

Central America
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TO:JJM
FR:JIM MCGOVERN
RE:MEETING WITH JAMAICA PLAIN COMMITTEE ON
CENTRAL AMERICA

Roger told me that you are scheduled to meet with the Jamaica Plain Committee on Central America this Friday. I have prepared some notes to help you with that meeting...

EL SALVADOR

Reagan has once again handed down a "certification" on the government of El Salvador--allowing El Salvador to receive US military assistance. Current law requires the President either to make a certification with respect to Salvadoran government policies every 180 days--or to suspend US military assistance to that country. Prior to certifying, the President must determine that El Salvador is making progress in observing human rights, in exercising control over its military, in developing its land reform program, and in establishing a dialogue for the purpose both of facilitating an end to the civil war and of establishing an open and democratic electoral process. In addition, Congress has been assured that no certification will take place unless the Salvadoran government was acting in good faith to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for the murder of four American churchwomen and two agrarian reform workers in El Salvador two years ago.

None of this has happened! Murders and kidnappings continue to rise. Further, following the selection last March of Major Roberto D'Aubuisson as head of the Salvadoran Constituent Assembly, the land reform program and other economic reforms were brought almost to a standstill. In addition, the trial of a half-dozen National Guardsmen for murdering the four churchwomen has been postponed indefinitely. It is for these reasons that you stand firmly opposed to the President's certification and have joined, once again, as a co-sponsor of Gerry Studd's legislation declaring the certification "null and void." You are also a cosponsor of every other major piece of legislation opposing further military aid to the government of El Salvador. You have urged that the US do more to encourage a negotiated settlement.

GUATEMALA

US military sales to Guatemala have been prohibited since 1980, due to widespread human rights abuses by that government--including kidnapping, torture and murder of its own citizens. Recent reports--from almost every major human rights organization in the world--indicate that the government of General Efraim Rios Montt has not changed its attitude. Therefore, the Guatemalan government does not warrant US military assistance. The Reagan Administration recently

announced its plans to sell spare parts for military helicopters to the government of Guatemala. You are opposed to such a sale because we have documented evidence that the Guatemalan government used helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft in past massacres against its citizens. You recently joined Rep. Tom Harkin (D-IA) as a cosponsor of his legislation opposing the sale.

HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA

Most questions concerning these two countries deal with the prospect of US covert military activities. You are on countless letters (see the one attached) opposing any US support for covert military operations to destabilize the governments of Nicaragua and Honduras. Such actions only adversely affect our own foreign policy goals in Central America. In addition, you are a co-sponsor of H.R. 5828--introduced by Mike Barnes--prohibiting US support for military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua.