

TSONGAS DISAPPOINTED BY KISSINGER PRESS CONFERENCE

Senate Foreign Relations Committee member Paul Tsongas said this afternoon that he was "disheartened" that Henry Kissinger, in his press conference at the state department earlier today, in no way "distanced" himself from the administration's plans to double the number of U.S. military advisors in El Salvador or their decision to send a naval group to do exercises off the shores of Nicaragua.

The Massachusetts Senator said that it was likely that Kissinger gave his "tacit consent" to the build-up. "I think that this bodes ill for both Kissinger and his Commission on Central America."

"Many of us had hoped for a fresh-start for U.S. policy in Central America," Tsongas emphasized. "However, recent activities suggest just the opposite. We are increasing our military options and diminishing the emphasis on social, political and economic factors."

"In the long term, we may be faced with the likelihood of some very difficult decisions where the U.S. will be called upon to send in troops" Tsongas concluded. "I don't think that the American people are at that point and I don't think that Congress has arrived at that point, either. The President is apparently engaged in a major build-up of stakes in Nicaragua and El Salvador in particular, and Central America in general. This is an ominous sign that we may be headed toward a military rather than a political solution."

Tsongas will visit Nicaragua and Costa Rica in mid-August to meet with both government officials and leaders of insurgent forces.