



POLICY

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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In Reply Refer to: I-21147/84

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: NOV 19 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America -- ACTION MEMORANDUM (U)

On 11 January we provided you with a preliminary assessment of the Commission's report. You requested a clarification on the comment that certain Commission members felt that "DOD has not conducted its affairs vis-a-vis the Central American problem as effectively as possible." (TAB A)

The comment refers to three of the five military issues the Commission identified (TAB B) but did not have the time to examine in detail. Instead, the report recommended the National Security Council conduct a detailed review of each.

- Length of Military Service Tours in El Salvador. The Commission was concerned about rapid turn-over due to relatively short tour assignments for MILGP personnel. To provide continuity, stability, and to make best use of expertise of personnel, OSD believes that tours need to be lengthened. In this connection, USSOUTHCOM has requested 24-month tours for MILGP personnel (Defense Attache personnel already serve 24 months). The Services are identifying qualified volunteers for 24-month tours. It is our understanding that the Commission had no problem with our TDY mobile training teams. As you know, tasks for mobile training teams (MTTs) and engineer and technical service support teams (ETSSs) are specifically designed to maximize the utilization of their expertise while in-country.

- Development of Greater Area Expertise by Selected US Military Personnel. The Commission felt there were too few military members qualified and knowledgeable in Central American issues. Moreover, the belief was that the Services ought to produce more area experts and adopt a personnel policy which encourages and rewards productive service by them. While the Services have varying types of foreign area officer programs, and will continue to review these programs for regional emphasis, this area requires significant additional emphasis, effort and in some cases expansion.

- Organization and Command Structure in the Pentagon and the Field. Planning and execution of US military exercises, deployments, and other activities in support of US policy in Central America require the constant coordination of USSOUTHCOM and USLANTCOM. Additionally, Mexico does not fall under the purview of any unified command. While procedures exist to effect this coordination, the Commission was still concerned that the current UCP arrangement may be

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adversely affecting our overall effort. Quite apart from the Commission concerns, the time seems right for a fresh review of the military command structure.

(U) We have prepared a tasking memo for you at TAB C to send to the Chairman, JCS requesting a review of these issues.

*Fred C. Ikle*  
Fred C. Ikle

Attachment  
a/s

cc: ASD/ISA

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: NOV 19 2013

Office of the Secretary of Defense *502.C.6522*  
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