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SYSTEM II
90956

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

September 6, 1984

Mary White

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: OLIVER L. NORTH

SUBJECT: Nicaraguan Helicopter Downing

In response to your direction, State Department this afternoon convened a meeting among CIA, DOD, and NSC to review all known facts relating to the September 1 helicopter downing in Nicaragua that killed two Americans. Based on information collected at the meeting, State is preparing a paper which will be forwarded ASAP. When it arrives, it should be attached to this summary.

Facts relating to the events of September 1 are summarized below. Classification of the material is indicated so that you may discern which should or should not be used during your television appearance this evening:

-- The helicopter was a Hughs 500 belonging to the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). (S)

1.4c

[REDACTED]

-- The helicopter took off from the FDN military headquarters at Las Vegas, Honduras, carrying two American members of the so called Civilian Military Assistance (CMA) group and a Nicaraguan FDN pilot. (S)

-- The FDN has claimed that the helicopter launched from a site in Nicaragua. (S)

-- While the motives of the CMA personnel are unknown, it is assumed that they were following a FDN air attack earlier the same day against a Sandinista training facility at Santa Clara, Nicaragua. The CMA leader claims that their intended purpose was to provide search and rescue for any downed FDN pilots. (S)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART

NLS 01587 #15

By CA, NARS, E.O. 11/16/85

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Declassify: OADR

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- The first U.S. cognizance of American involvement in the incident was through the FDN late on September 1. (U)
- On September 2, CMA members in Honduras informed Embassy Tegucigalpa that two of their members were missing and presumed downed in the helicopter which had returned from Nicaragua. (U)
- Our earliest record of contact between CMA and U.S. officials dates from October 1983, when Thomas Posey approached the Milgroup in San Salvador expressing interest in donating equipment to the Salvadoran military (Tab A). The Milgroup arranged contacts between CMA and the ESAF General Staff. Subsequently, the Embassy reported that CMA's offer had been accepted, and that "several small boxes of equipment" were delivered to the ESAF. Posey also offered to provide five "infantry trainers" to the ESAF. We have no indication of the Salvadoran response. (U)
- Mr. Posey and the CMA organization first appeared in Honduras in January 1984 offering to provide "free military equipment" to the Government of Honduras and requested the assistance of our Embassy (Tab B). In reply to the Embassy's request for information on CMA, the State Department responded on January 28 (Tab C). (U)
- There is no evidence that any munitions were ever delivered to the Government of Honduras; although, small quantities of non-ordnance materiel (boots, web gear, etc.) were apparently turned over to Honduran customs. In August, CMA delivered similar equipment evidently designated for provision to a Honduran airborne battalion and the FDN. (U)
- There is no record of USG contact with CMA between the time of the initial approaches to our Embassies in San Salvador and Tegucigalpa until September 2 (Tab D). (U)
- At some point between the initial contact and the events of September 1, it is apparent that CMA established contact with the FDN. Based on their public statements, the relationship has existed for several months. (U)

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1.4c -- [REDACTED]
U.S. Army and Honduran engineers conducted limited training at the airfield. During the engineering training at Ajucate, Honduran military engineers installed culverts for drainage. (U)

-- No permanent installations were developed at Ajucate as a result of the U.S. exercise. (U)

1.4c -- [REDACTED]
-- There is no known relationship between the CIA or any other U.S. intelligence establishment and the Alabama National Guard Unit with which several of the CMA members seem to be affiliated. The DOD is investigating whether or not the CMA members affiliated with the Guard or the DOD violated any regulations or laws. (U)

-- There were no U.S. Government personnel at the base from which the helicopter launched and no U.S. officials were aware, in advance, of either the airstrike by the O-2 aircraft or the helicopter mission. The FDN command (including Adolfo Calero) indicates that they were unaware of what appears to be a spontaneous mission instigated by the two Americans. (U)

-- Based on information available, it can be assumed that this was a well-intentioned effort on the part of these Americans generated by public knowledge that USG funding was no longer available to the anti-Communist Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters. (U)

RECOMMENDATION

That you use the points above during your television appearance this evening.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Attachments

- Tab A - AMEMBASSY San Salvador 00936 of January 26, 1984
- Tab B - AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa 00353 of January 11, 1984
- Tab C - SECSTATE Wash DC 026677 of January 28, 1984
- Tab D - AMEMBASSY Tegucigalpa 10950 of September 3, 1984

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