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Senior Interagency Group No. 54

PARTICIPANTS: See List Attached

DATE AND TIME: November 5, 1985, 4:30 p.m.

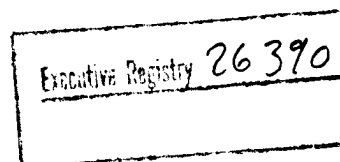
PLACE: Deputy Secretary's Conference Room

SUBJECT: SIG Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for
Nicaraguan Resistance Forces, November 5, 1985

The Undersecretary opened the meeting by noting that NHAO appears to have made real progress in getting the humanitarian assistance program underway. He then asked Deputy Assistant Secretary Michel for a report on activities related to the NHAO program in the Inter-Agency Group chaired by Assistant Secretary Abrams. Mr. Michel noted that the Inter-Agency Group had met several times since the first SIG meeting, and had satisfactorily resolved policy issues on NHAO presented at that level. Policy guidance has been provided with sufficient detail and rapidity to assist NHAO in developing its operational structure and to reassure the democratic resistance that humanitarian aid was being disbursed as quickly as possible. The Undersecretary asked Mr. Michel if there were any issues in the Inter-Agency Group which should be addressed in the SIG. Mr. Michel indicated that there were none.

The Undersecretary noted that all participants had received copies of the draft report to Congress on NHAO disbursements to date, and asked Ambassador Duemling to brief the group on its contents. Ambassador Duemling noted that \$5.5 million had been obligated to date, and that disbursement activity has accelerated considerably as the program has progressed. There was some discussion of the advisability of flagging in the report the needs of the resistance forces for other types of assistance than those presently provided by NHAO. It was agreed that the report should be submitted to the Congress as written. The Undersecretary stated that we should be prepared to brief appropriate members of Congress in further detail on NHAO activities. He also requested that the policy issue of whether NHAO should provide other categories of assistance and the need for Congressional consultations on this issue be examined in the Inter-Agency Group.

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The Undersecretary asked Ambassador Duemling if he anticipated any problems in disbursing the full \$27 million in humanitarian assistance by the March 31 deadline. Ambassador Duemling noted that in some respects the program was "front-loaded" in that NHAO disbursement has been responsive to accumulated resistance needs. It was difficult to anticipate, but he has pressed for estimates of projected requirements. Mr. Michel noted that full NHAO funding could be obligated, if not completely expended, before March 31.

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