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The CIA and the Salvadoran National Guard: Such Good Friends?

A SALVADORAN WOMAN is fighting deportation from the U.S. in a case that raises renewed questions about whether the CIA passes information about dissidents to El Salvador's controversial security agencies.

Ana Guevara Flores was arrested along with a group of her countrymen after they entered this country illegally in 1981. According to documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, she was carrying "a leftist appearing letter," and the FBI queried an official at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador about her.

A classified cable—released without the usual

name deletions—identified the official as "deputy chief of station," a CIA title, and said he "advised that El Salvadoran authorities determined that subject is not a known guerrilla/subversive." Still, the official told the FBI, the Salvadorans asked to be notified of Guevara's flight number if she was deported back to El Salvador, because it was illegal "to possess subversive literature [there] and she could be detained." The cable said the Salvadoran authorities wanted copies of all documents found on Guevara, and it suggested they be handed to a pilot of the Salvadoran airline, TACA, and addressed them to the director general of the Sal-

vadoran National Guard.

The Senate Intelligence Committee concluded last year that the CIA only identified dissidents for the Salvadoran security agencies, which have in the past been linked to right-wing death squads, in "highly unusual" circumstances, in which it is unlikely that the information could be "misused."

Guevara's case may be an exception, said Jay Peterzell of the Center for National Security Studies—a Washington group affiliated with the American Civil Liberties Union—which obtained the documents while preparing an article for the next issue of its magazine, *First Principles*. "But it's disturbing that

at least in her case, there was a casual and obliging exchange between the CIA and the Salvadoran National Guard," Peterzell added.

Guevara had entered the U.S. seeking political asylum "for religious reasons," according to Thelma Garcia, her lawyer, in Texas. Guevara's letter "was simply an introduction to a church group in Puerto Rico," said Garcia. "But the FBI construed *compañero* as 'comrade' when it simply means 'friend.'" After the embassy official's query, Garcia claimed, National Guardsmen began harassing Guevara's family: "She's afraid she'll be jailed or killed if she's deported."