

# TELEGRAM

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ACTION:	AMEMBASSY LONDON			
INFO:	SECSTATE WASHDC			
	<del>FOR OFFICIAL USE</del> TEGUCIGALPA		8233	

Ambassador requests that following letter be transmitted to Andrew Knight, Editor of The Economist, with request that it be published. Embassy also requested to convey my personal regards to Mr. Knight.

BEGIN TEXT: To the Editor.

Sir: Your special correspondent from Tegucigalpa (September 4) distorts beyond recognition the image of democratic Honduras and our policies here. Honduras has a freely elected civilian government and liberal democratic institutions, including full freedom of expression. Honduras can also be proud of its vigorous labor movement, considered a model in the region, and of its land reform program, whose origins date back more than twenty years.

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DRAFTED BY: AMB:JDNegroponte:kjl	DRAFTING DATE 9-23-82	TEL. EXT. 211	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMB:JDNegroponte
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CLEARANCES:

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CLASSIFICATION

OPTIONAL FORM 153  
(Formerly FS-413)  
January 1975  
Dept. of State

50153-101

Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.  
() Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny ( ) Declassify  
Date 6/2/98 Exemption \_\_\_\_\_

Honduras' increasingly professional armed forces is fully supportive of this country's constitutional system. United States policies here place emphasis on supporting Honduras' commitment to democracy and pluralism. Our current A.I.D. program, three times the cost of United States military assistance, reflects the longstanding United States commitment to Honduras' economic development.

To be sure, Honduras is threatened by a large military buildup in Nicaragua. Counting militia, Nicaragua's armed forces outnumber Honduras' five-to-one, far beyond any plausible defensive need. Equally disturbing for Hondurans is the guerrilla war in neighboring El Salvador and the use of Honduran territory with impunity by members of the Salvadoran extreme left. A most dramatic example of this regionalization <sup>of</sup> ~~is~~ armed strife by Central America's extreme left took place September 17 in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, when terrorists took hostage more than one hundred local business leaders and three Cabinet Ministers demanding, inter alia, the release of a prominent Salvadoran rebel commander under detention in San Salvador. In response to this increasingly difficult situation, the United States has provided ~~increased~~ military assistance to Honduras to assist in the defense of that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. But to place our military assistance efforts

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in perspective, there are from thirty to fifty U.S. military personnel in Honduras on temporary training at any given time, as compared with an estimated 2000 Cuban personnel engaged in military and security activities in Nicaragua.

Finally, your correspondent indulges in several egregious errors of fact which cannot go uncorrected. We are not planning to build a jet airstrip at Durzuna near the Nicaraguan border as alleged. There are as noted earlier nowhere near 100 U.S. military trainers in Honduras as suggested. And it is simply untrue to state that ~~small~~ death squads have made their appearance in Honduras.

I regret that your story in this instance lacked the balance and perspective characteristic of your respected newsmagazine. John D. Negroponte, United States Ambassador to Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

END TEXT.

DECONTROL UPON DELIVERY.

NEGROPONTE

Q: CAN YOU COMMENT ON THE CONDITIONS OF HIS RELEASE OR HOW THAT RELEASE WAS OBTAINED?

Oct. 26, 1982

A: I HAVE TO REFER YOU TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

4. SUMMARY OF NOON PRESS BRIEFING OCT. 25, 1982 (ROMBERG):

THE SPOKESMAN MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT ECUADORIAN VIOLENCE, AND WAS ASKED FOR A COPY.

ANYTHING ON TRIPS TO LATIN AMERICA BY THE PRESIDENT OR BY SECY. SHULTZ? SPOKESMAN SAID HE HAD NOTHING ON THAT.

RETURNING TO ECUADOR, LOEB OF INTERPRESS ASKED WHY DEPARTMENT FELT IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT ECUADORIAN DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH IN WORLDWIDE TERMS WERE NOT ALL THAT SERIOUS. SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF "NECESSARY," BUT THE FACTS WERE THAT...AND USED THE FIRST RESPONSE OF THE GUIDANCE. ANYTHING ON DISAPPEARED LEFTIST LEADERS IN EL SALVADOR? SPOKESMAN USED THE FIRST RESPONSE OF THE GUIDANCE. LOEB OF INTERPRESS ASKED WHAT GAVE AMB. HINTON THE CONFIDENCE TO SAY THIS WAS NOT THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT? SPOKESMAN USED THE SECOND RESPONSE OF THE GUIDANCE, AND ADDED THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN AN EXACT READOUT OF AMB. HINTON'S STATEMENT IN ANY CASE. LOEB ASKED HOW THIS DEVELOPMENT BODES FOR RECONCILIATION, WOULD WE CONSIDER IT A SEVERE SETBACK? SPOKESMAN SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO CHARACTERIZE IT, BUT REPEATED THE FIRST GUIDANCE.

LOEB THEN WENT TO SUBJECT OF HONDURAS, ASKING ABOUT

A LETTER TO THE LONDON ECONOMIST FROM AMB. NEGROPONTE, IN WHICH HE SAID THERE WERE NO SUCH THINGS AS DEATH SQUADS IN HONDURAS. LOEB SAID THERE WERE REPORTS OF DISAPPEARANCES IN HONDURAS, AND WANTED TO KNOW THE BASIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENTS. SPOKESMAN SAID HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE LETTER, AND IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ASK THE AMBASSADOR HIMSELF FOR CLARIFICATION. SPOKESMAN REFUSED TO TAKE THE QUESTION. LOEB ASKED WHAT THE DIFFERENCE WAS BETWEEN AMB. HINTON AND AMB. NEGROPONTE, SINCE THE SPOKESMAN HAD BACKED UP AMB. HINTON'S STATEMENT EARLIER, BUT WOULD NOT COMMENT ON AMB. NEGROPONTE'S. SPOKESMAN SAID THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUPPORTING AMB. HINTON'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE SCENE IN EL SALVADOR OF AN ONGOING EVENT, AND OFFERING AN INTERPRETATION OF WORDS IN-PRINT THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN FROM AMB. NEGROPONTE.

DOES THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THE DISAPPEARANCES OF THE LEFTIST LEADERS IN EL SALVADOR WILL "FOUL UP" CERTIFICATION THIS TIME AROUND? THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT QUESTION HAS NOT YET BEEN ADDRESSED, AND IN ANY CASE IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

SHULTZ  
BT  
#C006

A: I WILL ONLY REPEAT WHAT I SAID BEFORE -- THAT WE HOPE THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ECUADOR'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, WHICH WE FULLY SUPPORT.

-- TAKEN QUESTION: OCTOBER 20, 1982:

Q: CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE U.S. IS REALLY PREPARED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH NICARUGA, AS OPPOSED TO THE DESULTORY DIALOGUE THAT HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE?

A: AT A PRESS BACKGROUNDER ON APRIL 8, 1982, A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL OUTLINED A SERIES OF U.S.

PROPOSALS WHICH HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH OUR AMBASSADOR IN MANAGUA. THE EIGHT POINT PROPOSAL, REPRESENTING AN EXPANSION OF THE FIVE POINT PROPOSAL MADE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ENDERS IN AUGUST 1981, WERE INTENDED TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AIMED AT A NORMALIZATION OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. ALTHOUGH THAT DIALOGUE HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO ACHIEVE SUFFICIENT SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT TO LEAD TO ANY CONCRETE RESOLUTION OF THE KEY ISSUES AT STAKE, THERE HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NICARAGUA AND THE DIALOGUE REMAINS OPEN.

SINCE APRIL, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF OTHER PROPOSALS PRESENTED BY OTHER HEMISPHERIC NATIONS WHICH HAVE FOCUSED ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF EXISTING TENSIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. MOST RECENTLY, THE U.S. WAS ONE OF EIGHT SIGNATORIES TO THE FINAL ACT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA. THE COMMUNIQUE'S RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE A COMMITMENT TO REVIEW THEIR OWN PROPOSALS ALONG WITH PREVIOUS PEACE SUGGESTIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA WHICH DID NOT ATTEND THE MEETING. WE SUPPORT THE COMMUNIQUE'S CONDITIONS FOR PEACE IN THE REGION AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF BOTH RELIEVING THE TENSIONS, BUT ALSO THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE CURRENT AMERICAN CRISIS.

IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN IN BILATERAL TOUCH WITH NICARAGUA, EVEN THOUGH WE WONDER WHETHER THE NICARAGUANS ARE SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR AVOWED WILLINGNESS TO WORK FOR PEACE IN THE REGION.

-- CUBA: ARMANDO VALLADARES RELEASE --

Q: WE UNDERSTAND THAT CUBAN DISSIDENT INTELLECTUAL ARMANDO VALLADARES HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON IN CUBA AND HAS ARRIVED IN FRANCE AS A RESULT OF THE PERSONAL EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT MITTERAND. DO YOU KNOW IF VALLADARES HAS ANY PLANS TO COME TO THE U.S. AND WHAT WOULD BE THE U.S. VIEW OF THAT.

A: WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT MR. VALLADARES PLANS ARE AT PRESENT. WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT HE IS IN THE FREE WORLD AND WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR MR. VALLADARES, WHO WAS INCARCERATED

UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS FOR SO MANY YEAR. SO FAR WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT HE WANTS TO COME TO THE U.S.

IF ASKED ONLY:

Q: WHAT IF HE DID EXPRESS AN INTEREST?

A: ANY SUCH REQUEST WOULD OF COURSE BE GIVEN THE MOST PROMPT ATTENTION. SUCH SPECULATION IS PREMATURE HOWEVER.

## LETTERS

## The Falklands

SIR—I was saddened to read your very negative assessment (September 18th) of Lord Shackleton's report on the Falkland islands. By far the most important recommendation as far as islanders are concerned is that dealing with the redistribution of land. Sheep farming is, after all, the only industry that we have and Lord Shackleton's suggestions would have drastic economic and social effects. Our farming industry has an appalling record and has been stagnant for the past 100 years. The lack of investment is not as you suggest just over the last years of the wool slump. It must be the only farming industry in the world that has not increased its output over the past century. I do not believe that giving self-motivated entrepreneurs the opportunity to farm for themselves will be inflationary, in fact quite the opposite. There will be a release of labour. Not all present employees will wish to farm on their own account and it is important that other development takes place at the same time to provide jobs for these people. Many of your editorials in the past support the creation of small entrepreneurial businesses in place of the large mindless juggernauts. That this would all lead to a drastic improvement in efficiency and productivity has been proved by the

subdivision that has already taken place. People will work harder and even skimp on their own incomes to put money back into their own land.

We all appreciate that there are ideological difficulties for the present government in something that smacks of nationalisation but in this case I hope the Tories can see the wood for the trees. What could be more capitalistic than encouraging and assisting farmers to settle on their own land?

We Falkland islanders can never thank or repay the British people enough for the sacrifices in blood and money that were made to return to us our freedom. What we can do, with your assistance, is to create something that would have made it worthwhile. I believe Lord Shackleton's recipe is the best plan we have.

What happens if some time in the future some maniac manages to close the Panama canal in some way? What price our strategic value then? We could be the only stable democracy for about 5,000 miles from Cape Horn.

Charres,  
Falkland Islands W. R. LUXTON

## Honduras

SIR—Your special correspondent in Tegucigalpa (September 4th) distorts beyond recognition the image of democratic Honduras and our policies here. Honduras has a freely elected civilian government and liberal democratic institutions, including full freedom of expression. Honduras can also be proud of its vigorous labour movement, considered a model in the region, and of its land reform programme, whose origins date back more than 20 years. Honduras's increasingly professional armed forces are fully supportive of this country's constitutional system. The policies of the United States here place emphasis on supporting Honduras's commitment to democracy and pluralism. Our current aid programme, three times the cost of military assistance, reflects a long-standing commitment to Honduras's economic development.

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Salvador and the use of Honduran territory with impunity by members of the Salvadorean extreme left.

A most dramatic example of this regionalisation of armed strife by central America's extreme left took place on September 17th in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, when terrorists took hostage more than 100 local business leaders and three cabinet ministers demanding, inter alia, the release of a prominent Salvadorean rebel commander under detention in San Salvador. In response to this increasingly difficult situation, the United States has provided increased military assistance to Honduras to assist in the defence of that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We are not planning to build a jet airstrip at Durzuna near the Nicaraguan border. There are nowhere near 100 American military trainers in Honduras. And it is simply untrue to state that death squads have made their appearance in Honduras.

JOHN D. NEGROPONTE  
Tegucigalpa, United States  
Honduras Ambassador

SIR—Your article on Honduras gives the reader a totally distorted picture. Is it wrong for Honduras to increase its internal security when a fragile democracy which was recently installed is being threatened by Soviet-Cuban inspired movements?

Honduras has a freely elected civilian government and liberal democratic institutions, including a free and privately owned press. The armed forces, under our civilian elected president, are dedicated to defend our sovereignty, territorial integrity, law and order, and, most important, are publicly committed to civilian constitutional rule.

Honduras is one of the countries in central America, along with Costa Rica, where there exists no concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals, enabling the government to maintain democratic institutions through political and social stability.

It is totally unjust for you to say that "the country is virtually on a war footing". Honduras has the smallest armed forces in central America with only 15,000 men in comparison to Nicaragua's 30,000-man regular army and 150,000 men being trained in the militia. American military aid to Honduras is limited to between 30 and 50 military personnel on temporary training duty.

Honduras's government and armed forces are publicly committed to a peace programme in the region.

Tegucigalpa,  
Honduras OSMOND L. MADURO

## Namibia

SIR—Your editorial on Namibia (October 2nd) dangerously sought to intoxicate public opinion with the obsession that for there to be progress on the independence negotiation on Namibia the Cuban troops should be withdrawn from Angola. Your suggestion that Angola should satisfy the western negotiators that the Cuban troops will start to leave Angola once the South Africans have started to pull out of Namibia, and that the western negotiators then tell Mr Botha that they are satisfied, misses the point. If the western countries were honest, they would have been satisfied by the Angolan-Cuban joint statement of February 4th. That statement made clear that if the physical threat and occupation of parts of southern Angola were removed, then the two countries would consider the withdrawal of the Cuban troops.

TULIAMIENI KALOMOH  
Paris Swapo representative

## Indonesian faiths

SIR—We are a group of Indonesian Moslems and Christians, and we feel that Godfrey Jansen's essay on Islam in Asia (September 4th) is distorted.

Mr Jansen says that "Mr Suharto uses his Christian minority in rather the same way as the Shah of Iran used his religious minorities to fill posts in Iran's intelligence services", and relates that to jobs which Christians have "now". He overlooks the fact that the majority of Indonesians of whatever religion have been living together in harmony for hundreds of years. *Kerukunan beragama*, "religious conviviality", is a fact, not just a political imposition.

Consider the *pela* system in the Moluccas, a kinship support system involving Moslem and Christian villages, which has existed for centuries. The oldest church in Ambon, for example, was restored recently with the active help of Moslem villagers obligated under the *pela* system. Construction of mosques has been undertaken with Christian *pela* chiefs being asked to drive in the centre pole. There are many Indonesian families which have members of the different faiths.

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