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STATEMENT OF
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COMMANBER IN CHIEF, U. S. SOUTHERN COMMAND
HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS
ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA
1 AUGUST 1984

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, it is a pleasure for me to appear before you to discuss the direction and nature of U.S. military activities in Central America. Before I address the specifics, it may be helpful to put the United States Southern Command in perspective. SOUTHCOM is one of six Unified Commands and, apart from the European Command, is the only unified command with its headquarters on foreign soil. By law, I report to the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In general, I am charged with exercising operational command over all U.S. forces in Central and South America. My missions are provided to me by the National Command Authorities through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I have synthesized those missions into a single statement which reflects the nature of the activities of the Southern Command, and have appended same.

To carry out the missions assigned to me, I have the following personnel organic to the component units of the Southern Command-

ARMY	5593 (193d Inf Bde)
AIR FORCE	1398 (USAF Southern Division)
NAVY (INCL USMC)	286 (US Naval Station, PN)

My headquarters (136 officers; 86 enlisted personnel) and tenant and supported units and activities add another 2,036 military in Panama, and I have 80 officers and enlisted personnel of all services

authorized in the 16 Military Liaison Offices throughout Latin America. These figures exclude, of course, exercise personnel and the various Mobile Training Teams which serve in Latin America on a temporary duty basis.

Additionally, I believe my command has a unique relationship with the Reserve Components: my entire complement of fighter aircraft consists of four A-7DS which are provided to me on a rotational basis from Reserve Component units in the continental United States. Similarly, the total contingent of intra-theater lift assets is six C-130 Hercules transport aircraft which report to me from units in the CONUS. During the past year, 24 different states of the Union and Puerto Rico have been represented by Reserve Component crews and aircraft on duty in the Southern Command.

The Army National Guard is playing an increasing role in Southern Command, with elements from Florida, Louisiana and Puerto Rico having recently participated in training exercises in Panama. Plans are being formulated to expand the concept of militia-to-militia contacts in several Latin American countries. Those governors and state adjutants general who are involved or who have been observers have all expressed their enthusiasm and support for these training exercises. Moreover, the troops are especially benefitting from superb mission training in a challenging environment.

In addition to those forces which are assigned to me on a regular basis, and the Reserve Component forces discussed above, I can and do draw on the resources of the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, and on the various major commands headquartered in the United States for the

purpose of supporting training exercises in the region and other military operational commitments.

The goals and objectives of the Southern Command are expressed in budgetary terms in both the service budget estimates and in the security assistance request formulated by the State Department. I would assign the following priorities -

- Protect the vital interests of the United States.

- Provide an adequate level of security assistance funding to friendly governments to insure an environment in which democracy and economic and social progress can take place.

- Continue military cooperation with Central American democratic states through readiness training exercises and exchange of vital information.

- Adjust U.S. Forces in Panama per the treaty of 1979.

- Improve the quality of life programs for all DOD personnel and their families living in Latin America.

You have directed your inquiry today at Central America, so let me provide a brief assessment of the nations of that region:

BELIZE. This small nation merits more than just a passing interest on the part of the United States. Desperately poor and under developed, their security is currently guaranteed by the British. Belize is a new nation but has long been involved in a territorial dispute with neighboring Guatemala.

Security Assistance*

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$0.1M	\$0.1M
-MAP	0.5	0.5
-FMSCR	0.0	0.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	2	2

*FY 84 dollars = President's Budget plus Supplemental; FY85 dollars reflect continuity levels submitted by embassies. Mil Grp personnel are military only.

Resident U.S. personnel 1,943

(Embassy estimates 75% potential evacuees)

COSTA RICA. By law, the Costa Ricans have no Army. But today Costa Ricans are fearful of the growing threat to that nation from Nicaragua—not only in military terms, but also from the stream of refugees that are moving into Costa Rica from Nicaragua. I support the modest program for Costa Rica which provides a modicum of training and some essential equipment.

Security Assistance

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$0.15M	\$0.20M
-MAP	9.85	9.80
-FMSCR	0.0	0.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	3	3

Resident U.S. Citizens 26,204

(Embassy estimates 75% potential evacuees)

EL SALVADOR. The Salvadorans have proven their ability to continue the democratic process through the conduct of free elections in the midst of an externally supported insurgency. They urgently need guaranteed and sustained U.S. security assistance if they are to achieve the force levels necessary to cope with their insurgency. There are presently four government servicemen for each guerrilla; in 1982 the ratio was 6:1. A force ratio of 8-10:1 is commonly accepted as the minimum essential, depending of course, on the degree of tactical mobility and proficiency possessed by government forces. We are supporting El Salvador through a series of Mobile Training Teams to provide security assistance training. MTT personnel are in El Salvador on a temporary duty basis only and are in addition to the permanent MilGrp members.

Security Assistance

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$1.3M	\$1.5M
-MAP	223.7	116.0
-FMSCR	18.5	15.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	11	11

Resident U.S. Citizens 10,257

(Embassy estimates 75% potential evacuees)

GUATEMALA. The government has announced a timetable for democratic elections and return to civilian rule. Unofficial results show that 1,784,241 voters (78% of the registered voters) participated in the 1 July elections. We currently have no military assistance program for Guatemala beyond a small military group. We must review that relationship on a priority basis, for as Guatemala transitions to democracy, I believe it is time to broaden our influence there, and to seek to incorporate that country in the security arrangements for the region, on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and mutual assistance in political, economic and security undertakings. The largest of the Central American countries, Guatemala also has an effective army which is successfully coping with its long-enduring insurgency. With help, they could do it better.

Security Assistance

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$0.0M	\$0.3M
-MAP	0.0	0.0
-FMSCR	0.0	10.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	3	3

Resident U.S. Citizens 4,930

(Embassy estimates 40% potential evacuees)

HONDURAS. The recent change in the military high command has not affected the defense relationship between the United States and Honduras. Honduras is another nation which perceives a significant threat from its neighbor, Nicaragua. They are the poorest nation in Central America, and they have elected not to match quantitatively the Soviet-Cuban supported militarization which is proceeding apace in Nicaragua, opting for a small quality professional force. The Congress should make every effort to provide an adequate measure of security assistance for the Hondurans. Until such time as the Honduran military reaches minimum risk force and equipment levels, we should continue to demonstrate our commitment to the region through periodic exercises and temporary deployments.

Security Assistance

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$1.0M	\$1.2M
-MAP	77.5	77.5
-FMSCR	0.0	0.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	6	6

Exercise Program

-Ahuas Tara II. Terminated 8 February 84. Was a series of exercises designed to increase U.S./Honduran experience in combined and joint operations, develop procedures for integration of U.S. support in contingencies, and enhance force readiness.

-Granadero I. Multinational engineer and counter - insurgency FTX conducted from April to June 84 with U.S., Honduran and El Salvadoran troops. Objectives were to further Central American military relationships, enhance combat readiness of participants, and promote interoperability among regional forces.

-Deployment Readiness Exercises. The DRE program consists of short duration deployments of forces from either CONUS or Panama to test unit capabilities. Three DREs have been conducted into Honduras this fiscal year, and some \$2.0 million has been budgeted to support a very small DRE program in Southern Command in FY85.

Military Construction Program

-Palmerola Air Base (Comayagua, Ho)

-Airfield Improvements. FY83 \$13 Mil. USAF. Project consists of construction of approximately 1400 feet of runway and over-run on southern end of existing runway, connecting taxiways, 22,400 square yards of parking apron with revetments for 8 aircraft, 2.1 million gallons of underground fuel storage and installation of runway/approach lighting system. This project will make Palmerola Ai r

Base the only airfield in country fully capable for night time operations. (Final cost estimated at \$11.3 Mil)

-100 Man Compound. FY85 \$4.3 Mil. Army. Will provide relocatable troop quarters, dining, recreation, administration and supply facilities and a 16,000 square foot aircraft maintenance hangar with 6,200 square yards of parking apron.

-La Ceiba. FY84 \$8.0 Mil. USAF. Provides for upgrade of Goloson Air Base through construction of parallel taxiway, additional ramp space, underground fuel storage, security fencing and lighting.

NICARAGUA. The continued militarization of Nicaragua is at the heart of the Central American problem. The Sandinistas are imposing a Marxist-Leninist structure on Nicaragua as rapidly as possible. The Cuban presence is all pervasive with upwards of 10,000 personnel spread throughout all levels of both military and governmental organizations. Soviet bloc arms shipments ensure the continued modernization and growth of the Sandinista armed forces including sufficient T-55 tanks to outfit an armored brigade, APCs, and larger caliber artillery and trucks—an unmatched offensive capability in the region. Soviet and Cuban investment in military construction in Nicaragua is on the order of \$300 million, including a Soviet-manned military hospital at Chinandega and numerous new or upgraded airfields. Among the latter the most important by far is Punta Huete, across Lake Managua from the capital, where feverish round-the-clock efforts are ongoing to complete this Fall what is expected to become the main base of the Sandinista Air Force.

The almost 13,000 foot runway will be able to accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet inventory - and the presence of numerous fighter revetments underscore that this is not a civil airfield. In spite of repeated denials, the Sandinistas continue efforts to export revolution and destabilize their neighbors. Defenseless Costa Rica is extremely concerned while Honduras has relied more than ever on its association with the United States to offset Sandinista pressure. Cuban and Soviet bloc supplies continue to flow through Nicaragua by land, sea, and air to insurgents in El Salvador, in spite of repeated denials by the Sandinistas that they are involved in such activities. In short, the Sandinistas are building a Marxist-Leninist garrison state which intimidates its neighbors and poses a major threat to regional peace and stability.

Resident U.S. Citizens 7,943
(Embassy estimate 60% potential evacuees)

PANAMA. The Panamanians recently concluded their first presidential elections since 1968, another display of support for the democratic process. U.S. forces in Panama are in the process of realigning force structure and repositioning some units in accordance with our treaty obligations. The Army has announced the deactivation of one mechanized infantry battalion, and the streamlining of the remaining two infantry battalions in Panama in order to adapt to the new light infantry division model, with the Panamanian Defense Forces, our military-to-military relations have never been better. We are training together on a daily basis, and the US National Guard exercise, Minuteman I, which involved a combined engineer training effort on the remote Azuero Peninsula, some 130 miles southwest of Panama City, was by all measures a resounding success. Our major efforts with respect to the Panamanian Defense Force will focus on continued combined training

with the ultimate objective of turning over the total defense of the Panama Canal to them.

Security Assistance

	FY 84	FY 85
-IMET	\$0.5M	\$0.6M
-MAP	10.0	14.4
-FMSCR	5.0	5.0
-Mil Grp (Personnel)	6	6

Exercise Program

-Blue Blade. Focus will be the defense of the trans-isthmian transportation systems with emphasis on a combined counterinsurgency exercise in remote areas of the isthmus.

-Kindle Liberty. The annual Panama Canal Defense exercise; emphasis will be on the combined aspect of military operations. This exercise series is designed to enhance U.S.-Panamanian cooperation and understanding and to increase the operational effectiveness of U.S. participants.

Military Construction Program

-Energy Conservation. FY84 \$0.6 Mil; FY85 \$0.4 Mil. USAF. Provides for improvements to family housing at Howard AFB to reduce energy consumption.

-Computer Facility Improvement. FY84 \$0.7 Mil. Army. Urgent Minor Construction. Provides for installation of upgraded USSOUTHCOM WWMCCS computer and analysis center at Ft. Amador.

-Dining Facility Modernization. FY84 \$0.7 Mil. Army. Continues Army wide program of modernizing and improving troop dining facilities a quality of life initiative.

-Utility Improvements. FY84 \$0.8 Mil. Army. Repairs deteriorated electrical distribution line.

-Naval Station Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing. FY85 \$1.6 Mil. Navy. Provides quarters for 64 personnel, replacing aging and inadequate buildings currently in use.

-Family Housing Improvements. FY85 \$1.0 Mil. Army. Provides for a number of line item improvements to family housing at various military housing sites in Panama.

Resident U.S. Citizens 34,123

(Embassy estimate 80% potential evacuees)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Regional Military Training Center. As you know, the RMTC is located in Honduras and is staffed by Hondurans and U.S. Military Forces. To date both El Salvadoran and Honduran battalions have trained there. The RMTC offers a training program which will benefit all nations of the region.

Panama Canal Area Military Schools. The PACAMS continue to benefit all Latin America. After October 1984, we anticipate that the U.S. Army School of the Americas will become the Pan American Institute of Military Science and National Development, under a 12 year agreement to continue the school at its current location in partnership with the Panamanians, it is estimated that an additional \$2.3 million above the current budget request will be required to complete the conversion.

	FY 84	FY 85
-RMTC (MAP)	\$25.0M	\$20.0M
-PACAM Schools (IMET)	5.5M	6.0M

In summary, it should be noted that all of the United States military activities in Central America are rather modest when compared to the level of effort put forth to protect vital U.S. interests in other parts of the world. I am grateful for the support which the Congress has shown in the past, and strongly urge your continued support.