

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

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November 12, 1982

Mrs. Katharine Graham
Chairman of the Board
The Washington Post Company
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Mrs. Graham:

Your November 8 issue contains a sidebar section entitled "Our Man in Tegucigalpa". As the subject (or perhaps I should say victim) of this unfortunate piece of journalism, I wish to call your attention to the following.

First, a review of the tape recording of our conversation will confirm your correspondent never asked me about my reading habits, a subject upon which I would have been pleased to enlighten her had I been asked. What little leisure time I have for casual reading does not incline in the direction of English literature but rather towards 19th and 20th Century history and current events. Clearly, the unfounded assertion that I read Shakespeare was merely a convenient peg upon which to draw an analogy with Julius Caesar, my alleged imperiousness and my supposed proconsular role. In other words, a cheap shot.

As for the paper on proposed steps to improve the Honduran economy, there is no truth whatsoever to the suggestion that I conveyed it to President Suazo on his inauguration day, January 27, 1982. The paper, in the form of informal talking points, was prepared by AID and Embassy officers at the specific request of President-elect Suazo in late 1981 and, with Washington concurrence, conveyed by myself to members of Doctor Suazo's economic transition team on December 21. The document is written, incidentally, with the courtesy one would expect of diplomacy. It is possible that NEWSWEEK misconstrued the subjunctive mood for the imperative, a not uncommon error for inexperienced Spanish speakers. Again, had I been asked, I would have been pleased to provide your correspondent with the complete background of this economic paper.

Finally, it is simply incorrect to state that I, as a dedicated career professional, was "personally hurt" that President Reagan chose to make Costa Rica his only stop in Central America during his planned five-day tour of Latin America. I have never entertained or indicated any such

Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.

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emotion to anyone and, at the risk of being repetitive, again draw your attention to the fact that your correspondent did not query me on this subject either.

Needless to say, I take offense at what I consider to be such fabrications and innuendos. Even more distressing is the fact that they represent pejorative and inaccurate characterizations of the way in which I have dealt with the Government of Honduras. I consider myself to be a courteous and well-trained diplomatist and therefore especially regret any negative consequence your report may have had on the excellent relationships and friendships which I believe I have established during my twelve months here.

Since it is not my desire to enter into any sort of public debate with your magazine or its correspondents, I expressly request that this letter not be published. I ask that it be considered for your information and that of your colleagues only. I, of course, welcome the opportunity to exchange views further at any mutually convenient time with correspondents of NEWSWEEK.

Sincerely yours,

John D. Negroponte
Ambassador