

MEMO

January 13, 1984

TO: PET
FROM: CHRIS C.

RE: TALKING POINTS ON KISSINGER COMMISSION

1. Composition of the Commission

- no significant critics of the Administration's policy
- lack of regional Central American expertise among commission members, particularly the absence of anyone with long diplomatic or government experience in the region with exception of Harry Shlaudeman, exec. director
- "Nor were its members - distinguished citizens all - the principal players in the real-life game." Wash. Post editorial, Jan. 12, 1984
- Michael Barnes and other democrats served as "senior counsellors", but the report's conclusions do not "necessarilly reflect the views of the counsellors" but of the Commission itself.

2. Conclusions of the Commission

- N.Y. Times editorial described conclusions of the Commission as "pure Reagan doctrine" with the exception of the requirement for a Human Rights conditionality legislation.
- The Report places the conflicts in CEntal America firmly in the East-West struggle. Kissinger's global perspective is repeated throughout, with heavy emphasis on the Cuban-Soviet connection.
- The Report does not recomend any course of action in regard to covert aid to the Contras, but the individual commission members "believe that the efforts of the Nicaraguan insurgents represent one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement and that the future role of the U.S. in those efforts must therefore be considered in the context of the negotiating process."
- The Report recommends major aid increases for the region, \$8 billion over 6 years, and unspecified increases for each country. It called for major increases in military aid for El Salvador in addition to the \$8 billion in economic assistance.
- The unanimity of the Commission was broken by dissenting veivs. Mayor Cisneros took exception to the Report's strict Administration line on El Salvador negotiations, saying that past abuses of elections by the Salvadoran military require a more forthcoming response to the guerillas concern for security for such elections.

He also took exception to the negative assessment of the Report on recent diplomactic overtures of the Sandanista government toward the region and to the U.S. He also called for a suspension of covert aid to the Contras. Carlos Diaz-Alejandro also called for a suspension of Contra aid.

Kissinger, Brady, and Silber took exception to the human rights conditionality requirement saying that such a requirement should not be allowed to lead to the fall of Salvaor in the hands of Marxist- Leninists.

Eight of the twelve commission members added their dissenting views. Only four wrote no dissenting remarks.

3. Critiques of the Report

- Times, Post, and Globe all criticized the Report. A constant theme is the failure of the Commission to end the debate on Central America, in fact, it may have added to the debate.
- Moynihan in today's Times said he did not see the evidence of Cuban and Soviet activism and intervention as the Commission measured them. He said the Commission's conclusions in that regard were "doctrinal".
- With the federal budget in such imbalance, it is unlikely that the Commission's call for massive economic and military aid will survive Congress. (Today the Times reports that Reagan will ask for a \$250 million supplemental military aid package for El Salvador for 1984 and \$350 million in the same category for 1985. Current 1984 level for El Salvador is 64 million).
- Reagan at first rejected the Commission's recommendation for human rights certification process, then Speakes backtracked. Kissinger on "Good Morning America" called for an end to Salvador "right wing death squad's" in order to get American support for a policy of aid to El Salvador. This is a step back from his pronouncement in the report.

4. Strengths of the Report

- it calls attention to a region where we must be effective and provides solid analysis.
- it acknowledges the difficulties of fighting counter insurgency wars and predicts a guerilla victory in El Salvador if the stalemate continues.
- it correctly emphasizes the need for social and economic reform without which a military effort will fail.