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22 June 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 16 June 1987 HPSCI Briefing

CIA Briefer:

ADDI Helgerson

ADDO

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Congressmen Present:

Cheney, Kastenmeier(chair), and Kennelly

Subjects Briefed:

South Korea: Political Developments
Nicaragua: War Situation
Panama: Political Developments
Persian Gulf: Military Developments
Afghanistan: AN-26 Shoot Down

Questions/Answers:

Kastenmeier:

QUESTION: With respect to Korea, there does not appear to be much room for accommodation. The position of both sides seem set with little likelihood of concessions. Does this bode well for a peaceful transition?

ANSWER: Chun places great significance in having the first peaceful transfer of leadership. Although Roh has promised conciliatory moves, his prospects are uncertain since he is viewed as Chun's clone. Current situation is not optimistic. Chun is determined to move ahead and will maintain hard line toward opposition that too is becoming more determined. Could lead to Roh being jettisoned, martial law, state of emergency, or a move by the military.

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QUESTION: What information do you have on news stories about two US citizens being killed in Central America?

ANSWER: ADDO. We are aware of one soldier being killed in Honduras while on guard duty but indications are that he was killed as a result of criminal activity, not political.

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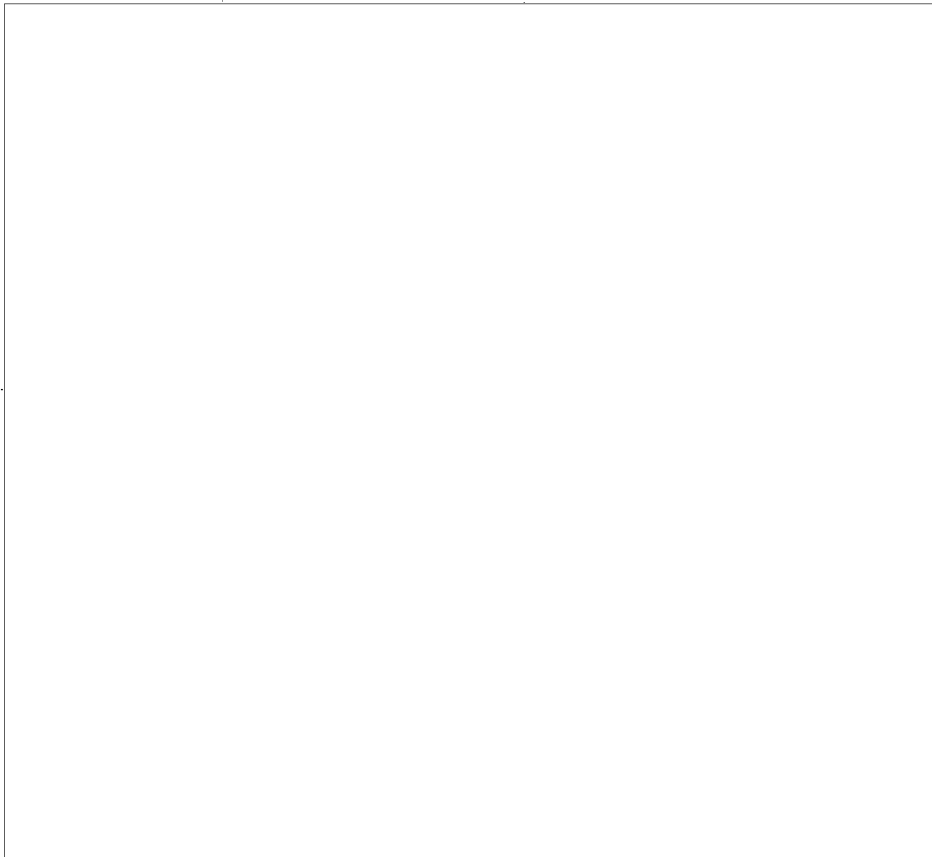
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Kennelly

QUESTION: Obviously tied to the funding question, have the Contras been successful?

ANSWER: Contras are showing greater ability to conduct operations, either in small groups and with other groups. For example, the successful attack on Abisinia was a multi-group effort. Contras have shown significant growth in their capabilities. However, they will not defeat the Nicaraguan Army.

QUESTION: Have the Contras improved significantly in terms of taking territory?

ANSWER: The Contras are not able to take and hold territory permanently. They are a guerrilla force which has significantly improved its ability to operate in larger areas. This forces the Sandinistas to spread their forces to counter the Contras.

QUESTION: Is there hesitancy in the Contra and Sandinista forces to engage in conflict?

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ANSWER: ADDI. The few highly publicized engagements may give the impression of little overall action.

ADDO. The Contras are a guerrilla force and do not engage in set piece battles, but the number of engagements is fairly impressive.

ADDI. We publish a monthly review on this activity and we will send you our latest edition.

Kastenmeier

QUESTION: Are Silkworm launch sites near the Strait of Hormuz?

ANSWER: Yes. One is near Kuhestak along the northeast coast of the Strait. The other is on Qeshm Island in the western part of the Strait.

QUESTION: The level of violence in Persian Gulf is presently low, will Iran intensify the situation?

ANSWER: Iraq is the single important variable in the Gulf. Iraq started the war on land and at sea. The current unofficial moratorium will end if Iraq attacks a ship, Iran will do likewise. Iran's goal is to keep the superpowers out of the area. There is no doubt that Iran will react at some point in time to US escort efforts. Also, Iran used the just completed visit by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov to make the US appear as the villain and the Soviets as peacemakers.

QUESTION: With respect to El Salvador, there seems to be diminished violence.

ANSWER: We would like to address this issue in another session. The number of guerrilla/terrorist attacks are down and the number of guerrillas has reduced by half compared to several years ago, but capability exists to attack at will politically important targets.

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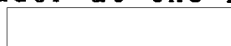


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Follow-up:

In response to Representative Kennelly's question on the level and number of engagements/clashes, O/DDI has forwarded the latest edition of the Nicaraguan/El Salvador Monthly Report. We will address Representative Kastenmeier's question on guerrilla warfare in El Salvador at the next HPSCI session, tentatively set for 23 June 1987.

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