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**TERMINATION
PHASE-OUT
STUDY**

PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECT

HONDURAS

APRIL, 1974

**AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523**

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ALBERT L. BRYANT
KNUTE F. K. THORPE

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Terms of Reference

A.I.D. funded police assistance overseas prohibited by the recently passed Foreign Assistance Act is consequently being terminated. In the phase-out of these projects, future development of the civil police forces and their role in Honduras' economic, political and security posture become matters for concern. Of equal concern is what, if any, effect this premature termination of U.S. assistance will have on current and future U.S. interests in Honduras.

This report presents the findings of the study conducted with these objectives in mind. An evaluation is made of the past and present security and developmental situation in the country, the civil security forces' operations and the role they have played in the context of their own society, A.I.D. Public Safety efforts in accomplishing project goals and contributing to U.S. objectives and interests. An appraisal is provided relative to the expected effect the termination of police assistance will have on future progress and development of the civil security forces.

Subsequent actions by both the USG and the GOH towards continued development of responsible, professional and responsive law enforcement in Honduras are recommended and offered for consideration.

B. Conduct of the Evaluation

The team was composed of the following members:

Albert L. Bryant - OPS/W
Knute F.K. Thorpe - OPS/W

After reviewing pertinent background documents in Washington and meetings with the Country Desk Officer and the Chief of OPS/TA, the team arrived in Tegucigalpa on March 24, 1974 and remained until April 6, 1974, for its in-country survey. This evaluation was conducted by interviews and discussions with numerous persons from the U.S. Country Team, Honduran police officials and on site visits to Honduran police installations. These visits included the Special Security Corps (CES) Headquarters in Tegucigalpa, Traffic Headquarters, Department of National Investigations, Region I Headquarters and the Police Training School at Ojo de Agua.

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DECONTROL FOLLOWING April 25, 1975

All persons contacted were candid and helpful in the discussions.

Prior to departure the team discussed findings of a general nature with officials of the CES, U.S. Embassy and the USAID.

II. SUMMARY

A. Impact of Program Termination

Although there is some political maneuvering currently in Honduras, no serious threat to the current government exists.

The CES seems determined to continue its professional police development and the team was constantly aware of the enthusiasm of the officers toward the progress being made. This progress will continue but the void created by the departure of USG assistance will be felt.

Ambassador Phillip V. Sanchez urged that every effort be made to increase the activity of the International Police Academy to assist in the continued development of the CES. He urged that present funding levels should be maintained and those funds previously used for technicians be transferred to the IPA. He further recommended creation of a shorter course for policemen below officer rank to increase professionalization.

B. Observations and Conclusions

The CES has made great progress in a short time toward the goal of becoming a civilianized police force, dedicated to providing enlightened police service to the people of Honduras.

For the short term, the absence of Public Safety will make no perceptible impact. The momentum generated by the program is not expected to be lost immediately and clearly defined goals will probably be met. For the longer term, however, absence of the counsel, guidance, friendly and experienced advice on matters of organization and procedures is expected to result in a slower rate of progress.

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III. U.S. INTERESTS ^{1/}

U. S. interests in Honduras can be divided into three main categories: economic, area tranquility and humanitarian.

A. U. S. private sector investments in Honduras are at about the \$200 million level concentrated in bananas, petroleum refining and marketing.

B. Continued peace and cooperation in the Central American region is important to U.S. interests and investments.

C. Honduras is one of the least developed countries in Central and South America. It is in the interest of the U.S. Government to assist in the development of this country for humanitarian reasons.

IV. INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMSA. Political

There appears to be no serious threat to the current government. The CES and the military have the capability to deal with any foreseeable internal security problems.

The Communists operating in Honduras number about 500 and are divided ideologically into three groups: Moscow oriented, Chinese oriented and Cuban. There is constant disagreement among the groups and much of their efforts are directed toward fighting each other.

The Communists do have control of the university, have made some gains in the trade unions where they control six out of 25 to 30 unions and are attempting to gain some influence with the campesino (peasant class). The level of activity is low and not too successful. There are occasionally demonstrations against U.S. installations but violence has been minimal in recent years. Some bombings did occur in 1971 but even these were carried out at night and resulted in no injuries and slight damage in

^{1/} For a detailed discussion on Mission views on this subject see the FY-74/75 CASP.

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most cases. There is evidence of some loose connection with the Guatemala Communists but nothing of significance has resulted. Some scholarships are provided by Cuba and Russia which are utilized.

The Christian Democrat party is a strong force with the campesinos in the area. The party is controlled by a group of Canadian priests who are strongly anti-American and anti-British. The priests are from the Quebec area. This group is supporting and encouraging the land invasions being carried on by the campesinos and do pose a potential problem for the police. The government appears to be dealing with the problem through a program of re-settling the campesinos. In 1973, 15,000 were re-settled. The campesino himself does not receive title to the land but the title goes to a cooperative of which he is a member. If progress continues at this pace, the campesino problem should be resolved within four to five years.

B. Criminality

Crime is a growing problem and is covered in the unclassified segment of the report.

V. CUERPO ESPECIAL de SEGURIDAD(Special Security Corps-CES)

More detailed discussion of the CES is contained in the unclassified report.

The current commander of the CES, Colonel Policarpo PAZ Garcia, is a military officer with no previous police experience. Despite this, the Team was impressed with his grasp of civil police concepts and the gains made toward development of the CES during his tenure. Colonel Paz is politically and personally close to the President and the Minister of Government which augurs well for the CES. Many feel that if Colonel Paz leaves the post of Commander of the CES, he will be making an upward movement into a position where he could continue to influence its development.

There are various problem areas within the CES which were observed by the Team and expressed by the Commander.

Colonel Paz stated that there is a great need for managerial and supervisory training for his mid-career officers. The Team has recommended that this be accomplished at the IPA.

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Additionally, it was the opinion of the Team that the laboratory facility of the DIN could be vastly improved. The competence of the Laboratory Director is questionable.

The narcotics unit was recently moved to the Treasury Police from DIN due to a personality conflict between the Chief of DIN and the Chief of the Narcotics Unit. Hopefully, the unit will become more effective in its current location.

VI. THE PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM

All major aspects of the program to date have been covered in the unclassified report.

It is the opinion of the Team that CES will continue to progress toward becoming a more professional, civilianized force so long as current leadership remains but that the progress will be much slower without the advisory and commodity assistance of the U.S. Government.

This feeling was expressed by several officers of the CES. Captain Sagastume, Chief of DIN, stated that it was tragic that Public Safety was being withdrawn and that he was uncertain of the future without this assistance. He described our departure as "leaving the family", an experience which leaves an empty feeling.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the USG continue to program CES personnel for U.S. training and continue to develop training courses designed to fulfill the needs created by the termination of our advisory efforts. Particularly useful to CES would be the IPA development of a shorter general type police course as recommended by Ambassador Sanchez for young, promising CES personnel with a minimum of service. This course should be designed and tailored to give the young student modern and humanitarian conceptual guidelines for his future development as a police officer.

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