supportive role to other initiatives, but we should be prepared to lead. (S)

2. Begin discussions with Western Europeans, Canadians, and Japanese on a common approach, and explore the idea of setting up a Central American Development Group (modeled on the Caribbean Group) to coordinate aid to the region, to encourage regional economic cooperation, and to provide added leverage in pursuit of our objectives. (S)

3. Publicly articulate a policy to the region, preferably during a visit to the region within a month by a high-level delegation (Vance or Christopher).⁶ (S)

4. Consult closely with Congress to explain what we are doing. (S)

5. Expand and intensify our contacts in the region—with centrist groups, regional institutions, government officials, and open contacts

⁴ Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁵ Brzezinski drew a vertical line, checkmark, and an arrow in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁶ Brzezinski drew a vertical line and an arrow in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

with army leaders and directly or, through intermediaries, with leftist groups.⁷ (S)

6. Send a blunt warning to Cuba and to all other countries (Israel, Argentina, etc.) that are supplying arms to the region, and explore the possibility of sub-regional arms restraint.⁸ (S)

7. Strengthen and expand our Embassy representation in the region. (S)

4. National Strategies

While Nicaragua may be the key to the Central American crisis and will probably occupy a good share of time during the discussion at the beginning, I strongly recommend that we leave a discussion of US strategy to Nicaragua until the end of the PRC meeting. Otherwise, Nicaragua will so dominate the discussion that we will find little time left for anything else. This can be done because each national strategy is reasonably self-contained. (S)

—*El Salvador*. The preliminary steps listed on p. 14 are sound and necessary.⁹ As to the tactical question—whether to begin by giving a carrot or withholding it for more concessions by the Salvadorean government—I would recommend combining the two options in the PRM.¹⁰ Clearly, we need a policy which will provide our support contingent on credible steps toward reform on the part of the Salvadorean government. We should match their words with ours, their steps with our steps. We should fully discuss the steps we propose to take

⁷ Brzezinski drew a vertical line and a checkmark in the left-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁸ Brzezinski bracketed this sentence and drew an arrow pointing to the brackets in the right-hand margin next to this sentence.

⁹ The strategies toward El Salvador noted on page 17 (not page 14, as noted in Pastor's memorandum) in the response to PRM 46 (see footnote 2, above) were: "Public definition by us that we believe dialogue and internal accommodation and reform offer the only peaceful solution to the nation's problems, and an announcement by us that we will support efforts by the Government and the opposition to this end; We would tell Romero the same thing, define for him the things he should do—electoral reform, amnesty, wider political participation; We would increase our contacts with economic/business/military elements that currently support Romero to gain their support or acquiescence for a process of political opening; We would do the same thing with labor, the PDC and the MNR, urging them to close ranks, participate in a meaningful dialogue and develop proposals for the Government to consider; We would seek out constituent elements of the BPR for the same purpose; We would make clear to the Government—and to other actors—that our support will be conditioned upon progress." (Ibid.)

¹⁰ The response to PRM 46 (see footnote 2, above) included two tactical options for El Salvador: "an 'encouragement' approach, which would involve some immediate indications of support as encouragement to enable Romero to move in the right direction, although on-going assistance and help would be directly related to progress" and "a 'reciprocal' approach, which would begin with a distanced posture and would extend support only after the Romero Government had taken steps." (Ibid.)

with a mix of opposition groups to make sure it will not diminish our credibility and that the steps are viewed as significant by them. We should be guided by their advice, but we should err on the side of the positive, try to lead with a carrot rather than a stick. *Our peg is free legislation and municipal elections in March 1980*, but we should be prepared to explore the possibility of earlier elections. (S)

—*Guatemala*. Our objectives include human rights, social reforms, free elections, and a more cooperative foreign policy. I would recommend a more active, higher profile approach along the lines suggested by the steps on page 20.¹¹ (S)

—*Honduras*. As a country with no significant violence and a sustained interest in development, we should single out Honduras for an aid “bonus,” and encourage the government to permit a free, civilian election in April 1980. (S)

—*Nicaragua*. To the extent that it is possible, we should focus on the medium-term issue described in the PRM: how to guide the Nicaraguan political process through the difficult problem of political succession from personal dynastic rule. This assumes that the current violence in Nicaragua represents the second more violent cycle of crisis in Nicaragua, and that Somoza and the National Guard will emerge battered, hopefully shaken, and intact in a few weeks. I believe this to be the case. If there is time, it would be useful to discuss what we should do if the National Guard disintegrates in the next couple of weeks and Somoza leaves, but frankly, such scenarios are best dealt with when there is some probability of them happening. (S)

¹¹ Brzezinski drew a vertical line and a checkmark in the left-hand margin next to this sentence. The response to PRM 46 (see footnote 2, above) included three possible levels of engagement regarding Guatemala: a “*low profile policy of as normal relations as are consistent with human rights conditions and simply wait to see what happens*,” “*somewhat more active steps of discussing human rights/assassination questions with the Lucas regime to seek an improvement in this situation, increasing contacts with enlightened elements in the military and society in general to stimulate support for a fair election and a civilian President in 1982*,” or a “*more active posture*” informing Lucas about “*steps to end political assassination and official involvement in violence*” including: “*centralization of intelligence and anti-subversive activities in a single office with clear prohibition on use of torture, with immediate notification of all arrests to that office and open access to that information*; and prohibit hiring of regular military personnel by private landowners,” and “*the naming of a highly respected special prosecutor to pursue investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the Fuentes Mohr and Colom Argueta assassinations*.” (Ibid.)

I would recommend a strategy that combines elements of options #2 and #3 (p. 10).¹² Our new Ambassador should get there immediately and begin working with the moderate opposition to restore their confidence and our credibility. He should be equally frank with Somoza: unless all sides fashion a moderate political transition (which does not include Somoza) within three months, Nicaragua will probably fall to the Sandinistas. We cannot expect Somoza to accept the prospect of his departure until everything is nailed down. We need to orchestrate international pressure in a way which doesn't back him into the wall, but instead gives him a "silver bridge." We should think about engaging conservatives like Charlie Wilson in this task. We need to expand and intensify our contacts in Nicaragua to include discussions with the Sandinistas and the National Guard. (S)

In addition, we should increase the level of our emergency assistance for the Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras, but also in Costa Rica. (S)

5. *Conclusions*

The most important instrument we have in our arsenal of influencing developments in Central America is "legitimacy," which happens to be the one commodity the governments in the area lack. Increased aid will be important to serve our objectives, but not so much as making our objectives public and clear, extending and intensifying our contacts, and relying on the astuteness of our Ambassadors. While I know you leave the question of representation to State, I really think you ought to at least pose the question at the PRC meeting: Do we have our best FSO's and Ambassadors in Central America? If not, shouldn't we move them there? The fact is that our representation in the area is our weakest, and we are paying the price for it.¹³ (S)

¹² Brzezinski underlined "#2 and #3 (p. 10)" in this sentence. The response to PRM 46 (see footnote 2, above) included four basic options regarding Nicaragua: 1) "Support Somoza to put down the Sandinista insurrection and eliminate the danger of external intervention, then seek a transition formula with Somoza and the centrist forces;" 2) "Seek first to convince Somoza to negotiate his early departure, then work to design a transition for a successor government. Stand ready to isolate him if he refuses;" 3) "Take an active lead now to catalyze a negotiated transition, dealing with all sides, offering to help and proposing ideas;" 4) "Remain neutral, disassociate from Somoza, let nature take its course and wait for a future opportunity to re-engage." (Ibid.)

¹³ Brzezinski placed two vertical lines and an arrow in the left-hand margin next to this and the previous sentence and wrote at the bottom of the page: "Why not propose a Central American Confederation?"

469. Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, June 11, 1979, 3:30–5:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

Central America

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary
David Newsom, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs
Frank Ortiz, Ambassador to Guatemala
Lawrence Pezzullo, Ambassador to Nicaragua

OSD

Charles Duncan, Deputy Secretary
ADM Gordon Schuller, Director, Inter-American Region

JCS

Lt General William Smith, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director
[*name not declassified*] Office of Political Analysis

OMB

Dr. John White, Deputy Director
Bowman Cutter, Executive Associate Director of Budget

AID

Robert Nooter, Acting Administrator
Abelardo Valdez, Assistant Administrator for Latin American Bureau

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

NSC

Robert Pastor

MINUTES

U.S. Policies to Central America. Warren Christopher opened the meeting by suggesting that since the section in the PRM background paper on U.S. interests and objectives (page 6) was so general, he assumed that it was not objectionable.² He asked whether there were

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 76, PRC–111 6/11/79 Central America. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 3, Document 468.

any comments on this section, and if not, perhaps the discussion should shift directly to country-by-country strategies. (S)

Deputy Secretary Charles Duncan suggested that the first objective should be "the reduction of violence and instability in the region," and that we should give highest priority to that. Only after there is a stable foundation can we begin to talk about moving "toward more open political systems." (S)

Christopher said that he was less certain about the sequence. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski took exception with Mr. Duncan's remark. He said that we should begin with the statement on the need to move "toward more open political systems" as this is an appropriate chapeau, which incorporates all of the other objectives. (S)

Mr. Duncan accepted the objective "a reduction of violence and instability" as the second objective which should be listed on page 6, and all agreed with that. (S)

General Smith, however, suggested that a philosophical issue is at stake—a question between the need for orderly change, or just change for the sake of change. He and Mr. Duncan agreed that the first priority needs to be to calm the situation in Central America. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski repeated his suggestion that that objective be the second one, and all agreed. (S)

Nicaragua

At Christopher's request, Ambassador Vaky provided an assessment of the state of affairs in Nicaragua. Vaky said that there is currently a stand-off between the FSLN and the National Guard, but that the National Guard could probably last out the violence. However, the Sandinista strength has increased to some degree. The polarization between the extremes has also increased. A valid question is whether Somoza can hold out until 1981. The conflict is becoming particularly dangerous because of the internationalization of the arms flow to both sides, and the prospect that other countries could enter the conflict. (S)

In response to a question from General Smith about whether the real problem in Nicaragua right now is the increasing violence, Ambassador Vaky said that is not the case. The issue is Somoza—a personal, dynastic problem. The problem is how to address the need for a transition of power from Somoza to someone else; that is the only place to look for an answer. (S)

Mr. Carlucci agreed with Mr. Vaky's assessment. The question is not if Somoza will fall, but when and under what circumstances. While Somoza may get through the current fighting, Carlucci wondered how much longer he would be able to survive. The Center in Nicaragua is being chewed up. The left is much stronger than before. The possibility

of a revolutionary council-style of government is very real. The Cubans have also escalated the degree of their involvement. (S)

In response to a question from Mr. Christopher about whether Carlucci's assessment represented a revision of a previous assessment of Somoza's staying power, Carlucci said it did. It is now unlikely that Somoza will be able to last until 1981 according to the CIA. (S)

Mr. Newsom interjected that the National Guard is also having trouble recruiting at this time, and this could be an important factor. (S)

Carlucci speculated that Somoza could go as a result of a seizure of power in Managua by the FSLN, or it could happen from a coup from within the National Guard. However, the choices for the National Guard at this time are not very comforting, and he thinks it is too early to consider the possibility of a coup from within the Guard. (S)

Christopher said that a set of new circumstances required that the U.S. adopt new decisions for Nicaragua. He noted a recent report that the Presidents of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador had met recently with Somoza, and the subject was probably how and under what circumstances they would help Somoza prevent a Sandinista victory.³ Furthermore, the internationalization of support for the Sandinistas is a very serious problem. Thirdly, there is a greater likelihood that the radicals will seize power, and that these radicals will be closely allied with Cuba. The newest and most important element is the inability of Somoza to maintain law and order until 1981. The problem is essentially how do we help a peaceful transition emerge. (S)

Duncan said that the reason that Somoza cannot maintain law and order until 1981 is the Sandinistas. They exist because of the support they are getting from Cuba, Panama, and Costa Rica, which permits the Sandinistas refuge. He asked whether we shouldn't lean on these countries, and also on Somoza to calm the violence. (S)

Christopher said that even if we were able to stop arms flow to the Sandinistas, the basic problem would remain. He reported that the Andean group had adopted a strong resolution on Nicaragua, and sent two Foreign Ministers (from Venezuela and Ecuador) to Managua to meet with Somoza. Ambassador Bowdler met with the two Foreign Ministers in San Jose, and apparently the Foreign Ministers really

³ In telegram 3692 from Guatemala City, June 11, the Embassy reported that an American businessman had informed the Embassy of a June 9 meeting in Guatemala among Lucas, Paz, and Somoza: "This would seem to support information from other quarters of a discussion here, at Lucas' invitation, by 'Northern Tier' leaders of what next in Nicaragua." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790266–1091)

hadn't thought through their objectives.⁴ They seemed to think that they could just talk Somoza out of the presidency. Nonetheless, Christopher said that he thought that the first point in the paper on "U.S. strategy on Nicaragua," which relates to the need to consult with the Andean nations, was the best place to start, and he asked whether there were any comments on this idea.⁵ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he thought the strategy paper was a good and useful one, but one way or another, it would be necessary to convey several basic points. What is needed at this time is a clear statement by the United States in favor of self-determination. The situation in Nicaragua is evolving in the midst of seeming ambiguity of U.S. policy. We need to clearly reaffirm our view that Nicaraguans should be permitted to exercise the right of self-determination and to have free elections. Secondly, we should explore with other nations in the Americas the possibility of inter-American peacekeeping force. In doing so, we should make clear that there really are two alternatives facing Nicaragua and the people of the Americas: (1) That the National Guard will win this time, but there will be another cycle of violence and repression; or (2) that the National Guard will disintegrate, and the left will seize power in Nicaragua with serious spillover implications for neighboring countries. (S)

Brzezinski said that he did not expect that the idea of an inter-American peace force would be accepted immediately, but it is important to get the nations of the Americans to start thinking about the idea. Moreover, it would be necessary to get the force in place in order to prevent the emergence of a political vacuum, and to assure the opportunity for Nicaraguans to make a clear determination on their political future. Thirdly, Dr. Brzezinski recommended that we issue a very tough statement against foreign intervention, and this should apply equally to Panama, Cuba and others helping the Sandinistas, as well as to any nations that might be helping the Nicaraguans. This would be consistent with the approach of this Administration against intervention in inter-American affairs, and it also is quite consistent with the draft strategy paper on Nicaragua, which Christopher has circulated. The important point is that the United States would not be

⁴ In telegram 2441 from San José, June 11, Bowdler sent Vaky a report on his meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Venezuela and Ecuador, who comprised the mediation mission to Nicaragua and Costa Rica approved by the Andean Pact. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 8, Central America PRC Meeting: 6/11/79) In telegram 5336 from Caracas, June 12, the Embassy included the text of the communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministers of Ecuador and Venezuela regarding Nicaragua. (Ibid.)

⁵ For the final version of this document, see Tab B, Document 470.

getting involved in Nicaragua by itself, but within the context of working with other nations in the Americas. (S)

Christopher agreed on the necessity of the U.S. going beyond the current apparent position of ambiguity. Somoza has been able to suggest that our policy wavers and is ambiguous. Christopher also agreed with Brzezinski's point about the need to condemn intervention coming from all sides. He asked for other views on the idea of a military force. (S)

Ambassador Vaky said that we should consult with other nations, but the idea of a military force should be the very last step and should only occur once a process is in motion, and once it is clear that it is within the context of a political transition and the departure of Somoza. Vaky suggested that we try to gain agreement from the Andean countries for introducing a specific resolution at the OAS, calling for either a plebiscite or whatever, calling for a cease-fire, an interdiction of arms, and perhaps the sending of a high-level mission to the area. It was necessary to make clear that we are talking about a process which did not include Somoza; it perhaps could include a mediation effort, but Brzezinski said it would have to be one "with teeth." Vaky stressed the need for looking at the OAS force only in the context of a solution to the succession problem. (S)

Brzezinski said that the force should also include the Brazilians or other governments from South America. This would also provide some reassurance to conservatives within Nicaragua. (S)

In response to a question about the chances of getting something like this accepted, Vaky said that it was not very likely to get a two-thirds vote. (S)

Pastor insisted that this idea should be broached not because we expect immediate acceptance, but as Dr. Brzezinski suggested, because we want to plant a seed now which could flower when we really need it. Moreover, we want the nations of the hemisphere to understand the intensity of our concern, and that will be conveyed by a discussion of a peace force. (S)

Christopher summarized by saying that he found Dr. Brzezinski's three points quite useful in sharpening the strategy paper, and he thought they should be incorporated. (S)

Newsom asked whether it is realistic to think that others will really consider military force, and Ambassador Pezzullo said that Somoza is much more of a pariah in the Hemisphere than is thought in the United States. The situation in the OAS is not really that divided. Somoza has alienated so many people that he has even given anti-Communism a bad name. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that in connection with the positive political program, this strategy gives others an opportunity to think of an alternative other than violence or a revolutionary take-over. (S)

Christopher pointed to 4(a) on the strategy paper and asked the other members of the PRC what the U.S. should do if other nations in the Americas do not join with us. Should we do it ourselves? (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we don't need to address this question at this time. We should reassess this question if and when others decide not to go along. (S)

Vaky asked whether Pezzullo, when he arrives, should engage in conversations to these ends right away. (S)

Pezzullo said that there really was no choice. If he arrived and did not engage in conversations, this would imply indifference to their problems. (S)

Christopher asked whether Pezzullo's arrival should be delayed until after the OAS meeting, and Vaky said that he should go down right away to provide the kind of leadership necessary in our Embassy. (S)

In summarizing, Christopher said that the elements of the U.S. strategy, plus Dr. Brzezinski's three points, produced an option somewhat between options 2 and 3 in the PRM paper. In addition, we should talk with the Cubans and also with Torrijos to try to stop the flow of arms to the Sandinistas, and we should issue a statement, perhaps at the OAS, on non-intervention. If Torrijos thought that our position was no longer ambiguous, he could conceivably be more cooperative. Carlucci asked whether this would imply that we should ask the Israelis to also cut their arms sales to Nicaragua, *[less than 1 line not declassified]* explained that in fact they had sent a full cargo ship recently to the government of Nicaragua. (S)

Brzezinski asked whether or not we could get an OAS resolution on an embargo, and Vaky thought that we could not get one right away. Rather, we should try to get a resolution asking others to desist from transferring arms, and perhaps later on this resolution could be enforced. (S)

Christopher said that we had raised the issue of who should speak with the Israelis at an earlier meeting, and Secretary Vance had felt that the time was not appropriate. He said he believed the time would never be appropriate with the Israelis, but this is as good a time as any. Dr. Brzezinski agreed that we should get in touch with the Israelis and ask them to stop transferring arms to Nicaragua. (S)

Ambassador Pezzullo said that we will be in a much stronger position at the meeting of Foreign Ministers if we have already communicated to those who transfer arms to the region. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski summarized his views again. If the situation is really as serious as the paper suggested, and he thought it was, and he also thought the paper was very good in explaining that, then, it is very important for us to register immediately the intensity of our concern

with other Latin American states. In that context, we should raise the issue of the inter-American peace force, but also stressing the importance of using this force to encourage the change and including the transition problem in Nicaragua. He does not expect that they will buy this idea, but they need to start thinking about it. Particularly, they ought to think about this inter-American force as an alternative to U.S. intervention. Secondly, it was important to try to get all parties to desist in the transfer of arms to the region, and to look into ways to enforce this. He thinks that the American people would be prepared to support an embargo around Nicaragua to stop the transfer of arms, but he wouldn't want to do it against the other Latin Americans since that would undo all that we have tried to do with the Canal Treaties. We should try to engage them in a cooperative effort. In that case, such an embargo would probably obtain needed support in the United States. Finally, he believes that the time has come for us to take a very strong position because the situation has become so serious. (S)

In response to a question from General Smith about what kinds of enforcement we should contemplate to stop the arms flow, Dr. Brzezinski said that we should be prepared to physically enforce the embargo. If we believe that this is a serious situation, and that the transfer of arms is having a negative impact on the situation, then we should try to get others to join with us to begin an embargo. (S)

Ambassador Vaky said that it would be easier to move into an embargo than into an OAS blockade which he didn't think stood any chance. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed that he didn't think a blockade was what he was talking about. (S)

In answer to a question from Pastor, Vaky said that he thought a peace force would be more likely than an embargo, although he was dubious about the possibility of getting either. He also thought that a peace force would be able to stop the arms flow in and of itself. (S)

Carlucci confirmed that the PRC discussion assumed that Somoza's departure was part of the process. All agreed with that statement. (S)

With regard to Brzezinski's point about the need for an election, Christopher said that should be our standard position, but we may have already reached a point where Somoza will have to step down, regardless of whether elections are possible. (S)

(Dr. Brzezinski left at this point.) (U)

David Aaron said that there is no other way. He said that he didn't expect the Latin Americans would do anything until we applied force. And we should always be prepared to do it ourselves. In reviewing the last mediation effort, Aaron said that he didn't think Somoza believed the U.S. would do anything when we suggested he stand aside, and for that reason he refused. (S)

Vaky and Pezzullo both agreed that the inter-American peace force would not be able to remove Somoza; its principal purpose would be to fill a possible vacuum. In summary, Christopher said that we should go down the path suggested by the strategy with Zbig's modifications, and also include a demarche to the Israelis. This will take several weeks, but we should aim for MFM next week, after full consultations. (S)

David Aaron said that there was a fair chance that in three days Somoza won't be there. He asked whether we shouldn't go out and do everything right now. Vaky said that there was less than a 20% chance that Somoza will be gone in that short a time. (S)

Christopher agreed that we should move on each of these elements in a strategy as rapidly as it can be done effectively. (S)

In response to a question from Vaky about whether we had done any contingency planning, Christopher said that DOD and JCS should look into contingencies under the assumption that the Guardia falls apart soon. (S)

Newsom said that the assumption underlying this strategy is that we would be assuming a major part of the responsibility for the process this time. (S)

David Aaron agreed with that statement, saying: "The peso stops here." (U)

El Salvador

Christopher introduced the second subject by saying that we need to have certain goals in mind as we pursue a strategy towards El Salvador. In particular, we need to seek free and fair elections and a greater commitment to human rights. To do so, we need to show Romero that we really care about these, and try to encourage him to take the necessary reforms. (S)

Vaky said that we are dealing with a relatively weak government in Salvador. President Romero has sought a dialogue with key elements, and has stated his intention to move towards free elections and to recreate a national consensus. The municipal and legislative elections of 1980 provide a peg for us to adopt a new strategy. The question is what tactics do we use. Should we strengthen Romero? If so, how? (S)

Christopher asked Pastor to comment, and Pastor said that we should let our strategy be guided to a certain extent by the views of certain opposition groups. We do not want to get in front of these opposition groups, or take steps which will lose either our credibility with this group, or diminish the credibility of the dialogue. Still, we want to err on the side of the positive, and lead with the carrot. We need to take steps on our side, but should only respond when it is clear that more than just words are coming from the Salvadorean president. We should match words with words, and steps with steps. (S)

Vaky said that we shouldn't let ourselves be hostage to any of the opposition groups. He said that Romero needs some indication of our support before he can go forward anymore. It is important that we make a public statement of our position, in favor of dialogue. (S)

Christopher said that Archbishop Romero is very important to such a strategy, but that he is hostile to the government. He asked whether or not President Romero can be reconstructed. (S)

Vaky said that the Archbishop has not condemned the government like the Archbishop of Managua has done to Somoza. Vaky said that if we had a process in motion, then the opposition is more likely to give the dialogue a chance. (S)

Christopher stressed the importance of not just approaching opposition groups, but the church as well. He expressed great concern about the terrifying repression in the country. He asked Vaky where such a statement should be made, and Vaky said that perhaps a speech would be the right vehicle, but he hadn't really thought that through yet. Nooter said that an aid loan was ready to be signed, but in answer to a question from Pastor, he said there was no need for it to be signed until October 1, 1979. (S)

Pastor asked whether a high-level visit wouldn't be the most appropriate vehicle for such a speech and for a new strategy as well. Newsom said that this may not be the most appropriate time for such a visit. (S)

Newsom said that the question is whether we should wait until a state of seige is lifted before going ahead with the aid loan. While the state of seige is on, it is difficult for us to sign such an aid loan. (S)

Vaky ticked off the number of steps that Romero has taken, including, and most importantly in his mind, the repeal of the public order law. (S)

Christopher said that we should make a statement on the signing of the aid loan, which is clearly one that encourages the Romero government to take more steps forward, and also makes clear to them what our expectations are. (S)

Vaky said that if Romero does not solve the problem now, he will be overthrown from the right, and estimated the chances of that would be about 60%. (S)

In answer to a question from General Smith about what the U.S. government and the Salvadorean government should do about terrorism, Vaky said that one of the avenues is to expand the dialogue. (S)

Christopher repeated that we should engage the church in the dialogue, and he hopes that the Ambassador will do that. (S)

Vaky said that a statement should be made soon. In answer to a question from Pastor about who is currently participating in the dialogue, and whether such a statement would not undermine our own

objectives, Vaky said that the Christian Democrats are not participating in the public dialogue, but the church and MNR are. (S)

Guatemala

Christopher said that the Guatemalan regime is a stable and conservative one, which apparently sanctions official assassinations. Recently, the Chief of Staff of the Army was assassinated. He was the one who had been implicated in the murder of two leading centrist politicians. (S)

Vaky said that it is not a popular government in Guatemala. Furthermore, there is some indication of government involvement in political assassinations. The MNR under Sandoval is certainly involved in certain political assassinations, and is connected with the government. Vaky also pointed to the problem of integrating the Indian population, which is a long-standing problem in Guatemala's history, and could lead soon, as it has in the past, to massacres. But at the same time, there is a growth of a middle class and of professional groups, which have been denied participation in the political process, but who want to participate. In the long term, the only chance for a stabilizing process in this country is to include these middle groups in a participatory process towards a credible election. This is not an urgent problem. Tactically, we have more time. But the question is the same: how do we get the government moving in a more positive direction? Vaky said that there is a guerrilla problem, but that is not that serious. But he said that official terrorism is much more of a problem, because many in the government suspect anyone or any group that suggests a change from the status quo. (S)

Christopher asked how do we encourage the Guatemalan government to move in positive directions. Vaky said that it really comes down to a tactical question: Do we insist that the Guatemalan government take certain steps, or do we take the lead? He said there are two immediate operational issues: one is for a \$6 million basic human needs rural enterprise loan, and the second is a request for a presidential helicopter, which will be unarmed, though armored. (S)

Duncan said that we should give them some encouragement. He said that we should give them the helicopter. (S)

Christopher said that we should give the basic human needs loan, but this does not necessarily imply that we should give a whole list of items to them. As to the helicopter, we should see if this produces any improvement in our relationship. Perhaps, we should give them the helicopter only if they are more helpful with Somoza. (S)

David Aaron said that was a serious recommendation. (U)

Ambassador Ortiz insisted that we have very little leverage with the Guatemalan government, and we shouldn't think that we have much or that this will affect them much. (S)

Christopher said that any aid that we give to them should be conditioned with a demarche restating our concern with officially sanctioned assassinations. (S)

Honduras

Christopher said that Honduras is basically moving in the right direction, and that we should think of ways to help them move in that way, particularly as it applies to the election in 1980. (S)

Vaky asked whether it would be possible to reprogram FMS and IMET toward Honduras. He said that we cut them out largely for budgetary reasons. (S)

Duncan said that he would agree to try to reprogram money to Honduras if this was possible. He was reminded of David Jones' statement at San Antonio where he said that we have very good military relationships in Latin America, and we should try to keep these as they are a good source of contacts.

David Aaron said that we should give a lot of help and aid to Honduras. It would be much better to our overall policy and image in Central America if we find a way to reward them than to have a vague human rights policy to the others. That would set a good "demonstration effect" for the others. (S)

Nooter said that the aid levels to Honduras are already double that of our aid program to the other countries, but that only amounted to \$18 million for Honduras for FY 80 versus \$9 million for Guatemala. (S)

He admitted that the differences are not that great in 1979. Aaron asked whether or not we could stretch out the Guatemalan loan, and give some of that money to Honduras in this year. (S)

Nooter said that he could do that, but Vaky strongly opposed it. (S)

Christopher summarized by saying that we should try to increase aid monies to Honduras for the purposes of showing the other countries that we are willing to be especially helpful to countries with good human rights records. (S)

Central America

Pastor raised one broader issue at the end. He said that it would be very important for us to relate the specific country statements within a broader framework, describing U.S. concerns and policies to all of Central America. Part of the problem with the ambiguity of our policy is that we have not projected a sense that we have an overall vision toward Central America, and we should do so in a statement or speech. (S)

Christopher and others in the PRC agreed on that last point. (U)
(The meeting ended at 5:10 P.M.)

470. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 13, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC on US Policy to Central America (U)

Attached is the Summary of Conclusions of the PRC meeting on Central America which Warren Christopher chaired on June 11th. There was a consensus that the area demands our highest attention because of the increasing violence and political polarization, and also because of the possibility that Communist guerrillas could seize power. In order to try to reverse the perception of US vacillation or withdrawal, the PRC recommends a strategy to the region and to its four northern nations—Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. (S)

In addition to the strategies recommended in the attached, we also believe that we should explore with the Europeans, Canadians and Japanese the possibility of establishing a Central American Development Group (modeled on the Caribbean Group) to coordinate aid to the region, to encourage regional economic cooperation, and to provide added leverage in pursuit of our objectives. At the same time, we should seek agreement with these countries on a common approach to the political problems in the region. (S)

In addition, I recommend that we begin Congressional consultations urgently in order to explain our overall strategy to the region. (U)

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the Summary of Conclusions and the strategies set out in the attached.² (U)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 27, Latin America, 5-7/79. Secret. Sent for action. Under cover of a June 12 memorandum, Pastor sent Brzezinski the summary of conclusions of the June 11 PRC meeting on Central America for Brzezinski to submit to Carter. Pastor noted: "There is a great deal of urgency in getting a decision. Vaky would like to get a cable out to all our posts instructing our Ambassadors to seek support for an OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers along the lines decided by the PRC. If we want the meeting by early next week, we should get the cable out by tomorrow." Aaron approved on June 12; according to a handwritten note on Pastor's memorandum Brzezinski hand-carried the summary of conclusions to Carter on June 13. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject, Box 25, Meetings—PRC 111, 6/11/1979)

² The summary of conclusions is attached but not printed. The strategies are printed as Tabs A and B, below. For the minutes of the June 11 PRC meeting, see Document 469. Carter approved and wrote: "See notes re embargo" in the adjacent margin. Brzezinski sent the approved summary of conclusions, under cover of a June 13 memorandum, to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Gilligan, Jones, and Turner. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 27, Latin America, 5-7/79)

That you approve the idea of our exploring with Western Europeans, Canadians and Japanese a common approach to the region and a possible Central American Development Group.³ (C)

That State be instructed to urgently hold consultations on the Hill.⁴ (U)

Tab A

Paper Prepared in the Department of State⁵

Washington, undated

U.S. OBJECTIVES TOWARD CENTRAL AMERICA

—movement toward more open political systems, free elections, and democratic processes;

—reduction of violence and instability;

—strengthening of centrist and moderate groups and the linkages among them;

—a diminution in the appeal and power of radical elements and Castro-linked groups;

—economic and social development which would improve the services and opportunities available to the people and reduce the vulnerabilities and frustrations that lead to political tensions;

—renewed momentum toward greater regional economic cooperation and integration as an effective framework to foster modernization and reduce intra-regional tensions, including demographic problems;

—better observance of human rights, an end to terrorism from both left and right, and a cessation of such practices as political assassination and torture;

—resolution of the area's international conflicts, especially the Honduras—El Salvador dispute; and

—a friendly perception of the U.S. and willingness to cooperate with us for larger goals, including strategic considerations related to both the Panama Canal and the hemisphere's security.

³ Carter approved the recommendation.

⁴ Carter did not indicate his preference with respect to this recommendation.

⁵ Secret.

Tab B

Paper Prepared in the Department of State⁶

Washington, undated

US STRATEGY ON NICARAGUA

1. Consult with Andean nations, Mexico and others to share our appraisal of gravity of Nicaraguan situation, and to secure support for an OAS Meeting.⁷ In our consultations, we should explore in a preliminary way the possibility of establishing an Inter-American military peace force that would have balanced representation (including, for example, the Brazilians) and would provide the necessary stability to permit a peaceful and democratic transition to a new government.⁸ The PRC stressed that such a force should only be contemplated within the context of a process by which the Nicaraguan government would change. (While the PRC did not expect agreement on such a force at this time, all agreed it would be useful to broach the idea now in order to register the intensity of our concern over the possibility of a chaotic or a Cuban-style outcome and also to encourage countries to think about it now so that they may be more prepared to act in the future.)⁹ (S)

2. Join others in calling (or call, if necessary) for OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers, on an urgent basis, to consider present Nicaraguan situation as a threat to peace. U.S. would make a clear statement at the OAS (or elsewhere) in favor of selfdetermination, calling for a negotiated transition of power and free elections as soon as feasible, and expressing U.S. willingness to assist. It would also be a tough statement against foreign intervention, applying equally to those who are providing support to the Sandinistas as well as to those who are helping or could help the Nicaraguan government.¹⁰ (S)

3. Take steps through private demarches and, if possible through the OAS to halt arms flow to both sides (e.g. from Israel and Argentina as well as from Cuba and Panama) so that the parties can be persuaded to negotiate.¹¹ We should seek an OAS resolution calling on all countries

⁶ Secret.

⁷ Carter underlined "consult with Andean nations" and wrote "ok" in the adjacent margin.

⁸ Carter underlined "explore" and "Inter-American military peace force" and wrote "ok" in the adjacent margin.

⁹ Carter placed a checkmark in the margin next to this sentence.

¹⁰ Carter wrote "ok" in the margin next to this paragraph.

¹¹ Carter wrote "ok" in the margin next to this sentence.

to cease providing arms to the parties to the conflict, and privately and on a selected and bilateral basis, we should explore the possibility of future steps, including an embargo, to enforce that resolution.¹² (S)

4. Instruct Ambassador Pezzullo, upon arrival in Managua, to

(a) join others in helping to build an effective moderate opposition, to provide for a transition of power as soon as feasible,

(b) point out to Somoza the necessity of accepting a negotiated solution with free elections, and the steps to achieve same, and

(c) encourage National Guard and Liberal Party to support negotiated solution.¹³

5. Maintain present “cool” position with respect to economic and military aid.

6. Take other available steps to support moderate opposition and promote negotiated solution.

¹² Carter underlined “including an embargo,” wrote “no” in the left-hand margin next to this sentence, and wrote “? Embargo against Israel?” in the margin under this sentence. A revised version of “U.S. Strategy on Nicaragua” eliminated the phrase “including an embargo.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 8, Central America: PRC Meeting: 6/11/1979)

¹³ Carter wrote “ok” in the margin next to this paragraph.

471. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to President Carter¹

Washington, June 25, 1979

SUBJECT

Limiting the Consequences of a Sandinista Victory

As you are aware, there are a variety of steps being taken to deal with the situation in Nicaragua. However, we ought to consider the consequences if we are unable to achieve a satisfactory solution. It therefore seems to me desirable that we begin immediately to examine what we might do to prevent the destabilization of neighboring countries, especially El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 30, Meetings—SCC 183, 7/17/1979. Secret.

Should the Sandinistas prevail in Nicaragua, and especially if the resulting government goes Marxist-Leninist, we are likely to see two types of general effects. The leftist oppositions in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras will be encouraged in their efforts; Nicaragua likely will be available to them as a base of operations, possible safe haven, and source of, or conduit for, materiel support. The right in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras will likely react sharply to protect their positions; they (including especially the military) will want to take measures to ensure that "it can't happen here." In sum, a Sandinista victory will strengthen the leftist insurgents and increase the likelihood of left-right confrontations in these other countries.

It would be useful specifically to take account of these possibilities in our policies toward El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The recent PRC on Central America made specific recommendations concerning these countries (Tab A), but, at that time, a near-term Sandinista victory seemed less likely than currently is the case.² The situations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras actually differ substantially, making different strategies appropriate:

—In El Salvador, the current president, Romero, is one of the very few El Salvadoran military leaders who would be receptive to United States' suggestions for internal political liberalization. He faces a very significant (and recently quite successful) leftist opposition—the take-overs of the Venezuelan, French, and Costa Rican embassies³ are only the most recent manifestations of the very substantial internal terrorist threat—who almost certainly will be emboldened by the Sandinista (and their own) successes. Concurrently, his military will want to crack down hard on this opposition and will want to replace him if he does not respond.

—The US cannot reasonably expect a better government in El Salvador than President Romero represents and our near term efforts should be directed toward maintaining Romero in power. El Salvador is, however, a tinderbox and helping Romero may require both providing him assistance (beyond the aid loan recommended by the PRC) to demonstrate that his "dialogue" with the US Embassy pays dividends and looking the other way somewhat if, to offset the terrorists, he takes steps that also violate rights in country. This would require our adopting (especially in forums like Deputy Secretary Christopher's committee⁴ which reviews our many non-military assistance programs) a policy toward El Salvador designed toward encouraging stability by

² Not attached; see Document 469.

³ See footnote 4, Document 374.

⁴ The Interagency Group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance was known as the Christopher Committee for the chairman Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

giving more weight to actions that would buttress Romero and less weight to actions which would squeeze him because of human rights violations.

—In Guatemala, the military and ruling elite are sufficiently strong and the opposition sufficiently weak that a Sandinista takeover likely will have only long-range, rather than immediate, significant effects. Given the substantial involvement of the government in assassination of potential moderate leaders, we probably do not want to do more than the PRC recommended (\$6 million rural enterprise loan, helicopter for President). Indeed, long-range United States strategy may best be served by selecting moderate military leaders and seeking to protect them from government attack.

—In Honduras, as in Guatemala, there is no significant leftist threat. Indeed, the advent of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua could remove them from their safe havens in Honduras and thereby eliminate one of the significant problems the country now faces. The other significant problems (apart from Honduras' general politico-socio-economic plight) are the influx of refugees from Nicaragua and the Honduras-El Salvador border dispute. Neither of these will be much affected by a Sandinista victory in Nicaragua.

Our strategy in Honduras, therefore, should be directed to ensuring that the military do not (in reaction to the Nicaraguan situation) refuse to go through with its plan shortly to hold elections. One useful thing the United States could do would be quickly to implement the PRC strategy to "try" to increase economic aid, FMS, and IMET levels. This would be a demonstration of US support at a time when the Honduran military might most appreciate it.

In sum, the strategy laid out by the PRC and approved by you is sound so far as it goes, but it should be expanded as outlined above.

472. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, July 19, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC on Central America—July 20, 1979 (C)

The central questions for the SCC are how can we keep Nicaragua from becoming another Cuba, and how can we keep the rest of Central America from becoming another Nicaragua? Or, to put it a little differently, how do we bring the influence of friendly neighboring countries to bear on the internal political process in Nicaragua in a way which keeps the extremists from taking over, and how do we put the examples of "Nicaragua" to best use in encouraging Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (HEG countries) to make the kinds of reforms necessary to prevent a repetition of the polarization that afflicted Nicaragua? (Agenda at Tab A)² (S)

Harold Brown's memo (Tab B) suggests we bolster the HEG countries and abandon our human rights policy.³ I believe his argument rests on a weak and perhaps erroneous premise: that U.S. support is necessary and sufficient to stabilize these regimes. The central crisis in HEG is the increasingly widespread alienation of the people of Central America from their government; we are witnessing the wholesale delegitimization of narrow-based military governments. That is why popular front organizations have mushroomed in number and size in El Salvador. They do represent a threat to the democratic process, but so, too, do the government's executions (including the killing of 24 people on the steps of the Cathedral, filmed by CBS). (S)

But I agree wholeheartedly with Brown that we should not let our human rights policy drag us into a policy of withdrawal or disassociation. Rather, what is needed is some bold steps on our part and on the part of the governments in the region, and we need to continue trying different paths until we find the one that works. And we need to counter everything the Cubans do. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Subject File, Box 30, Meetings—SCC 183, 7/17/1979. Secret. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it.

² Attached but not printed.

³ Not attached; see Document 471.

The formula we must adopt is simple, and we should seek to reach private agreement with the governments first and then announce it publicly in order to make our policies and intentions clear and reduce the opportunity for extremists to misconstrue our motives. The HEG governments should announce a series of political and social reforms (described in more detail below), and the U.S. will support them to the hilt. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that such reforms are not necessary, or that U.S. support is sufficient to overcome the crisis of delegitimization in the absence of these reforms. If we decide to “look the other way” to acts of repression, we will be merely boarding a sinking ship. (And at the same time, we will be violating U.S. human rights laws, and Congress is likely to respond by tightening them.) (S)

I believe we can sell that formula—reforms for support—to the Honduran and Salvadorean Presidents now. Both are very worried by Nicaragua. The Salvadorean President has asked for a meeting with the President, and I believe if we make clear that we are ready to support them with economic and security assistance and with political/psychological support, they will buy it. But the formula should be supplemented by covert and overt support to moderate groups and covert and overt opposition to extremists. *We should also seek to engage other Latin American democracies and seek to draw all five Central American governments into a tighter, more interdependent matrix in which increasing amounts of foreign aid are channelled through Central American regional institutions to be allocated according to a formula or plans made jointly by them.* (This procedure would not only increase the possibilities for regional integration, it would dramatically increase the leverage of HEG on the new Nicaraguan government.) (S)

The important point is that this strategy needs to be implemented boldly with high-level trips to the region, occasional visits by leaders from the region, public statements, etc. (S)

El Salvador

On Monday,⁴ the Salvadorean President Romero asked for a meeting with the President. I think it makes sense to bring him up here, but I think we should save the President until we really need him, and we will. I recommend we set up meetings for Romero with the Vice President, you, Secretaries Vance and Brown, and General Jones. The message to be conveyed is a simple one, and if he agrees, we should make it public. We should inform President Romero that we are prepared to provide economic and security assistance (as suggested in

⁴ July 16.

McAuliffe's memo at Tab C) if he is prepared to publicly state his commitment to free, internationally-observed Congressional elections in March 1980.⁵ This would mean that he would have to reform the electoral code, gain the full support of two critical political parties (the Christian Democrats and MNR), and fully investigate any allegations of massive repression. (The church killings still have not been investigated.) (S)

Before he comes, we should send someone like Vaky down (next week) to explore the possibility of scheduling Presidential elections (not scheduled until 1982) earlier—say by October, and to get the military to oversee (rather than participate in) the elections much as the military in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru has done. (Indeed, we ought to consider encouraging the Andean military leaders to give advice to their Central American counterparts.) *An early election would be a quick and effective injection of legitimacy, and it would prevent the radicalization of the middle.* Unlike in Nicaragua, Salvador has an effective and popular middle party (the Christian Democrats) with a popular national leader (Napoleon Duarte, whom I have met; he is a moderate, effective leader). Duarte won the Presidential election overwhelmingly in 1972 but was booted out by the military. If he could be protected (both the extreme left and right would probably like to assassinate him), he would probably win an early election, and he would stop the polarization in its tracks. We ought to try to convince Romero to accept him and an early election as the only way to save Salvador from revolution. For a long time, the military and the "14 Families" have viewed the Christian Democrats as "Communists" or as a threat to them; unless they begin to see them as their hope—not a threat—they will be in real trouble, and nothing the US does will be of any help. (S)

Honduras

Compared to El Salvador, Honduras seems easy—at least on the surface. We have received several reports suggesting that the Communists might try to grab Honduras by infiltrating the military and since we have very little information on what's happening in the military,

⁵ Not attached. Attached to another copy of the memorandum is an undated and unsigned memorandum entitled "Shoring up the Northern Tier." The memorandum summarizes McAuliffe's proposals, in which ISA/IA concurred and the JCS viewed "favorably," for "security assistance actions" for Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador in order to "give quick signals of reassurance to those countries which will feel threatened by the accession to power in Nicaragua of an FSLN-dominated government." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 6-7/79) McAuliffe's full proposal is in a telegram from Southern Command Quarry Heights Canal Zone, July 12, 1800Z. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 8, Central America: SCC 7/20/1979 Meeting)

it's difficult to assess these reports. You should ask JCS and DOD to look into this. (S)

Honduras's human rights record is good, and we can in fact, go ahead with all of McAuliffe's recommendations right now—and we should (Tab C). But the Honduran military still have doubts about letting the Christian Democrats (PDC) play any role in the elections next March, and so we should encourage them to accept the PDC. (S)

We may want to consider inviting the Honduran President with the Salvadorean for two reasons. First, the two countries are somewhat competitive, and the Hondurans have been doing a better job so that it looks like we're rewarding the wrong one if we only meet with Romero. Secondly, the two countries have been negotiating a border dispute since the soccer war in 1969. They are reportedly very close to settlement, and a trip to Washington could be the catalyst to resolve it, and resolution of that problem would help heal the profound divisions in the region. Again, to make sure that a trip to Washington would accomplish these objectives, we should consider sending Vaky, McAuliffe, and perhaps me to speak to Paz first. (S)

Guatemala

Guatemala does not face the prospect of revolution, only isolated acts of political assassination, almost all of it being done by right-wing groups associated with the government. Our reports suggest that the former Army Chief of Staff Cancinos ordered the assassination of two leading moderates, Colom Arguetta and Fuentes Mohr. In turn, Cancinos was killed by a right-wing military rival, who tried to blame it on leftist guerrillas. A hopeless government of short-sighted leaders. Fortunately, the political situation does not show any signs of getting out of control. Still, I think we should try the Salvador strategy—reforms for support. I would encourage more selectivity with McAuliffe's list on Guatemala. (S)

Nicaragua

Two issues should be addressed: (1) How, when, and how much reconstruction assistance? I think State is developing some specifics on this. I'm inclined to begin soon and modestly, after consulting with our Latin friends; but to escalate our involvement in a couple of weeks if things still look O.K.; and (2) What should our policy be to the new government? My recommendation: give them the benefit of the doubt; give them relief and later reconstruction assistance; hold them to their assurances; tolerate their trespasses for a while; and cross our fingers. (S)

**473. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination
Committee Meeting¹**

Washington, July 20, 1979, 3–3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Central America

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher

Mr. David Newsom, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Mr. Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

OSD

Mr. David McGiffert, Assistant Secretary, International Security Affairs

JCS

Lt General John Pustay

DCI

ADM Stansfield Turner

Deputy Director Frank Carlucci

Mr. Martin Roeber, Analyst, Office of Political Analysis

OMB

Mr. Bowman Cutter, Executive Associate Director for Budget

Mr. Randy Jayne, Associate Director for National Security and International
Affairs

AID

Robert Nooter, Acting Administrator

Mr. Edward Coy, Deputy Administrator for Latin American Bureau

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

Mr. Henry Owen

NSC

Mr. Robert Pastor

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *U.S. Policy to Nicaragua.* The SCC agreed that the U.S. should be forthcoming in discussions on humanitarian assistance, and to a lesser degree on reconstruction assistance, with the new Nicaraguan government. We will seek first to determine Nicaragua's needs and then, after

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330–82–0205, Central America Jan.–Aug. 1979. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Brzezinski sent the summary to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Gilligan, Jones, and Turner under a July 26 memorandum. Brown's initials appear on this copy of the memorandum. No minutes for this meeting were found.

consultation with Congress, seek to re-program money for humanitarian assistance for FY 79 and explore various options for increasing reconstruction assistance in the future. Owen will follow up. (S)

2. *The Central American Problem.* The issue is whether El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala can gradually and peacefully broaden their bases of support by making the kinds of reforms necessary to deal with the inequities and inadequacies of the socio-economic and political structures. The alternative is revolution as just occurred in Nicaragua. Though OSD had some reservations, we all agreed that unquestioning support for the status quo was not only too sharp a departure from the overall foreign policy objectives of the Carter Administration, but it also could not work. We agreed on the following three objectives: (1) to give reassurance to the three governments who are nervous about the possibilities that the Nicaraguan revolution could spread; (2) to give them some economic and military assistance; and (3) to pressure them very hard to agree and begin implementing with all deliberate speed a program of meaningful reforms that will broaden the scope for political participation. (S)

3. *A Recommended Approach to Central America.* The SCC agreed that we should send Assistant Secretary Vaky on a mission to “object” countries (El Salvador, Honduras, and perhaps Guatemala) to explore with their leaders the kinds of reforms they would be willing to take if we supported them with economic and military assistance. The mission would also go to “framework” countries like Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama, and Mexico to discuss the nature of the problems in these Central American countries and to seek ideas about what should be done about it. He will also explore the possibility of a meeting of several Foreign Ministers from the area and Secretary Vance to seek agreement on a common approach. Our objective would be to seek a multilateral solution to the problems in the area with the Latin Americans taking the lead. If that’s not possible, we would be prepared to take the lead. (S)

4. *Impact On Nicaragua.* We will take added precautions to make sure that the new government of Nicaragua does not perceive this mission as hostile or confrontational. Our forthcoming response to their humanitarian needs and a clear statement of our intent should help in this regard. (S)

5. *Follow-Up.* While Vaky is travelling, we will set up a working group to make recommendations on the kinds and amounts of economic and security assistance we should consider for the region and on the kinds of political and socio-economic reforms which will be needed to broaden the scope for political participation in the region.

We will convoke another SCC meeting to consider these recommendations and Vaky's report in about a week.² (S)

² An unknown hand crossed out "another SCC" and added "PRC." For additional information on Vaky's mission, see Document 298. In telegram 5779 from Panama City, July 27, Vaky reported on his conversations with Paz in Honduras. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 6/79-7/79) In telegram 5782 from Panama City, July 27, Vaky reported on his July 26 conversation with Torrijos. (Ibid.)

474. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, August 1, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC on Central America (U)

It may be useful to recall where the SCC meeting on July 20th left off: (1) We agreed on a strategy to encourage reforms in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (HEG) in exchange for U.S. assistance. (2) Vaky was to travel to the region to hear what the Latin Americans had to say about the problems in Central America and to sound out the possibility of a Foreign Minister's meeting. (3) We were to prepare a strategy paper (Tab A); a list of desired reforms in each country; a list of possible increases in economic assistance; and a list of ways to increase security assistance.² The purpose of this meeting is to hear Vaky's report and balance packages of reforms and assistance in order to develop new strategies for the US to use on Central America. (The summaries of the July 20 SCC meeting on Central America, and the June 13 PRC meeting are at Tabs G and H.)³ (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, PRC-120, 8/2/1979, Central America. Secret. A stamped notation indicates that Brzezinski saw the memorandum.

² Attached but not printed at Tab A is the undated strategy paper. The lists are attached as Tabs B-F, but not printed.

³ Tabs G and H are attached but not printed. See Document 470 and 473.

El Salvador

As my memo (copy attached) on Central America indicates, El Salvador is clearly the most urgent case.⁴ I am more and more convinced that if we (and Romero) don't try something dramatic soon, El Salvador will go down the tubes very quickly. We will not lose anything by trying to encourage an acceleration of the electoral process; if it doesn't work, then we can always adopt State's suggested strategy (Tab A, pp 5–6), but I think it could work.⁵ I would certainly like to try it with Blatchford first; I think I can convince him, and I believe he can convince Romero. (S)

The only problem with State's strategy is that it places too much reliance on military assistance and too little on economic aid. (For that, see Tab B). (S)

Honduras

I agree with State's strategy (Tab A, pp 2–3), supplemented by increases in aid (Tab C).⁶ Honduras should be an easy case. All we need to do is step up our aid and make Honduras into a showcase. We need also to make this fact known throughout Central America in conjunction with a repetition of public assurances from the Honduran government that it will transfer power to a democratic and civilian government, beginning with free elections for a constituent assembly in April 1980. (S)

Guatemala

Guatemala could be a hopeless case, but nonetheless, we ought to try State's strategy. (S)

Regional Programs

I strongly recommend increases in economic assistance to regional programs as suggested at Tab E. We should use this regional aid to encourage greater cooperation between Nicaragua and its neighbors, and also frankly, as a way to provide some necessary leverage by Nicaragua's neighbors. (S)

⁴ Not attached. See Document 474.

⁵ The strategy paper noted: "Basically we would seek to extract a *quid pro quo* in terms of political and human rights improvement; for some assistance from us." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, PRC–120, 8/2/1979, Central America)

⁶ The strategy paper proposed a range of economic and military assistance to Honduras in order to "cultivate Honduras' confidence and friendship; encourage it to continue on its constitutional path; and generally demonstrate our support and encouragement." (Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, PRC–120, 8/2/1979, Central America)

475. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, August 2, 1979, 5–6:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

Central America

PARTICIPANTS

State

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State

David Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

OSD

Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense

Walter Slocombe, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

JCS

General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Lt General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence

Martin Roeber, Analyst, Office of Political Analysis

OMB

Bowman Cutter, Executive Associate Director for Budget

AID

Douglas Bennett, Administrator-designate of AID

Abelardo Valdez, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

IDCA

Thomas Ehrlich, Administrator-designate of IDCA

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Ambassador Henry Owen

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 28, Latin America, 8/79–9/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the memorandum and wrote "OK." Brzezinski sent Carter the summary under an August 6 memorandum, requesting that he approve it. Brzezinski noted that "options on possible increases in economic assistance" to the countries were being formulated prior to Vance's trip to Ecuador (August 9–12). An unknown hand wrote at the bottom of the covering memorandum: "Dispatched to agencies 8–10–79." (Ibid.) Dodson sent the approved minutes to Vance, Brown, McIntyre, Gilligan, Jones, Turner, and Ehrlich under an August 9 memorandum. (Ibid.) Roeber prepared a memorandum for the record, dated August 8, about the August 2 PRC meeting. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 80B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 11: (SCC) Central America) No other minutes for the meeting were found.

NSC

Robert Pastor, Staff Member

Summary of Conclusions

1. *The Problem.* The SCC agreed that we were approaching a critical point in our relationships with the governments in Central America in the light of the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua. El Salvador is the most “ripe” for political polarization and revolution. Honduras has a much better human rights record and its leadership seems more committed to development programs. There is considerable violence and dissatisfaction in Guatemala, but there is much less of a chance of a revolutionary situation emerging. (S)

2. *Objectives.* The SCC agreed that we should pursue four objectives: (1) Contain Cuba; prevent the consolidation or spread of extreme leftist regimes. (2) Attempt to reduce significant repression in El Salvador and Guatemala (and also in Nicaragua and Honduras) and encourage wider political and economic participation in all these countries. (We should continue to press for free elections in Nicaragua.) (3) Prevent armed conflict in the area, and to the extent possible, encourage peaceful change. (4) Stimulate growth to reduce the vulnerability of these countries to extremism of either right or left. There was some disagreement within the SCC about which of these objectives should be given priority in the case of conflict between the objectives. (S)

3. *Honduras.* The SCC agreed that Honduras should be given priority in economic assistance in order to make it a showcase to demonstrate our willingness to support a government in the region that has a relatively good human rights record. Owen will chair a group to explore various options to increase economic assistance; it will make recommendations by next Wednesday.² In addition, we will seek to give modest increases in military assistance and training to Honduras, and try to increase our military representation there. And we will encourage El Salvador and Honduras to reach an early settlement to their border dispute. In this case, and in the others, we should consult early and fully with like-minded Latin American governments about ways to encourage multilateral support for moderate democratic change. (S)

4. *El Salvador.* The SCC agreed that we should seek to extract a quid pro quo of economic and military assistance for human rights and political improvement. An illustrative list of what reforms we should ask for, and a list of assistance we should be prepared to provide is attached. We intend to review that list carefully to see what should be added—including economic assistance—and what should be

² August 8.

deleted, but once agreement on a final list is reached, we should press to get the Salvadoreans to agree to all of it. We should also push for a peace settlement and an end to the assassinations by the para-military squads. There was a disagreement on what additional support to help the government deal with the subversion problem we should be prepared to provide. (S)

5. *Guatemala.* The USG should continue to press the government to stop political assassinations and to move toward free elections in 1982. Our approach to Guatemala is less urgent. (S)

6. *Multilateral Consultations.* We will make clear that we will not give aid to governments that export violence to other countries in the region. Secretary Vance will try to meet soon with Foreign Ministers and Heads of State—especially Venezuela and Ecuador—to discuss common regional security concerns and seek a common approach. (S)

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Department of State³

Washington, undated

U.S. STRATEGY TO EL SALVADOR

A. *What we would ask for:*

1. An immediate public declaration by the President (which we would publicly support and applaud) that there would be no military candidate in the 1982 presidential election, and that at that time the Salvadoran military would abandon politics and return to their barracks;

2. That in the meantime, the 1980 election for Legislative Assembly members and Mayors, will be free, honest, and guaranteed by the GOES and the military;

3. That immediate action will be taken to reform the electoral law, calling in experts from the OAS for this purpose;

4. That the Central Electoral Council will be reformed or re-implemented in such a way as to assure representation by all parties at a significant level;

5. That the OAS will immediately be requested to send observers to oversee preparations for the March 1980 election and the balloting itself;

³ Secret.

6. That all political exiles, including Napoleon Duarte, may henceforth return to El Salvador at any time of their own choosing;

7. That labor law and labor regulations and procedures will be revised in such a way as to offer workers a greater alternative to illegal strikes;

8. Release of political prisoners not charged with common crimes; and

9. A pledge to avoid violence and paramilitary killing.

B. *What we would do:*

1. Temporarily suspend public denunciations and pressure;

2. Approval of their applications for tear gas and/or other items of non-lethal crowd control equipment;

3. Approval of their applications for commercial purchase of military equipment;

4. Reversal of our long-held negative position on C-47 engines;

5. Withholding of pressure on other governments to block foreign arms sales to El Salvador;

6. Renewed assurance that our travel advisory will be lifted as soon as conditions permit; and

7. A general posture of greater cooperation than they believe we have displayed over the past two years.

476. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 3, 1979

SUBJECT

PRC Meeting on Central America (U)

Attached at Tab I² is a memo from you to the President with the Summary of Conclusions of the PRC meeting. This morning there was considerable give-and-take between Henry Owen, Secretary Vance, Pete Vaky, and myself about whether we should develop options on increased economic assistance to El Salvador, Honduras, and to Central America as a region. My understanding is that we will develop options on all three, and seek decisions on Honduras and El Salvador before the Secretary's trip to Quito. We will look at the possibility of increasing aid to Central America as a region, although we will not try to make a decision on that before the Secretary's trip. (S)

I must add that if we are niggardly in our approach to assistance to Central America, we cannot hope to exercise the kind of influence which we all believe is essential. Suggestions of interdicting arms supplies are really hollow if we cannot even muster sufficient strength within the Administration to increase aid as a lever to induce change in Central America. The assistance will obviously not have that much impact on development in that short a term, but it will have a significant—perhaps critical—impact on political perceptions in the region about where the US stands and what it is prepared to do. (S)

I continue to believe that the crux of the problem in El Salvador is the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). The cable attached at Tab B³ (which is for your use and need not be forwarded to the President) points out the significant divisions which are emerging in the PDC; they will be having a convention in September, and I would speculate that that convention will decide whether the PDC goes to the left or continues to seek free elections. We, therefore, need to move before they convene, and we need to move in an open and decisive way so as to influence the Christian Democrats to continue to play the game. I have spoken to Pete Vaky about my idea of communicating the depth

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: 8/79–12/79. Secret. Sent for action. A copy was sent to Owen.

² Not attached. See footnote 1, Document 475.

³ Attached but not printed is telegram 4263 from San Salvador, July 31.

of our concern about the Salvadoran problem to President Romero through Joe Blatchford, who is Romero's lobbyist in Washington and a close friend, and who is a close friend of mine as well. Pete is dubious about whether Blatchford can convince Romero about the idea of accelerating and opening the electoral process, but he thinks it is worth a try. Unless you disapprove, then, I would like to make that try with Blatchford, making it clear to Blatchford that I am not trying to use Blatchford as an intermediary, but rather I am just suggesting ideas to him that he in turn may want to suggest to Romero.⁴ (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo at Tab I and forward it with the Summary of Conclusions at Tab A.⁵ (U)

Alternatively, that you approve the Summary of Conclusions.⁶ (U)

That you indicate what distribution should be made of the Summary. (U)

To all participants⁷

Only to

None

⁴ Brzezinski placed a vertical line in the right-hand margin next to this sentence and wrote: "OK."

⁵ See footnote 2, above.

⁶ Brzezinski indicated his approval.

⁷ Brzezinski indicated his approval of this option.

477. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, August 14, 1979

SUBJECT

Central American Strategy

During my consultations with Latin American Chiefs of State and Foreign Ministers in Quito, Ecuador, August 10 and 11, I found a remarkable consensus regarding the situation in Central America.

With regard to Nicaragua:

—All recognized the potential danger we face in Nicaragua and the presence of Marxists in some key positions. They agreed, however, that it would be a mistake to assume that radical influences will inevitably prevail.

—Virtually all agreed that it was important to assist the new government actively, and to be highly visible in Nicaragua through extension of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance.

—All urged the US to respond promptly and generously to the needs and requests of the new government. All urged that humanitarian and economic aid be extended without “political conditions,” and that what the US did would be central to what eventually happened.

—All urged substantive economic aid; they also urged some response to bilateral requests for military assistance, although they recognized this was more complicated and difficult.

—Most nations are planning or have undertaken economic and humanitarian assistance. The Andean Group is planning extensive help to the new government through the Latin American Economic System organization (SELA). Most are dubious about their capacity to help militarily, but Panama and Costa Rica are aiding the police, and Venezuela is prepared to consider military requests.

With regard to Central America:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 83, Sensitive XX: 8/79. Secret. Carter wrote in the top right-hand corner of the page: “Cy—A) Sounds good. B) Severe budget restraints. C) See Zbig’s 2 questions. J.” Reference is to two questions Brzezinski wrote on an undated note: “Two additional issues: 1) How do we reassure those whom we want to undertake reforms that they will be protected from outside subversion; i.e. do we draw the line somehow? 2) How do we discourage, isolate or punish the Cubans—and also entice them into a healthier relationship?” Denend (on behalf of Brzezinski) returned Vance’s memorandum and Brzezinski’s handwritten note to Vance under an August 16 memorandum.

—All agreed Honduras was in the best shape of the northern tier countries, was embarked on an encouraging course, and should be assisted.

—All agreed that the situation in El Salvador was dangerous, and that some movement toward a more open system through the electoral process offered the only chance to avoid confrontation and polarization.

—All agreed on the rigidities in the Guatemala situation and potential dangers there, and that moves to reduce these should be encouraged.

A number of Latin American leaders stressed to me that the US was too inactive in Latin America; that there was need for a “new dimension” to our relationship, for more active involvement in and response to Latin American problems and concerns. It was clear that Central American events have become something of a watershed, and have focused the worries and concerns of Latin America on our relationship. This gives us both a challenge and an opportunity.

To respond to the Central American situation specifically, we are undertaking the following lines of action:

With regard to Nicaragua:

—We will continue substantial amounts of food and humanitarian assistance.

—We are requesting reprogramming of \$8.5 million of FY 1979 funds for reconstruction and humanitarian assistance, and will be proposing substantial funds for FY 1980 for economic reconstruction aid. We have despatched technical personnel to assess reconstruction needs.

—We are encouraging private contacts with the private sector and private institutions in business, labor, media and other sectors.

—We propose to provide a military team to assess and vet Nicaraguan requests for military assistance. We propose to be responsive in terms of training and provision of non-lethal material. Mobile Training Teams can also assist in reconstruction efforts.

—We will provide technical experts and assistance.

With regard to Honduras:

—We will encourage the Honduran Government’s present policy of return to constitutional government, and its social and rural development programs.

—We are planning increases in economic assistance for social and economic development, including rural “impact” programs.

—We will provide modest increases in military training and provision of equipment.

With regard to El Salvador:

—We propose to explore with the President of El Salvador the institution of electoral reforms and a credible electoral process for the

March 1980 municipal elections; we would propose to provide a quid pro quo of economic and limited military assistance for human rights and political improvement.

With regard to Guatemala:

—We will continue to press for human rights improvement and to persuade the Guatemala Government to prepare for free elections in the 1982 presidential elections, preferably with a civilian president. We would be prepared to be helpful to the extent we can to achieve these improvements.

Multilaterally:

—We will continue in close consultations with other Latin American nations, especially the democracies, and encourage parallel and coordinated actions.

—I intend to go to the OAS General Assembly meeting in La Paz in October both to demonstrate high-level interest and to continue personal consultations and exchanges.²

—We will strengthen cooperation with regional groups such as the Andean Pact.

Clearly, our Central American strategy—and in Latin America generally—will require substantial resource inputs. We have tried to promote reform in Latin America by persuasion and encouragement. We have sometimes created political vacuums by denial of economic and military assistance, but we have not been able to formulate and deliver on a partnership approach to bring about constructive change. As we have created vacuums, it has been inevitable that others would enter; not just Cuba, but such countries as Panama in Nicaragua or China in Chile. The crisis in Central America now challenges us to formulate a partnership approach in which we provide substantial resources provided constructive change moves forward. Our greatest challenge is in Nicaragua where the devastation has been so great, and where the task of reconstruction will be seen by Nicaraguans and Latins generally as a test of our sincerity and capacity.

Additional resources are clearly required for these new challenges and crises. I will be sending you a separate memorandum outlining the funding I believe is needed for Central America.³

² October 20–23.

³ See Document 480.

478. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 6, 1979

SUBJECTYour Question about Aid to Nicaragua² (U)

Since my return from vacation, I have worked with Owen and separately to get the State Department to come up with its promised package of aid to Central America, Nicaragua and the Caribbean. They have just sent a first draft of a Vance to the President memo.³ I will work on it with Owen, but there are certain critical and fundamental issues which are not addressed in that memo, and I need your guidance on whether I should press hard for these points. (S)

First, the memo is essentially directed toward providing assistance to Nicaragua, recommending \$120M worth of balance of payments support. It recommends only \$12M for El Salvador and \$13M for Honduras and nothing for the Caribbean. It is clear that the Congress and the American public are increasingly exercised about the broader issue of instability in the Caribbean and Central America and the expansion of Cuban influence there. The SALT debate looks as if it will begin meandering down this road soon where it will collide with the debate in the Appropriations Committees on reprogramming \$8.5M to Nicaragua. (S)

There is not only a great deal of concern about the lack of a coherent strategy to the region, there is also a question whether we are ideologically tilting to the left in the region. Asking for a large sum for Nicaragua and negligible amounts for Honduras and El Salvador will reinforce this feeling, which Charlie Wilson repeated to me last night. He said that, unless we ask for a fair amount of money for Salvador and Honduras, we may not get anything for Nicaragua. (S)

It seems to me that we are faced with a clear choice: we can continue to fight rear-guard actions on a piecemeal basis following every request

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 56, Nicaragua: 7/79–9/79: Secret. Sent for information. Pastor originally designated the memorandum as sent for action but crossed out the word “action” and substituted “information” above it. A copy was sent to Owen.

² In a September 4 Evening Report to Brzezinski, Pastor described planning of the Conference of American Army Commanders scheduled for that November in Bogotá. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: “Aid to Nicaragua?” (Ibid.)

³ For the final version of the memorandum, see Document 480.

we make for aid to countries in the two regions, or we can have Vance and Brown go up there with a coherent strategy to Central America and the Caribbean and show how our money can be used to pursue our overall interests in the region. Anything less will be ineffective in the region and on Capitol Hill. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, I recommend that I continue to press for a more inclusive package from the State Department which includes aid for the Caribbean as well as Central America, and more money for Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and for regional programs.⁴ (S)

⁴ Brzezinski indicated his approval. Aaron wrote below: "I agree. It is on the 'options list' for the Soviet/Cuban issue as a possible 'security supplemental' for Central America and the Caribbean. DA."

479. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 25, 1979

SUBJECT

Central American Supplemental—A Dissenting View (U)

*In this memo, I request that you consider recommending different options than those Owen recommends in his memo to the President on the Central American Supplemental (Tab A).*² The options I suggest you recommend are described below and can be easily incorporated into Henry's memo. These recommendations seek a balance between Vance's national security concerns and Owen's budgetary concerns. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 10/1-14/79. Secret. Sent for action. Copies were sent to Aaron, Owen, and Poats. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page to Owen and Pastor: "HO/RB I agree with much of Bob's case—and does the P. Let's beef up our position." A notation next to this comment in an unknown hand reads "9/26/79."

² Tab A, attached but not printed, is an undated draft memorandum from McIntyre, Brzezinski, and Owen to Carter; for the final version see Document 480.

—On Nicaragua

Option (No. 3). Seek immediately FY 1980 Supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$75M to help cover Nicaragua's balance of payments gap in 1979 and 1980, with the *expectation that the remaining amount requested by Secretary Vance (\$45M) be included* in the FY 1981 budget if our current balance of payments projections for the Nicaraguan economy prove reasonably accurate. (S)

Discussion: Henry accepts Vance's argument about the need to help Nicaragua fill its balance of payments gap, but he doesn't see any reason why we need to appropriate funds at this time which will not be used by Nicaragua until 1981. I accept his point, but if we are going to commit ourselves to help the Nicaraguans over a two-year period as Vance and Owen recommend, we should be clear that we intend to put the remainder of the funding in the FY 81 budget, provided of course that the balance of payments gap that we presently project proves reasonably accurate. (There is no need to go ahead with it in FY 81 if the gap has been closed.) Henry's option leaves the entire issue about FY 81 open, and that detracts from the two-year *commitment* which we need to make at this time. (S)

—On Honduras and El Salvador

Option (No. 3). Seek Supplementals for these countries with the clear understanding that it would be used to give impetus to a broader multilateral development effort in Central America, which would be initiated by the Central Americans, coordinated by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and involve the Europeans, Japanese, and us. (S)

Discussion: Henry's option to announce plans to participate in a multilateral development effort in Central America is a non-starter; if we get that far out in front, we will kill it. (We need to let the Central Americans put it together first; the Belgrade meeting of the World Bank/IMF will give them the opportunity; the Bank is pursuing the idea.) Moreover, his recommendation that we reprogram \$25M in the AID budget is based on the fragile assumption that this kind of money can be easily found. I know that the Latin American aid budget is very tight, and I don't expect that we will have any more success finding it in other regions. But there are more important reasons for our requesting this additional money for Salvador and Honduras: (S)

- First, it is politically imperative that we seek to try to balance our requests for money for left-wing Nicaraguans with money for right-wing governments in the region. Charlie Wilson has told me that he expects our requests to balance, and while these small amounts for Salvador and Honduras don't do that; if we omit them, we will be inviting a retaliatory strike. (S)

- Secondly, it is important that our strategy is not only directed at Nicaragua—the product of past policy, but at the next round of problems in Central America. (S)

In addition to these two options, I would like to recommend that the memo include three more points, which are pertinent:

(1) The problem we face in Central America is partly how to respond to Cuban activism on our border. This, of course, is the same problem we face in the Caribbean, and it is not surprising that the American public relates the instability in both areas. To exclude the Caribbean is to imply that we are still approaching the Caribbean on a piecemeal basis. *I recommend that the memo refer to our intention of seeking an increase in the FY 81 aid and security assistance budget to the Caribbean.* (S)

(2) Another problem we repeatedly face is lack of continuity or follow-through. I believe that the second most important thing we can do for Central America and the Caribbean after the supplemental is to *make a solid multi-year commitment that we will try to maintain our aid to the regions at a reasonably high level.* (S)

(3) *We should seek to maximize our impact on Central America by engaging like-minded donor countries in a multilateral effort to help develop the region and assist moderate democratic forces.* (S)

Finally, I think it is important to put Henry's memo, which is written from a budgetary perspective, in a broader context. The American people are prepared to buy a \$30B M-X; they are prepared to pay 5 percent more than the Administration requested for defense; they are prepared to sink the SALT Treaty and risk confrontation with the Russians at least in part because of what the Soviets/Cubans are doing in Central America and the Caribbean. I think we are correct in our judgment that Americans have focused on the issue of Soviet troops in Cuba, not because of Soviet troops per se, but because of the Cubans.³ If the American people are prepared to do all of that, then why are we cutting corners on a few million dollars for Central America—money which is likely to have a helluva lot more impact in the medium-term, when it matters, than anything we do in Guantanamo, Key West, or for that matter in the defense budget. Furthermore, it is consistent with our perspective—that the problems are indigenous, the Cubans are only aggravating them. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you recommend to the President the two options sketched above plus the three additional points—continued increased aid to Central America, budgetary increases in FY 81 for the Caribbean, and the need to maximize our impact by engaging other like-minded nations.⁴ (S)

³ An unknown hand wrote in the margin: "A tad overdrawn."

⁴ Brzezinski neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation.

Alternatively, that you meet with Rud Poats and me to discuss the memoranda.⁵

⁵ Brzezinski neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation.

480. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (McIntyre), the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 27, 1979

SUBJECT

1980 Central American Supplemental (U)

In the attached memorandum Cy Vance seeks approval of a \$145 million Economic Support Fund supplemental for Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. \$120 million of the request is designed to help fill *Nicaragua's* balance of payments gap over the next two years. He proposes that *Honduras* receive \$13 million for immediate impact rural development activities to signal support for the transition to democratic government. The proposed \$12 million for urban impact projects in *El Salvador* would, he indicates, be provided only if its government carried out electoral and human rights reforms. (C)

In addition, the special NSC working group on Cuba and the Soviet troops issue is considering recommending stepped-up US security assistance and political impact development aid to Caribbean countries. If this recommendation is made and accepted, it would require a supplemental request for some \$30 million so as to begin and expand programs in 1980 which we had previously planned to begin in 1981—plus expanded aid to this subregion in the FY 1981 budget. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 10/1–14/79. Confidential. Sent for action. Carter initialed the first page of the memorandum. Tabs 1–4 are not attached.

This memorandum focuses on Cy's request, and does not consider any further recommendation that may be made by the NSC Working Group. (C)

Any supplemental request for aid funds faces great difficulty in the Congress at this time, and could generate reactions in the budget committees that would endanger their support of your wider fiscal policy. You have just transmitted supplementals of \$206 million for PL 480 and \$25 million for Caribbean disaster relief. The current Senate budget resolution provides no room for international affairs add-ons. The House committee version allows \$350 million for PL 480 and other emergency foreign aid budget increases, but there will be an attempt to cut it back on the floor, which may well succeed. (C)

The reaction of the budget committees and of the Congress will depend, to some extent, on the size of a supplemental request, and on whether it is limited to amounts that must be committed during FY 1980 and cannot reasonably be obtained by reprogramming. OMB is concerned that requests beyond amounts justified by emergencies will undermine the Administration's close cooperation with the budget committees regarding government-wide fiscal restraint. (C)

On the other hand, Zbig and Cy believe that the national security case for increased aid to Central America and the Caribbean is sufficiently strong that Congress will be hard pressed to resist it, provided it is presented effectively. (C)

One other factor: If a large supplemental request is made, we will have to follow through with larger requests for later years. There is no sense in playing yo-yo with these countries' aid programs. This has out-year budgetary effects. (C)

Nicaragua

Uncertainties as to Nicaragua's balance of payments in 1981 also lead us to suggest that you confine any supplemental request for Nicaragua to an amount related to its needs for important financing in the immediate year, 1980. At this moment, we cannot determine within large orders of magnitude what aid, if any, Nicaragua will need in 1981 for this purpose. The 1981 gap can better be estimated later in the fall, during the FY 1981 budget process, when we will know more about creditor action to reschedule foreign debt payments, aid commitments by other donors, private capital movements, and supplier credit extensions. (C)

We believe that \$75 million in Economic Support Funds for general import-financing is a sufficient and defensible FY 1980 supplemental request for Nicaragua. It could be augmented by food aid, drawing on the program reserve—in substantial amounts if the Congress approves your pending PL 480 supplemental budget request. McIntyre and Owen

believe it is quite possible that no further import financing aid will be required in 1981; therefore, our presentation of the FY 1980 ESF supplemental to the Congress in October should not commit us to continue in FY 1981 this extraordinary form of aid to Nicaragua. (C)

Zbig believes that further aid will be needed and that US assurance of support in providing that aid throughout Nicaragua's recovery period (present–1981) is important. He proposes that this assurance be given by asking for a \$75 million ESF supplemental now and informing the Nicaraguans that we intend to fund the remainder (Cy recommends \$45 million) in the FY 81 budget, provided that there is still a need in Nicaragua and our current projections prove accurate. (C)

El Salvador, Honduras

In proposing supplemental requests for additional project assistance to El Salvador (\$12 million) and Honduras (\$13 million) Cy rejects reprogramming on grounds that this would cut too deeply into other country programs already reduced by Congressional cuts. IDCA and AID also oppose shifting development funds to programs enlarged for short-term political purposes. Further, Cy and Zbig advocate a supplemental for these countries as a clearer political signal of a broad US response to Cuban pressure in Central America and evidence to Congressional conservatives that our support is not limited to leftist Nicaragua. (C)

McIntyre and Owen submit that the stated objectives can be accomplished without including El Salvador and Honduras in the supplemental. Instead, they propose that a willingness to provide expanded development aid to these countries be foreshadowed in the testimony on the Nicaragua supplemental and included in the FY 1981 budget. All agree that an intensified program of Central American development should be coordinated by the World Bank and engage other donors and multilateral agencies. The Bank already is preparing to fulfill this role in response to Central American requests, and an announcement can be made just before the testimony. We believe Venezuela and other countries would welcome it.² Out of our FY 1981 budget we would provide increased development aid to Honduras and El Salvador if the World Bank concludes that this is needed and could be put to good use, and subject to execution of the promised reforms. If it later becomes evident that immediate impact development aid to one or both of these two countries during FY 1980 is absolutely necessary, McIntyre and Owen would then favor review of reprogramming or supplemental options. They note that in the 25-year history of foreign aid attempts

² Carter wrote in the left-hand margin next to this portion of the paragraph: "I agree w/ Owen & Mc." Reference is to McIntyre.

to achieve short-term political objectives with development projects have seldom worked. They oppose such potentially wasteful aid spending when domestic programs are being cut back to fight inflation. (C)

If an expanded Central American Development Group is established in early 1980, based on the experience of the Caribbean Group two years ago, Zbig believes that a successful launching of this initiative will require an early and firm financial commitment from the US. He therefore recommends that we request the two additional packages for El Salvador and Honduras in a supplemental but make clear that our purpose is to give impetus to the multilateral effort. If we waited until the FY 81 budget is appropriated before making a financial commitment in the new group, Zbig believes we would deprive the initiative of urgency and momentum. (C)

Options

Nicaragua:

Option 1: Seek immediately FY 1980 supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$120 million to help cover Nicaragua's balance of payments gaps in 1980 and 1981. *Vance recommends.* (C)

Option 2: Seek immediately FY 1980 Supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$75 million to help cover Nicaragua's balance of payments gap in 1979 and 1980, and advise the Nicaraguans that the remaining amount requested by Secretary Vance (\$45 million) will be included in the FY 1981 budget if our current balance of payments projections for the Nicaraguan economy prove reasonably accurate. *Brzezinski recommends.* (C)

Option 3: Seek immediately FY 1980 supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$75 million to help cover Nicaragua's balance of payments gap in 1980, deferring to the FY 1981 budget process consideration of whether such assistance is required in 1981. *McIntyre and Owen recommend.*³ (C)

Honduras and El Salvador

Option 1: Seek immediately FY 1980 supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$12 million for El Salvador (subject to execution of stipulated reforms) and \$13 million for Honduras to fund additional quick-impact projects. *Vance Recommends.* (C)

Option 2: Seek the supplementals for El Salvador and Honduras, as proposed by State, but with the understanding that we would use this aid to give impetus to a broad multilateral development program

³ Carter indicated his approval and added his initial.

for Central America under IBRD and IDB leadership starting early in 1980. *Brzezinski recommends*. (C)

Option 3: Do not seek supplementals for these countries but, instead, announce support for a multilateral development effort in Central America to be organized by the World Bank at the request of these countries; increase planned FY 1981 development assistance to them, subject to progress on democratic reforms. *McIntyre and Owen recommend*.⁴ (C)

Attachment

Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter⁵

Washington, September 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Support of U.S. Foreign Policy
Initiatives in Central America

Success of our foreign policy in Central America requires a substantial increase in our commitment of resources to the area.

The Nicaraguan civil war produced death and destruction comparable to that resulting from our own civil war, and recovery will require substantial assistance from the United States. The most urgent need is for flexible balance of payments support, which could most appropriately be provided from the Economic Support Fund; that account, however, is almost entirely earmarked by Congress for priorities in the Middle East. To assure a reasonable chance of success with our political strategy in this nearby area, I therefore recommend:

—That we seek a one-time ESF supplemental of \$120 million for Nicaragua to cover the most urgent requirements in 1980 and 1981;

—That we include in the supplemental \$25 million of additional funding for urgent impact programs in Honduras and El Salvador.

Treating this funding for the next two years as a one-time supplemental is the best way to demonstrate to the Congress and to the Central Americans that this is extraordinary assistance and not the

⁴ Carter indicated his approval and added his initial.

⁵ Confidential. Tabs 1–4 are not attached.

beginning of support at very high level such as we provide certain Middle East countries.

NICARAGUA

The Nicaraguan economy requires large inputs of foreign financing. Our strategy is to support the moderates such as business, labor, church groups, traditional political parties and the Nicaraguan economic team which is pro-Western in outlook.

A rapid economic recovery is essential to our political strategy. Continued large-scale unemployment and economic difficulties will force the regime to turn to authoritarian procedures. Cuban advice and influence would then become more important.

However, if we support rapid economic recovery over the next two years, the existing non-Somoza business and agricultural groups can be reestablished. A pluralistic political system can develop. U.S. assistance now can reestablish our credentials as a reliable friend of democratic progress.

All Latin America is watching Nicaragua to see if we will support the establishment of democracy following the end of a rightist dictatorship. Some believe the only alternative to such dictators as Somoza is authoritarian regimes of the left. A vast majority of Nicaraguans want to prove that is not true. The western financial community—Inter-American Development Bank, IBRD, IMF and private banks—is considering large scale support to assure a positive political outcome. Other Latins are providing major assistance (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras have offered \$25 million each). We must make a large contribution not only because it is needed, but because others will despair of the effort if the largest and richest country in the hemisphere does not do its share.

This assistance and effective rapid economic recovery will not guarantee a democratic outcome in Nicaragua. Through control of the armed forces and active political organization, the communists and their sympathizers may eventually take over. But failure to provide adequate U.S. assistance virtually assures such an unfavorable outcome and suggests that our policies of non-intervention and human rights mean Latin America is open for intrusion by Cuba and its friends.

Our mission in Nicaragua projected the balance of payments deficit before U.S. assistance over the two-year rehabilitation period at \$300 million. The Country Team proposed \$95 million in balance of payments assistance, and \$38 million in PL-480 Title I and Title II. This is an option you may wish to consider.

We have revised, however, the Mission's balance of payments projections, because we believe it underestimated: 1) international inflation, 2) petroleum prices, 3) the need to rebuild stocks drawn down

and destroyed during the disturbances, and 4) the interest rate costs of any debt rescheduling.

Our information also indicates that additional financing will be available from other donors and from use of reserves. The revised estimates indicate an overall balance of payments gap before financing of \$1.6 billion for 1979 through 1981. We project financing from the private sector and other donors of less than \$1.2 billion, leaving a gap of over \$400 million. I do not believe we can meet this entire gap. But I do believe we should do more than the \$95 million proposed by the AID mission.

There are three key reasons, in addition to the clear humanitarian need, for us to seek \$120 million of ESF funding instead of \$95 million.

—Our political strategy in Nicaragua requires a rapid recovery of the economy in Nicaragua to support the private sectors there which are our political friends.

—International burdensharing suggests an even larger share for the U.S.; including PL-480 we would be meeting only about 10 percent of the gap even with my proposed \$120 million; we have suggested to Venezuela that about \$55 million in addition to the \$20 million it has already provided would be reasonable; what the Germans are offering appears to be about equivalent on a per capita basis to what I am proposing for the U.S. although our interests in Central America are clearly greater than those of the FRG; even with my higher proposal our effort would not be comparable to that of Costa Rica or El Salvador with \$25 million of assistance from countries of 2 and 5 million people.

—Following the 1972 earthquake we provided \$95 million of assistance; the present crisis is much worse, the current dollar buys much less; I believe \$120 million in the Nicaraguan supplemental combined with the \$70 million from other sources is the minimum to show the U.S. commitment to democratic change in the whole Caribbean area.

Whatever assistance we provide Nicaragua will be monitored by our AID Mission in the country to insure that none of it could be used to finance the subversion of neighboring governments. Moreover, the type and level of assistance we are recommending would involve our Country Team very fully in Nicaraguan Government affairs so that they would be better positioned to discourage any action against Nicaragua's neighbors.

HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR

Events in Nicaragua make modest additional funding for Honduras and El Salvador essential. Honduras is already on the road to elections and democracy. Its economy and institutions are weak. We need to increase support for the present political liberalization by increased funding for immediate impact rural development. A recent high-level

AID mission has identified rural projects of about \$13 million that should be funded within a few weeks in addition to the programs in the FY-80 budget.

In El Salvador, following your approval of the PRC recommendations,⁶ we have laid out for the government a major package of reforms to avoid the same revolutionary polarization as in Nicaragua. El Salvador can explode any day. We have identified a \$12 million urban impact package to help defuse the explosive urban unrest while movement to a more democratic government takes place.

Our assistance for regimes in El Salvador and Honduras will help liberalize the political structure to avoid Nicaraguan-style polarization and is key to our worldwide human rights policy. There will however be criticism of the policy by some who believe we cannot work with human rights offenders such as the Government of El Salvador. But the government has said it will carry out promised democratic reforms and we will make clear to Congress and President Romero that this assistance will be provided *only* if the reforms are carried out. Seeking the supplemental appropriation is essential to increase our leverage for reforms.

BUDGET CONSTRAINT

I am very conscious of our budget constraints and have examined all the ways we might meet the Nicaraguan requirements without seeking supplemental appropriations. We are reprogramming in FY 80 and increasing previously planned levels within the FY 81 budget proposal. We shall provide the maximum amount of assistance through PL-480. The required grant technical assistance program—a key program because it supports our unions and many other private groups in working with their Nicaraguan counterparts—will be funded by reprogramming.

Even with \$65-70 million of reprogramming in FY 1980 and 1981, however, a supplemental request is necessary. The balance of payments requirements in Nicaragua must be met by flexible funds of the ESF type and because of Congressional earmarking of ESF, there is no feasible option for reprogramming significant ESF funds.

The projects in Honduras and El Salvador could be financed with AID Development Loans and doing so is an option for you to consider. However, the FY-80 budget for Development Loans has already been cut substantially by the Congress, and reallocations to these two countries of \$25 million would have a severe impact on other countries. Within Latin America it would mean more than a halving of the Panama

⁶ See Document 475.

program and some cuts in the Caribbean. About half the funds would still have to come from other regions. I do not believe, therefore, that we can meet the need for these programs effectively, except by a supplemental.

Beyond such funding issues, there is considerable political merit to a supplemental for Central America. It will show that the Administration is moving throughout the area in response to the Cuban pressure. Support for more conservative governments will win additional support in Congress. Because of Congressional cuts, total foreign aid appropriations and expenditures for FY–80 will be below our original request level even with a \$145 million supplemental.

We are confident that the supplemental can be a one time requirement to meet an extraordinary situation. After that we will rely on funding our requirements in Central America within our normal development assistance budgets. We will be moving as quickly as possible from a focus on economic recovery and impact type programs to AID's traditional development concerns. We will attempt to do this on a regional basis and we are already exploring the feasibility with the World Bank of a coordinated approach in agriculture.

Recommendations

That you approve proceeding with a Central American supplemental budget request of \$145 million, including \$120 million for Nicaragua, \$13 million for Honduras, and \$12 million for El Salvador.

Alternatively, that you approve proceeding with a supplemental budget request for Nicaragua only of \$120 million, and approve reprogramming funds for Honduras (\$13 million) and El Salvador (\$12 million) from AID Development Loans.

Alternatively, that you approve proceeding with a supplemental budget request for Nicaragua only of \$120 million.

Alternatively, that you approve proceeding with a supplemental budget request for Nicaragua only of \$95 million.⁷

⁷ Carter did not indicate his preference with respect to any of the recommendations; see, however, footnotes 3 and 4, above.

481. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, October 2, 1979

SUBJECT

Economic Security Assistance for Central America and the Caribbean (U)

In response to your memorandum of September 28, the President has approved your seeking immediate FY 1980 supplemental ESF authorization and appropriation of \$75 million to help cover Nicaragua's balance of payments gap in 1980.² Consideration of whether such assistance is required in 1981 will be deferred to the FY 1981 budget process. (S)

With regard to Honduras, El Salvador, and the Caribbean, the President has decided not to seek supplementals for these countries. Instead, the United States will support multilateral development efforts to be organized by the World Bank at the request of these countries. Subject to progress on democratic reforms, we will increase planned FY 1981 development assistance to them. (S)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 10/1-14/79. Secret. Owen wrote at the top of the memorandum: "John pls call me. H. Owen."

² Vance's September 28 memorandum to Carter requested that the administration increase the \$145 million budget request for Central America by \$30.6 million "to address immediate and urgent requirements in the Caribbean." The memorandum is printed as Document 365 in *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean.

482. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, October 9, 1979

SUBJECT

Central America and the Caribbean

Last Friday² at breakfast you expressed the desire to know more about the situation in the Central American and Caribbean regions and suggested that our Ambassadors might be brought back for a briefing session. I would like to suggest that instead we structure a briefing session around Phil Habib for the Caribbean, Bill Bowdler for Central America, and Pete Vaky for overall Latin America. Habib and Bowdler have recently made separate surveys of the respective regions and all three have an overview of the trends and dynamics. As you suggested, we would also have a CIA briefing on the countries involved.

I believe this would be preferable to bringing up the Ambassadors. A series of briefings by five or more Ambassadors is likely to be country-centered and less cohesive and integrated than a specially structured overview by Habib, Bowdler, and Vaky.

I recommend that you agree to set aside a suitable period, perhaps an evening session,³ for such a briefing, at an early date.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: CACAR: 11/1/78–11/6/79. Secret. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "Zbig, OK. J." Hutcheson sent a copy of the memorandum to Brzezinski under an October 10 note, indicating that the memorandum was to be returned to Brzezinski. Brzezinski added the following to the note: "RG—to CV. RP—implement. ZB."

² October 5.

³ Carter drew a line from the comma and wrote: "breakfast or late afternoon."

⁴ See Document 487.

483. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, October 9, 1979

SUBJECT

Intelligence and Related Activities in Central America (S)

On October 4, I asked [*name not declassified*] from DDO at the CIA for an update on the CIA's activities in Nicaragua. I found his report profoundly disappointing. We are doing too little too slowly. He said that operatives were passing modest amounts of money to [*3 lines not declassified*]. I told him that I thought the [*less than 1 line not declassified*] was a non-starter, and he more or less agreed with that. I agree that we must support [*1 line not declassified*]. He said that CIA had a budget of about \$750,000 (a year) for these activities in Nicaragua. He also said that they were looking for ways to help the independent labor movement. (S)

This effort has to be negligible compared to what the Cubans are doing. Cuba has already given scholarships to 850 Nicaraguans to train in Cuba, and has sent 1,000 Cuban teachers and hundreds of doctors and military advisers to Nicaragua. It is inconceivable to me that the US cannot match and compete against a nation with less than 5 percent of our population and 1 percent of our GNP, but that apparently is the case. I suggested to [*name not declassified*] that he think about ways that we could assist third countries with good democratic credentials [*1 line not declassified*] to provide teachers to Nicaragua so that there would be less reason to invite the Cubans. I also suggested, and Vaky did as well, that CIA put together a more comprehensive proposal to compete with the Cubans in Nicaragua and throughout Central America. He said he would look into it. (S)

The CIA's inadequate effort in Nicaragua is a symptom of a much larger problem: no agency in the USG has adjusted its resources to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: CACAR: 11/1/78-11/6/79. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. On another copy of the memorandum Aaron added the following notation: "ZB—Use the tasker for Talking Points at the SCC on covert action and follow up with a memo as necessary. DA." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Box 88, Presidential Advisory (PA) Very Sensitive, 1-12/79)

give Central America or the Caribbean the kind of priority it demands. We need to take steps to correct that now. (S)

On Friday,² at the interagency meeting which I chaired to discuss the reports of a coup in El Salvador, it was obvious that we were trying to develop policies based on a dearth of information.³ [3 lines not declassified] The State Department is just as guilty; our best Ambassadors and the largest number of officers are in countries in South America, where there are no crises and few problems. With the exception of Larry Pezzullo, we have our least talented Ambassadors in Central America and the fewest officers. I learned a couple of days ago that if AID is asked by OMB to cut its overseas personnel by 10 percent, it plans to eliminate its Central America Regional Aid Mission (ROCAP) and reduce by half the number of AID personnel in its Caribbean regional program in Barbados. It is quite obvious that the decisions made by AID and by the administrative people in State, CIA, and DOD are based on criteria and priorities which are very different from those which we are using. (S)

I am not privy to the decisions which are being made on the intelligence supplemental regarding Cuba, but I think it would be a great mistake if we did not use a large portion of any intelligence supplemental on Cuban activities in Central America and the Caribbean; my opinion is that we will obtain much less of a return on money spent directly on Cuba than if we spend it on what the Cubans are doing elsewhere. [2 lines not declassified]

RECOMMENDATION

1. As we try to deal with the problems of Central America and the Caribbean during the next year, we will need a lot more and a lot better information than we have been receiving for the last two years. We will also need a lot better political operators in the field. Because the bureaucracies are responding to a very different set of criteria, I recommend that you send the memorandum at Tab I.⁴ (S)

² October 5.

³ For more information about the reports of a coup in El Salvador, see Document 388.

⁴ Tab I, attached but not printed, is an unsigned and undated memorandum from Brzezinski to Vance, Brown, Miller, Bergland, Kreps, McIntyre, Jones, Turner, Celeste, Reinhardt, and Ehrlich noting the "need to increase the U.S. presence" in Central America and the Caribbean and requesting a report by November 15 "with recommendations on specific steps that need to be taken to increase the quantity and quality of our manpower and administrative resources in our posts." Brzezinski did not approve or disapprove of this recommendation, but he signed a copy of the memorandum on October 11. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: CACAR: 11/1/78–11/6/79)

2. We also need to get CIA to reassess its effort in Nicaragua and begin developing proposals for the rest of Central America. I have prepared a tasker at Tab II for this purpose.⁵ (S)

Donald Gregg and Henry Owen concur.⁶

⁵ Tab II, attached but not printed, is an unsigned and undated memorandum from Brzezinski to Turner requesting a covert action proposal for El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, as well as a comprehensive proposal for Nicaragua, by October 15. Brzezinski neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation.

⁶ Gregg and Owen both indicated their concurrence, (Gregg concurred in the second memorandum and Owen in the first), and an unknown hand wrote: "OMB concurs with memo#1." In a November 8 memorandum to Brzezinski, Pastor described the response by the agencies to Brzezinski's October 11 memorandum (see footnote 2 above) as "clearly unsatisfactory," noting that "all use the exercise as an opportunity to carp at budget stringencies" and to submit "wish lists" for new positions. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 11/1979) Gregg, Henze, and Rosenberg responded to Pastor's November 8 memorandum in a November 9 memorandum to Brzezinski: "All three of us have reacted to Bob Pastor's memo in the same way: He may not like what he is being told by CIA and other agencies about the difficulties involved in augmenting resources in the Caribbean, but what he is being told is true." (Ibid.)

484. Memorandum From the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, October 10, 1979

SUBJECT

Central America (U)

On late Friday morning² Jim McIntyre told me that the President had just asked him for his and my views about two questions:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 35, Nicaragua, 7-12/79. Confidential. Sent for information. Brzezinski added a checkmark and wrote at the top of the page: "RP," indicating Pastor. In an October 4 memorandum to Carter, Vance requested that Carter "reconsider" his decision to seek supplemental assistance for Nicaragua only and not other Central American and Caribbean nations. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 28, Latin America, 10/79)

² October 5.

1. *Should we have a package of \$75 million Nicaragua supplemental and \$15 million reprogramming for other countries?* I said that this was what I had advocated all along: a one-shot \$75 million for Nicaragua and relying on modest reprogramming for other countries, and that we could also throw in about \$10 million FMS, since this would require only a \$1 million appropriation. (C)

2. *Should the \$75 million for Nicaragua be reduced to allow a supplemental request for other countries?* I said no, since Nicaragua needed the money and the other countries' needs could be met as per (1) above. (C)

I then briefed Bob Pastor on the above. (U)

That evening Jim said that the President had asked whether his and my proposed \$15 million reprogramming could be accomplished without difficulty. At my suggestion, OMB sent the President a message at about 8:00 p.m., pointing out that the reprogramming was not difficult; \$10 million of it had already been accomplished, as a result of the formation of the Afghan aid program. (C)³

As per the President's note to you and Jim, I am now consulting State about how to spend the \$5 million reprogramming that has not yet been completed and the \$5 million new money that the President added.⁴ Pastor and I agree that it would probably be \$7 million for Honduras and \$3 million for El Salvador (conditional on political reforms). The \$10 million already reprogrammed is going to the Caribbean for public works. I will also follow up on Congressional consultation and presentation re what we will describe as a \$105 million package (though only an \$80 million supplemental). (C)

³ Not found.

⁴ In an October 5 note to Carter, Wise wrote: "Jim McIntyre reports that it is possible to re-program the \$15 million for Central America and the Caribbean without difficulty because it will come from collapsed programs mainly Afghanistan or other programs where the needs have lessened—Jordan.) In fact, 10 of the 15 have already been re-programmed by State. In addition, we can provide \$10 million in FMS credits if desired." Carter wrote to McIntyre and Brzezinski at the bottom of the note: "To: Jim & Zbig—Re: Carib/C. America aid—Put \$75 mil already approved, \$15 mil reprogramming, \$10 mil in FMS credits, plus \$5 mil in new funds. Let Henry & State recommend how to use these '80 funds. JC." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: CACAR: 11/1/78–11/6/79)

485. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Vance, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (McIntyre), and the Director of the International Development Cooperation Agency (Ehrlich)¹

Washington, October 10, 1979

SUBJECT

Additional Assistance for Central American and Caribbean Countries (C)

The President has approved the following increases in US assistance to Central American and Caribbean countries:

—\$75 million for economic recovery programs in Nicaragua, to be sought as an FY 1980 Economic Support Fund supplemental authorization and appropriation;

—\$10 million for development projects in Honduras and El Salvador designed to achieve early impact, of which \$5 million is to be sought as an FY 1980 Economic Support Fund supplemental authorization and appropriation and \$5 million is to be obtained by reprogramming FY 1980 Economic Support Funds on a worldwide basis;

—\$10 million in Foreign Military Sales credits to Eastern Caribbean countries, for the planned joint coast guard and other purposes, to be provided through reprogramming of FY 1980 FMS funds on a worldwide basis;

—\$10 million for development projects, principally public works with high employment impact, in small Eastern Caribbean countries, of which \$7.6 million has been provided through reprogramming of FY 1979 AID development assistance funds and \$2.4 million is to be provided through reprogramming of FY 1980 development assistance funds. (C)

The Department of State should arrange with the Office of Management and Budget for immediate preparation and transmission to the Congress of the required supplemental authorization and appropriation requests. (C)²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 28, Latin America, 10/79. Confidential. A copy was sent to Bennet.

² For Carter's November 9 message to Congress transmitting proposed legislation for U.S. assistance to Central America and the Caribbean, including "\$80 million in flexible Economic Support funding, \$75 million to assist in the reconstruction of the Nicaraguan economy and \$5 million for early-impact development projects in other Central American countries," see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pp. 2103-2104.

The Department of State should promptly determine, in consultation with the Agency for International Development and the National Security Council staff, the allocation of the additional ESF funds among projects in El Salvador and Honduras, taking into account the feasibility of obtaining the required political commitments from and executing projects in El Salvador and the relationships of proposed projects to the Central American development program to be organized under World Bank leadership. (C)

The IDCA should promptly determine, in consultation with the Department of State and the National Security Council staff, the allocation of the additional funds for development projects in the Eastern Caribbean. (C)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

486. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Some Ideas for Your Briefing on Central America (CA) and the Caribbean (CAR), Friday, October 19—3:00 p.m. (C)

State has suggested Stan Turner begin with an overview. Cy will give a policy overview and Habib and Bowdler will focus on the Caribbean and Central America respectively. (Each presentation would be about five minutes.) (C)

The Problem

The repeated crises we confront in the Caribbean (CAR) and Central America (CA) are, of course, related; they are symptoms of a more perplexing challenge characterized by the following:

—All these nations have rapidly expanding populations and scarce resources. Long appendages of the US or UK they are now asserting

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 28, Latin America, 10/79. Secret. Sent for information. Carter wrote at the top of the page: "This is wrong approach—I'll speak at meeting. C." Carter's reference is to Document 487. An earlier draft of the memorandum, prepared by Pastor and sent to Brzezinski under an October 18 memorandum is *ibid*.

their national identities, and their new leaders are eager to play large (and vocal) roles on the world stage. (S)

—The Administration's human rights and non-intervention policies have helped to bring long-standing contradictions and tensions to the surface. Our desire to replace paternalism with balanced relationships has provided these nations "space" to define themselves. Our continued predominance, however, irritates their nascent nationalism, and its results create problems for us. (S)

—Cuba offers a defiant, assertive alternative, and is now once again trying to profit from these tensions. (S)

Two Contrasting Regions

There is a need to recognize that the problem plays out different in the Caribbean and in Central America. (S)

—In the *Caribbean*, the parliamentary tradition survives, but has no deep roots. Problems are so immense that utopian, revolutionary posturing is very attractive. Every island has its radical group, and increasingly they are working with each other and with Grenada, Jamaica, Guyana and Cuba. (S)

—With the exception of Costa Rica, *Central America (and Haiti)* lack a democratic tradition, and are burdened by an authoritarian and inequitable class structure. (S)

Our objectives therefore, have different emphases. In Central America, we have promoted democratic changes; in the Caribbean, we have sought to defend existing democratic institutions. (S)

Recent Developments

The *Caribbean* is becoming more polarized. Bishop of Grenada may have just made a decisive turn to the left by closing the independent newspaper and arresting some opposition leaders. Jamaica's Manley gave an anti-US speech at the NAM and named a doctrinaire Marxist (D.K. Duncan) as his party leader. Guyana joined Jamaica, Grenada, and Cuba in attacking your October 1 speech.² In contrast, Barbados and Trinidad are strong and successful, and exert some influence on the uncommitted mini-states. (S)

Most of the decisions by Manley, Bishop, and others, which disturb us, are probably made for internal reasons. Bishop in Grenada fears he is losing popular support. Manley has probably shifted to the left to capture the imagination of the radical youth of Jamaica, much as

² See footnote 5, Document 319.

he did before his election in 1976. In Guyana, Burnham is just trying to hang on. (S)

Thus Caribbean politics often produces attacks on transnational corporations and capitalist countries. Even Trinidad's conservative Eric Williams is convinced that the Caribbean's plight is caused by Western exploitation. Some Caribbean leaders are eager to test our commitment to "ideological pluralism." (S)

We should not consider Manley, or even Bishop, as irretrievable; this would unintentionally make them so. There is a potent opposition newspaper and party in Jamaica, and Cubans were thrown on the defensive by recent disclosures there. International public opinion matters in the Caribbean, even to Bishop of Grenada. (S)

In *Central America*, the recent coup in El Salvador may have turned the worst crisis into our best opportunity.³ The civilian appointments to the Junta are encouraging. If we can help Salvador to get on track toward free elections, that will have a very positive impact on its three closest neighbors. We must be very quick and flexible to respond to the new government's requests, and helpful in dealing with the very real guerrilla threat. The new Junta will have to reach an accommodation with the Christian Democrats (PDC) by sponsoring free elections soon or by co-opting them into the government. We need to make sure that they do this. (S)

If El Salvador has free elections soon, Nicaragua and Honduras will be hard pressed to avoid them. Guatemala will have to reassess its opposition to social reforms. The game is much rougher in Central America than in the Caribbean, and the risks of being heavy-handed (or caught red-handed) are much less. We should use our leverage more. (S)

Issues and Ideas

Let me suggest that you focus the discussion on the following issues: (U)

(1) *Precluding A Radical Alternative*. How far should we be willing to go to prevent radical take-overs in the region? Should we be willing to provide counter-insurgency support to the new Salvadoran junta? Should we provide support to those who seek to replace Grenada's Bishop? (S)

My own view is that we should be prepared to help the new Salvadoran junta with military and political assistance if it remains on track toward free elections. We should find all effective means

³ For information about the coup in El Salvador, see Document 388.

to support centrist groups in the region and to expose Soviet/Cuban activities. (S)

(2) *US Presence and Capabilities*. Are we receiving sufficient high-quality intelligence? Is our presence adequate to convey the message of US interest and determination? (S)

I believe the answers to both questions are negative. US agencies continue to give the region very low priority in terms of quantity and quality of manpower. Even though we are the largest aid-givers to the region, few realize it because we have tended to give most of our aid through multilateral channels, and we seem reluctant to take credit for it. Our intelligence is good, but considering the amount of time senior policy-makers spend on the region, there are too few officers [*1 line not declassified*]. We have just begun an inter-agency review to determine ways to increase the quantity and the quality of our manpower in the region, but we will need your strong support if this effort is to succeed. (S)

(3) *Economic Policies*. Are we doing enough? The Caribbean Group is a successful initiative, and we should maintain our contribution, but we also need to *expand bilateral programs* and *increase the flexibility* of our aid-granting mechanisms in order to be able to respond rapidly to circumstances. We are also encouraging a Central American Development Group modeled on the Caribbean Group, but we are trying to keep a low profile in this, least it look like our initiative. (S)

If we really want to help the Caribbean, we should reduce US protectionism in sugar, coffee, and meat. No other set of decisions would have as positive an impact on the region. Our rising interest in the Caribbean might make this fly politically here. (S)

(4) *Diplomacy/Democracy*. How can we effectively raise the costs to those who criticize us and the benefits to those who work with us? How can we better shape public opinion? How can we strengthen the democratic process? We should emphasize rewards for friends. More attention and aid. You may want to consider responding positively to requests for meetings with you by the democratic Presidents of the region: Barbados, Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica. Short meetings with them would send a clear message of our strong support for democracy to the whole region. (S)

I believe we should avoid punitive sanctions against those like Manley who have been insensitive to our concerns recently. Instead, we should gradually but modestly reduce our assistance to these countries; and we should "cool" our relations (fewer visits, less attention). The message will be understood and is sufficiently unobtrusive so as to give these leaders a chance to walk back. (S)

In addition, we should support centrist groups in both areas and continue to encourage the Europeans and Latin democracies to help

these groups, and when necessary work with them. Cy should pursue this issue in La Paz. (S)⁴

Finally, you should select a forum soon to speak on the Caribbean and Central America along these lines. The perfect occasion is the Conference on the Caribbean on November 28, 1979, hosted by Miami. If you so decide, I will prepare a draft speech. (S)

⁴ Vance travelled to La Paz October 20–23 to attend the OAS General Assembly meeting.

487. Summary of Conclusions of a Presidential Meeting¹

Washington, October 19, 1979, 3:05–4:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Central America and the Caribbean

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State
Viron T. Vaky, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
William Bowdler, Director of Intelligence and Research
Lawrence Pezzullo, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua
Ambler Moss, U.S. Ambassador to Panama
Philip Habib, Senior Adviser to the Secretary of State

OSD

Graham Claytor, Deputy Secretary of Defense

CIA

Stansfield Turner, Director
Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director

White House

The President
Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser
Hedley Donovan, Presidential Adviser

NSC

Robert Pastor, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 83, Sensitive XX: 10/13/1979–10/31/1979. Secret. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room.

Summary of Conclusions

The President asked Secretary Vance to begin the briefing, and he, in turn, asked Phil Habib to make a presentation on the Caribbean. Bill Bowdler would follow with a presentation on Central America.

CARIBBEAN²

[Omitted here is discussion on the Caribbean.]

Central America

Bowdler stated that Central America is a real volcano; the surprising thing is that it has not erupted before now. Like the Caribbean, Central America suffers from a manipulation of the political process, extreme economic disparities, rapid population growth rates and low economic growth. This has led to growing resentment and pressures for change which have produced violence and counter-violence. The extreme left is well organized and poised to exploit the discontent. These conditions are present in all the countries in Central America, except Costa Rica. *Bowdler* said that Nicaragua is a classic example of militarism which was carried to such a degree that it alienated everyone. Honduras has a relatively benevolent situation. The economic and social differences are not so great. Past governments have implemented an agrarian reform which has alleviated some problems. There will be elections for a Constituent Convention in March and this could be the government's escape hatch. If the government allows all groups to take part, it can defuse the situation. Our role should be to encourage President Paz to allow the political process to be open to all parties, and particularly to allow the Christian Democrats to participate as a party in the election. (S)

Bowdler said that the recent coup in El Salvador removes the crisis. We have been fortunate. It provides a real opportunity for constitutional government in the near future. In answer to a question from the President, about when free elections would occur, *Bowdler* said it would probably occur within 12 months. The composition of the Junta is such that they will probably want to expedite the transition to democratic rule. The leadership is young, moderate and progressive. It will face challenges from the extreme left and possibly also from the right. It will also have the problem of having to stop the economic down turn while moving the country toward free elections. (S)

What can we do? We can assist them economically by AID projects, by encouraging the international development banks to undertake proj-

² For more information about U.S. government policy toward the Caribbean, see *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean, Document 368.

ects, and by encouraging investment. *Vaky* interjected that business has been moving out of El Salvador, and we should try to get business to go back in. (S)

Bowdler continued by suggesting that the US should also encourage in subtle ways various groups in El Salvador—the Church, the Private Sector—to play a constructive role in the democratization process. We should also make available economic and security assistance if that is requested. At the same time, we should keep an eye out on the Cubans and help the government cope with its guerrilla threat. (S)

Bowdler said that the situation in Guatemala is less serious, although certain conditions are very disturbing. This is the third military president in a row to rule Guatemala. The private sector is frightened by the polarization and by developments in Nicaragua. Tourism is also down. All this has led to a general economic retrenchment. Congressional elections are scheduled for next March and we should encourage Lucas to make them free. We should use modest amounts of aid to do this. (S)

What do we need to do? First, we need to have a sensitive understanding of revolutionary forces in Central America. Secondly, we need to use our resources flexibly to support moderate elements in these countries. Third, we need to provide encouragement and leadership when necessary. Fourth, we ought to try to facilitate the settlement of the border dispute between El Salvador and Honduras. Fifth, we should promote a new level of economic integration and try to involve Nicaragua in it. If we succeed, it will be most difficult for Nicaragua to go radical. Sixth, we need to develop sophisticated political operatives to help these regimes better deal with their problems. In response to a question from Secretary Vance as to whether this would involve covert operations, *Bowdler* said it would. (S)

The *President* asked how we would involve the Andean Group in this process and whether we had a good relationship with them on these issues. (S)

Bowdler said that we are talking to the Andean Group, but we have not moved into the action stage yet. *Vaky* said that the capacity of the Andean Group to act is limited although they are naturally interested and their information on Central America is good. The Andean Group has spoken among themselves on this issue often. *Pastor* said that we ought to continue to coordinate and work in parallel with the Andean Group, but we should not think that it would be easy to adopt a unified approach with them. They may be reluctant to do that. (S)

President Carter said that he wanted to be frank with the group, and without meaning to be critical, he feels that he has sat in the Presidency for three years and he still does not have a clear idea of what we are trying to do in the region. All he ever gets are last minute

requests from Vance and Christopher for a budget supplemental to deal with these problems and this irritates him. There is nothing long-term to deal with the problem. Do we need a conference on this? Andy (Young) could take a group down to the area if this were necessary. Do we need a long-term stabilization program for the region? What are we trying to encourage? (S)

Habib answered by saying that we do need a coordinated and integrated program, and that was one of the conclusions of his report. He also found that there wasn't sufficient attention given to the region. Since then, the Secretary has set up an interagency group, and it is looking into our policies toward Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana. The group will also examine what kind of coordinating effort could be undertaken in the economic, political and multilateral fields. We look forward to an early decision on these issues. In addition to these long-term programs, we also need to be able to react better to short-term crises. (S)

President Carter said that whenever there is a problem, all the recommendations seem to focus on sending more money. There is no idea what it will be used for. There is no sense of how it will fit into an overall approach. (S)

The President said he received recommendations that we should knock the hell out of Manley and support a moderate group. He said he was going down that path when Andy came to see him. He persuaded me that such a policy would be suicide in Jamaica, that Manley will be in power until 1981 and he is too strong to be overthrown. Such an approach would only put us in danger of losing Manley permanently. (S)

The President continued by saying that he felt that in sensitive areas, we are simply not getting sound advice. We need to treat even the small islands in the Caribbean with respect. If it is necessary to have Manley up here for a talk and to stay in the Mansion, he would be prepared to do that or if we wanted to send someone down—like my wife or Andy—I would be willing to do it. (S)

Secretary Vance said that a number of months ago he asked *Habib* to undertake the task of developing a comprehensive strategy for the Caribbean. He particularly asked *Habib* for suggestions on the way to deal with Jamaica. The Secretary felt that the President might be overreading what he and Dr. Brzezinski had recommended. We are not suggesting that we jump Manley, but rather that we express concern about recent developments. We have to be careful to think of what kind of leverage we have in Jamaica; to exercise that effectively, we need to know the local situation better. Recently, he spoke to some officials from Kaiser, which has long experience in Jamaica, to get a better feel for the situation there. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski pointed out that in the memo which he sent the President that morning he wrote we should not view Manley or even Bishop as irretrievable. To do so would only have the effect of pushing them in a radical direction. (S)

President Carter said he was not referring to the memo this morning, but rather to the advice he had been getting for the past three weeks. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then tried to put the current difficulties in a broader perspective. The Caribbean and Central America have recently emerged from a colonial or neocolonial legacy. Central America has long been under US domination, while the Caribbean has been under the domination of various European countries. One needs to understand the current problems in the region within this context and also within the more recent context of US disengagement. Our long-term goals are correct. The problem is in the short-term and in the mid-term where it looks as if the US is out of the picture, and people who are hostile to the US are on the offensive. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski recommended that the President make a speech soon, which states that the US has long and enduring interests in the Caribbean. But these interests are different than they have been in the past. We are interested in the long-term development and democratization of the region. We are interested in letting these countries define their own place in the world. But in the short-term, we should be prepared to assert ourselves, politically, economically, and perhaps even militarily. We need to develop more sophisticated covert operations. These have been destroyed over the last five years, and we need to rebuild them. In addition, we need to be prepared to provide more economic aid to the region and we need to do more politically. Unless Manley realizes we are in the picture, and we are willing to crack down, he will gravitate to the left. (S)

Secretary Vance said that our technological and economic assistance is our advantage, and we should use it more. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed, and said that our approach should be clearly set in a secure and confident context. We are a major power with major responsibilities, but we are interested in helping the countries in the region achieve their objectives of development and democratization. (S)

President Carter said we may have made an enormous mistake in Jamaica if we had followed the original path, but what really disturbs him is that the discussion seems permeated with an inadequate attitude. We should try hard not to be exploitative. It is wrong to think that we can buy friends, and I think that is our major problem. I don't think that people in the area think that the US really cares about them, that we are their friends. There are many ways we can demonstrate this interest. We have a thousand major universities in the US and I could call and ask them to participate in a program to help the area. If I

called some business leaders and told them we have a problem, and divided up responsibilities, I am sure they would be glad to help. I believe we could really help if we did this. The American people would be happy to establish friendly relations directly with the people of the area. I don't feel that the people in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and perhaps even in Costa Rica feel that we care about them; perhaps they think that Cuba does. (S)

The President said that as long as white Anglos sit in the Cabinet Room and think of ways to keep out the Cubans, we will be unable to get at the problems in the area. If we could spend our time thinking of ways we can help the people of Guatemala—to work out a good transportation system or an educational system—I think that would work. We need to get the American people involved—the church, business, labor, etc. When I was in Atlanta, the Baptist Church there sent 30 people into the mountains to help poor people, and I think that helped. We do not have a broad enough outreach and I believe they can sense that. And we ought to do that. They probably feel we have been exploitative and they are probably right. (S)

Habib referred to two examples to prove the President's point. The Prime Minister of Dominica was recently here and asked for just \$200,000 of fertilizer and a few bundles of seeds to begin to reconstruct his country's agriculture after the hurricane. We were able to respond quickly, and the Prime Minister became a hero when he returned. By and large, we have neglected the area because we thought it was a British responsibility. We need to change that. Our two goals should be democracy and development. Business is not going into the Caribbean because it is not profitable (due to poor transportation, etc.) and because they feel they are unwelcome (rhetorical attacks against international corporations). (S)

Habib said that Manley is a complex person. The British think he is off the wall; they also believe that Bishop is not salvageable. *Habib* agrees with that. Manley is preparing to win the election and that explains the reason for his radical shift. We ought to continue to press Manley and Bishop to go toward free elections. As to Manley, *Habib* did judge him on his ability to maintain the democratic process and to make his source function better. He has an affinity for Cuba because he admires Castro and because he wants to play a world role. (S)

In Guyana the alternatives to Burnham are worse. (S)

President Carter said he is not trying to oversimplify, but it seems to him that what we need to do is change our basic attitude. We need to do what we can to give them a reason to like the US. We need to reach beyond the government structure and relate directly to the people. (S)

The President says that he thinks Manley, like him, is a politician facing elections. He wants to do the right thing, but maybe he is con-

strained. Maybe we can give Manley some help in agriculture. That was Andy's suggestion. We have Castro beat 10,000 to one in this area, but somehow we cannot compete. If we concentrate on labor and agriculture, we can magnify greatly what we can do in Jamaica. The problem is we have a tendency to hold on to things. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that we need to break with the paternalistic tradition. (S)

President Carter said that we still have it. *Dr. Brzezinski* said we must engage the private sector which would involve them and others. *Secretary Vance* said that the business community is prepared to work with us. *Habib* said that the AFL/CIO wants to expand its activities, but to do so requires money. (S)

The President said that he is the only person in the region who can marshal all the resources, private and public. He said that we need a country-by-country analysis, describing in detail what resources are required, and who he should contact, and he said that he would get in touch with these people. (S)³

Admiral Turner said that the CIA is considerably more pessimistic than Andy Young about Jamaica. Jamaica has received about \$100 million during the last year, but much of this has been wasted. It is possible that Jamaica may have passed the point where we can influence Manley to continue down a Parliamentary path. Turner cited a number of instances of Cuban-Soviet collaboration in Jamaica, including the fact that the Soviet Ambassador provided the Jamaican Minister of Information some ideas on October 2 about how to respond to the President's speech of October 1. The CIA increasingly sees Manley working with the Cuban DGI to generate anti-US propaganda. The CIA thinks that it is difficult for him to come back after making such a sharp turn to the left. (S)

³ In an October 24 memorandum to Tarnoff, Dodson instructed the Department of State to prepare a report by October 31 "describing activities undertaken by U.S. non-governmental groups which contribute to the development (economic, political, or social) or democratization of Central America and the Caribbean," on a country-by-country basis. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 7, Central America: CACAR: 11/78–11/79) Tarnoff replied to Brzezinski in an October 31 memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 10/15–31/79) In a November 15 memorandum to Carter, Vance discussed proposals to enhance "U.S. non-governmental activities in Central America and the Caribbean." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 11/79) In a December 12 memorandum to Brzezinski, Tarnoff outlined strategies for and raised questions about "strengthening people-to people ties in the Caribbean and Central America." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 12/79–1/80)

Turner said that he agrees with the State Department's analysis on El Salvador and our need to be more sympathetic with the Junta. He believes there is a 50–50 chance of civil war, and that Jamaica will need to find some strong leadership soon if it will survive. He suspects that it will require military aid to keep the extreme left down and it will also need to coopt the moderate left. (S)

The President said that he is willing to provide more aid, if it is placed at the context of our longer-term objectives. (S)

Ambassador Pezzullo said that if we had tried to describe a worse case for Nicaragua six months ago, we would find ourselves presently in it, but it's not that bad. We have a tendency to have a bad mindset which often leads us to exaggerate the impact of the Cubans, although he did recognize that many of the new leadership have been trained in Cuba. In Central America, there have been a number of rapid changes, and Castro is resourceful in currently taking advantage of it. On the other hand, we have opportunities which we don't use. For example, Humberto Ortega, Commander in Chief of the Sandinista Army, wants to come to the US to meet with people in State and the Pentagon. He told Pezzullo that Castro had promised him a plane to take him to Cuba, but we have difficulty in even getting him an invitation to come up to the US. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski interjected that he supported the idea of having the Pentagon invite Ortega for a VIP visit. (S)

Pezzullo said that we need to use our advantage in technology better. It is very attractive throughout Central America. Even Jaime Wheelock, Nicaragua's radical Minister of Agriculture, has expressed interest in getting an adviser from the Wisconsin Land Tenure Center to work with him. We do not need to jump in too fast with our power, but we should be quick to respond with our technology. (S)

The President said that he understood what Pezzullo was saying. (S)

Secretary Vance said that we need a contingency fund; otherwise, it is very difficult to respond rapidly to such opportunities. President Carter agreed with him. (S)

Habib said that he had briefed the Congress on the Caribbean, and had found considerably more sympathy there than in parts of the bureaucracy for more money to the Caribbean. (S)

President Carter said that we need to plan ahead and anticipate these changes and developments. He acknowledged that there is a fair amount of attention to the region, but he insisted that we do not have an adequate long-range approach to the region. He said that we are starting to correct that, but we have not thought through what we should do in an extra-governmental way. He wondered whether we had graduated from a neocolonial perspective, but thought that we

haven't. The general tone of the briefings at the beginning of the meeting suggested that we are about to lose these countries from our sphere of influence. He thinks that is the wrong approach. (S)

The President said that we need to focus much more on the preparation of the FY 81 budget as it applies to our concerns in Central America and the Caribbean. We need to build in some flexibility—perhaps including a contingency fund—so that we can respond rapidly to events. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we respond to the problems in the Caribbean and Central America in five ways: First, we must respond to the socio-economic needs with an economic assistance plan, and we will provide the President with such a plan. Secondly, we need to develop a strategy to deal with the political-military problems in the region. Third, we need to develop a covert strategy which complements our overall approach. Fourth, we need to develop an extra-governmental strategy, devising ways to mobilize the resources of the country as the President had described. (The President interjected by suggesting that we examine the example of a group from Georgia who went to Haiti recently to plant one million trees.) And fifth, we need to develop a regional strategy for engaging other Latin American countries in these problems. Secretary Vance can follow this up in La Paz. (S)

Secretary Vance suggested a number of mechanisms we can use, such as land grant colleges. *Habib* said that the AFL wants to do more. (S)

The President said that he is eager to help. This conversation should help to stimulate our thinking, and he asked the group to come back to him with an analysis of each country individually—not the region—and what we can do. It is surprising what can be done if we set our minds to it. (S)

Habib suggested that a good time to mobilize this effort would be at the Committee on the Caribbean meeting in Miami in November. *Secretary Vance* said that the President has agreed to see Prime Minister Adams of Barbados. (S)

Ambassador Moss agreed that we faced a significant attitudinal problem. There are a lot of suspicions in the area, particularly that the only reason we are interested in it is because of Castro. (S)

The Secretary said that he will mention the need for a new attitudinal approach in his speech in La Paz. (S)

The President said that Bob Graham, Governor of Florida, had recently visited three or four countries in the Caribbean and was very excited with the experience. One of the President's neighbors in Plains had spent a year in Jamaica, and another group from Georgia had gone to an island in the Caribbean and given every person on the island

dental work. This is the kind of activity which conveys a genuine feeling of warmth. Georgia had a relationship with the Brazilian state of Pernambuco, and it was a good opportunity to assert our influence in an exciting and enjoyable way. To me, this is one of the best opportunities to relate to other governments, without trying to figure out what we are trying to get out of it. (S)

The President also expressed some skepticism about the quality of our ambassadors. In a country which is black or Spanish-speaking, he wondered whether we are sending our best ambassadors. We should look very closely at the quality of our ambassadors, and we ought to assess every possibility of upgrading our people in the area. (S)

Vaky said that the U.S. traditionally has difficulty relating to the interests of these countries. Whether it is on sugar or tin, we do not take into account their concerns very well. The IDB is currently having a problem with Ecuador, for example. We need to find a better way to examine the consequences of our global policies. *Secretary Vance* said that we should also examine the GSP from that perspective. (S)

The President said that there is another opportunity we should examine. Dante Fascell can help us by organizing a group of Congressmen. The region is an attractive place to visit. If they did, we could arrange meetings with good, moderate leaders, but we need to identify with the people. For too long, dictators had identified key members of the Congress and entertained them. By the time we tried to change our policies, it was more difficult. We should involve them early on. We need to work with Fascell, and look for another 20 like him. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that in about 15 minutes an interagency group would be meeting to examine ways to improve the quantity and quality of our manpower in Central America and the Caribbean, and he said that that was very much consistent with what the President had said. (S)

488. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Special Representative for Economic Summits (Owen)¹

Washington, October 29, 1979

SUBJECT

US Policy to Central America and the Caribbean—2:00 p.m. Meeting, Monday, October 29, 1979 (U)

Let me use this memo to suggest some ideas for discussion at our 2:00 p.m. meeting today.² There are three subjects I would like to cover: (1) the President's comments at our October 19, 1979 meeting;³ (2) some ideas on how to incorporate the President's ideas into a more comprehensive approach; and (3) the next steps that need to be taken to activate that approach. (S)

I. The October 19, 1979 Meeting on Central America and the Caribbean: some comments. I rushed to write the notes from the October 19, 1979 meeting because I sensed that the President and the rest of us had missed each other; that we had approached the subject from such different directions that the discussion failed to grasp the issues in an effective way. On reading through the notes (Tab A)⁴ again, I find that I can condense my concerns to three points, relating to the information the President has received, his analysis, and his strategy:

1. *Information.* The President, by his own admission, said that he didn't have a clear idea of what we have been doing in Central America and the Caribbean during the last three years. Perhaps, he concludes that we haven't done much; I believe the more accurate conclusion is that we haven't kept the President adequately informed of our approach, and also of its inadequacies, which have become more evident in the last six months. Instead, we have sent in individual intelligence items on developments, and he relates these items to his instincts rather than to a coherent framework. The President really should not have received a summary of our Ambassador's current feelings on Jamaica without being informed that we had begun an interagency

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 83, Sensitive XX: 10/13–31/1979. Secret. Sent for both action and information. Brzezinski wrote at the top of the page: "RP—good."

² No further record of this meeting has been found.

³ See Document 487.

⁴ Not attached.

review to assess recent developments in Jamaica and decide on a new approach. (S)⁵

It would be useful to send a memo to the President which describes our overall approach to Central America and the Caribbean (CACAR) and identifies those areas undergoing reassessment. (As a matter of routine, it might be useful for all of the staff to take 2 or 3 subjects in their area and do such a memo from time-to-time, although I suspect this is probably most needed in areas—like CACAR—which are in a rapid state of flux, thus not lending themselves to a static definition.) (S)

2. *Analysis.* The President said that any new approach to the region must be based on a change in our attitudes. He said, “the problem is we have a tendency to hold on to things.” He said we tend to view the region as “our sphere of influence.” He came extraordinarily close to criticizing his October 1 speech on the brigade in the same terms used by other Caribbean leaders—like Manley and Bishop.⁶ He said that State’s briefing was too preoccupied with trying to find ways to keep the region from being “lost to the Cubans.” (S)

This is a rather startling statement. It appears to contradict other statements he has made about the need to counter the extension of Cuban influence in the area.⁷ Is it possible that the President was not aware that his October 1 speech would be viewed as one of his Administration’s most paternalistic actions in the Caribbean? Is it possible that he is not aware that our increased military presence, our high per capita economic assistance, our heightened attention, and indeed, our concern about the Soviet brigade are all indications that CACAR is within our sphere of special concern, if not influence? There is no way the US can relate to a region on its doorstep composed of approximately 20 political entities, the majority of which have populations of less than 1 million people, on the basis of complete equality. We can try to treat these nations with respect, but if they lean toward the Soviets or Cubans, we cannot very well ignore that without sending signals of weakness throughout the world. The issue, therefore, is not how do you eliminate paternalism in the Caribbean, but rather how do you limit it without permitting effects which jeopardize US interests. (S)

There are two rather different ways to visualize recent developments in CACAR. Andy Young probably is not terribly concerned about developments in Grenada or Jamaica, essentially believing that

⁵ See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean, Document 191.

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 319.

⁷ Brzezinski underlined “to counter” and wrote in the left-hand margin next to the sentence: “No the question is how.”

we should roll with the tide of events there. If we stay friendly, the attraction of the US will keep them “friends.”

There is an alternative view which suggests that if we acquiesce in the pro-Cuban tilt of Grenada and Jamaica, we will invite like-minded groups in the other islands to push in the same direction, which, in the least, means a heightened criticism of the US. Before too long, Cuba will have become the dominant influence in the region. It is not clear to me with which of these two views the President feels most comfortable, although it appears he’s closer to Andy’s view. Since the two frameworks are so different, suggesting different explanations and prescriptions, it is difficult to formulate policy to the region unless one has a clearer idea of which of the two frameworks the President wants to use. I believe the memo to the President should state this difference precisely and request his guidance. (S)

3. *Strategy: People-to-People vs. Policy.* A cynic could conclude that the President’s “people-to-people strategy” is either naive, extraordinarily subtle, or a cop-out. Habib, Bowdler, and you tried to get the President to focus on geopolitical considerations; Vaky tried to steer the President toward sugar, tin and energy policies. The President would have none of it. His prescription is to use the non-governmental resources of the US to reach out and touch the people of the region. On reflection, I believe the strategy is a subtle one, but inadequate.⁸ If we can unleash an intensive and extensive sister cities/Partners of the Americas-type program, I believe it would have an impact on the region, but unless we can do something about the inadequate investment in the region or Cuban subversion or inducements, or commodity pricing, we will find ourselves playing to the long-term while the Cubans prevail now. It’s important that the President realize that we need to deal with the legitimate and immediate concerns articulated by the governments in the region as well as reach out to the people. (S)⁹

II. *An Overall Approach.* I believe that we have in place most of the components of an effective policy to the CACAR; we just need to weave the different threads together, add a few new points, including the people-to-people strategy, and then present it in a speech.¹⁰ Hopefully, the Caribbean Conference in Miami will provide the President that

⁸ Brzezinski underlined “the strategy,” placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to the sentence, and wrote: “his doesn’t exclude also ours.”

⁹ In a December 13 memorandum to Carter, Brzezinski discussed Carter’s proposed people-to-people strategy on Central America and the Caribbean. Carter’s comments indicated that he wanted a low profile effort that would require minimal federal funding and be primarily non-governmental. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 46, Latin America: 12/79–1/80)

¹⁰ Brzezinski drew a line in the margin next to this sentence and wrote in the margin: “Yes.”

opportunity (although I understand the schedulers are resisting the event). (S)

—Politically, our strategy has been to defend democratic institutions and processes in the Caribbean and help them to take root in Central America by supporting moderate and centrist groups. (S)

—Economically, we have increased our aid to the Caribbean (although not by that much) and sought to channel it through the multinational Caribbean Group. We have committed ourselves to a similar approach in Central America. (S)

—Internationally, we have tried to work with basin countries (Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico) with varying degrees of success, and with interested Europeans and Canadians. We have also allowed governments in the region a greater degree of “political space,” which some have unfortunately used to criticize us. (S)

That is the essence of our approach. Where are its inadequacies? What more should we do? (S)

—*Economic Assistance.* Our aid instruments are cumbersome and invisible. They are correctly pointed to long-term development needs, but they have been ineffective as either carrots or sticks. We need to be careful of the propaganda effect of our actions, taking immediate credit for positive actions and making clear our negative actions are unwanted reactions to insulting or offensive actions taken by others. Our assistance levels have not been proportionate to the challenge we face in the region. In fact, the “current” level of aid being requested for the Caribbean in FY 81 (\$86.2 million) represents a *decline* from what was asked in FY 80 (\$93.9 million), this despite a clear statement by the President that he would increase aid to the Caribbean. The increase in aid to Central America (from \$48.6 to \$71.1 million) is inadequate when one considers there have been two major changes in governments, and we have changed our strategy from disengagement to active involvement. (See Tab B) (S)¹¹

Recommendations

1. *Bilateral Help for Moderates.* We need to channel much more of our aid through bilateral channels to moderate governments in the Caribbean, like Barbados, St Vincent and Dominica. This should be explained by pointing to our desire to help those who most effectively use aid. (S)¹²

2. *Less Help for Radicals.* We need to gradually reduce our aid to governments that take potshots at the US, tilt toward Cuba, or are

¹¹ Not attached.

¹² Carter placed a checkmark in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph.

subverting democratic institutions. These include Jamaica, Guyana and Grenada. We should not announce reductions; in response to questions, we should point out our concern that recent actions by these governments have lead us to question the degree of their commitment to development, and we intend to be more cautious about giving future aid. But we should be very responsive to signs of significant change by those governments. (S)¹³

3. *Caribbean Group and Overall Aid Levels.* We should maintain our overall contribution to the Caribbean Group, and increase our overall economic assistance levels. Those who have abstained from criticizing our Caribbean initiatives have done so by pointing to the portions of the President's speech, calling for increases in economic assistance to the region. As FY 81 budget figures now stand, however, our assistance levels will decline. This needs to be reversed. The President will be severely criticized by our moderate friends if we fail to register an increase in our aid level to the Caribbean. (S)

4. *CDB.* Many countries in the region have complained about the slowness with which the Caribbean Development Bank disburses loans. AID should commission a special study mission to investigate the problems and make specific recommendations to its board. Future contributions by the US should in part be determined by the commitment of CDB to follow up on those recommendations. (S)¹⁴

5. *Publicity.* ICA should undertake special efforts, and if necessary commission a public relations firm to make sure that the people of the region are aware of the extensive aid the US is giving. (S)

6. *Flexible Contingency Fund.* We need to be able to react much more quickly to events. A regional (CACAR) contingency fund (from ESF) should be established in the FY 81 budget to meet this need. (S)

7. *Central America.* Should receive dramatic increases in aid. Nicaragua should be programmed in FY 81 to receive the \$50 million aid for commodity imports; current FY 81 budget doesn't have this item. To get these funds will require some hard trade-offs—perhaps even with the Middle East—but the way the budget process is currently working, the middle-levels at State/AID are cutting this money out before the higher-levels can even focus on it. (S)

8. We should immediately follow up Frank Press's trip to Barbados by funding S&T projects (\$10 million), initiated by him.¹⁵ (S)

¹³ Carter placed a checkmark in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph.

¹⁴ Carter placed a checkmark in the left-hand margin next to this paragraph.

¹⁵ See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean.

—*Military Assistance/Presence.* In addition to programming increases in our military presence in the Caribbean, we ought to dramatically increase military assistance in Honduras and El Salvador. I believe this would have a positive demonstration effect on Nicaragua and Guatemala. The US is presently proscribed from assisting the mini-states of the Caribbean to build up their police forces. (S)

9. After full consultation with Caribbean basin and Central American governments, we ought to continue to increase port calls and identify other ways to enhance the US military presence in the region. (S)

10. We should try to get Congress to alter the law to provide aid to police forces in the Parliamentary Caribbean. (S)

11. We ought to purchase and maintain patrol boats for St Vincent, Dominica, the Bahamas and Dominican Republic. (S)

12. We should increase the level of FMS to Latin America—with special emphasis on CACAR—to 4–5 percent. We should especially increase military assistance to El Salvador and Honduras. (S)

—*Political/Covert/Diplomatic.* Part of the criticism of the President's October 1 speech stemmed from our failure to consult or even inform the nations before the speech. Another problem is that the Cubans actively help their allies while we have done little to support democratic groups. (S)

13. *Consultation.* We ought to consult with CACAR on a regular basis on issues of concern to both sides, particularly on routine military-related exercises. (S)

14. *Political.* We ought to seek out ways to help centrist groups either directly or indirectly. (S)

15. *Expose Cubans.* We need to make sure that all reports of Cuban activities in the region are widely circulated to interested basin governments. (S)¹⁶

16. *Build Democracy.* We need to try to develop, or maintain as the case may be, regional institutions which defend or strengthen democratic processes or institutions, like the Inter-American Press Association or IAHCRC. We should stress "democracy and development" as our major themes and look for opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to them. (S)

—*Manpower.* The President mentioned that he sensed our Ambassadors were not as good as they should be, and he is right, and the appointments continue to be a quality notch below that of other regions.

¹⁶ Brzezinski placed a vertical line in the left-hand margin next to this sentence and wrote: "this should be done on a cont. basis."

For reasons of security, size, and former unimportance, most Missions continue to be understaffed. (S)

17. *Quality of Personnel*. You need to look especially close at Ambassadorial appointments suggested by State in this region. We need more experienced and entrepreneurial Ambassadors. (S)

18. *Quantity*. Because of overall reductions in overseas personnel, it will be important to increase the priority of CACAR. (S)

—*Investment*. The radical governments are suffering from a lack of private investment—domestic and foreign. (S)

19. We can only encourage private investors to invest where they feel secure. This is clearly a step which the governments in the region can take. (S)

—*Global Policies*. Our failure to obtain ratification of the sugar or coffee agreements has had a profound impact on this region. There are many minor modifications in a variety of laws which could have a significant and positive impact on the region and draw it closer to us—laws dealing with tax deductions on conventions, duty-free status, and rum tariffs. We need to be alert to these. (S)

20. As part of the President's increased interest in CACAR, we should push for the ratification of the sugar and coffee agreements and task the agencies to find ways to give special assistance on preferences to CACAR. (S)

—*People-to-People (PTP)*. There are many PTP programs, including sister cities and Partners of the Americas, but a Presidential push could lead to an important expansion and intensification of the effort. I have tasked State for an inventory of existing programs (Tab C), and after examining their report, we will be better positioned to decide how to expand it.¹⁷ The President was right to focus on this area. (S)

The best way to use the President would be for him to speak to this issue in the context of the more comprehensive approach before an audience which includes members and leaders of these groups. That event is clearly the Miami speech. Maurice Ferre, the Mayor of Miami, and an energetic, intelligent politician may be the person Zbig is looking for as the leader of such a broad PTP effort. I think he would be interested in doing it, and he knows the region well. We need to expand the purpose of the Conference from just the Caribbean to CACAR and from primarily business groups to a broader cross-section of America. This can only be done if the President gets involved, and if we focus on it immediately. Ferre is in town today; I suggest Zbig get in touch with him (after firming up the President's schedule) and with the

¹⁷ Not attached. See footnote 3, Document 487.

organizers of the Conference (Joe Blatchford and Peter Johnson), and steer them in this direction. (S)

III. Next Steps—Recommendation. If you approve I will draft a memo from you to the President which summarizes what we have done in CACAR and what we haven't done. The memo will include an outline of the speech he would give in Miami which would deal with both PTP and policy and include references to the recommendations in this memo. That speech will be used as a deadline for us to get budgetary and policy decisions out of the government and to organize a massive PTP effort. We have less than one month, but if we work hard on getting these decisions, I believe we can do it.¹⁸ (S)

¹⁸ Brzezinski wrote at the bottom of the page: "We should hold a *PRC* on all of these items—together with our *private/govt. initiative*. How about a speech by the V.P. or Vance?"

489. Memorandum From Paul Henze of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 3, 1980

SUBJECT

CIA PAPER "COVERT ACTION OPTIONS FOR CENTRAL AMERICA"

This CIA paper bears the marks of having been rather hastily put together. On the theory that doing something in this volatile area is better than doing nothing, its proposals nevertheless need to be seriously considered.²

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box I022, SCC(I) Meeting, Cover Action, PB Henze, 7 April 1980. Secret; Sensitive. Tabs A–E are attached but not printed.

² In another April 3 memorandum to Brzezinski, Henze noted that an SCC(I) was scheduled for April 7 to discuss covert action. He also endorsed the CIA proposals for Honduras and Guatemala. He remarked that they were "along the same lines already approved for Nicaragua and El Salvador," and added "though modest and not too specifically formulated, these proposals represent a desirable beginning if we are to try to protect our interests in this vital region." (Ibid.)

The paper includes *status reports* on what has been accomplished to date in previously approved programs for *Nicaragua* and *El Salvador*—TABS A and B.

New proposals in this paper relate to *Honduras* and *Guatemala*—TABS C and D.

Considering the magnitude of what is aimed at—insulation of these societies from susceptibility to Cuban manipulation and reorientation of them along pro-American, democratic lines—the proposals are modest.

Media and agents-of-influence operations are proposed but are not thought likely, by themselves, to have significant impact (Option #1).

Option #2 proposes provision of assistance to the intelligence services of Honduras and Guatemala to help them combat terrorism and insurgency. Option #3 proposes support for moderate, reform-minded leaders and organizations. It also envisions enlisting the help of like-minded individuals in neighboring Latin American countries and selected Europeans to further the same purposes.

Options #2 and #3 are judged to require a new Presidential Finding. A draft text is provided at TAB E.³

RECOMMENDATION: The proposals are actually much less specific than they first seem. What CIA is asking for is a general “hunting license”⁴ to become active in the covert action area in Honduras and Guatemala. This is desirable. A beginning must be made somewhere. Recommend endorsement.

Attachment

Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency for the Special Coordination Committee⁵

Washington, April 3, 1980

SUBJECT

Covert Action Options for Central America

1. **INITIATIVE:** This proposal originated within CIA, but reflects the shared concern of senior CIA, DOD and other USG officials about increasing Cuban involvement in Central America. Liaison services

³ For the final version of Tab E, see Document 355.

⁴ An unknown hand wrote “no” in the margin next to this sentence.

⁵ Secret; Sensitive.

throughout the hemisphere believe that Cuba is replacing the United States as the dominant influence in Central America and fear that the USG is either unwilling or unable to react. None of these services (or the governments that they represent) is prepared to take on the Cubans; but several might be willing to cooperate with a U.S.-sponsored regional program. This possibility has not been discussed with any of them, however, pending the approval which is being requested in this memorandum.

2. *ISSUES FOR DECISION:* The basic issue is whether the level of the threat to Central America posed by Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency is great enough to warrant a decision to take overt and covert actions which would encourage the countries of the region to resist Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency concurrently with overt and covert actions which would prompt Honduras and Guatemala to institute needed social and political reforms.

3. *ACTION OPTIONS:*

Option No. 1: Develop a covert action infrastructure (media and agent of influence operations) within the region and in appropriate third countries to encourage Central American countries to resist Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency. This option by itself is unlikely to have a significant impact.

RISK: Low *COST:* Absorbable within current funding levels

Option No. 2: Provide assistance to the liaison services of Honduras and Guatemala to enable them to deal with Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency; such assistance would take the form of training, materiel and on-the-scene counsel and would have to form part of a large USG overt assistance package. As a *quid pro quo* and enducement for that assistance, support USG efforts to end human rights abuses in Guatemala and to promote needed social and political reforms in Honduras.⁶

RISK: Moderate *COST:* [dollar amount not declassified]

Option No. 3: Identify, support and encourage moderate and reform-minded leaders and organizations in Guatemala and Honduras. Use them as well as selected individuals, institutions, and third countries [2 lines not declassified] to encourage significant political, social and economic reforms.

RISK: Moderate *COST:* [dollar amount not declassified]

4. *COMMENTS:* It is generally accepted that Nicaragua is presently very heavily Cuban-influenced (if not controlled). El Salvador is tottering. Guatemala is believed to be "next" on the Cuban priority list

⁶ An unknown hand wrote "?" in the margin next to this sentence.

and it is anticipated that within another six months to a year Guatemala will be in a situation roughly similar to present-day Nicaragua or El Salvador. Honduran Communist party members are currently being trained in assassination and terrorism techniques and are presently engaged in providing logistical support to the transshipment of arms through Honduras to Guatemala and El Salvador. It is anticipated that an active level of terrorism/insurgency could break out in Honduras within the next year to year and one half, particularly if the new Honduran Government does not initiate some needed social reforms and significantly curtail government corruption. Both Costa Rica and Panama have been extensively "used" by the Cubans as channels for support to terrorism/insurgency within the four Central American countries of concern. Both Panama and Costa Rica have potentially positive roles to play in the region and both should be encouraged to participate in a regional effort to encourage peaceful reform and the exercise of self-determination.

Enclosed as TABS A and B are updates on activities carried out in support of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran Findings. Enclosed as TABS C and D are details on the programs being proposed for Honduras and Guatemala.

A regional overt and covert policy for the Central American region is sorely needed. The absence of such a policy will almost certainly be viewed by other countries in the hemisphere, and perhaps elsewhere, as an abrogation of the USG's responsibility within an area which has traditionally been regarded as a zone of USG influence. Non-action will be tantamount to declaring disinterest in the area and will imply a willingness to allow other (non-regional) countries to call the shots. On the positive side, U.S. influence in the region is still potentially high and much can be accomplished if the USG is willing to make a public commitment to oppose Cuban-supported terrorism and insurgency and to promote needed reforms.

While USG overt commitment to the continuing stability of the region is an imperative, overt policy can be supplemented by the covert actions proposed in this paper.

5. *FINDING*: Options 2 and 3 outlined in paragraph three require a specific Finding and reporting to the Congressional Oversight Committees in accordance with Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended. Enclosed as TAB E is the proposed text of a specific Presidential Finding.

6. *SOURCE OF FUNDS*: [1 line not declassified]

490. Editorial Note

The Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence), chaired by Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, met on April 7, 1980, and reviewed the Central Intelligence Agency's proposed covert action options for Central America. (See Document 489) Brzezinski forwarded the summary of conclusions of the April 7 meeting, along with a draft Presidential Finding for Honduras, in an April 11 memorandum to President Jimmy Carter. The summary of conclusions stated that the "CIA presented *status reports* on its incipient covert action programs in *Nicaragua* and *El Salvador* and proposals for *inauguration of programs in Guatemala and Honduras*, stressing the need to do preparatory work in good time if efforts are to have any impact as situations become more critical. An expanded media and agent-of-influence program for *Honduras*, [dollar amount not declassified] was endorsed as well as [dollar amount not declassified] for working with Honduran liaison to develop improved capabilities to counter terrorism and internal intelligence collection. A draft Finding for Honduras was approved. At State's request, consideration of the proposals for Guatemala was deferred for a week to permit conclusion of a field assessment which is currently under way." For additional information on the covert action proposal for Guatemala, see Document 43.

On April 29, National Security Council Staff member Paul Henze prepared a memorandum for the record, noting that the summary of conclusions of the April 7 SCC-I meeting "omitted mention in the paragraph on Central America that endorsement of agent-of-influence operations included endorsement of the [dollar amount not declassified] estimated cost of such operations. This cost estimate was an integral part of the Honduran program which the SCC endorsed and which was subsequently approved by the President." (National Security Council, Carter Administration Intelligence Files, Box 1022, SSC-I Meeting, 7 April 1978) For the approved Presidential Finding on Honduras, see Document 355.

491. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, August 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Central America: The View from Our Chiefs of Mission

This COM Conference was unquestionably the most useful I have ever attended. All the questions I carried down with me were answered by our Ambassadors with precision and certainty. Unfortunately, on the key questions, the CIA and DOD had different answers. The principal message from our Ambassadors is rather startling: we may have turned the corner in El Salvador; Nicaragua is still on track, and there is good reason to believe that if we can hold steady and lock the Sandinistas into the capitalistic world economy, pluralism could ultimately prevail; but Costa Rica could easily go the way of Uruguay unless the political leadership gets its act together and we help. There is much we need to do throughout the area. (S)

El Salvador

In response to my central question of whether the left has the capability and the support mechanisms to seize power soon, surprising us as the Sandinistas did in their June 1979 offensive, Bob White was unbelievably categorical: "I'll make you a guarantee that there is no capacity of the left to take over." In fact, he argued that unless the right seizes power first, we need not even concern ourselves with the left. His main objectives are to maintain the unity of the Junta and the army and use all our influence (including the helicopters) to get them to stop the violence from the right. If this doesn't stop soon, the Junta and the army will split. White thinks that the reforms are working; the Church has begun to play a positive role; and that if the Junta announces an electoral program soon, as he expects, the left will be deprived of their program and cannot win. He insists that there is no firm evidence of Cuban arms or involvement, or of any substantial arms trafficking to them. White considers the extreme left divided and weak with no capability of launching a large-scale attack. White's recommendations

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 28, Latin America, 7–8/80. Secret. Sent for information. A copy was sent to Owen. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that Brzezinski saw it.

include: (1) A meeting between the President and two or more Junta members who will be in Washington in late August on IVP grants as a way to strengthen the prestige of the Junta and particularly of Majano, the more liberal military member who keeps threatening to walk out if the High Command won't discipline the right. (I argued that to maintain the unity of the Junta, we should invite the other members provided we get agreement for such a meeting. I'm preparing a memo on that now.) (2) Get Export-Import Bank to raise the level of their guarantee ceiling and extend a letter of credit. (3) Get \$20 million of ESF to help the private sector as we are doing in Nicaragua. (4) Send a mission (Cheek and/or myself) to Europe to back-stop the Germans as they begin to try to turn other European nations around on El Salvador; we need to get the British, French, Swedes, Spanish, and Dutch to send their Ambassadors back and to re-activate aid programs. International support for the Junta is crucial. White believes that we could jeopardize this support if we expanded our military assistance beyond present levels, and strongly recommends against it. (5) Push the IFI's to start mobilizing the economy. (S)

There is no disagreement among the agencies on these recommendations, or on the main lines of our policy, but there is substantial disagreement with White's analysis. The CIA and DOD believe that the left is much stronger and capable of turning the Junta out. They see the Cubans as aggressively trying to achieve a second revolution on the isthmus by shipping arms to the insurgents. To a certain extent, Jim Cheek of State agrees, suggesting that there is a pattern of bigger, pitched battles with more guerrillas and that they may be moving to slice off a piece of territory and seek international recognition from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Mexico. (S)

I hope White is right, but I fear he isn't. I think the Cubans are hungry for a second revolution and that the Salvadoran revolutionaries are even hungrier. If Cheek's analysis is correct, and the guerrillas are beginning a wave of larger-scale confrontations, they are going to need a lot more weapons and a steady pipeline, and we need to be alert to any indication that this is beginning because in Nicaragua, they did it so fast and heavy—500 tons of arms in a little more than a month—that we were caught behind the power curve. We need to step up our ability to monitor arms trafficking in the area and *also from the US*. I would recommend that David chair a working group which would include CIA, State, DOD, and also Justice, FBI, and Treasury (Customs) to try to identify ways to stop the flow and to feed back information to Justice and FBI to clog the routes from the US. Similarly if the war starts, the Salvadoran military are going to need a lot more weapons too, and it would help to start examining what they might need, what we have, and how fast could we send the stuff. State will begin preparing for this contingency. (S)

Nicaragua

Pezzullo is also relatively upbeat. The Sandinistas knew how to topple Somoza, but they are having trouble running the government, and Pezzullo thinks they will have increasing problems maintaining the support of the Nicaraguan people, whose expectations have been raised by the FSLN, and who learned one thing from Somoza: don't trust your leaders. The mass organizations, which the FSLN tried to set up to control the population, are either failing to take hold or are being used by the people to lobby the government. The July 19 celebrations were a political "fantasy" of the Sandinista leadership, but it turned off a lot of Nicaraguans, and he sees growing resentment of the Cuban presence. Larry believes that the longer we stay engaged the more practical the Sandinista leadership will become and the more influence we will have. The Church is strong; *La Prensa* is as vital as ever; and the Venezuelans and other democratic countries have put in a lot of resources and are starting to use these resources to keep the government on track. Larry is very worried, however, that "we can turn this reasonable effort into a debacle" if we do not handle the Presidential Determination on aid to Nicaragua well. It won't be easy. The law says that before releasing the \$75 million aid to Nicaragua, the President must make a determination that the Nicaraguan government is not harboring terrorists and is not aiding, abetting, or supporting acts of violence in other countries. (S)

Pezzullo and State believe there is *no* conclusive evidence that the Nicaraguan government is helping the Salvadoran guerrillas, and that the President can make the Determination; CIA and DIA disagree, and as suggested in the article in last week's *Post*,² the President's decision will be very controversial, particularly if CIA and DIA state their disagreement publicly, or the Congress elicits their views. Pezzullo told me that if we don't go forward with the \$75 million, our relations will be irretrievable, and he will resign. Carlucci and Turner may not budge, but it's imperative that they be brought around. State is convinced the CIA doesn't have the evidence, but Carlucci thinks there is a reasonable amount of proof. Something needs to be done soon; either you need to talk to Muskie, Brown, and Turner, and hammer out an agreement or David should first try it with the Deputies. If CIA and DIA refuse to support Pezzullo's conclusion, we will have two options: (a) either overrule CIA or DIA; or ask for an independent assessment of the evidence and a judgment by a small group of outside "wise men," like a Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. This is a tough, but key issue.

² Reference is to John Goshko, "Aid for Nicaragua the Focus of Fierce Internal Policy Dispute," *Washington Post*, August 8, 1980, p. A2.

If we don't obtain a determination, all our efforts to get the \$75 million and to tie the Nicaraguans to a pluralistic path were for naught. (S)

Guatemala

There was a consensus that the Guatemalan government was the strongest and most inhumane in Central America, and that we cannot expect any change in our relationship until Reagan either wins or loses, and we have a new Ambassador in place. Nonetheless, DOD is eager to give it a try, and they are moving to set up the Dreyfuss-Nutting mission soon. CIA fortunately confirms that the left is much too weak to constitute an immediate threat to the government. We have time, although I should add that our Ambassadors had serious reservations about the mission and believe that there is little we can do in Guatemala before November, except hurt our policy to the region. (S)

Costa Rica

I was surprised that the most discouraging report was on Costa Rica. The government has been unable to impose the kind of austerity necessary to turn the economy around for reasons quite similar to our own inability to put a 10 cent tax on gas—lack of popular support. Add to that, the following—corruption, a major scandal involving arms trafficking, and increasingly aggressive Communist party activities (particularly in the unions)—and the conclusion is that Costa Rica could easily totter into a Uruguay. Ambassador McNeil will continue to press Carazo on the arms trafficking, but we don't want to push him over the brink. To contemplate limiting their textile exports to the US and reducing our aid at this time, as we are doing, is simply contrary to US interests. Costa Rica is key to Central America: when the Nicaraguans say democracy won't work there, or it can't produce economic progress, or justice, we have Costa Rica to point to. But for how long? I recommend that IDCA work out a package with the IFI's in front, but the US solidly behind. I will talk to him, but may need Henry's or your help. (S)

Panama

As a result of his inimitable adventures and machinations, Torrijos is the only Central American leader who has managed to keep the Cubans on the extreme left from opening up shop and subverting Panama; an achievement which looks more and more impressive each day. The Canal Treaties are being implemented smoothly. (Incidentally, Ambassador Moss and I conveyed the President's message about the Inland Waterways Bill to President Royo.) Panama supported us on the Olympic boycott, on Afghanistan, and on taking the Shah. Moss thinks he's been helpful on El Salvador too. I'm not so certain, but I won't lose sleep over it. The economy is having some problems, but

Royo has taken some concrete steps to the right to firm up business confidence. The Treaties, in short, worked. (S)

Honduras

The constituent assembly elections on April 20th went off well, but the two principal political parties have been bickering over relative trivia ever since. Our Ambassador has done a first rate job of resolving their disputes and trying to keep the political process on track. The Cuban effort to strengthen the Communist Party for future insurgency was setback quite far by the recent schism in the party. The Hondurans also show signs they will use our helicopters effectively to reduce the arms trafficking on the border. So the situation there also looks fine. (S)

I spoke to our Ambassador about the possibility of selling a package to General Paz to get him to re-settle Cubans, and she thinks it can be done, although it is more difficult today after the constituent elections than a few months ago, mainly because it is now necessary to clear the idea with more people. Nonetheless, she thinks we ought to pursue it, and I agree. I will sketch out a more detailed proposal, and obtain State's and AID's comments. (S)

Central America

There are two reports—the York Agricultural Mission and one by Sid Weintraub with recommendations for new US economic policies to Central America and the Caribbean; these will be completed soon, and Henry will want to make sure they are reviewed systematically and gleaned for proposals for the FY 82 budget. (S)

We will re-double our efforts to get the Hondurans and Salvadorans to resolve their border dispute as this would cement cooperation between the two armies to deal more effectively with the insurgency on the border. We will try to get Orfila's help and encourage the OAS to host the signing of an agreement in September. This would be a very positive political development for which we could take some credit. (S)

On August 3, the Presidents of Mexico and Venezuela signed an agreement, which will provide a 30% rebate on oil sales to Central America and the Caribbean; this may amount to about \$600 million in 1981. In an instant, Mexico and Venezuela will leap past the US in aid to the region, and experience shows that political influence will not be far behind. There was a consensus among the Ambassadors that we ought to look for a good moment to express our support for this new program. I agree. (S)

Summary

Central America looked a lot better in Panama than it does in Washington, but that is reassuring because White and Pezzullo are not

only perceptive and effective, but they are also deeply involved in the political situation in both countries and ought to know what is happening. We ought to try to get their message out here, but at the same time, prepare for the worst. (S)

Let me summarize the recommendations of the Conference:

1. *On El Salvador*, we will try to give greater support for the Junta by meetings in the White House and elsewhere, seeking more assistance from ESF and X-M, seeking wider international economic and political support for the Junta. (S)

2. I recommend David chair an interagency group to monitor the *arms trafficking* information and seek ways to stop it in the US and elsewhere. (Kimmitt concurs.) State and DOD will begin working on security assistance which the Salvadorans would need under worst-case scenarios. (S)

3. *On Nicaragua*, we should wait until Pezzullo sends his analysis and judgment on whether the Nicaraguans are exporting revolution, and then you will need to hammer out a recommendation for the President from that. (S)

4. *On Guatemala*, the COM's agreed we should stay cool until November. (S)

5. *On Costa Rica*, we should encourage IDCA to develop a package with Costa Rica and the IFI's which will help the nation through this difficult period. (S)

6. I will prepare a detailed proposal for re-settling future Cuban refugees in Honduras, and seek comments from State for a future SCC. (S)

Unless you express disapproval, I will pursue the points in this memo. I do not think that a PRC on Central America is necessary at this time. (S)³

³ Below this sentence Brzezinski wrote: "Good report; proceed. ZB."

492. Memorandum for the Files Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

Washington, December 16, 1980

SUBJECT

Covert Action Review—Latin America

PARTICIPANTS

INR—Ambassador Spiers
Mr. Kux, DAS for Coordination
ARA—Mr. Bushnell, Senior DAS
CIA—[*name not declassified*] Deputy Chief, DDO/LA
[*name and title not declassified*]
[*name and title not declassified*]
INR—Mr. Flanegin, Director, INC/IC

The following emerged from the first year-end review, covering the covert action programs authorized for Central America and the Caribbean:

Nicaragua

—Approval was given CIA's Memorandum of Notification of December 5, 1980, updating progress of the Nicaraguan program and requesting additional FY 81 funds for a list of activities consonant with the Finding.² (A series of MONs, including one for El Salvador, will be submitted via the NSC for State comment since it is expected the SCC will rarely convene until after the new Administration takes office.)³

—Support of independent institutions such as [*1 line not declassified*] highly politicized, and the encouragement of free political parties to coalesce form the centerpiece of the current program. Ambassador Pezzulo backs both overt and covert means of strengthening the independent sector.

—The Agency places particular emphasis on subvention [*1 line not declassified*] on which the largest single amount in the Nicaraguan program has been spent.

—We may be winning the battle to preserve the independent sector while losing the war; as the independent groups wax, they wane relative to the FSLN as the latter takes countervailing measures. Although

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Box 18, ARA–CIA Weekly Meetings, 1979–1981. Secret; Sensitive.

² See Document 325.

³ For the El Salvador memorandum, see Document 454.

the need for more funds is clear, the strategy of institution-building may need reexamination, including use of non-monetary measures.

—Use of ESF is being investigated by ARA as an overt means of institution-building, complimenting covert means.

—[1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

El Salvador

—One of the most serious weaknesses in the El Salvador program is the absence of a single national intelligence service for focussing operations liaison and training. It appears that each military and law enforcement entity has its own, fairly mediocre, service. [1 line not declassified] is in El Salvador advising on coordination of these elements; a significant effort is underway to increase professionalism.

—The Soviets and Cubans have mounted a sophisticated and very successful anti-Junta worldwide campaign through various surrogates, witting and unwitting (e.g. social democrats) which has out-classed our efforts and badly hurt our side.

—Covert action won't work without an overt aid program, since individuals in positions of influence see no point in accepting subsidies under the table when there are no assistance funds available as an earnest of our backing.

—An effective covert program in support of a large moderate left labor grouping [1 line not declassified]. A MON will soon be available giving further details of the program to date, and plan for the future.

Honduras

—The covert action program in Honduras is nascent. [2 lines not declassified]

—There is a single Honduran service, a plus.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Central America.]

Costa Rica

—The Senate Select Committee placed a ban on all covert action activity in Costa Rica, to eliminate any possibility that activities might be undertaken which could destabilize the Government of a democratic, friendly nation. An exception was later made in the case of CA targetted against Nicaragua.⁴ To a recent CIA request that the exception be

⁴ According to an August 10, 1979, letter to Turner from the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Birch Bayh (D-IN), and the committee's Vice Chairman, Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), the committee had "directed termination" of covert media placement activities in Costa Rica in its fiscal year 1978 budget authorization "on the grounds that the national interest would be seriously harmed if it were ever discovered that the United States was subverting the free press of a close and democratic ally." A committee vote authorized a "partial resumption" of these activities dealing "solely with the Nicaragua question." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 37, Nicaragua: 8/11-31/79)

broadened to include actions targetted against Central American countries (explicitly excluding Costa Rica) and Cuba, the Committee replied it would ease the embargo upon review of CIA plans having State approval.⁵ CIA argues this is a dangerous precedent, opening the way to demands it seek approval of other covert actions when they are only required to notify Congress of actions under a Finding.

NOTE: DDO/LA will provide Ambassador Spiers with a periodic updating of ARA covert action programs prepared for Ambassador Bowdler.

Robert L. Flanegin⁶
INC/IC

⁵ Carlucci made the request in a November 25 letter to Bayh. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Congressional Affairs, Job 82B00035R: Committee Files, Box 2, Folder 2: Covert Action) Bayh and Goldwater sent the response in a letter to Turner, December 2. (*Ibid.*)

⁶ Flanegin signed "Bob F." above his typed signature.

493. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 12, 1981, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

El Salvador and Nicaragua

PARTICIPANTS

State
Mr. David Newsom, Under Secretary
for Political Affairs
Ambassador William Bowdler, Ass't.
Secretary for Inter-American Affairs
Ambassador Lawrence Pezzulo,
American Ambassador to Nicaragua
Mr. Philip Stoddard
Defense
Mr. Frank Kramer
Ambassador Frederick Chapin

Joint Chiefs of Staff
Lt. General John Pustay
Central Intelligence
[name not declassified]
[name not declassified]
White House
Mr. David Aaron
National Security Council
Mr. Thomas Thornton

I chaired a meeting of the SCC this morning to discuss the implications of intelligence reports about Nicaraguan support to Salvadoran insurgents.² We have not been able to develop our intelligence information any further since our source is not available at present. Secretary Muskie will be talking to you about this later today; he will have discussed it previously with Zbig and Harold Brown. (S)³

The principal issue is whether you find that the recent intelligence reports require you to terminate further assistance to Nicaragua and demand repayment of previous assistance. (The legislation gives you the option of waiving immediate repayment even if you make a positive finding.) (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Pastor Files, Country Files, Box 22, El Salvador: 1/13–15/81. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the page. Aaron sent the summary of conclusions to Carter under cover of a January 12 memorandum in which Carter approved of moving six helicopters to El Salvador immediately. Davis sent a description of the mini-SCC meeting to Turner in a January 13 memorandum (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 16, Folder 36: (SCC) Nicaragua)

² The minutes of meeting are in the Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 183, SCM 161 Mini-SCC El Salvador 1/12/81.

³ According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter spoke with Muskie by telephone from 6:59 to 7 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

1. You can terminate aid *and* invoke the repayment provisions of the legislation. While this would be an unequivocal move, it would dangerously undercut the position of those Nicaraguans who are willing to cooperate with us and the demand for repayment could unleash a violent anti-US reaction. (Ambassador Pezzulo said that the risk of “another Tehran” was so great that he would recommend withdrawal of our mission.)

2. You could postpone any finding until we have had a chance to go back to the Nicaraguan Government to tell them that we have concluded that they are supplying insurgents in El Salvador; and unless they desist we will have to invoke our legislation. This could force a debate within the junta and perhaps lead to termination not only of these small air operations but also of possible much larger-scale support to the insurgents. We will not, however, be able to confront them with details since we have to protect our source; hence, we may not have the desired effect. Also, under the best of circumstances, it would be some time before we could be sure they had complied.

3. You could cut off assistance now but withhold demanding repayment until we had a chance to see how they react. This would provide valuable flexibility; it would, however, provide only a temporary reprieve if they continue to support the insurgents. (S)

State hopes that you will be able to take some intermediate step rather than decide on a complete invocation of the legislation. Their line of thinking is contained in the attached paper. (S)⁴

The SCC looked into three other questions:

—It is difficult, if not impossible, to mount effective surveillance and interdiction operations that would cut off supply of support of the insurgents by air. Even if we could, it would just be dealing with the tip of the iceberg. Nonetheless, some unilateral US reconnaissance flights could have a useful psychological effect and DOD will look into the possibility. (S)

—The SCC recommends that we proceed immediately with the supply of two helicopters from CINCSOUTH stocks to El Salvador. (S)⁵

—DOD will develop a package of lethal and non-lethal material that can be supplied to El Salvador rapidly if the decision to do so is made. Some of this would be drawn from CINCSOUTH war reserves. The SCC made *no recommendation* to proceed with the delivery of such a package at this time. (S)

⁴ Attached but not printed is an undated paper drafted by Cheek entitled “Presidential Determination on Nicaraguan Support for Salvadoran Guerrillas.”

⁵ Carter neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation; see, however, footnote 1, above, and Document 494.

494. Memorandum From Secretary of State Muskie to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Security Assistance to El Salvador and Government of Nicaragua Involvement in Supplying Arms to Salvadoran Guerrillas

Issues for Decision:

1. Whether to expand at this time security assistance to El Salvador to include use of FMS credits for six helicopters and grant lethal equipment funded under Section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act.²

2. Whether to determine on the basis of recent intelligence that the Government of Nicaragua is supporting terrorism.

Background:

Issue I:

On December 18 we made clear to President Duarte that our resumption of military assistance was contingent on demonstrable progress in three areas: transfers within the military; reduction in the violence originating from the security forces; and rapid progress in the investigation of the murders of the four American churchwomen. Following the President's decision on January 2 to permit some IMET to go forward we told Duarte we would shortly review the question of further assistance giving special emphasis to progress on the investigation of the churchwomen.³

The offensive of the past weekend confirmed that the leftist guerrillas have received a substantial supply of arms from abroad, including heavier weapons such as recoilless rifles and machine-guns. Although the government forces contained the offensive, they expended consider-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80-1/81. Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed the top right-hand corner of the page and wrote: "To Ed, David." Muskie attached the memorandum to his January 12 Evening Reading memorandum to Carter, in which he described the fighting in El Salvador and noted: "There has been no indication of popular support for the guerrillas, let alone a popular uprising." He also reported that the "Salvadorans have requested helicopters, arms, and ammunition from the US." (Department of State, Executive Secretariat's Special Caption Documents, 1979-1989, Lot 92D630, Evening Reading Jan.-June 1981)

² Public Law 87-195; 75 Stat. 424.

³ See Document 457.

able material and lost their last transport helicopter. Their need for military assistance is now greater and more urgent.

Issue II:

[2 lines not declassified] Nicaraguan Government (GRN) involvement in supplying arms to Salvadoran insurgents. [2 lines not declassified] a rural airstrip at Papalonal, Nicaragua, is being used by DC-3 (C-47) and twin-engine Cessna aircraft to fly arms and munitions to Salvadoran insurgents. One of these Cessnas crashed in El Salvador on November 25. [3 lines not declassified] Efforts of this magnitude could not be undertaken, we believe, without the knowledge and approval of senior officials of the Nicaraguan Government.

This evidence is persuasive and it could be considered as coming close to meeting the standard of “conclusive” established for your determination last September. What remains unclear is the nature and extent of official Nicaraguan involvement. We still do not know the specific high-level officials involved or how they actually participate in the arms traffic. Nevertheless, the evidence could support a new finding by you under Section 536(g) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 that the Government of Nicaragua (GRN) is supporting terrorism in El Salvador.

Analysis of the Issue:

We have combined these two issues because they are inter-related and because what is at stake in both cases is our overall strategy for the entire Central American region. El Salvador is the key to that strategy. What we seek is to assist the moderate military/civilian government of President Duarte to defeat the Marxist guerrillas and carry forward its reformist program. Such a victory will:

(a) protect an important flank for Honduras and enable it to get on with its plan to return to constitutional government in 1981;

(b) remove a major source of concern for Guatemala and encourage the Lucas government to curb violence and go for open elections in 1982; and

(c) force the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to reassess the direction of their revolution and the course they want to follow vis-a-vis Central American integration.

We therefore need to proceed with both issues in a manner which will advance our regional strategy.

Expanded Military Assistance

Progress on the three areas of concern to us have been mixed. Our primary concern, the investigation of the murders has been reasonably thorough and professional, although the investigation was stalled for

two weeks during the holiday season. The Commission has developed some leads. The FBI plans to deliver to the Commission this week their assessment of the evidence obtained from the two autopsies performed and the visit of their technicians to El Salvador. The Salvadoran Embassy in Ottawa will interview the group of Canadian missionaries who talked with the women at the airport. President Duarte and Vice President Gutierrez have instructed the Foreign Ministry to ask the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to observe the investigating commission's work. We will urge the IAHRC to do so when the request is received.

The military supply requirements of the Salvadoran armed forces have become greater and more urgent during the past month. The leftist guerrillas have received substantial supplies of arms and ammunition from Cuba and elsewhere and demonstrated during the past weekend that they know how to use them. In successfully containing the offensive the government forces expended supplies that will have to be replaced. Their most urgent need is for transport helicopters, having lost their last one. Although the need is clear, we question whether this military equipment should come exclusively from the U.S. We have not supplied any lethal equipment to El Salvador since 1977. They have waged a successful counterinsurgency campaign to date with relatively little non-lethal supply from the US. Although we are the best and fastest source of helicopters, they could obtain arms and ammunition from other sources. They would face funding problems, however.

Opposition to our military assistance to El Salvador is growing in this country, especially among religious, academic and human rights groups. Although Congress would probably go along with non-lethal equipment and the transport helicopters, arms and ammunition would be strongly opposed by many Democrats, especially in the House. We would be in for a very rough time.

Determination on Nicaraguan Support for Terrorism

Following extensive inter-agency deliberations in the SCC we have concluded that some concrete action on the new information is required. Our first step however should be a very strong demarche to the GRN and the Sandinista (FSLN) leadership because:

—Our October 1980 aid agreement and exchange of letters with the GRN obligates us to first advise them and explain our reasons for making a determination of their culpability. We have made several previous demarches on the subject but have not yet stated that we are contemplating a new determination.

—We do not have substantial, convincing and credible proof of Nicaraguan involvement sufficient to support our determination before

world public opinion. If we proceed without this, we may emerge the loser.

—If we give up the leverage of our aid program in a manner which does not impose new restraints on the GRN, the likely result would be increased unhindered Nicaraguan support for the Salvadorans, the opposite of what we wish to achieve.

—Our intelligence suggests that only a small group of high level FSLN officials working with the Cubans is involved in the arms trafficking to El Salvador. Our demarche will open up the issue within the GRN and FSLN and force a full airing of it. This could produce a decision that it is in Nicaragua's interest to curtail the support operations.

Options:

Issue 1

There are four options for expanding our military assistance to El Salvador:

a) Go ahead only on the FY–81 FMS deliveries of non-lethal equipment and IMET;

b) Go ahead with the FMS and IMET and deliver two helicopters and hold back on the other four;

c) Go ahead with the FMS, continue IMET and deliver all six of the helicopters.

d) Go ahead with the FMS, continue IMET, deliver all six helicopters and furnish some of the lethal equipment and additional supplies requested by the Salvadoran military on a grant basis with funding under the Section 506 emergency drawdown authority of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

We recommend that you approve option b. This increase in aid would be responsive to the progress made so far and to the increased military threat. By holding back on the other four helicopters we would:

a) retain some leverage on the investigation;

b) gain some time in which to monitor performance of the civilian-military restructuring;

c) turn over an on-going military assistance program to the new administration.

Issue 2

We believe that our sole option at this time is to proceed at once with a strong demarche to the GRN/FSLN. A telegram implementing this is attached. After receiving the GRN/FSLN's reaction we can consider next steps. If a formal determination is called for, we will have the

option of making it but waiving the sanction of demanding immediate repayment of the \$40 million already disbursed under the Nicaraguan Supplemental.

Recommendation:

Issue I:

That you authorize us to sign and implement the FY-81 FMS loan agreement, continue with IMET training and deliver two helicopters and the non-lethal equipment under FY-81 FMS.⁴

Alternatively,

That we implement the FMS agreement for non-lethal equipment and continue with IMET training but take no action on the helicopters.

OR,

That we implement the FMS agreement, continue with IMET training and proceed with delivery of all six helicopters.

OR,

That we implement the FMS agreement, continue with IMET, deliver the six helicopters and furnish some of the arms and ammunition and other supplies requested on a grant basis with funding under Section 506 authority.

Issue II:

That we proceed with a strong demarche to the GRN on its support for terrorism per the attached telegram.⁵

⁴ Carter indicated his approval of this option.

⁵ Carter indicated his approval of this option and wrote in the right-hand margin: "Strengthen. Set as immediate a time limit as possible." Attached but not printed is a draft telegram stipulating a demarche on GRN support of Salvadoran guerrillas. Carter wrote on the draft copy: "Strengthen. I need [a] quick response." (See footnote 2, Document 328) Aaron sent the memorandum containing Carter's decisions to Muskie and Brown under cover of a January 13 memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 21, El Salvador: 12/80-1/81)

495. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 15, 1981

SUBJECT

Friday Morning Breakfast: Central America (U)²

The attached is self-explanatory. You can either read it as a memo to you, or give it to the President before the breakfast. If we decide to support lethal assistance to El Salvador, we will need to make a clear Presidential statement indicating reasons, and we will need to consult with the Congress as well. In itself, that will make a busy weekend, particularly since I understand there is a lot of opposition to this in the State Department (from Derian and Atwood). The bottom line of the memo is that we should send a Jetstar on Saturday to pick up Pezzullo and White and bring them back to Washington for an NSC meeting on Sunday. I don't think we can sidestep either decision; I believe we should face them even in the limited time available. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo at Tab I and forward it to the President. (U)³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Unfiled File, Box 130, El Salvador: 1/81. Secret. Sent for action.

² January 16.

³ Brzezinski neither approved nor disapproved of this recommendation. However, Pastor wrote at the bottom of the page: "ZB read and used at Friday morning breakfast, Jan. 16, 1981 where President made decision to go ahead with most lethal and to make specific demands to GON on no support for insurgency." Brzezinski's January 16 memorandum for the record described that day's foreign affairs breakfast meeting: "El Salvador: Go ahead with the basic lethal supply list provided by DOD but omitting the 7.62 mm ammunition (since White reports the present stocks are adequate for 4–6 weeks) and limiting the helicopters to six, with Brown to work out the question of the crews with the El Salvador Government but with the USG not providing any Americans for them. Nicaragua: ZB to request CIA to provide a list of specific steps the Nicaraguans can be requested to take in order to turn off aid flow to the rebels; State to go with a demarche to the Nicaraguans to that effect later on Friday; DOD to deploy AWACs to monitor flights from Nicaragua to El Salvador and from Cuba to Nicaragua." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 93, Foreign Affairs Breakfast, 1977–1981)

Tab I

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter⁴

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Friday Morning Breakfast: Central America (U)

There are two urgent issues, which you will be required to address before the inauguration either because of the urgency of supporting a friendly government against a serious Communist insurgency (El Salvador) or because of legal requirements (a determination on aid to Nicaragua).

1. *Lethal assistance to El Salvador.* Although our reports of the military situation in El Salvador are hardly comprehensive, it appears that the armed forces have seriously depleted its reserves of ammunition, while at the same time, the guerrillas have received continuous and extensive resupplies. Moreover, the guerrillas are attacking the government all over the country, and because of the lack of lift capability, the balance could very well tip in favor of the guerrillas quickly. We have not supplied lethal equipment to El Salvador since 1977, and while the government has received some military supplies since then, it is weak and very much in need of help from the US. (S)

There are some who have opposed US military aid totally. This position is unrealistic, given the strong support the guerrillas are receiving. For me, I have long felt that we ought to use the military aid as an inducement to get the government to stop the repression, implement the reforms, and pursue the investigations on the nuns. The Junta has taken positive steps in the last month in each of these areas, and Duarte is pleading for military aid now. We cannot and should not ignore him. *Your Administration should leave office with a clear statement of our policy to El Salvador—that we are providing lethal assistance because the government has taken positive steps in the three areas of our concern, and it is besieged by Communist guerrilla forces, armed, trained and supported by the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist governments.*⁵ (S)

2. *Nicaragua.* In his demarche to the Nicaraguan leadership, Pezullo informed them that the reports of Nicaraguan involvement in El

⁴ Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum.

⁵ See Document 459.

Salvador may cause us to cancel the aid.⁶ Everyone realized that this would mean a total collapse of the relationship between our two countries, and it would also mean the radicalization of the Nicaraguan revolution. The middle class would be driven out, and we would have thousands more refugees. The Nicaraguans denied they were helping the guerrillas and asked for proof. They said that if we did not provide proof, Latin America would believe them rather than us. I do not agree with this entirely, but I believe that unless our proof is definitive, and can stand solidly in the court of international public opinion, we will look very foolish indeed. We have struggled for the last 18 months, against considerable resistance in the United States to fashion an enlightened relationship with the Sandinistas. If we throw this all out on the last day of your Administration without exhibiting clear evidence, we will look as if we were either spooked by Reagan or fooled by the CIA. I believe that either the CIA should permit us to use definitive evidence publicly, or you should indicate that they do not have such evidence, and pass this issue to the Reagan Administration. (S)

The decision to terminate aid to Nicaragua is an extremely significant one because it will definitely lead, in my opinion, to the expulsion of the middle class, the Communization of Nicaragua, and could very well precipitate a major international war in Central America. *I suggest we bring Ambassadors Pezzullo and White back for an NSC meeting on Sunday afternoon to make these decisions.* (S)

⁶ See Document 328.

496. Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 16, 1981

SUBJECT

Mini-SCC on the Question of Nicaraguan Aid to Insurgency in El Salvador (S)

The attached is a summary of the mini-SCC. At Tab A is the CIA's original response to your tasker; David and I thought it was completely

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 125, SCM 164 El Salvador Mini-SCC, 1/16/81. Secret. Sent for action.

inadequate, and I recommend that you do not forward it to the President.² Instead, David worked up the outline of a stiffer demarche to the Nicaraguans, which clearly places the burden of proof on them. In addition, we developed several other steps, as a part of a strategy for dealing with the problem of the Presidential determination and its consequences. Undoubtedly, the strategy will extend beyond January 20th, but I think it makes much more sense to transmit this strategy to Reagan than to inform him to make a Presidential determination. (S)

I am working on a press statement, and will show it to you Saturday morning³ for your clearance. I believe it should be issued from the White House as a clear statement of what the President has been trying to do in El Salvador. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memo attached at Tab I. Do not forward Tab A.⁴

Tab I

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter⁵

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Mini-SCC on the Question of Nicaraguan Aid to Insurgency in El Salvador—
January 16, 1981 (S)

David Aaron and Bob Pastor chaired a mini-SCC on Friday to discuss the steps the US should take regarding Nicaragua's support for the insurgency in El Salvador. Since aid to Nicaragua is currently suspended, the group felt that it is not legally required for you to issue a determination ending aid, and there are many good reasons—the

² In a January 16 memorandum to Turner, Brzezinski requested "by midday today, on a most urgent basis, a list of specific demands which the USG could make of the Nicaraguan Government in order to make certain that there is no Nicaraguan assistance to the rebels in El Salvador." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Unfiled File, Box 130, El Salvador: 1/81)

³ January 17.

⁴ Brzezinski did not indicate his preference with respect to this recommendation. Aaron wrote at the bottom of the page: "ZB—Looks good. DA." Brzezinski wrote on January 19: "If State agrees, go ahead; if not, stick to approach approved by the P. at the breakfast. ZB."

⁵ Secret. Sent for action. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. No minutes for the mini-SCC were found.

possible threat to U.S. personnel, further evidence—why we should not move precipitately. (State, however, will confirm the validity of this interpretation with its lawyers.) (S)

The mini-SCC decided to recommend a 6-part strategy aimed at the following objectives: to encourage the Nicaraguans to terminate assistance for the Salvadorean insurgency; to minimize the possible threat to U.S. citizens in Nicaragua; to minimize the possibility that hard-line Marxists would consolidate power in Nicaragua, forcing the middle-class to flee; and to scrupulously implement the law on aid to Nicaragua. (S)

To further these objectives, the mini-SCC recommends that we take the following steps:

(1) Ambassador Pezzullo will be instructed to make a stiffer, more specific demarche, indicating that we know that Radio Liberacion is broadcasting within the vicinity of Managua, that Nicaragua is being used by Cuba as a transshipment point for the infiltration of men and equipment by air, land, and sea to Nicaragua, and that Radio Sandino is carrying out a systematic and hostile campaign against the Government of El Salvador. The demarche will ask the Nicaraguans to take steps to stop these activities, and would indicate that they have the burden to prove that they have taken these steps. We will indicate that we have the capability of verifying their actions, without being specific, and if the Nicaraguans do not take such steps, the U.S. will be forced to terminate aid and demand repayment. (S)

(2) The Defense Department will ensure that an AWACS will be dispatched to the area as early as possible; they are trying to do it by Saturday night. (S)

(3) Ambassador Pezzullo will be asked to submit a plan to the State Department on steps that he would take to reduce the number of Embassy personnel and inform U.S. citizens in Nicaragua of our concern about possible Nicaraguan support for the insurgency and about its likely impact on US-Nicaraguan relations. (S)

(4) Ambassador Pezzullo will be instructed to inform leaders of the private sector, the Church, and non-radical military leaders in a way which will encourage these leaders to put pressure on the Nicaraguan leaders to stop these activities. (S)

(5) The Intelligence Community was tasked to establish a coordinating mechanism in San Salvador and in Washington under the chairmanship of a designated official from the State Department to collect and coordinate all intelligence information on external support of the Salvadorean guerrillas, compile these reports into a good presentation, and either act on the intelligence or provide the reports to the Salvadorean Government for public dissemination. (S)

(6) As we develop this information, we should begin consulting with friendly governments with the purpose of developing a common approach and perhaps to begin preparing a case of the OAS. (S)

State and NSC are preparing a press statement which will be released on Monday, describing the reasons for your decision to send lethal military aid to El Salvador. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the six steps described above.⁶

Tab A

Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁷

Washington, January 16, 1981

*Demarche to the Government of Nicaragua Concerning Aid
to the Salvadoran Revolutionaries*

Following is a series of demands which could be made on the government of Nicaragua regarding aid to the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

I. [1 line not declassified] Compliance would reflect some Government of Nicaragua cooperation, but would not have a major impact on the armaments flow.

A. Halt broadcasts by the revolutionary radio station Radio Liberation. This station is clearly located within Nicaragua, within an 18 nautical-mile radius of Managua.

B. Tone down domestic radio broadcasts and statements by officials in support of the Salvadoran insurgency.

C. Halt actions by mass organizations—such as the selling of war bonds—in support of the Salvadoran revolution.

II. The second set of demands involves acceptance by the Nicaraguans of international teams to investigate possible Sandinista aid to the revolutionaries. The presence of teams would be a strong deterrent to Sandinista support activities, although we would expect the government to reject such proposals as an infringement on its sovereignty.

⁶ There is no indication of Carter's preference with respect to this recommendation; see, however, footnote 4, above.

⁷ Secret; Noform; Nocontract; Orcon.

A. Allow international inspection of flights through Managua's Sandino International Airport.

B. Accept OAS investigation of the landing of revolutionaries in El Salvador at Playa Coco for possible international involvement. This could include inspection of the northern Nicaragua coastal region.

C. Allow the temporary posting of international observers in the Nicaraguan coastal region facing El Salvador.