

# TELEGRAM

Nov 15 01 25 '82

INDICATE  
 COLLECT  
 CHARGE TO

A242

FROM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET~~ UNCLASSIFIED

E.O. ~~11652~~ 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: MILI, HO  
SUBJECT: HONDURAN REQUEST FOR HELICOPTER SUPPORT

ACTION: SECDEF WASHDC NIACT/IMMEDIATE  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN NIACT IMMEDIATE  
INFO: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
~~USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN NIACT IMMEDIATE~~  
Date 6/6/00 Exemption

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

DECAPTIONED

SECRET TEGUCIGALPA 10107  
**EXDIS** - ENTIRE TEXT

AMB  
DCM  
POL-2  
DAO  
MILGP

2. In conversation with Ambassador, DAO and ~~MILGP~~ MILGP reps evening November 15 Honduran Armed Forces Commander requested ~~XXXX~~ USSOUTHCOM assistance in transporting four to eight 160mm mortars to locations on Honduran territory within three kilometers of Salvadoran border. Locations would be near area of current Salvadoran sweep through Chalatenango Province. As Washington knows, 1500-man Honduran blocking force is on Honduran side of border. Reason for Alvarez' request is that roads are poor or non-existent in area in question and mortars must be transported to remote locations near border in order to support Honduran defensive operations.

DRAFTED BY: AMB:JDNegroponte:kjl DRAFTING DATE: 11-15-82 TEL. EXT.: 211 CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMB:JDNegroponte

CLEARANCES:  
POL:RBurghardt (draft)  
DAO:Col.DBollert (draft)  
MILGP:Col:FWMatthews (draft)

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UNCLASSIFIED

OPTIONAL FORM 15  
(Formerly FS-413)  
January 1977  
Dept. of State

3. Alvarez' request comes very late in the day since operation likely to end by week's end. Nonetheless, we promised to transmit it because we do not see any danger of exposing U.S. CH-47's to hostile fire. Therefore GOH request, though very sudden, would appear to have some legitimate basis.

4. Apart from very short notice and fact that our CH-47's may all be grounded, it strikes us that real problem with GOH request is purely political. If fact of our assistance could be kept extremely low key, then we would be inclined to recommend in favor of granting Alvarez' request without reservation. ~~XXXXXX~~ Public affairs angle, however, and fact that making available such support likely to become public knowledge, raises specter of severely adverse publicity to the effect that we are indirectly becoming involved in Salvador war through Honduran back door. Thus while request may have its merits on narrow technical grounds, the potential political costs may prove to be overriding factor in Washington's decision.

5. This matter would also appear to raise the issue of making available to Salvador and Honduras a limited heavy lift helicopter capability. In light of this GOH request, which definitely appears to have military merit, we would urge Washington to seriously consider giving GOH and/or GOES that kind of capacity. Also, this question would

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not have arisen had we been able to make M-198 artillery available to Honduras as they have frequently requested.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: We promised to provide Alvarez a reply ASAP. Please advise.

JAN  
NEGROPONTE

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