

DCI Statement on El Salvador
10 March 1982

I welcome this opportunity to discuss El Salvador with you today. I am confident that as a result of our presentation you will have a clear understanding of the nature of the externally supported insurgency, which has made El Salvador a military battleground.

The fact that the insurgency is and has been supported and directed by external forces is not something that was discovered by this Administration. In January 1981 the Carter Administration acknowledged that the Salvadoran government was struggling with left-wing terrorism covertly supported by Nicaragua, Cuba, and other communist nations.

On 15 January 1981, then U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, was quoted in the New York Times: "It is my personal conclusion that there has been a change in the amount and sophistication of weapons coming to the guerrillas, and I think they are coming from Nicaragua."

On 17 January 1981 in approving lethal military aid for El Salvador, the Carter Administration stated that its purpose was to "support the Salvadoran government in its struggle against left-wing terrorism supported covertly with arms, ammunition and training and political and military advice by Cuba and other communist nations."

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~~During the~~ ^{Last} summer the Intelligence Community produced a National Intelligence Estimate on Central America and I would like to quote its key judgment to you: "...A continuation of the present trends could result in victory for the extreme left in El Salvador, and such a victory would heighten prospects for the revolutionaries in Guatemala. It may be that those Communist and radical Arab forces providing external support and management help to the insurgencies intend to make Central America a battleground over the next few years which would distract, weaken, and undermine the United States in other parts of the world. The evolution of these scenarios would bring the revolution to Mexico's border, thereby raising the risks of internal destabilization and infiltration by radical leftists."

Subsequently we have learned a great deal about how the insurgency is organized and supported. Cuba, with Soviet backing has been instrumental in establishing ties and pulling together the various leftist Central American groups. First with Nicaraguan groups in 1979 and then with Salvadoran elements in 1980, the Cubans have organized and then, when persuaded that the time was appropriate, provided increased material assistance to cement unification. More recently, the Cuban pattern of organization has been used with Guatemalan and Honduran guerrilla groups. We have received a variety of human source reports on how the external support is provided to the Salvadoran insurgents. These sources have reported on supplies coming in by air, by trucks through Honduras, and by sea via the Gulf of Fonseca. These reports served as the basis for the White Paper issued by the Department of State last year. Subsequent to that, German SPD official Wisniewski spoke to Castro, who said that the bulk of the findings of the Paper were essentially correct.

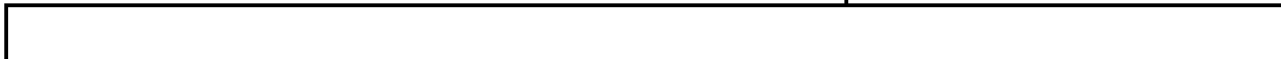
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I want now to turn to my experts, who will brief you in detail on what we have learned.

First, [redacted] will spell out for you the picture of the insurgent capabilities and show how they are supplied and directed. [redacted] will then review what we have learned about the scale of the insurgent effort, its objectives, its propaganda and its future plans [redacted]



The picture to be laid out before you will disclose a well organized and sophisticated structure which is the work not of peasant revolution, but of experienced revolutionary leaders who have won before. I want to emphasize the sensitivity of what you are about to see and hear. Should the information laid before you get into public circulation, sources can be compromised, the flow of future information taken away from us, and lives put at risk.