



February 6, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honduras Working Group

FROM:

SUBJECT: Honduras Working Group Inquiry Concerning Agency Activities in Honduras in the 1980's



Honduras Working Group Questions -- Answers:

I. Father Carney, the Olanco Operation, and Reyes Mata - 1983-84 (S):

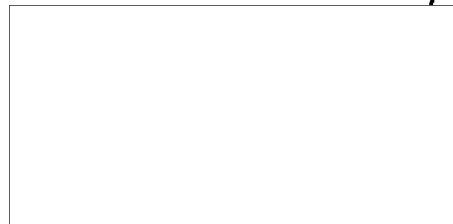
Note: I did hear of the Reyes Mata incursion subsequently.

Questions:

A. Do you recall the late 1983 Olanco Operation, also known as the Patuca River Operation? Do you recall anything about how Reyes Mata died? What do you remember, if anything, about an American priest's involvement with Reyes Mata's group, whether he was present during the operation, and what may have happened to him? Do you recall whether this American priest may have been Father James Carney, alias "Padre Guadalupe"?

Answer: I was aware in general terms of the Reyes Mata group incursion in 1993, based upon general public information and Agency correspondence read at the time and later. I have no direct knowledge of the events. Recall that Reyes Mata was a Cuban and Nicaraguan trained revolutionary to led an armed column of insurgents into the Olanco district of Honduras from Nicaragua in 1993. The group was poorly trained, poorly motivated, and the

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area was one of almost no local population and triple canopy jungle. Some group members deserted/defected, some starved to death, and some died in armed clashes with the Honduran military. Recall that there was virtually no local support for the group by Honduran peasants, which the insurgents encountered when they emerged from the northern edge of the jungle, and that the peasants quickly reported the presence and location of the insurgents to Honduran authorities. Have no recollection of "Padre Guadalupe", beyond that he may have been one of the group members who died of starvation.

B. Do you remember whether [redacted] was tasked to ascertain what happened to Carney? What was [redacted] response?

Answer: I do not recall specific [redacted] tasking to find out what happened to Carney [redacted]. We all were well aware, however, that any information regarding the disappearance of a political activist priest, U.S. Citizen or not, was to be reported immediately upon receipt and in detail.

C. Which [redacted] contacts, if any did you talk to at any time about the Olanco operation, Reyes Mata, and/or Carney, and what did they tell you?

Answer:

[redacted]
[redacted] the Hondurans who were recruited to fight with Reyes Mata had been duped by the recruiting personnel, had felt betrayed, and had deserted once they were back in Honduras. This information was not new, it had been reported [redacted]

[redacted] Therefore it did not reach reporting threshold. This was part of a general review [redacted] of then ongoing Honduran leftist revolutionary training in, or transit through Nicaragua.

D. What was your understanding of the Embassy's role in the investigation of the disappearance of father Carney? Did [redacted] the Defense Attaches, and the State Department officers cooperate in the investigation? What was the coordination process, and who had the lead in the investigation?

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Answer: I have no recollection of the Embassy's role in any such investigation [redacted] and no knowledge of such a role before or since those dates.

E. What do you know about the U.S. military's operations in Olancho in September 1983? Are you aware of any CIA officers who were working in Olancho (particularly at Aguacate) during the Olancho operation, and what can you tell us about their activities if any [redacted]

Answer: I have no knowledge of the U.S. military's operations in Olancho in this period. [redacted]

II. State Department Human Rights Reports [redacted];

A. What was your understanding of the role of [redacted] Headquarters in providing information to the State Department for the Department's yearly human rights report to congress? What was the coordination process?

Answer: My understanding was and is that we provided information to the Department of State on human rights issues via normal intelligence dissemination routes, when we had access to protected information that reached dissemination threshold, and, that the Department used all source information, including disseys, in compiling the reports to congress. Coordination on such reports would have been the function of [redacted] managers above me. I am not familiar with the specific coordination process employed [redacted] at that time.

B. Do you recall who took the lead in preparing the report at the Embassy? What information did [redacted] provide that person? How was agency information incorporated into the reports? What disagreements, if any, concerning the Honduras human rights reports do you recall? How were they resolved.

Answer: I do not have memory of coordinating on such reports [redacted] and cannot comment beyond saying I presume the Embassy political counselor took the lead in preparing the Embassy human rights reports.

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C. Do you recall any classification issues? Was there any human rights information [redacted] considered too sensitive for the report? If so, why?

Answer: I am aware of no specific classification or sensitivity issues, although classification and sensitivity could have been relevant issues, since disseminated Intel reports had ORCON controls, and Embassy/State could not expand distribution of the Intel data, or downgrade classification of material from the disseminated reports without Agency concurrence.

III. [redacted]

Answer: [redacted]

[redacted] This section is not applicable to respondent.

IV. Congressional Notification and Politicization [redacted]

A. [redacted] do you know if congressional delegations visiting Honduras asked about human rights issues? What did the [redacted] Embassy tell them? Are you aware of any failure to provide information to congress or to congressional delegations concerning human rights abuses committed [redacted] in Honduras? Are you aware of any information on instances of human rights abuse in Honduras that you believe should have been, but was not passed to Headquarters, policymakers, and/or Congress?

Answer: [redacted]

[redacted] I do recall hearing, probably sometime in 1986, that congressional oversight committee members, and/or staffers had been briefed on the [redacted] reporting (these were sensitive memo-dissems: see V-B and E below), and had been favorably impressed by this human rights reporting. I am aware of no failure to inform Congress, Headquarters or policymakers of any human rights abuses committed [redacted] in Honduras. I am aware of no instances of human rights abuse in Honduras that should have been but were not passed to Headquarters, Congress or policymakers.

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B. Do you recall any cases of politicization of reporting on Honduras? Do you recall any analysis being altered in response to political concerns? If so, who suggested that it be changed, and for what reasons?

Answer: I am not aware of any politicization of reporting on Honduras, and recall no analysis being altered in response to policy concerns.

V. Honduran security/intelligence service involvement in human rights incidents [redacted]

A. [redacted]

Answer: [redacted]

B. Did you ever have concerns that particular units might have been engaged in specific human rights abuses (special unit of FUSEP/DNI, the 316th Military Intelligence Battalion, the Counter-Intelligence Division of the C-2?) Did you ever have concerns that any of these units/personnel might have been engaged in summary killings other than in combat? If so, what was the basis for your concerns? Did you ever discuss such concerns with any other Agency/State/DOD personnel?

Answer: Information [redacted]

[redacted] indicated that paramilitaries of the Honduran Anti-Communist Liberation Army (ELACH), associated with the DNI, had engaged in selective kidnapping, interrogation and summary killings of leftists between 1980 and 1984 with the approval of Chief of the Honduran Armed Forces and the Honduran President. [redacted]

[redacted] these killings ended in 1984 when Bg. Gen. Walter Lopez Reyes became Commander of the Honduran Armed Forces. I discussed this information with [redacted]

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[redacted] Headquarters disseminated the information to policymakers, including the Director of Intelligence and Research at State, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Director of the National Security Agency, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and the National Security Council. [redacted] provided the information to USCINSO. I later heard that congressional oversight committees, or committee staffers, had been briefed on the [redacted] information. [redacted] worked [redacted] to ensure that these past abuses did not recur.

C. To your knowledge, did [redacted] take any action to resolve allegations of human rights abuses--by the Hondurans or in other International press--against Honduran security/intelligence units [redacted]?

Answer: Such allegations were of concern [redacted] management emphasized to [redacted] personnel the importance of [redacted] protecting human rights, [redacted] At the same time, [redacted] we were alert for any information to corroborate such charges. The [redacted] reporting discussed above is the result of [redacted] sensitivity to this issue, and collection alertness.

D. Do you know of any abuses/human rights incidents possibly committed by Honduran security or intelligence units that -- for lack of evidence or any other reason -- were never reported officially (e.g., cable or memos) [redacted] to Headquarters? If so, please describe the incident and your understanding of why it was not reported. Who decided not to report it?

Answer: I am aware of [redacted] no Agency collected information, concerning human rights abuses or incidents possibly committed by Honduran security or intelligence units that was not reported [redacted] to Headquarters.

E. What do you know about the Honduran Anti-Communist Liberation Army (ELACH) and any human rights abuses it may have committed? Do you know of any Honduran security/intelligence

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personnel who may have belonged or had contact with ELACH? If so, who were they and what was their relationship with ELACH? What efforts did [redacted] undertake to collect additional info on ELACH and Mario Izaguirre, head of ELACH.

Answer: All that I knew and know of ELACH was reported [redacted]

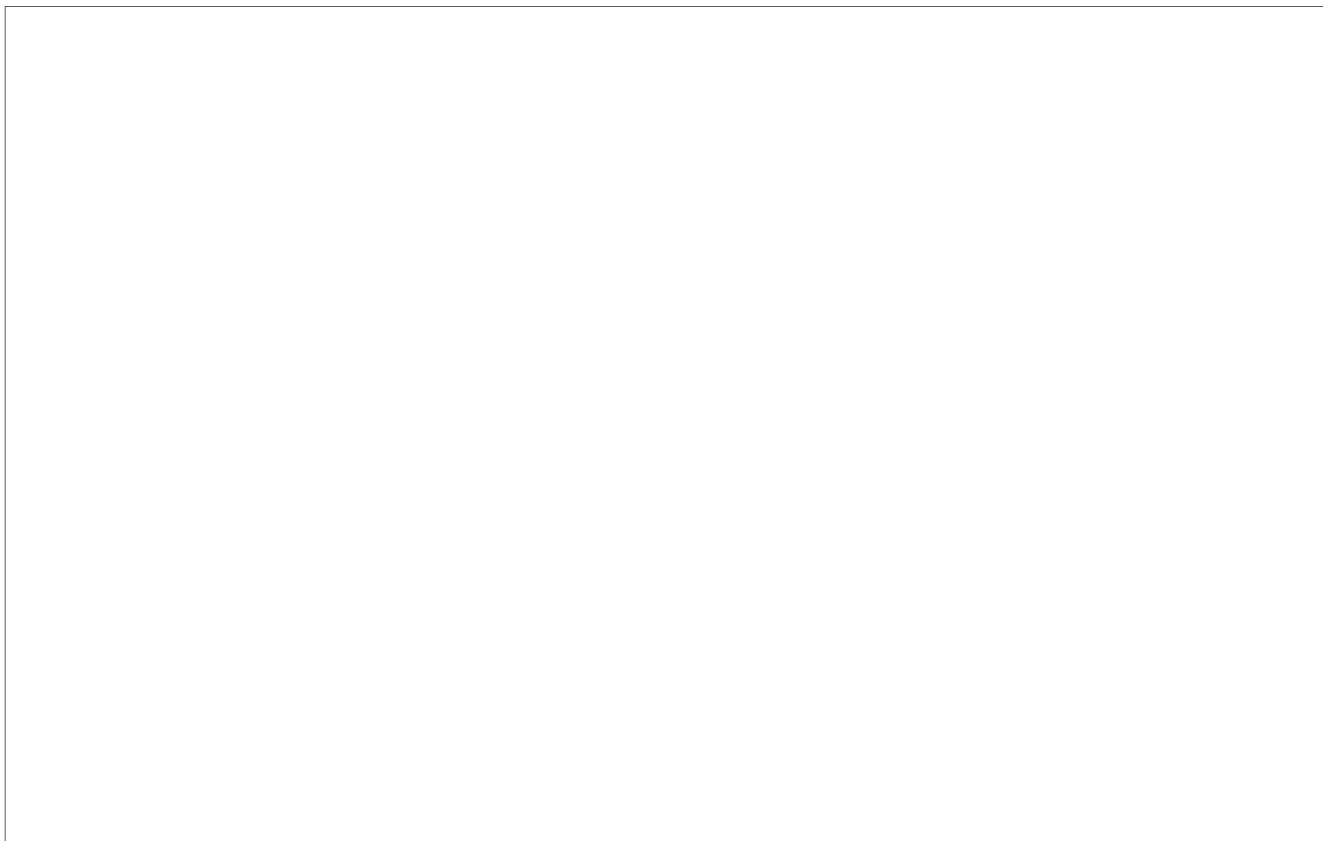
[redacted] Additional efforts were made officers to collect on ELACH and on Mario Izaguirre, including via additional [redacted]

[redacted] Do not recall any significant additional information being collected. Please see answer to V-B above for additional details.

F. [redacted]

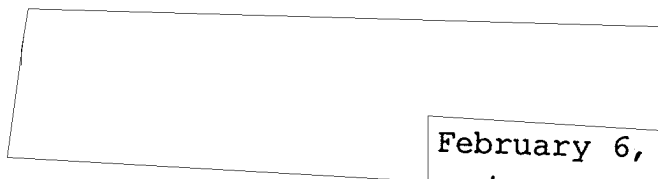
Answer: [redacted]

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Signed:



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