

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
FOR POLICY

CA  
#27

11 Jan 1984

MEMO FOR Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Kissinger Commission Report

Attached is a brief assessment of the  
recommendation of the Kissinger Report  
that you requested.

*Fcd*  
Fred C. Ikle

Attachment

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Date: NOV 09 2018

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## Preliminary Assessment

**Subject: ISA/IA Preliminary Assessment of the Kissinger Commission Report**

- **DOD can work with the recommendations and thrust of the report.**
  - There is sufficient support throughout the report for meaningful and predictable levels of security assistance to El Salvador.
  - Dollar amounts for security assistance were not specified
    - Report did refer to a DOD estimate of \$400 million for FY84 and 85 to break the stalemate and move forward with the National Campaign Plan.
  - Report clearly recognizes that humane anti-guerrilla tactics require modern expensive equipment not fundable by the financially weak Central American nations.
    - As we oppose inhumane behavior, we obligate ourselves to assist in the development of effective and humane anti-guerrilla forces.
- **Conditionality is a keystone of the security assistance recommendations.**
  - Henry Kissinger, Nicholas Brady and John Silber commented that conditionality must not lead to a Marxist/Leninist victory in El Salvador which would discourage American interests and risk a larger war. Hopefully, their comment will put conditionality in proper context.
  - The report attempts to give Congress and the Executive branch some space on conditionality by suggesting an independent monitoring body, such as the Central American Development Organization (CADO).
    - Should the President accept this suggestion, he should be able to negotiate with Congress a charter and a flexible reporting system which could reduce the highly charged political process now tied to certification.
    - Another bureaucracy to administer aid is not needed, but a monitoring body may be quite useful.
- **Report accurately discusses the United States' global interests which are at stake in Central America.**
  - Report recognizes the challenge placed before us by the Soviet/Cuban/Micaraguan camp and effectively ties events in Central America to the global balance.
    - Failure to resolve the conflict at its present level could lead to either a much larger defense burden or a redeployment of our forces to protect our borders, markedly reducing our worldwide responsiveness.

-- Report presents the nature of guerrilla war with its unique characteristics in a manner which should aid in educating the American public to the difficult challenge this type of war makes on the United States and why it is essential that we meet that challenge now and not later.

-- Report also discusses the historical march of communists states, with their appetite for massive armed forces.

- Support for the anti-sandinista forces is carefully worded to meet broad acceptance.

-- Majority of the Commission believes the anti-sandinista forces represent one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement.

-- Commission did not address the issue of what if any support the US should provide the anti-Sandinistas.

- Contadora process was cited as a useful building block for an eventual comprehensive regional settlement.

-- Commission stresses the importance of a comprehensive regional settlement building upon the 21 objectives of the Contadora group.

-- Report also recognizes that certain provisions of the Contadora principles would impact on how the US currently conducts its affairs in the region.

-- Should Nicaragua accept the Contadora principles and their acceptance could be verified, then a step toward lasting peace would be achieved.

-- The report recognizes that a consolidation of the Nicaraguan government in its present form would be a threat to all its neighbors.

- Importantly, the Commission quite accurately and clearly recognizes that needed action in the short term to solve the security issue overshadows all of the long term nation building recommendation.

- Commission also made a recommendation that the National Security Council conduct a detailed review of certain DOD issues. They are:

-- The length of the service tours of our military people in El Salvador.

-- The development of greater area expertise by selected US military personnel.

-- Organization and command structure in the Pentagon and the field.

-- Prospects for closer cooperation among the nations of Central America in defense matters.

-- The possibility of a strengthened role for the Inter-American Defense Board.

Underlining each of the above are strong opinions of certain Commission members that DOD has not conducted its affairs viz-a-viz the Central American problem as effectively as possible. We should anticipate questions on these issues especially if and when any Commission member is asked to explain why they were included in the report. (We are preparing now more detailed responses to these DOD issues.)

*what does this mean? what are the issues?*

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(Extracted from Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, p. 103)

Additional issues the Commission believes require attention but which we have not had the opportunity to examine in detail include:

- \* The length of the service tours of our military people in El Salvador.
- \* The development of greater area expertise by selected US military personnel.
- \* Organization and command structure in the Pentagon and the field.
- \* Prospects for closer cooperation among the nations of Central America in defense matters.
- \* The possibility of a strengthened role for the Inter-American Defense Board.

We believe the National Security Council should conduct a detailed review of these issues.

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IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5  
Date: NOV 09 2018

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THE MILITARY ASSISTANT 1/13/84

NOTE FOR USD(P)

See SecDef's markup and his question on page 2 of the Kissinger Commission Report, "What does this mean? What are specifics?"



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IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5  
Date: NOV 09 2018

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