



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE DEFENSE OF SALVADORAN REFUGEES

Comisión Internacional Pro-Defensa de Refugiados Salvadoreños

REPORT ON SALVADORAN REFUGEES IN HONDURAS

Brief History and Overview of the Situation:

Refugees from El Salvador began crossing the Honduras border as early as January, 1980. By May they numbered as many as 2,000. Not until the massacre at the Rio Sumpul on May 14, however, did their plight become known internationally when some estimated 600 refugees were murdered by the Salvadoran Security Forces. Six weeks later the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Copan denounced the massacre publicly, implicating the Honduran Army and the Organization of American States (OAS).

During the summer months the emergency needs of the refugees were largely attended to by CARITAS-Diocese of Santa Rosa de Copan and by CEDEN, the Evangelical Committee for National Development and Emergency. By September, an Emergency Program for Salvadoran Refugees was formed under the direction of the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) at the invitation of the Honduran government. In the wake of the government-Catholic Church controversy over the massacre at the River Sumpul, CEDEN was chosen over CARITAS to administer the program of refugees.

Under the coordination of UNHCR-CEDEN, responsibility for the refugees was divided according to geographical area and assigned to a particular private agency:

<u>Refugee Sector</u>	<u>Responsible Agency</u>	<u>Number of Refugees</u>
1. La Virtud Valladolid	CARITAS	14,000
2. Guarita	World Vision	2,100
3. Virginia Mapulaca	Mennonites	1,000
4. San Marcos San Francisco Mercedes	Mennonites	800
5. Colomocagua	CARITAS/ World Vision*	4,500

The Role of the Honduran Government:

On January 21, 1981 a National Committee on Refugees was formed by the Honduran government, incorporating the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Health and Foreign Relations, and operated out of the Defense Ministry. From the beginning the government made clear its position on the refugees--"For delicate reasons of security and control the government wants all Salvadoran refugees placed in camps controlled by military commanders--" Four points of agreement were reached: 1) Honduras must accept Salvadoran refugees, 2) Honduras cannot extradite Salvadoran refugees back to El Salvador, 3) Salvadoran refugees cannot work in Honduras, and 4) Refugees must remain in designated refugee zones.

By June, it was clear that the government of Honduras would not respect points 1) and 2): Refugees had been prevented from entering Honduras during and following the Rio Lempa massacre (March 18), and on May 1, four refugee children, captured in Tegucigalpa on April 22, were turned over to Salvadoran authorities.

What is the Objective of the Relocation of the Refugees?

What is the objective of relocating the refugees 50 kilometers inside the border of Honduras? Given the collaboration between the Salvadoran and Honduran military, given the pressure of the US government to control the border, given the situation of "insecurity" which the Honduran Army is creating among the refugees, and the limitations on the UNHCR, one can only conclude that the objective of relocating the refugees 50 kilometers inland is to create a free-fire zone along the border, free of refugees and international humanitarian organizations who until now, have provided the only source of information as to collaboration between the Honduran and Salvadoran military, and the U.S. role.

In Defense of the Refugees:

The International Commission for the Defense of Salvadoran Refugees strongly oppose the relocation plan for the following reasons:

1) The security of the refugees themselves: There is no evidence to date that guarantees that the Honduran Army will provide more security inland than it does at the border. In fact, evidence points to more control, as in the case of the camps in Colomoncagua which are located 5 kilometers outside the city. Access to this camp is controlled by the military and all international refugee personnel are required to leave at 4p.m. each day. This is not true in the camps near La Virtud. Furthermore, the Honduran Security Forces are as much the enemy of the Salvadoran refugees as the Salvadoran National Guard along the border. This is evidenced by the disappearance of Salvadoran refugees in Tegucigalpa and in the numerous instances of harassment of refugees and relief workers by the Honduran military in the border region.

2) The security of new refugees: The absence of international personnel at the border jeopardizes the security of new refugees. The proposed establishment of a handful of way-stations will not be effective in countering the Honduran Army's practice of turning back Salvadoran refugees as evidenced by the Rio Sumpul and Lempa incidents. In effect, the last escape route for the Salvadoran civilian population will be sealed off.

3) The work of the refugees; In the camps and aldeas, the refugees have built schools and hospitals, planted fields and built homes. Several artesan workshops have been developed and program of nutrition have been organized and located in well-built structures. Relocation to Mesa Grande, the proposed new campsite, would mean losing all this work. Furthermore, Mesa Grande is without any infrastructure, such as water or shelter or roads, as witnessed by the recent Washington Post article of

4. Hostility of Honduran peasants in the interior: The refugees along the border have a history of living together with the Hondurans of the border region which is not present inland. Until the 1969 Soccer War the currency along the border was the Salvadoran colon not the Honduran Lempira. Hondurans went to market in El Salvador. Several families inter-married and many Salvadorans took up residence in Honduras. Hostility from the 1969 Soccer War is directed more against the Salvadoran military than the against the refugees as a result. The reception of the refugees by the Hondurans at the border is an example of this. Hondurans have opened their homes to the Salvadorans fleeing the war. This history of living-together is not present in the interior. In fact, Honduran peasants have reacted bitterly to the rumor of relocation to Mesa Grande.

On June 19, in a meeting with refugee organizations called together by the government in Santa Rosa de Copan, Coronel Mejia Peralta demanded that all refugees along the border area be relocated four kilometers inland. At the same time, the Salvadoran government was prepared to move the camps themselves if the Honduran government did not act. Salvadoran Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia was quoted as saying: "We have tried through international organizations to see that the camps are moved from the border to the interior of Honduras. Until now there have been serious obstacles, but we believe in the days to come a solution will be reached."

The Salvadoran Defense Minister's solution arrived on July 16, when some 1,200 Salvadoran National Guardsmen landed six helicopters throughout the day in a peasant's field near Los Patios, an aldea between Valladolid and La Virtud. Refugees and Hondurans alike fled from their homes and cornfields as the National Guard took up positions along the border and prepared to invade back into El Salvador. Not one shot was fired by the Honduran Army. The only protest was diplomatic and made ten days later by the overnment of Honduras.

What are the Motives Behind the Relocation of the Refugees?:

What are the motives behind the relocation of the refugees? We must take into account the following:

1) Collaboration between the Honduran and Salvadoran military. It is clear there is a deliberate attempt on the part of the Honduran Army to prevent refugees from entering Honduras. The massacres of the Rio Sumpul (May, 1980) and the River Lempa (March, 1981) are examples of this. Also, the July 16, 1981 invasion by 1,200 National Guard from El Salvador was responded to with a weak protest filed ten days after the incident.

2) Pressure by the US government. The US government support of the Salvadoran government and Security Forces is clear. Over 200 military advisers as well, have been sent to control the border region, at least 3 to La Virtud and 6 to Marcala near Colomoncagua. The former US Ambassdor to Honduras, Mr. Jack Binns, also lodged a formal protest in June claiming that CARITAS and CEDEN were passing food to the guerillas on the other side of the border. This protest was later modified, but the threat was clear.

3) Violations of the rights of refugees by the Honduran military, DIN (Department of National Investigations, G-2 (a Honduran Security Force, and Rural Police. The Honduran security forces are deliberately creating a situation of "insecurity" among the refugees in the border area. Since the arrival of the refugees, they have been regularly threatened and detained, beaten and in some cases assassinated. There are cases of refugees who have been turned over to Salvadoran National Guard with the aid of World Vision workers, and assassinated. Aldeas and towns where over 2/3 of the refugees live have been searched and in some cases local immigration under the guise of census-taking have identified refugees and turned such information over to known ORDEN members.

4) The limitations of the UNHCR. The UN represents governments not people. This is clear in the position the UNHCR has taken with respect to the relocation of the refugees. The refugees are clearly against the move. Not once has the UNHCR solicited their advice with respect to the relocation. The UNHCR depends on the support of governments for its budget (the US supplies more than 50% of the food commodities) and is present in Honduras at the invitation of the Honduran government which is not a signatory to the UN Convention or Protocol on Refugees.

5) One more move: Relocation would mean one more move, one more disruption in their lives and its concomitant negative psychological effects. Most refugees have been forced out of their homes more than one and two years. One more move carries with it all the insecurity and disruption which they have been subject to for the last years. The only security these people have left is the fact that their land "El Salvador" is within sight.

Conclusions:

As the situation currently stands, the relocation plan is neither in the security or health interests of the Salvadoran refugees. Until conditions warrant such a relocation, the Commission stands firm in its position to expose the relocation plan for what it really is-- a military manuevre to facilitate collaboration between the Honduran and Salvadoran military forces and an increased U.S. role in the regionalization of the conflict in Central America.

Salvadoran Refugees Cut Ties Anew, Move Deeper in Honduras

By Christopher Dickey
Washington Post Foreign Service

MESA GRANDE, Honduras — For 19,000 refugees along the embattled border with El Salvador, a new and grueling forced exodus has begun as that country's civil war increasingly spills into Honduras.

The refugees must abandon what little they have built up in the months and even years since they fled the battle-scarred northern areas of El Salvador. Their tiny plots, their crude shacks of stick and thatch and canvas tents around such border villages as Guarita and La Virtud, their crude wooden pallets and even their hammocks are being abandoned.

More than 13,000 refugees will be brought to this windy little plateau about 20 miles from the frontier. The rest are to be resettled at an as yet unspecified location to the southeast.

Relief workers and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are trying for an orderly relocation over the next two months but since the mysterious death of two Honduran soldiers in a refugee village two weeks ago, the Honduran Army is pressuring for immediate evacuation of all border settlements.

"They should be interned," the Public Security Forces chief, Col. Gustavo Alvarez, said in the capital, Tegucigalpa, Friday. "It is a sovereign right of our country to do so."

Alvarez, one of the most powerful military men in the country, said the refugees and such relief organizations as the Catholic agency Caritas are aiding the Salvadoran guerrillas.

The relief agencies deny any such role although they admit some of their supplies have wound up in guerrilla hands. The refugees themselves, while many have relatives among the guerrillas, have virtually no resources with which to help the insurgents.

The Salvadorans' latest internment began with the recent arrival of 440 refugees here from the area around Guarita. They first had to

walk as long as six hours, carrying what they could on their backs. They were then loaded on cattle trucks — 50 people, mostly women and little children, to a truck — for a three-hour trip over barely passable road. They arrived here on a cold night and found no shelter.

In one of the tarp-covered shelters built since then, Feliciano Menjivar and his family are spreading mortar on the floor so they will not have to sleep in the dirt. There are 18 people in their one-room tent.

"The grownups can take it," said the 40-year-old Menjivar as he put his arm around his little daughter, Lupe. She was covered in dust, her dress patched together from rags. "What we worry about is the children." Relief workers are planning to build as many as 2,000 small houses and other facilities.

Like other refugees at Mesa Grande, Menjivar said some of the relief workers "told us we would have land when we got here, a river for water and to bathe in. Many things they promised us, but really there is nothing. We must start all over."

As the war in El Salvador intensifies, cooperation between Salvadoran and Honduran troops is growing and traditional life on the border — let alone that of the refugees — is less tenable. Both armies have U.S. advisers.

Salvadoran soldiers now cross the frontier almost casually. A much publicized attempt to seize refugees occurred at La Virtud Nov. 16. Salvadoran Col. Sigfredo Ochoa told reporters in El Salvador recently that he landed his U.S.-built Huey helicopter in a nearby Honduran airstrip to observe two single-engine airplanes used by relief workers. Witnesses here said the helicopter trained its door guns on the airplanes before finally taking off again.

Two weeks ago a Honduran relief worker with Caritas was murdered near the village of Las Hernandez. Officials who went to identify his mutilated body were told that Sal-



By Rick Reinhard for The Washington Post

This U.N.-financed camp at La Virtud, Honduras, was judged too close to the border. It is being dismantled as refugees move on.

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vadoran National Guardsmen had spent several days in the town shortly before.

The wild-west atmosphere in these remote Honduran mountains has thickened with the political campaign for Sunday's national election.

On the night that the conservative, military-allied National Party held a rally in La Virtud almost two weeks ago, an attempt was made to burn a relief plane at the nearby Mapulaca airstrip, which is supposed to be guarded by Honduran soldiers. Anticommunist threats were painted on the walls of houses where relief workers from the French Medicine Without Frontiers and Caritas were staying. The French group has since withdrawn most of its personnel from the region.



By Richard Furno — The Washington Post

The Honduran soldiers who were killed near Guarita were said by military officials in the area to have died in a shootout with guerrillas. But the soldiers were wearing civilian clothes and were wandering through the camp after midnight when they were shot with small-caliber pistols. Their own automatic rifles were not taken from them.

This has led some relief workers to speculate that the Hondurans were killed by local people, perhaps in self-defense.

The U.N. and other relief workers

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are hoping that once all refugees have been removed from the area, the groups will still be able to maintain three or more receiving camps for people trying to cross the border. Various relief agencies have charged that the Honduran and Salvadoran military want to create a free-fire zone along the border in this part of Honduras. The objective would be to deny sanctuary to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

U.S. Embassy officials and Honduran soldiers, dispute this, saying the Honduran population will remain in the area and preclude such a zone. For whatever motivation, according to one international relief organization official, Hondurans recently have begun to abandon the area — with as many as 80 leaving in the last few days.

Green Berets Step Up Honduras Role

By RAYMOND BONNER

Special to The New York Times

LA VIRTUD, Honduras — This village's isolated mountain valley, as oppressively muggy by day as it is bleak by night, is nonetheless attracting its share of visitors. They include peasant refugees fleeing from neighboring El Salvador, Salvadoran Government troops and American military advisers.

"This dump is the center of the world now," a United States Army officer said when he was here for three days at the end of July. The officer, Capt. Michael Sheehan, is a member of the Army's elite Special Forces, known popularly as the Green Berets.

Captain Sheehan was accompanied by two senior enlisted men with extensive experience in Vietnam. All three wore camouflage jungle uniforms and carried M-16 automatic rifles.

They said they were from a Special Forces battalion based in Panama and that they and five other American soldiers from the same unit had been assigned to help the Honduran Army patrol the border. Their primary objective, they said, was to control the Salvadoran refugees streaming in to escape the upheaval in their country.

Aid May Be Reaching Guerrillas

But there is a special dimension to this duty: The American advisers in La Virtud say that many of the refugees are from the families of leftist guerrillas and guerrilla sympathizers and that at night some of them sneak out of the Honduran refugee camps carrying food and other supplies through the rugged mountain gorges to the rebels in El Salvador.

While the United States has long supplied Honduras with a limited number of military advisers, their presence along the Salvadoran border is believed to represent the first time they have been engaged in a mission connected with the conflict in El Salvador.

Captain Sheehan said that the National Security Council had approved the use of Special Forces units in Honduras in support of the military effort against Salvadoran guerrillas. A Special Forces unit would soon be based in La Virtud, he said.

The Reagan Administration has requested an increase in United States military aid from \$5.4 million this year to \$10.7 million next year. In April, four military advisers were on temporary assignment in the country.

Salvadorans Land in Area

Early in July, an American-trained battalion of the Salvadoran Army landed in this area then crossed back into El Salvador in an operation to squeeze the guerrillas out of the mountains on the Salvadoran side of the border.

The day after the landing, the Mayor of Vallodolid, a small village up the deeply rutted mountain road from here, told local reporters that she had seen American soldiers in the area a few days before the landing.



The New York Times / Aug. 9, 1981

La Virtud has become a haven for many refugees fleeing El Salvador

According to an official in the San José office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 70,000 Salvadoran refugees have entered Honduras out of about 305,000 who have fled El Salvador in the last year.

Refugees Live Under Tarps

On the bank of a river, in an area slightly larger than a football field, more than 60 incandescent green and orange tarpaulin sheets, normally used to cover truck cargos, provide shelter for several hundred Salvadoran families. The soil here is cement-like, but astonishingly a few cornstalks, surrounded by crude stick fences, stretch more than 10 feet high.

Several international relief groups, including Caritas Honduras, part of the Roman Catholic relief organization, have set up tin-roofed schools and a medical clinic. All of the work is being coordinated by the Evangelical Committee for Development and National Emergencies, which is known as Ceden, its initials in Spanish. It is affiliated with the World Council of Churches.

The effort has not been without controversy. The United States Embassy in Honduras has been embroiled in a dispute growing out of charges that international aid intended for the refugees has been reaching Salvadoran leftist guerrillas.

Reports Differ on Guerrilla Aid

In June, the country's major newspapers reported that Ambassador Jack Binns had said that 50 percent of the international aid intended for the refugees was going to the guerrillas.

In letters to the directors of Ceden and Caritas, Ambassador Binns said he had not been the source of the reports. But he said that there was "circumstantial evidence" that "small quantities" of the aid was reaching the guerrillas.

"There is no proof that any of the international aid for the refugees is going to the guerrillas," Charles-Henry Bazoche, director of the Honduras office of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, said in a recent interview. "We have established tight controls."

Militarily, it would be easy to control

the refugees, the American advisers here said, but there would be an international outcry about human rights if more military control were exercised. Mr. Bazoche has protested to the Honduran Government that the Honduran Army is treating the refugees brutally.

3 Refugees Reported Killed

Mr. Bazoche said that in March three refugees were killed after being taken from a camp by the Honduran Army and turned over to Salvadoran soldiers. He said that army incursions into the camps have "somewhat lessened, but it remains a serious concern of ours."

A major problem now, he said, is that refugees are being turned back at the border by the Honduran Army. Refugees reaching Honduras say that hundreds of others are unable to leave El Salvador because the Salvadoran Air Force bombs the fleeing columns of peasants.

In La Virtud, naked children, older boys playing soccer and grunting black pigs share the weed-infested, garbage-littered central area surrounded on four equal sides by crumbling adobe buildings. Widespread hepatitis and malaria have disabled even the foreign doctors working here.

A Dinner Shared With Americans

One evening, in a ramshackle adobe building where torrential rains easily penetrate the gaps in the red tile roof, four American and Honduran soldiers shared a kerosene lamp-lighted dinner with the French, West German and Honduran doctors that are part of the relief effort in La Virtud.

When the discussion turned to the refugees, Captain Sheehan, a 1977 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, said, "They have no human rights." He said they have a "right to food and a roof." And medicine, he added, realizing he was among medical people.

Captain Sheehan told the international doctors that a Special Forces medical team and other military personnel were being sent to La Virtud. International volunteers were solemn and angry, and they verbally sniped at Captain Sheehan, who again came to dinner, this night uninvited.

La Virtud has survived the poverty of underdevelopment for generations, they said. A medical team from the Special Forces is coming more for military than humanitarian reasons, they said.



right: Honduran Lt. Flores

left : Capt. Michael Sheehan,
U.S. Army. Age 26
West Point 1977

La Virtud, Honduras 28,29,30 July, 1981



right: wearing M16
Sgt. Major Lopez, USA

left : without weapon
Staff Sgt. Thornton

Each had two tours of duty
in Vietnam.

...the... the...
...Libya, Libia,
...and South Yemen.

He added that Libyan weapons
are starting to arrive at Ethiopian
ports for shipment to tribesmen
along the Ethiopian-Sudanese border.

...the...
...President
Anwar Sadat, H... and other senior
U.S. officials have expressed serious
concern about the security of Sudan,
which occupies a large part of a piece of
geography just south of Egypt on the
Nile.

...the... with...
...the...
...Saddam's death. He said he believes it
was a factor in...
...pull...
...the...
...to Sudan for
time being.

Foreign Visitors Avert Kidnaping Of Salvadorans

By Alma Guillermoprieto
Special to The Washington Post

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov. 18 —
"About 20 people were being led away up the hill,
the men with their thumbs tied behind them, the
women scrambling behind. They were whimper-
ing, mournful," said magazine editor James Git-
tings, still shaken by the "terrible sight" he had
seen at a border refugee camp.

The scene, an unexpected drama during the
visit of five foreigners to the refugee settlement at
La Virtud, was similar to hundreds of others re-
counted by witnesses to kidnapings by security
forces and right-wing death squads inside El Sal-
vador. This time was different both because it was
witnessed by foreigners and because it occurred
inside Honduras, about four miles from the Sal-
vadoran border.

The men were dragged away by "perhaps seven
men dressed in shabby civilian clothes and about
seven more men in red T-shirts and all with green
trousers tucked into their boots. One of the civil-
ian-dressed men carried a transmitter on his back.
They were all armed with M16 rifles," said James
Stephens, a consultant to the relief organization
Oxfam.

The incident Monday at La Virtud also ended
differently than many such kidnapings. Often the
victims are killed.

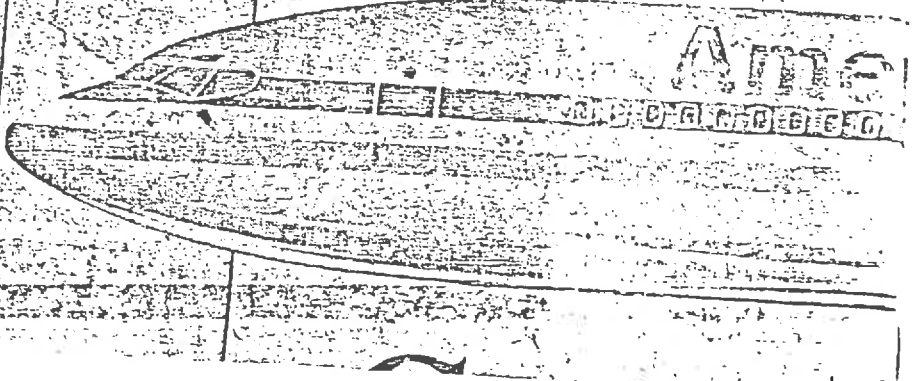
Socialite Bianca Jagger, also in the party of for-
eign visitors, said, "We ran up after the people,
shouting at the men to let the refugees go. Then
one of the men with a red T-shirt said, 'These
sons of bitches are going to report us.' The men
disappeared over the top of the hill walking in the
direction of the border. The refugees hesitated for
a moment, then ran toward us."

About 10,000 refugees from El Salvador's civil
war have been settled around the hot, desolate
town of La Virtud in a valley among the perilous
mountain peaks of the border area. Many of the
refugees and relief workers have complained about
harassment by both Honduran and Salvadoran
armed forces.

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was reluctant to bring in a party of journalists to cover the visitors' fact-finding trip was set on fire at La Virtud, apparently by a rightist paramilitary group that also painted graffiti on relief groups' offices there.

The refugees and the visitors at the camp said they are convinced that the intruders, as well as a group of men in military uniforms who arrived later and tried to take away more refugees, are Salvadoran troops and members of ORDEN, a rightist paramilitary organization that informs on left-wing sympathizers in Salvadoran villages.

The second group of men scuffled with Russell Davenport of Oxfam's Washington office. Also on the trip was Robert Brauer, an aide to Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.).

The incident at La Virtud ended uneventfully, but a simultaneous operation by uniformed men at Guajiniquil and La Cuesta, where there are smaller refugee centers, were more typically tragic: Seven people, including two adolescent girls, were taken away and not heard from again.

Relief workers say they are particularly upset about the apparent cooperation of the Honduran military with the armed groups harassing and kidnapping refugees.

"When the armed men were taking the refugees away," Brauer said, "a group of us went to the Honduran Army command post. We explained what was going on. No response. We asked for the commanding officer. They said he wasn't around and they couldn't get him. We asked one of them to come down and see what was happening. No way."

On the same morning as the incident witnessed by the foreigners, the commanding officer of the post, Capt. Flores Mejia, was seen arresting Elpidio Cruz, a Honduran who coordinated Caritas' food program at La Virtud. Other Caritas workers later saw Cruz being taken away from the barracks in an olive-green jeep. His bullet-ridden body was found yesterday in a field.

Field workers for Caritas and other relief organizations are often accused of sympathizing with the guerrillas fighting to overthrow El Salvador's Christian Democratic-military junta.

The refugees say this is the principal reason for the relocation of their camps recently announced by the Honduran government. They do not want to move.

"They feel they are close to their homes here, they feel more comfortable," says the coordinator for Honduras for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Charles-Henri Bazoche, who visited La Virtud briefly yesterday.

Nevertheless, he strongly supports the move. "They will be much safer farther away from the border," he said.

Brauer disagrees. "We saw lots of things here that indicated cooperation between the Honduran and Salvadoran military. That cooperation would only increase, I feel, if the refugees were taken out of this area. The point is that an illegal intrusion of what I and the other visitors are convinced were Salvadoran troops and paramilitary was callously disregarded by the local Honduran military."

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TRANSCRIPTS OF LIVE TESTIMONY FROM SALVADOREAN
REFUGEES AT LA VIRTUD, HONDURAS

NOVEMBER 16, 17, 18, 1981

1. ON U. S. ADVISORS
2. COMPLICITY AND COLLABORATION
3. ON HARRASSMENT AND HOSTILITY
4. RELOCATION PLANS

NOTE: ORIGINAL TAPED TESTIMONY CAN BE OBTAINED FROM
CONGRESSMAN RONALD V. DELLUMS' OFFICE

ON U.S. ADVISORS: Preface

Concerning the presence of U.S. military advisors in the border region, there are two outstanding points of concern. First, the arrival of the advisors has increased the intensity of harrassment by the local military --harrassment of the refugees as well as the Honduran civilian population. (If this is the result of the "civics" and "community relations" training provided by U.S. Mobile Training Teams, perhaps then the effectiveness of these programs should be reviewed.) The refugees believe that harrassment has increased only to justify the proposed relocation. (See HARRASSMENT AND HOSTILITY testimony.)

Second, not only has the incidence of harrassment increased with the presence of U.S. advisors, so too, it would appear, has the incidence of incursions by Salvadorean soldiers and the extent of coordination of the two armies in border actions. There have been numerous incursions by Salvadorean soldiers since the the July 17, 1981 landing of several hundred Salvadorean soldiers at Valladolid. These coincidences beg the question: does the advice of the training teams limit itself to "community relations", or, in fact, does it extend to coordinating border military operations. Furthermore, is there a hidden military agenda for Honduras, which is not being revealed by Executive branch agencies ?

We believe there are enough troubling indications here, that these questions deserve consideration.

ON U.S. ADVISORS

(Maxell 2/B 688): A Refugee says they've made things worse.

- "Is there a concrete relation between the treatment that the Salvadorean people have gotten and the arrival of the foreign advisors; like, for example if you've been better treated or worse treated or differently ?"

- "It's been much worse, because before the foreigners came, the authorities didn't do too much. Today they're throwing people out of their houses everywhere- and there's the killing of children and elderly and women who are in the houses, and they're burning the houses..."

(Maxell 1/A 261): U.S. Advisors in El Salvador are batallion commanders.

- "So is it a lie that those who oppose the Salvadorean government are torturing and killing indiscriminately the people, is it a lie ? "

- "As we were saying, the civilian population is getting killed, but at the hands of Salvadorean soldiers and National Guardsmen, and each batallion commanded by a U.S. advisor. He gives the orders and they're obeyed as he gives them."

(Maxell 2/A 564): U.S. Military advisors in La Virtud just before November 16th incident.

- "...The other day I walked up to La Virtud, and there was this white gringo dressed as a soldier. Well, that's a sign. Around here we know about this person from some other country. So it looks like they've got this other intention of pushing more, and controlling more to see how they can screw us..."

- "Do they themselves fire upon the Salvadoreans ?"

- "Well, now since they're at the checkpoints in the Lempa, they must be shooting the Salvadoreans; because, you know, people come here to Honduras to survive, you see, and people come down to the Lempa, and if they are there, they're all together. People aren't even buried...So if they are there collaborating, then they're helping the soldiers of Honduras and El Salvador."

U.S. ADVISORS II

(Microcassette 1/A 430): The U.S. Role in the border region: Remarks of an international journalist in Honduras.

"...What is the plan, of course nobody knows what the Pentagon plans are, but judging from the fact that only less than a week ago two U.S. advisors in Honduran uniform came here--and everybody saw them and recognized them to be U.S. advisors, not just because they had blue eyes and blond hair, but because they spoke English with clear American accents, and there were American citizens here who heard them and recognized them-- and just a couple of months before, other U.S. advisors were here...The involvement in this area is very clear, because the problem of Honduras, the problem of the refugees, cannot be understood out of the context of Central America. Honduras borders with El Salvador. Now, how is the war with El Salvador going? Haig, just a week ago, said that there's a "stalemate" in the war in El Salvador. How are they going to try to break the "stalemate"? Well, there are a number of ways, but certainly, one of the options which they seem to favor, has been to attack the guerrillas from the Honduran side with the participation of the Honduran soldiers. On July 17th, hundreds of Salvadorean troops...landed in Valladolid, in Honduran territory, and from there attacked the guerrilla position of Los Filos, La Canada, and Chupamiel. And in fact, they were able to dislodge them, to get the guerrillas out of there...and by the way, on this occasion napalm and phosphorus were used. The plan, in other words, is to attack the guerrillas from the Salvadorean side and the Honduran side, to sandwich them in between and not allow them any way out...

"...They need --when I say 'they' I mean the U.S. government, the Salvadorean army, and the Honduran army-- need, in order to attack the guerrillas from both sides, they need to create a totally militarized area, and that means kicking all the refugees out of here, kicking all the civilian population out of here, and the Honduran population as well, and creating a totally militarized zone, a free-fire zone. This might be the only hope, or one of the few hopes that they have to defeat the Salvadorean guerrillas..."

COMPLICITY AND COLLABORATION

The following passages document the fact that Salvadorean soldiers are able to enter Honduran territory and Honduran soldiers Salvadorean territory with impunity --and indeed, with consent. The last passage is a brief narration of the March 18, 1981 crossing of the Lempa River --an incident which, while extensively covered by the international press, was alternately denied or downplayed by Salvadoran, Honduran, and U.S. authorities.

These testimonies lend substance to fears of a "regionalizing" of the Salvadorean war. Indeed, it begs the question as to whether the Honduran army has not already been drawn into the Salvadoran conflict, particularly considering the legitimate concerns raised about the role of U.S. military advisors in the border. The latter question demands clarification by the sub-committee: should it in fact be the case that U.S. military policy encourages or assists Honduras' involvement in the Salvadorean conflict, clearly then that policy runs contrary to the sense of Congress that a political settlement must be found in El Salvador.

COMPLICITY AND COLLABORATION OF SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN MILITARY

(Maxell 1/A 629): Refugee tells of Salvadoran soldiers in the camps

- "...Another thing we have seen here these days is a Salvadoran soldier uniformed as a Honduran. It was well known that he was Salvadorean, the one that came. That shows that there is collaboration between the Honduran soldiers and the Salvadorean soldiers. We feel very insecure because why do they permit a Salvadoran soldier to come here and watch us, when they are the ones that in El Salvador have killed our families. That is not correct, I believe !"

- "Is there anything else you can tell us about the cooperation between the armed forces of El Salvador and Honduras in this area ?"

- "One day, a group of 200 people arrived, women, children, and they were carrying several handivapped people in hammocks. I don't knwo how they could do it. The Honduran soldiers machinegunned the people and killed some. There were seven dead; the rest were captured and taken to San Fernando."

- "Where is San Fernando ?"

- "San Fernando is a town in the Department (Province) of Morazan, in El Salvador. They machinegunned the people here, on this side of the borde captured the rest that were alive and took them there. The National Guard of El Salvador has killed many of them, according to what we hear..."

(Maxell 1/A 364): Hondurans in Salvadorean territory

- "If you are taken far away, would this turn into a military zone?"

- "I believe so. Many officers of the army here say they know very well the border towns of the Department of Morazan. From that you can tell they intervene. They invade the border area without any respect for Salvadorean territory. They say it is to help some people there, but I do not see how they help anyone with the machinegun in their hand..."

(Maxell 2/A 488): Fear of ORDEN in the new location

- "...Those military bands of ORDEN from El Salvador enter the territory of Honduras without any problem. They are not prevented from entering Honduras. In COLOMONCAGUA they go to the settlements to take refugees... Since ORDEN members from El Salvador know us, they come to the settlement, take refugees at night and kill them outside the settlement. Thant is happening in Colomoncagua..."

(Maxell 2/A 182): Refugee narrates crossing of the Lempa

- "The repression was very strong around here when we arrived because they had surrounded the area. We could not escape from any side because we were surrounded by military forces. At the Lempa river, and the border with Honduras, both armed forces got together and joined forces. They were waiting for us at the Lempa. The Salvadorean army machinegunned us, killed several women and children; others drowned in the Lempa. When we entered Honduras their army killed thirty six Salvadorans. Machine gunned. They were completely destroyed by the Honduran army. The army of El Salvador had bombed us with airplanes, helicopters. There was a crowd of children. There wer, we were 7,000 coming. Many people left their clothes in the river. Some saved their

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clothes many did not. The majority entered Honduras without clothes, without anything, without shoes. Everything got lost in the river. They came nude, only in underware. We entered through a place called Los Hernandez. The Honduran army came along and threatened us with death. They captured twenty. They beat some and others were taken prisoner. After they were liberated. Then we came to this settlement.

ON HARRASSMENT AND HOSTILITY: Preface

There is ample evidence of hostility, mistreatment, physical abuse, and even torture of the Salvadorean refugees by Honduran soldiers and paramilitary who enter the camps with the permission of local military authorities. The hostilities do not stop with the refugees --they extend to the Honduran border villagers. Their crops are destroyed by Salvadorean soldiers and their lives threatened by Honduran soldiers who say they must vacate the border.

The refugees themselves suggest the motives for this continued state of harrassment and hostility: the Honduran and Salvadorean military want at all costs to move them to new camps. In this sense, the refugees see the danger in their environment as "artificial": a device to justify the relocation. By one refugee's account, there are doubts that they would be any safer in the new camps, and indeed, that they would be in greater danger for the move.

(Maxell 2/B 540-580): Relation of Harrassment to Relocation: Interview with a Refugee.

- "They say they're going to move the people?"

- "Yes. That's the idea they have, and that's why they harrass the supervisors because they want to move people from their workplaces seeing that they have jobs. Everybody has his job and they can't abandon their jobs to go to where they have nothing. Instead, they're doing the harrassment so they see that its beyter that they leave, that's why."

- "Is there some relation between the torturing and mistreating of people and the plans for relocation?"

- "Yes. Yes."

- "What would that connection be?"

- "Well, first there's the mistreating and making camps just to see if people say, "well! I'll go to such a camp because there nothing happens to anyone. But I don't know about that. Because even in the camps they're doing things outside the law, because they capture refugees, they beat them up and o what they want. Because once you're in their hands, they do whatever they want. You know!"

- "So why do you think they want to relocate the people, the refugees?"

- "To have beeter control and then in a while just kill the people. Just to come bomb them directly where they're all together.

(Maxell 2/A 649): Harrassment of Honduran villagers by Salvadorean and Honduran military to make them leave the border:

- "But do Salvadorean troops really cross the border and molest the Hondurans living in the area?"

- "Yes. The Salvadorean troops really enter Honduras. Here we heard that they had burned the homes of Hondurans. Just today, up around La Cuesta, which they call it up there, on the border of Chupamiel, they burned down some houses, a Honduran hamlet."

- "They were Salvadorean troops?"

- "

. They macheted the corn stalks.

('milpa'). Do you know what 'milpa' is?"

- "Yes. Yes."

- "It makes the corn, you know. They were like this now...bursting out of flower...and they destroyed it!"

- "Why?"

- "I don't know why. I don't know."

- "So that they'll leave?"

- "Yes, so that they leave the border."

- "What else do you know, can you tell me?"

- "W...Well, first of all, let me tell you about what's going on in a part of Amatillo, in a town bordering El Salvador. Some people who have come told me that the other day, the army from La Virtud showed up and said that if they didn't leave the village, La Salpora they call the village, that if they didn't all leave the area, they would kill them."

HARRASSMENT

(Micro 1/A 239): A North American Relief, Worker

"...Right now there's a real psychological trauma for all of them...The soldiers are walking up and down, everywhere they talk about...they harrass the refugees saying "why don't you go home, go home, nobody wants you here, the Honduran people don't want you here, go back to your own country, get out of our country...", and although there's an official policy that they may come, there's an unofficial policy among the soldiers to harm them and molest them and tell them to go home... The soldiers don't even respect now the protection that offers the United Nations High Commission on Refugees..."

(Micro 1/A 227): an OXFAM Representative

"Now what Turcios has said less than a week ago was that any Salvadorean refugees that refused to be moved must not be refugees and are therefore probably guerillas...He is referring to people who are two or three years old and people who are sixty to seventy years old. There are invalid people in the camps, people who are so infirm, so sick... literally two days ago, two old people and one five month old baby died. The deaths have slowed down dramatically since the first few months when 150 children died, byt the conditions are not great. The fear is that the move will kill even more, to say nothing of the problem of security. I think that the biggest reason, the most important reason that the move should not go on, is the question of the fear for the security of the refugees who will be isolated from world view, and second, the security if the Honduran population..."

(Maxwell 2/B 185-400): Torture of CEDEN worker by La Virtud Commander

(There is ample evidence of Honduran mistreatment of the refugees and relief workers. The following are excerpts from one long narration to us by a CEDEN worker who runs the provision store of Guajaniqui. He was picked up from the store one morning by six armed Honduran soldiers who took him to the La Virtud command post:):

"...Then they took out a machine with two or three clips like this, and they took it out and attached it to me one here and the other here."

"...In the waist?"

"Yes".

"What were they like? Like ropes?"

"...Like wires. Well...and it knocked me over because it broke my bones."

"Did you feel anything?"

"...It was just a little touch right here and then it..."

"...Was it an electric shock?"

"...Yes; and it threw me to the ground!"

RELOCATION PLANS: Preface

The responses of the refugees when asked about the plans to move the refugee camps were varied. In the first place they were distraught that the stability-of-sorts they had found would be disrupted. They also felt that the move would expose them to ORDEN --that they would not be any more safe. Secondly, they felt the harassment by the Salvadorean army and paramilitary and the Honduran army, was tied to the plan to relocate them. (This is treated in the HARRASSMENT section of the taped testimony.) Lastly, they point out that it is not the Honduran villagers who want them to move, it is the Honduran army and the Salvadorean army --and for military reasons: they want to attack El Salvador.

(Maxell 2/A 488) Refugees describe fear of ORDEN in new location

- "...That new settlement where they want to take us is far from La Virtud and we would be very near a bunch of refugees members of ORDEN, from El Salvador, and we all fear them because they might come and take us out from there at night. We do not have any arms and the members of ORDEN are permitted to hold arms in Honduras. Then since they have guns, these paramilitary bands, they may come and take us from the settlement and we may be dead the next day... Here they do not do so freely because there are reporters and doctors every day. They find it difficult to come here and that is why we are being relocated. By changing to a different place we would be more insecure..."

(Maxell 2/A 265) The Honduran villagers are already moving

- "What will happen to the Hondurans that stay, those that have lived here for a long time? What effects will the relocation have on those who live here all the time?"

- "Some say that the Hondurans would stay here but some are already leaving. They are going away from here into the country, far into the country..."

(Maxell 2/A 234): Refugee says the move will not affect their security

- "What do you think about the relocation?"

- "We don't agree to moving away from here since if we go where they want us to, fifty kilometers away, they will have us threatened all the same or more. We think we won't get any better by moving elsewhere."

- "Do you think you will feel unsafe in the new settlement?"

- "Of course, they are going to behave with the same hatred towards us Salvadoreans."

- "And what about the Hondurans, the Honduran people around here and the peasants around here?"

- "The people, the peasants do not say anything. The peasants from the hamlets do not ask to take us away. Who wants to take us away are the military men. They are the ones who want to relocate us."

- "What for?"

- "We don't know why. Would it be because we bother them near the military area? We really do not know why."

- "What do the military men want in the area?"

- "Well, when they want to attack El Salvador, they bring the troops to the border. Then they feel that if we are here we bother them..."

- "They cannot do so while you are here?"

- "Since we are here there are many reporters from many countries. Then, they find it difficult to bring the troops here. If we are not here, they will bring all their power..."

RELOCATION PLANS

(Maxell 1/A 282): Disruption of Refugee Lives

- "Well, I want to explain something concerning the fact that they want to relocate Salvadoran refugees towards the center of Honduras. Here we have found all the comfort we can have. We have a water tank from which we distribute tons of water. We have a hospital which is very good for children and adults. Also, we have prepared the dwellings, tents where we are located. Above all, we have an organization that is superior to anything we can find elsewhere, which has helped stabilize our lives. For instance, we have here community coordinators: one for nourishment, one for housing, one for projects, one for children and one for health, for each settlement. There are 100 or more persons in each settlement. All of this does not permit the relocation, since it would cause a lot of damage to us the Salvadoreans because in addition to moving from our country, the relocation would force us to reorganize ourselves and do all the work again. Here we are in a very appropriate climate and if we are taken to another place where we do not know what we are going to find, the mountains, the mosquitos, and so many things we do not know, the uncertainty is too great for us. Well, from my point of view as a refugee, after being here, living and sharing with the others, I do not agree at all with the relocation they want. It would not be fair to the refugees, it would cause too much damage again."

- "I have heard that many refugees prefer to go back to their land, El Salvador, instead of being relocated. Why would that be so if it is so dangerous in El Salvador? What are the insecurities you feel about being relocated?"

- "We just do not know what it will be like when the relocation takes place. Here we already know how we have been treated by the officers, those who decided on the relocation. Some refugees would prefer to find a way to reach death back in our country, El Salvador, that go to another place, where maybe we will be much more watched or more 'submerged'."

(Maxell 1/A 498)

- "Well, what I can say is that we do not agree to the relocation that has been proposed because we have already done much work here and we do not want to lose it. We have worked here for more than a year. There are roads, drinking water, an organization within the settlement, there is even a strip where some planes may land to bring us supplies and medicines. That permits us to feel calm since we have done all that work; if we were relocated we would have to begin again. It would be an injustice."