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## ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

19 NOV 1980

INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

THROUGH: THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Latin American Policy, Priorities, and Initiatives

In separate memos, both you and Dave McGiffert have asked for ideas on revamping Latin American policies and suggestions for new initiatives. The basic US strategic interests in Latin America have been identified and incorporated in the DPG: (a) increasing US military presence in the Caribbean to deter Soviet or Cuban military involvement and maintain the capability to neutralize offensive forces in Cuba in a timely manner; (b) strengthening collective efforts to protect Caribbean and South Atlantic SLOCs; and (c) gaining base access, operating, and transit rights and denying such access to the USSR.

As you know, there is pending from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a response to Secretary Brown's request (due the end of November) to provide action recommendations for Latin America. We are working closely with JCS on this, and we believe those will parallel and be compatible with the initiatives described below:

I. Major Issues:

A. Cuban threat in general war. A key question is the degree to which we should give increased attention to the problem of dealing with Cuba in the event of a general war.

Discussion: Cuba is close to our vital areas (also to CONUS-based forces); it is a potential base for hostile Soviet actions ranging from intelligence gathering to offensive operations (if suitable Soviet forces were present) and continues to arm itself with sophisticated weapons (though so far with little combat projection potential). Before developing further planning about what actions to take with respect to Cuba in the event of a general war involving the Soviet Union, a detailed threat assessment is needed. Therefore, we should ask JCS to make an assessment of the uses of Cuba (in terms of Cuban/USSR military capabilities and intentions) and the threat of these uses to other US objectives in the event of a general war. This would permit US planning to be focussed on the most efficient suppression of the threat.

B. Rectify and rationalize overlapping and outdated command responsibilities.

Discussion: A review of the USCINCSO/CINCLANT command responsibilities is required at an early date. Such a review should address, inter alia: allocation of security assistance responsibilities; USCINCSO's ability to carry out his responsibilities from Panama under provisions of the Canal Treaty and, hence, whether USCINCSO should move to CONUS or elsewhere (Puerto Rico's future status is an issue here); the current adequacy of command responsibilities/relationships in the Caribbean to include whether commanders of US forces in Panama, Puerto Rico, or elsewhere should be subordinated as unified commanders to a relocated CINCSO. Preliminary studies to these ends are under way in the Joint Staff.

Classified by DLG/TJK/RSR  
Declassify on 19 November 1986

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**II. Specific Actions and Initiatives in the Near Future in Individual Latin American Countries:**

**A. Pursue required additional security assistance measures for El Salvador to include:**

- Appropriate in-country MTTs (operational and civic action).
- Helicopters.
- Other necessary equipment as determined by USMILGP or follow-on teams.
- Provision of limited lethal equipment including M-79 grenade launchers and ammunition as determined by follow-on teams.
- Approval for certain covert actions.
- Prepare to obtain early approval for reprogramming additional FY81 FMS credits to meet expected requirements in excess of \$5M FY81 authorization.

**Discussion:** Interagency and Presidential approval of these proposals will be required. The US has already brought about changes in the code of conduct and is training Salvadoran military in humane procedures. Human rights considerations should be essential to our program, but should not be permitted to serve as a veto to specific parts of the whole program.

**B. Expedite action on security assistance requests for the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) which may come from the newly elected Jamaican Government. Enhance military-to-military relations with the JDF in coordination with UK efforts.**

**Discussion:** The election of a moderate government in Jamaica affords us an opportunity to immediately demonstrate our support for the new government in a tangible manner within the framework of our overall political, economic and military relationships. The US Ambassador has requested, as an initial move, the furnishing of 500 flak jackets and 10,000 combat rations. He has also expressed the need for trucks. We have identified the flak jackets and rations and notified State. DSAA is in contact with American Motors on jeep-type vehicles.

**C. Build gradually on willingness of Brazilian Air Force and Navy to permit USN P-3 flights from Recife toward planning for cooperation in ASW in the South Atlantic in the event of general war.**

**Discussion:** Promote consultations between Brazilian and US military on this general subject at all levels, as the traffic will bear. Assist Brazil in developing its base on Trinidad Island by providing helicopter lift or other assistance requested. A game plan has been prepared for consideration by the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

**D. Increase military-to-military contacts with Mexico, including responding favorably to requests for increase in FMS and IMET programs, to achieve closer working relationships and to facilitate greater access to bases and facilities.**

**Discussion:** Mexico has now formally requested the purchase of F-5 aircraft; honoring this request will be an important first step in furthering US/Mexican military-to-military relations. To aid this initiative, we should consider an exception to DOD policy to respond to an anticipated request from Embassy

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Mexico to have the Air Force Thunderbirds flight demonstration team perform at next years' 60th anniversary of the formation of the Mexican Air Force.

E. Take no exacerbating actions with regard to Argentina in the absence of further, egregious provocations; promote discussion and exchanges between US and Argentine military, looking toward future consultations and cooperation in ASW in the South Atlantic in general war.

Discussion: This course of action will take considerable time in view of Argentina's lack of cooperation on restraint of grain sales to the Soviet Union, support for the present regime in Bolivia (which could disappear overnight), and human rights record.

F. Assure Chilean participation in the UNITAS exercise in 1981.

Discussion: The Chilean Navy is known to be the best in Latin America; its contributions to peacetime exercises and in contingencies should be considered. The use of facilities in Chile will greatly facilitate the transit of US naval forces from the Pacific to the Atlantic in time of general war, particularly if the Panama Canal is inoperable.

G. Convince Congress to repeal the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment which prevents selling any military equipment to Chile and Argentina at the earliest politically feasible time.

Discussion: It is recognized that emotions on human rights and other matters may run so high that it may not be possible to begin in FY31, but the objective should be retained high on the action list, reviewed periodically and undertaken as soon as possible. This objective is essential in order to achieve the ultimate objectives for Argentina and Chile listed above. It will be mandatory if the US is to participate in the imminent modernization program for the Argentine Air Force.

H. Seek through quiet approaches in-country to convince Peru to accept a small survey team to determine the feasibility of US manufacture or coproduction in Peru of spare parts for Soviet supplied aircraft and if Peru agrees, be prepared to finance a substantial percentage of the cost.

Discussion: Payments for Soviet airplane spares are a heavy burden on Peru. A favorable solution in this case would have an important influence on Argentine procurement for its new aircraft and we should be prepared to finance coproduction of spare parts in Argentina as well.

I. In 1981, initiate as soon as politically feasible, negotiations with Panama seeking that Government's agreement to develop an international status for USARSA.

Discussion: The Panama Canal Treaty prohibits the USG from operating USARSA beyond November 1, 1994 without Panamanian concurrence. A general concurrence is developing in the Joint Staff, USSOUTHCOM, ISA/IA, State Department/ARA and Embassy Panama that the school should be internationalized and placed under an Inter-American Board of Regents responsible to the IADB or the Conference of American Armies. The Panamanian reaction is the first step in a process to establish an international statue.

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J. Through the interagency consultations on the Caribbean, investigate the feasibility of providing military civic action teams (either Seabee, Army or Air Force Engineering teams) for the Caribbean.

Discussion: If a political decision is reached to deploy civic action teams and they are funded from other than DOD resources, this would provide an effective method of demonstrating US concern for Caribbean nations. Besides funding, the question of manning requirements would have to be addressed.

K. Provide a minimum number of standardized boats and training for a regional Coast Guard in the Lesser Antilles.

Discussion: The initial vessels and equipment should be furnished by grants; if not funded by MAP, then by authorization and appropriation bills. Training and a substantial amount of the operations and maintenance costs should be similarly funded. The mini-states have no economic capacity to finance either costs, even through concessional credits. The agreed principles with regard to Foreign Assistance Act expenditures should not be modified to deal with this special problem.

L. Extend the no-cost lease of helicopters to Honduras

Discussion: The present lease has proven its worth and should be continued.

M. Modestly increase training for the Surinamese Coast Guard.

Discussion: We should continue to work with the Dutch to assist the Surinamese military.

N. Cooperate with the UK in expanding assistance to the Bahamian Defense Force.

Discussion: The Bahamas Defense Force is growing in size, and though the training and equipment has been primarily British, Bahamians have expressed some interest in US training and equipment. We should continue close military-to-military contacts in exploring these initiatives.

*Fred*  
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for Inter-American Affairs

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