



Washington, D.C. 20505

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22 MAR 1988

OCA 88-0827

The Honorable Lee H. Hamilton
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The enclosed information responds to your letter of
25 January 1988 regarding allegations about CIA connections to
death squad activities. I have enjoyed and benefitted from
our recent discussions. Please contact me again if there is
anything we can do.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Sincerely,

John L. Helgerson
Director of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure

cc - The Honorable Louis Stokes

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FROM ENCLOSURE

CL BY:
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DR FR: HUM 4-82

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Approved for Release
Date JUL 00 2000

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SUBJECT: Response to Chairman Hamilton's Questions Concerning the 19 January 1988 New York Times Article: "Allegations of CIA Connections to the Activities of Death Squads in Honduras"

QUESTION 1: Is it accurate that a former Honduran Army sergeant, who has testified that he was a member of an army death squad was trained by the CIA as an interrogator?

ANSWER:

[REDACTED]

QUESTION 2: Is it accurate that Mr. Caballero tried to hide his death squad activities from the CIA, but that American Embassy officials in Honduras and the CIA were well aware of his activities?

ANSWER: We have no evidence to substantiate Mr. Caballero's claim that he participated in death squad activities or that he tried to conceal these alleged activities from the CIA. The Agency was not aware of his involvement in such activities.

QUESTION 3: Was Lt. Colonel Alexander Hernandez, until recently a leading official in the Honduran police, a former commander of army death squads in Honduras?

ANSWER: We have no evidence to confirm allegations that Lt. Colonel Hernandez was involved in death squad activities in Honduras.

QUESTION 4: Were American Embassy officials in Honduras, [REDACTED] aware of Lt. Colonel Hernandez's death squad activities at the time or at any time afterward?

ANSWER: In 1982 Agency officials became aware of allegations concerning Lt. Colonel Hernandez' involvement in the disappearance of several Central American leftists. These charges apparently originated with former Colonel Leonidas Torres Arias who, at that time was involved in a power struggle with then Commander of the Honduran Armed Forces, Gustavo Alvarez Martinez.

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QUESTION 5: Is it accurate that Lt. Colonel Hernandez formerly commanded the 316th Battalion, an intelligence unit

ANSWER: When he was a lieutenant and a captain, Lt. Colonel Hernandez commanded a Honduran police intelligence unit which was the precursor to the 316th military intelligence battalion. The Honduran Armed Forces converted this into a military intelligence, rather than police unit, and placed it under the supervision of the military intelligence division of the Honduran Armed Forces general staff.

QUESTION 6: Did this unit conduct death squad activities?

ANSWER: We are not aware of any death squad activities conducted by the 316th battalion.

QUESTION 7: Was the CIA aware of such death squad activities?

ANSWER: CIA is not aware of any death squad activities by the 316th MI Battalion, nor of any allegations of such activities by the 316th MI Battalion or its predecessor organization other than those ultimately originating with Colonel Torres Arias, described in the reply to question 4 above. The thrust of available intelligence on death squad activities in Honduras limits such activity to the 1981-1982 time frame and places responsibility for it with the Honduran police plain-clothes detective force, the DNI. The DNI organization and its personnel continued to function as a non-official auxiliary (but without engaging in death squad activities) as late as 1986.

QUESTION 8: What was the role of the CIA in promotions which Lt. Colonel Hernandez received?

ANSWER: CIA was not directly or indirectly responsible for promotions received by Lt. Colonel Hernandez.