



POLICY

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

#1

3 Feb 81

In reply refer to:
I-20514/81

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Need for In-Country Operational Training for
El Salvador -- ACTION MEMORANDUM

The guerrilla offensive that began in El Salvador on 10 January has changed the character of events there dramatically resulting in an increased need for U.S. Military Assistance Programs. The continuing insurgent attacks pose a serious threat to the Government of El Salvador (GOES) and we have responded with arms and ammunition but, to date, no in-country tactical training of GOES forces.

For nearly a year, the Department of Defense has repeatedly recommended that in-country training of GOES forces is essential to develop the requisite military skills, professionalism, and confidence necessary to meet the insurgent challenge. This recommendation to provide small U.S. Military Training Teams (MTTs) to El Salvador is even more important now. In-country operational training is the only effective way to teach quickly the professional military skills required to defeat the guerrillas and to correct the GOES tactical deficiencies which have been demonstrated during the current offensive.

Overall, our proposal would entail the deployment to El Salvador of several five-man MTTs to work with GOES Armed Forces for a period of 90-120 days.

Five of these teams (training MTTs) would be provided to conduct the training of uncommitted GOES Armed Forces in basic military skills such as marksmanship, individual skills, patrolling techniques, tactical communications procedures, basic counter-insurgency techniques and the military code of conduct. One or more of these teams may be used to re-establish a basic training program. US-CINCSO and the Joint Staff believe these teams should be deployed immediately.

An additional five-man Operational Assistance Team (OPAT) would assist each of the five zone commanders and their staff in developing requisite operational planning, improving command and control procedures and developing efficient communications and logistical systems. These five

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would be similar in nature to the operational planning and assistance team which is currently working with the military high command in the capital city and which has achieved considerable success, including laudatory comments from Ambassador White and the Minister of Defense himself. Militarily, these teams are also required quickly, but it will probably take a few weeks to identify suitable linguistically qualified personnel for this mission.

- We also believe that an immediate temporary five-man augmentation to the U.S. MILGP in El Salvador is necessary to assist in control and administration of our growing in-country program.
- As the situation dictates, additional temporary MTTs may be required in the coming months to train El Salvadoran Armed Forces in such areas as military civic action, medical assistance, and psychological operations. Training for the El Salvadoran Navy would also be needed.

(●) All of these proposals are being incorporated into the inter-agency study of U.S. policy options for El Salvador currently being prepared jointly with State. However, we feel that the need for tactical training is so great that we should not wait to act until completion of the formal study (which could take another week or two). The training MTTs should be sent to El Salvador now. (US-CINCSO is prepared to deploy our advance party for this mission within 48 hours and states that the five MTTs can be operational within 10 days.) We should also temporarily augment the US MILGP. We can defer the approximately \$210,000 cost of these MTTs under the current 506(a) authorization.

(●) While the deployment of U.S. military personnel to El Salvador is a politically sensitive issue, only a limited number of U.S. personnel would be involved and no amount of additional equipment can compensate for the enhanced effectiveness that could be achieved through development of the professional counter-guerrilla capabilities of GOES forces.

(●) The American Embassy has pointed out that President Duarte is very sensitive to accusations that U.S. military advisers have been involved in combat operations. According to the Embassy, President Duarte has told them that he would like to keep the U.S. military presence inside El Salvador to a bare minimum. However, the military high command has requested operational training on an urgent basis, and they report that Duarte supports this training. Obviously, this conflict must be sorted out before proceeding and we have asked that Fred Chapin address this issue promptly on his arrival in San Salvador this week. If he finds that operational training is politically acceptable, we should be prepared to move ahead with our training immediately.

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✓ We believe that the five training MTTs (25 total U.S. personnel), which have been informally discussed with the military high command and coordinated with the US MILGP Commander, meet both the need for minimum U.S. presence and requirements of the current military situation and that the MILGP needs temporary augmentation. Accordingly, recommend you sign the attached Memorandum to the Secretary of State at TAB A, expressing our views and requesting his concurrence for the deployment of operational MTTs as soon as Fred Chapin confirms that this presence in El Salvador is acceptable.



Franklin D. Kramer
Under Secretary of Defense
for Policy (Acting)

Attachment
as stated

Office of the Secretary of Defense **S O S C 6552**
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Date: 04DEC2018 Authority: EO 13526
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