



ASSESSMENT  
OF THE APPLICATION OF  
POLICE HELICOPTER SUPPORT TO  
THE PROBLEM OF COUNTERING URBAN TERRORISM  
IN GUATEMALA CITY

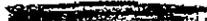
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this assessment was to study "possibilities and associated problems in applying helicopters to existing and future civil police operations in Guatemala City and environs" (State 184505, November 10, 1970). By its nature it related to the U.S. policy objective, "... to support the constitutional government of President Arana in its efforts to eliminate insurgency and terrorism..." as outlined in part in Department of State Background Notes, Republic of Guatemala, August 1970.

A single consultant, qualified in air and internal security matters, was utilized from the Office of Public Safety, Agency for International Development, Washington, D.C., from 13 through 28 November, 1970. The consultant received excellent cooperation from all levels and agencies of the U.S. Mission, Guatemala, and those members of the Government of Guatemala (GOG) necessarily contacted in the course of this visit.

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SUMMARY

The physical environment of Guatemala City lends itself suitably to helicopter operations in support of the National Police as part of the Government of Guatemala's efforts against a well established and significant urban terrorist threat. Terrorist mobility and ability to blend quickly with the population, periods of heavy vehicle traffic which slow police pursuit, and the proximity of many large wooded canyons and mountainous areas at the edges of the city which facilitate escape are a few of the factors which could be significantly nullified by improved police reaction using helicopter support.

The effective use of helicopter support in Guatemala City demands a more responsive police structure. Several long-standing limitations currently serve to slow local police response. These are crystallized in portions of the police communications system. For local purposes the existing police Communications Center largely is used for contacts with mobile patrol vehicles. While it works reasonably well for this purpose, and has contact with major outlying stations, radio contact with several substations is limited or nonexistent. There is no adequate method for rapidly alerting the entire urban police system to awareness of terrorist actions, which usually involve more than one administrative zone or police jurisdiction. An excellent and long planned revised communications center has been approved for the third time but needs priority action. The majority of static post police, and all foot patrolmen, lack communications. Without a police precinct system and/or call box net, this leaves many police individually and collectively in ignorance of on-going activities and greatly lessens the value of numerical superiority of the police over the urban terrorists.

As less significant but corollary matters, individual police mobility and information on terrorists also affect police response. There are excessive numbers of police assigned to static posts in the city. The lack of more foot mobility tends to immobilize the police effort and emphasize the separation of the police from the populace where it is needed for essential information gathering. At the same time, distribution of available information on wanted terrorists is limited. Though terrorist leaders are generally known to the police and other security elements, for various internal reasons, information useful for their apprehension is presently held too close. This may be in the process of change. Overall police response would be improved significantly with more effective police information gathering and more widespread wanted terrorist information.

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These conditions are not original with this report and have been addressed previously by USAID Public Safety officials. Their resolution has generally been hampered by the transitional effects of new National Police leadership, police budgetary and manpower considerations and the effects of continuing terrorist actions which displaced normal priorities.

In three brief exercises in the city, using a Guatemalan Air Force (GAF) helicopter and vehicles of the police Radio Patrol, a clear limitation was noted in the necessity for police or civilians to use telephones for initial notification of criminal activity. However, in the course of the exercises, it was also apparent that both the GAF and National Police personnel could adapt easily to the use of helicopter support in urban anti-terrorist operations and that the use of a helicopter would improve police response. It would not constitute an alternative for recognized police deficiencies - these will take time to change - but it will present a logical and feasible adjunct to police efforts against urban terrorism which can be almost immediately applied with the personnel and much of the equipment on hand.

Any helicopter support for the police should use GAF pilot and maintenance assets. Civilian commercial facilities are less than marginal for this purpose. Neither the GAF helicopters nor pilots can be considered overflowed but they have no light helicopters. A single light observation helicopter for the police, under complete police operational control, can add significantly to police anti-terrorist operations and further U.S. policy objectives in Guatemala.

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CONCLUSIONS

The physical environment of Guatemala City, the nature and tactics of the significant urban terrorist threat and existing limits in local police reaction capability indicate a positive value in adding helicopter support to inhibit urban terrorists' freedom of action and improving police response.

The application of helicopter support will be of only marginal value unless police communications deficiencies are resolved in large measure, more foot patrols are established, improved dissemination of terrorist information is effected and police patrol driver capabilities improved.

The Guatemalan Air Force is capable of absorbing the maintenance and operating requirements of an additional light observation helicopter with some adjustments in pilot and maintenance strength.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the U.S. Government consider providing the Government of Guatemala a single light observation helicopter, associated equipment, spare parts and essential training for use in countering urban terrorism in Guatemala City.

That this helicopter preferably be a Bell 47G-3B-2 model, equipped with turbo-supercharged engine and as otherwise outlined in this report.

That this helicopter be under the exclusive operational control of the National Police, but operated and maintained by the Guatemalan Air Force, partially on short notice alert and intermittently on patrol over the city during hours critical for countering terrorist activity.

That a helicopter be considered contingent upon reasonable indications of progress in resolving significant portions of limitations in National Police communications, police foot patrolling, dissemination of wanted terrorist information and driver capabilities.

That necessary actions be taken to assure that the planned police Communications Center is given necessary priority action by U.S. and GOG agencies to improve police response.

That in the absence of a police call box system, appropriate action be taken to assure that all police stations, most substations, all check points, and suitable proportions of static post and foot patrol police have sufficient communications equipment to be alerted to terrorist actions and to report any detection of criminal activity.

That necessary coordination be effected between U.S. and GOG agencies to develop an interim helicopter support system for the police, including short notice alert and patrols, using UH-1H helicopters and existing communications equipment to obviate future operational and training difficulties.

That the introduction of a police helicopter receive appropriate GOG assurances of UH-1H helicopter backup support in all periods of necessary maintenance for the police equipment.

That appropriate action be taken to assure that at least two experienced GAF helicopter pilots are designated primary duty as police helicopter pilots.

That appropriate action be taken to assure that at least two new helicopter maintenance positions are added to the GAF for police helicopter maintenance, over and above all other planned and programmed changes.

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GENERAL

HELICOPTER OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Guatemala City is at an altitude of almost 5,000 feet above sea level. With temperature rises this altitude will present the need for helicopters to be capable of operating at density altitudes up to 8 or 9,000 feet to overcome the effect of higher temperatures in a southerly latitude. The city population is given as 813,696; its area encloses approximately 50 square miles. The city is divided into 19 administrative zones (Chart A, Page 19).

In most zones, a suitably powered helicopter can safely fly from any operating level down to rooftop heights. In Zone 14 there are some antennae well over 200 feet in height which pose some restriction. Additionally, in Zone 1, the downtown area, building heights and other antennae will normally restrict helicopters to a height above 200 feet in most cases. However, large expanses of the city are only one story in height. The city has expanded over many adjacent hilltops, leaving large numbers of steep and heavily wooded valleys at the outskirts, particularly to the west. These valleys present an easy method of approach and departure for criminal activity. Any activity in the valleys can best be observed from the air. On all sides, the city is contained by mountains and a combination of wooded areas and a few small farms. Interspersed with the populated areas of the city are approximately one dozen suitable helicopter landing areas: two unused aircraft landing strips, several soccer fields, parks, vacant lots, etc. The immediate downtown area, however, has no areas suitable for emergency landings. Surface mobility is constricted by heavy vehicle traffic conditions in much of the city during morning, mid-day and afternoon periods. Helicopter patrol operations during these periods will be particularly advantageous to the police in overcoming traffic conditions.

The single commercial airport in Zone 13 presents some hazard to helicopter operations over the city, since the prevailing winds usually require the takeoff of commercial jet aircraft over the city. The bulk of this activity takes place in the afternoon. With proper planning and coordination with the control tower, any flight safety hazards can be minimized, since most large aircraft departure times are well established. The airport itself is ideally located for helicopter operations, maintenance facilities, fuel and is the home base for the Guatemalan Air Force (GAF).

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Guatemala City has a rainy season from May through October, and there will be a normal restriction to visibility to all helicopter flights in rain conditions. In addition, darkness will inhibit operations to a certain degree. Operating altitudes will usually be increased somewhat both for rain and for darkness, but should not terminate helicopter operations. From a safety standpoint, the city lends itself suitably to the use of helicopters within the limits of equipment, pilot experience and weather conditions.

#### SCOPE

The special significance of Guatemala City in national security created a need for some expansion of this assessment beyond helicopter utilization. All major internal security efforts by GOG agencies are centralized in the capital, which is the heart of most government, political, commercial and industrial activity. It also contains most of the principal military and police facilities, many of them intertwined in the security problems of the city.

In "normal" times the police operate under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Government. However, an emergency condition, of State of Siege, was implemented on November 13, 1970, placing all elements of the military and the police under control of the Minister of Defense, with the President as Commander-in-Chief. All military aircraft assets of the GOG are assigned to the GAF, which is subordinate to the Guatemalan Army at all times. In this set of circumstances, any assessment of helicopter support for police activities necessarily involved contacts with agencies outside the police.

Any consideration of applying helicopter support to the suppression or limitation of urban terrorist activities involves a fundamental chain of effective reaction within the police system. This reaction flows from the police or other individuals making initial detection, notification of higher control elements, alerting reaction forces (both air and ground) and notifying any associated security forces. When the reaction on the ground is incomplete, or inconsistent, deficiencies will not be eliminated by the availability of helicopter support. With these factors in mind, the writer observed the organization of the civil police structure, some of its routine operations, communications, driver capabilities and a few facets of criminal information dissemination.

#### THREAT

The current urban terrorist threat stems from a series of events dating back to an unsuccessful revolt by junior military officers in 1960

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which culminated in a communist-oriented guerrilla movement in 1962. Those disaffected following a 1963 military coup created further dissidence. By 1966 two basic rural guerrilla organizations were operating: the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) and the 13th of November Movement. Effective rural military counterinsurgency actions by the government drove much of the guerrilla activity into the relative security of Guatemala City by the end of 1967. Their urban activities have included the assassination of the U.S. Ambassador on August 28, 1968, political leaders, foreigners and members of the security forces. These activities continued through the election and inauguration of President Arana on July 1, 1970. (Background Notes, Republic of Guatemala, Department of State, August 1970)

Violence in Guatemala City is not specifically localized, according to the National Police data. Chart B, Page 20, reflects the city-wide dispersion of shootings, assassinations, kidnappings, robberies, bombings and found assassinated bodies during the month of October 1970. Only significant violence is indicated; any political orientation of this activity could not be attempted with the information provided.

Following imposition of the State of Siege on November 13, major police supervisors indicated that overt terrorist activity had markedly diminished due to the large military presence in the city and the imposition of several emergency measures. The terrorists' freedom of action has been circumscribed for the time being. At this point, the nature of overt terrorist activity and its extent when the State of Siege is lifted is beyond the scope of this report.

There are disparate opinions between GOG officials on the size of the urban terrorist threat. The best estimates by informed sources indicate the presence of several hundred organized disaffected insurgents with the immediate desired targets being more than 20 leaders of multiple cell combinations. These were estimates only. The same sources are convinced that the ease with which the terrorists disappear following terrorist actions indicate a substantial degree of sympathy for the terrorists within the city's population.

For the purpose of this report, there was no need for further detailed threat assessment. Although the dimension of the urban terrorist threat is numerically indeterminate, it is nevertheless major. It is also well established, current, and poses an obvious relation to the "law and order" emphasis of the incumbent President in his pre-election campaign.

#### TERRORIST MODE OF OPERATION

Although overt urban terrorist activity was diminished during this visit, police sources indicate that terrorist methods have been clearly defined

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over the past several months. Typically, terrorist assassination or kidnapping attempts are detected after the fact, the perpetrators taking particular pains to insure that all preliminary overt actions are within the law and non-suspect. Terrorists' actions are always well prepared and involve several participants, usually youthful and unobtrusively dressed. Often common criminal types are used to steal weapons or cars. In advance of a terrorist action requiring vehicles, one or more cars are stolen in succession, diverting police actions to erroneous vehicle descriptions before and after the act. Only the last vehicle, acquired immediately prior to the act, is used in the action. This is quickly abandoned for another vehicle or vehicles enroute to previously prepared hideouts. When suitable, the perpetrators proceed on foot. At times they board local commercial buses.

Officials contacted generally agreed that terrorists frequently fled to hideouts within the urban area and did not usually attempt to make for rural areas until police reaction cooled down. There have been a few instances of attempts to leave the city rapidly. It was the firm opinion of informed officials that only three to five minutes existed immediately following the terrorist act in which to make some form of detection. After the initial three to five minutes, using foot or vehicle mobility, terrorists were adept at blending into the populace and disappearing. Terrorist actions occurred at various times but generally during daylight hours and often developed during the 12 noon to 2 p.m. period when many offices are marginally manned and most people are going to and from the noon meal.

#### URBAN POLICE STRUCTURE

The major civil police organizations available to counter the terrorist actions in Guatemala City are the urban portions of the National Police and the Judicial Police. Each organization has currently a high degree of autonomy and each is responsive to the Ministry of Government. The National Police Chief, his Deputy (Second Chief), and his Operations Officer (Third Chief) are military officers appointed by the new administration. It was indicated that the Judicial Police and Treasury Police would be made subordinate to, or part of the National Police in December 1970 and January 1971, respectively. (The Treasury Police are not of major significance in urban security but have a more vital role on the borders and in outlying areas.) This action will institutionalize a more balanced civil security and law enforcement force. The present fragmentation of command can only work against consistent police reaction in some measure.

The National Police constitute the basic urban foot and vehicle patrol and static post element within the city, with the Judicial Police conducting a concurrent but separate investigative function. Their combined strength varies between 3,300 and 3,500 of the nation's 5,000

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(approximately) police. The day-to-day police activity is conducted in the four police geographical corps, or Cuerpos, which have designated responsibility for specific administrative zones of the city, plus the Traffic Division. The Cuerpos have a headquarters element and scattered sub-stations. In a normal day there are 75 foot patrols and 175 static posts manned by the police. This can vary.

Overlaying the foot patrols and static posts are 75 Traffic Police posts, 30 Radio Patrol cars and 12 to 16 police motorcycles. The Traffic Police are centrally controlled from their own headquarters; the Radio Patrol is the essential mobility of the police structure. The motorcycle element usually operates on the city perimeters but appears to be of marginal worth and is not radio-equipped.

It is evident that the police structure, with U.S. assistance, is making progress, and this in the face of political transitions, major personnel changes and criminal insurgent activities. A multitude of major problems exist within the urban police structure but are beyond the purview of the assessment; however, there are several specific matters which affect police reaction and bear on assessing the value of applying helicopter assistance to the police structure. The items discussed below are not intended as a definitive listing of police limitations and problems; police deficiencies are well established and familiar in detail to Mission Public Safety officials.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The Police Communications Center in Guatemala City services both national and local needs (Chart C, page 21). For this assessment only those portions applied to the urban capital area were considered. The Center has effective communications with approximately 60 vehicles (patrol and special service), police divisions, the Judicial Police and some government officials at the ministerial level. It has radio contact with only a few sub-stations and usually at least five check points. It contacts the Treasury Police, the Army and intelligence agencies by telephone. It has limited or no contact with static posts or patrolmen. No call box system exists, but one budget official indicated such a system was included in the 1971 budget.

With few exceptions, foot patrols and static posts must depend on the availability of a commercial telephone, a nearby police substation or a citizen to pass on information to the police Communications Center of any criminal activity. In the past, many terrorist incidents have been reported by citizens who witnessed the action and usually called the local Volunteer Fire Department. When rescue equipment was dispatched to the scene, the radio transmissions were the police notification of the

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occurrence. These are patently poor expedients. By their numbers and locations, police are often in a good position to alert the police system to criminal actions, but their poor communications represents a signal impediment in passing information. However, the information reached the police Communications Center, the Center in turn notified the Radio Patrol, and would also notify a police helicopter, if available. With a lack of communications to patrolmen, fixed posts and sub-stations, much of the city wide police structure is not alerted to on-going terrorist activity and can make little contribution.

The police Communications Center has been long programmed for change. Plans for its change have recently been approved for the third time. At present it is in cramped quarters in the National Police headquarters building and is a combination of Communications Center and Radio Patrol car dispatch. The new center, for which most equipment has been ordered, has been allocated adequate space in the same building and is programmed largely for self-help construction by the police. The police Director General indicated he had given the project first priority and was awaiting some technical assistance.

It is unfortunate that a fully viable communications system covering the entire city does not exist today. If the communications system is such that many patrolmen in the Cuerpos are unaware of what is taking place in periods of terrorist activities, much of the effectiveness of a numerically large force is lost. With the high mobility of terrorists, usually more than one administrative zone and more than one Cuerpo jurisdiction is involved. As presently equipped and organized, the communications system presents several built-in delays, disadvantageous to rapid reaction and applying helicopter support. It cannot alert the force properly. The existing communications are a considerable improvement over what existed in the past, but fall far short of what is needed for the level of command control needed for urban counter-terrorist activity. The new center will provide all the essential aspects of data, command and needed communications to combat urban terrorism, but may need additional equipment for helicopters, individual patrol officers and static posts.

#### FOOT PATROLS AND STATIC POSTS

In terms of reaction against terrorism, the low ratio of foot patrols to static posts constitutes an imbalance. The tactics used by the terrorists are essentially hit-and-run with a high degree of mobility and the ability to disappear within the city. Recognizing the necessity to continue static security for VIP, vital installations, etc., some consideration could well be given to increasing the number of foot patrolmen, preferably in pairs, to work closer to the citizenry in the historic "first line of defense"

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police role. It is the basic method of information gathering to counter the terrorists' ability to develop safe hiding places and disappear into the population. The present limited number of foot patrols is clearly to the terrorists' advantage since they are aware of the fixed posts and need only to avoid relatively few foot patrols and radio vehicles to commit terrorist acts and escape. If static post and headquarters personnel cannot be reduced, possibly military personnel could perform static post duties not requiring a policeman.

#### VEHICLE DRIVERS

It was estimated that approximately 60% of the police vehicle drivers were well qualified in all phases of driving. The remaining 40% pose an obvious limitation in terms of both safe police reaction to a terrorist created emergency and any necessary pursuit or work with helicopters.

#### TERRORIST CRIMINAL INFORMATION

Intelligence was considered only in the context of what criminal information was provided the patrolmen, radio patrols, stations and substations, etc., in order that bona fide terrorist suspects or known terrorists could be readily identified. There was little obvious evidence in two Cuernos visited that information of this nature had been passed down to that level in the form of photographs, descriptions, etc. One Cuerpo Chief indicates he had received no briefings or intelligence information on terrorist suspects, but that "he had his own methods and sources" of collecting such information. The Chief, Radio Patrol, had a Confidential folder containing photographs and other data on more than 20 known terrorists. He indicated that the information was made available to Radio Patrol officers at the daily roll call; however, photographs, etc., were not distributed beyond the three copies of the documents received.

The internal reasons for this situation were not explored, but basic to any system of crime prevention and detection is the principle of providing police officers all available information on possible suspects. There are indications that the GOG will proceed in that direction. In the absence of criminal or terrorist information, much of the police structure assumes a largely defensive posture and attempts the detection of terrorists only after-the-fact.

#### GAF HELICOPTER SUPPORT CAPABILITY

The GAF is a small air force of approximately 300 personnel who appear well motivated. One of its difficulties has been the lack of any personnel authorization expansion for many years, despite several changes in equipment and operational requirements.

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## HELICOPTERS

In terms of helicopters, it has an imbalance in types. It possesses four UH-1H's, which are first-line jet turbine powered utility helicopters; it also has three H-19's, which are obsolete reciprocating engine utility helicopters of marginal capabilities and not surprising maintenance difficulties. Within the next six months, the GAF is anticipating two additional H-19's on a no-cost, as-is basis, and two additional UH-1H's. There is a question concerning the use of the additional H-19's as spare parts sources or as actual flying machines. The H-19's have been used in flying counterinsurgency support missions in the past, but have recently been confined largely to training several neophyte pilots. The UH-1H's can be used over the city; the H-19's would be hazardous for this purpose. Ideally, the GAF should be equipped with light observation helicopters. Bell LOH-13 G's, or similar equipment, in lieu of the H-19's, would serve the multiple purposes of economically conducting training, reconnaissance, surveillance, border patrol, command control and liaison. If light observation helicopters were available, they could be immediately applied to the problem of countering urban terrorism in Guatemala City.

## HELICOPTER PILOTS

Only 12 trained helicopter pilots are available. However, of these one is the President's son, one is on a long-term leave of absence with a local airline, three are involved in command and staff duties which make them available only part-time. An additional pilot currently requires the presence of an Instructor Pilot on most flights. This leaves six remaining "duty" helicopter pilots. Members of this group conduct the bulk of the operational helicopter flying and additionally supervise the H-19 helicopter training function and some helicopter maintenance activities. During August, September and October, the 12 helicopter pilots accrued time as follows:

1. 01:05	5. 10:55	9. 43:10
2. 08:25	6. 11:05	10. 25:00
3. 15:15	7. 29:40	11. 26:35
4. 00:00	8. 48:55	12. 15:05

Considering that the above hours are spread over three months, it represents very low minimum for the supervisory element. It should be noted that some helicopter pilots also fly as co-pilot in the C-47's and two fly P-51 aircraft. The five neophyte helicopter pilots trained in-country are commissioned as officers, but not officially rated as pilots. They have accumulated approximately 40 hours in the H-19's and will need major additional training before being entrusted with operational missions. Since current experience seems centered in the

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six "duty" pilots, it would follow that these would be drawn on for operating any new police equipment over the city. If this develops, the need to bring two additional new pilots into the system might exist.

#### HELICOPTER FLYING HOURS

During the past quarter, helicopters averaged approximately 21, 10 and 15 hours for each of the seven helicopters possessed during July, August and September, respectively. (Twenty hours per aircraft is usually considered an acceptable Military Assistance Program average.) The best month was July when each UH-1H averaged over 21 hours and one accumulated 54 hours. The individual UH-1H high in August was over 33 hours and in September over 37 hours. In October, the UH-1H's averaged approximately eight hours due to unavoidable major maintenance difficulties. Judging by past performance and the fact that helicopters had their last accident one year ago, increased performance in the UH-1H's is within the capabilities of the GAF if no untoward maintenance or parts difficulties develop. By all indications, despite the outstanding efforts of the MILGROUP Air Section, it is not difficult to predict that the H-19 utilization will in all likelihood continue to be an uphill struggle achieving marginal results and absorbing scarce maintenance man hours.

#### HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE (GAF)

Twelve qualified GAF helicopter mechanics are available. With programmed gains and losses, this will rise to only 18 by June of 1972. It is estimated that they should be at the 18 level at this time aiming for a 24 or 25 total as rapidly as possible. The scarcity is symptomatic of the resistance to increasing the total space allocations for the GAF and concentrating training and re-training in some of the same individuals. With this situation, it is clear that the addition of any helicopter maintenance requirements would demand additional maintenance space allocations.

#### COMMERCIAL HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE

Local commercial maintenance capability for light helicopters is extremely limited. The sole local commercial operator of helicopters is utilizing one Bell Ranger and one Bell 47, with a second 47 possibly arriving in the near future. However, his maintenance capability is centered on a single knowledgeable helicopter mechanic who draws on other local mechanics on an ad hoc basis. All major maintenance, including engine overhauls, is accomplished at the Bell plant in Fort Worth, Texas, requiring a lengthy flight to and from the overhaul facility.

It would be fruitless to tie any police helicopter operation to a contractual arrangement for maintenance under these circumstances. Government helicopter operations would demand a high degree of availability of maintenance services on a 24-hour-a-day basis. Contract civil

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helicopter maintenance would be a definite and unacceptable limitation to anti-terrorist helicopter operations of any kind. It would also attenuate the operation by adding a commercial organization to the military and police agencies necessarily involved.

#### APPLICATION OF EXISTING AIRCRAFT

Since the guerrilla movement has concentrated its efforts in the city, and the security situation is considered sufficiently urgent to declare a state of emergency, existing aircraft can be applied to countering urban terrorism in some measure. The four UH-1H's are obviously an expensive and uneconomical piece of equipment to use in a light helicopter role. This would be analogous to using Cadillacs for patrol cars. However, if the level of urban terrorist activity is sufficiently high, economics should be a secondary consideration for the short term, whenever UH-1H's are not being utilized elsewhere. Through effective use of local communications media, publicizing the existence of such an arrangement could present a beneficial psychological impact on the general public and some deterrence to terrorist operations. The Acting GAF Commander indicated the feasibility of such an interim approach if the period was not extended.

Three brief exercises were run on November 23, 1970, in various parts of the city, using a UH-1H on airborne alert with a police observer and police FM-5 radio. The target was an unmarked USAID sedan containing a USAID Public Safety Adviser, the writer and a qualified Radio Patrol officer, plus a police FM-5 radio. The patrol officer initiated each exercise by notifying the police Communications Center of the location and description of the vehicle and its last known route.

At the outset, it was apparent that if the initial notification to the Communications Center had to be made by telephone by a police patrolman, a significant delay was inevitable. The first public telephone was out of order and the radio was resorted to. The second telephone was in a police sub-station; the third in a service station. The mechanics of locating a nearby telephone can pose a major restriction to prompt notification of higher police echelons. A private citizen would possibly have less difficulty in locating a phone in his own neighborhood.

Once notified, the police Communications Center reacted promptly and professionally, detailing two numbered patrol vehicles to locate the target vehicle and simultaneously calling in the helicopter. (The helicopter was kept airborne for the exercise to reduce the safety of flight hazard in scrambling the aircraft and possibly disrupting local commercial jet traffic.) Throughout the three exercises, the impromptu communications arrangement worked effectively.

On the first exercise the helicopter located the vehicle within five minutes. The Radio Patrol vehicles passed the target vehicle in six

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minutes, but were erroneously concentrating on license plate numbers, instead of the make and color of the vehicle, which was the information most useful to the helicopter. The second exercise was more fruitful in all respects. The Radio Patrol officer in the target vehicle wasted two or three minutes in passing the information to the Communications Center, but once that was complete, the Center notified the helicopter and two patrol cars almost instantly. In this case two designated intercept cars were too far from the scene; however, two alternate patrol vehicles and the helicopter located the target vehicle within three minutes. In the third exercise, all initiating calls were made promptly and the helicopter was on the scene in four minutes. It was able to keep the target vehicle in sight and direct two patrol vehicles which arrived in the vicinity of the target vehicle in approximately ten minutes.

A more complex series of exercises was considered, but due to the ongoing emergency and large numbers of armed military in the city, the hazards were considered too great, particularly if any terrorist activity developed. The exercises did, however, demonstrate the following:

- a. The communications equipment available can be applied to useful air-ground police actions.
- b. The use of telephones to report initial detection can absorb a critical number of minutes just when time is most important.
- c. Helicopters have no difficulty in low-altitude operations over the city.
- d. Helicopters can be advantageous in reaching any scene within the city.
- e. With a suitable training program, an interim system can be devised to use existing helicopters over Guatemala City in anti-terrorist activities, at least for the short term.
- f. During a vehicle pursuit, even if all Radio Patrol vehicles are notified, much of the urban police structure is in ignorance of what is going on due to the inability to monitor transmissions from the police Communications Center.

#### FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION

If positive actions are evident in expediting the new police Communications Center, improving communications for foot patrolmen and static

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posts; increasing the ratio of foot patrols to static posts and improving the caliber of radio patrol drivers, USAID should consider programming a single dual control Bell 47G-3B-2 turbosupercharged helicopter for the National Police. With the improvements in the ground environment as indicated above, this equipment can be effectively applied to limiting the effect of urban terrorism in Guatemala City.

Helicopter support can provide a highly trained pilot, extremely knowledgeable of all areas of the city, to work in conjunction with vehicle and foot patrols. Its greatest value would be the aircraft's capability to reach any reported scene promptly from an airborne alert status and maintain surveillance of reported criminal actions until foot or vehicle patrols can be brought to the scene. A corollary value would accrue from its airborne presence during periods of peak threat and its availability on short-term alert for suitable periods of each day.

The threat to Guatemala City from terrorists can be described as immediate but has existed since the end of 1967. All the desired changes to the police organization would clearly be useful immediately, but the realities of change in most lesser developed countries seem to indicate that all changes will not develop completely in a short period. Helicopter support supplied to Guatemala City anti-terrorist efforts at this time will partially offset the inevitable inertia anticipated from a combination of organization changes, command/control alterations, budgetary deficiencies, training inadequacies and the low entry educational level of many local policemen. It would not be an alternative, but a logical and feasible adjunct to local police efforts well within the capabilities of personnel already on hand to apply to the well established terrorist problem.

At this point there is considered to be no need for more than one police helicopter. With the four UH-1H helicopters already on hand in the GAF, adequate backup can be provided for the police helicopter whenever it is down for maintenance, or requires backup operational support. With two additional UH-1H helicopters already scheduled for the GAF in the near future, using the GAF aircraft to support the police helicopter will be even more feasible.

The Bell 47G-3B-2 is the most suitable equipment. Two Bell helicopters, one a Bell 47G, are flown locally by a commercial firm and the GAF UH-1H's are Bell equipment. Additionally, the 47G is similar to and compatible with the U.S. Army Bell LOH-13G, in which GAF pilots and maintenance personnel may receive training under MAP. If LOH 13G's are made available under MAP for the GAF, three of them would be the ideal replacement equipment for the three obsolete H-19's which should be purged from the system.

In the interim, USAID Public Safety, the police Director General and the GAF, should develop a series of coordinating exercises to prepare for helicopter/police combined operations, using available communications equipment and UH-1H aircraft. Specific attention should be paid to training two or three patrol officers to participate as helicopter observers both day and night.

To provide the required personnel, the GOG should be requested to bring two of the partially trained, but unrated, helicopter pilots into the flying program, in order to concentrate training in the police helicopter in two of the more experienced pilots. Additionally, the GAF maintenance complement should be increased by two helicopter maintenance positions, over and above any now being programmed.

To simplify the acquisition of the new helicopter and expedite the required training, arrangements should be made to have a suitable Bell factory pilot ferry the aircraft to Guatemala and check out two GAF pilots locally. At the same time, a suitable factory maintenance technical representative should accompany the aircraft to provide on the scene maintenance indoctrination. Since the personnel involved are GAF, accomplishing the pilot and maintenance training through MAP should be considered.

With minimum essential equipment, the costs should be approximately as follows:

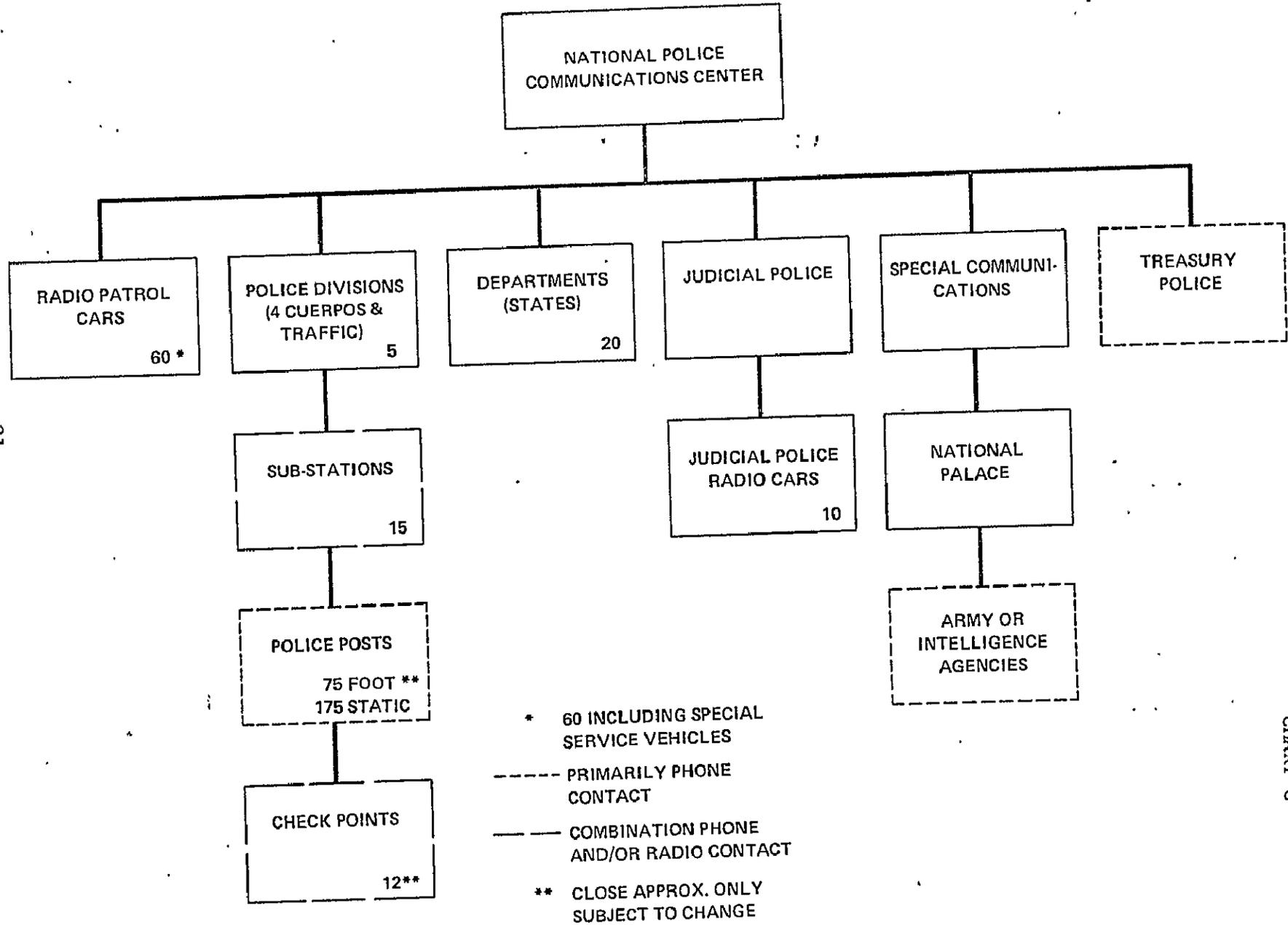
Basic helicopter	\$60,000
Spare parts	12,250
Communications and navigation radio	1,600
Dual Control	950
Cabin Heater	595
Shoulder harness	1,550
Two-place baggage carrier	695
	<u>\$77,640*</u>

\*Not included are 7% GSA, pilot training and fly-in costs. Spare engine omitted for single aircraft. Engine can be shipped to factory for exchange/overhaul and UH-1H utilized as substitute. Night lighting equipment may prove to be a desirable option.





POLICE COMMUNICATIONS  
GUATEMALA CITY



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[REDACTED]

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations  
from assessment of helicopter support for  
Guatemalan police in efforts to counter  
urban terrorism in Guatemala City.

Assessment made by S. Pesacreta, OPS/W from  
November 13, 1970, through November 28, 1970.

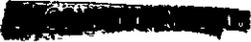
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SUMMARY

The physical environment of Guatemala City lends itself suitably to helicopter operations in support of the National Police as part of the Government of Guatemala's efforts against a well established and significant urban terrorist threat. Terrorist mobility and ability to blend quickly with the population, periods of heavy vehicle traffic which slow police pursuit, and the proximity of many large wooded canyons and mountainous areas at the edges of the city which facilitate escape, are a few of the factors which could be significantly nullified by improved police reaction using helicopter support.

The effective use of helicopter support in Guatemala City demands a more responsive police structure. Several long-standing limitations currently serve to slow local police response. These are crystallized in portions of the police communications system. For local purposes the existing police Communications Center largely is used for contacts with mobile patrol vehicles. While it works reasonably well for this purpose, and has contact with major outlying stations, radio contact with several substations is limited or nonexistent. There is no adequate method for rapidly alerting the entire urban police system to awareness of terrorist actions, which usually involve more than one administrative zone or police jurisdiction. An excellent and long planned revised communications center has been approved for the third time but needs priority action. The majority of static



post police, and all foot patrolmen, lack communications. Without a police precinct system and/or call box net, this leaves many police individually and collectively in ignorance of on-going activities and greatly lessens the value of numerical superiority of the police over the urban terrorists.

As less significant but corollary matters, individual police mobility and information on terrorists also affect police response. There are excessive numbers of police assigned to static posts in the city. The lack of more foot mobility tends to immobilize the police effort and emphasize the separation of the police from the populace where it is needed for essential information gathering. At the same time, distribution of available information on wanted terrorists is limited. Though terrorist leaders are generally known to the police and other security elements, for various internal reasons, information useful for their apprehension is presently held too close. This may be in the process of change. Overall police response would be improved significantly with more effective police information gathering and more widespread wanted terrorist information.

These conditions are not original with this report and have been addressed previously by USAID Public Safety officials. Their resolution has generally been hampered by the transitional effects of new National Police leadership, police budgetary and manpower considerations and the effects of continuing terrorist actions which displaced normal priorities.

In three brief exercises in the city, using a Guatemalan Air Force (GAF) helicopter and vehicles of the police Radio Patrol, a clear limitation was noted in the necessity for police or civilians to use telephones for initial notification of criminal activity. However, in the course of the exercises, it was also apparent that both the GAF and National Police personnel could adapt easily to the use of helicopter support in urban anti-terrorist operations and that the use of a helicopter would improve police response. It would not constitute an alternative for recognized police deficiencies, these will take time to change, but it will present a logical and feasible adjunct to police efforts against urban terrorism which can be almost immediately applied with the personnel and much of the equipment on hand.

Any helicopter support for the police should use GAF pilot and maintenance assets. Civilian commercial facilities are less than marginal for this purpose. Neither the GAF helicopters nor pilots can be considered overflown but they have no light helicopters. A single light observation helicopter for the police, under complete police operational control, can add significantly to police anti-terrorist operations and further U.S. policy objectives in Guatemala.

CONCLUSIONS

The physical environment of Guatemala City, the nature and tactics of the significant urban terrorist threat and existing limits in local police reaction capability indicate a positive value in adding helicopter support to inhibit urban terrorists' freedom of action and improving police response.

The application of helicopter support will be of only marginal value unless: police communications deficiencies are resolved in large measure, more foot patrols are established, improved dissemination of terrorist information is affected and police patrol driver capabilities improved.

The Guatemalan Air Force is capable of absorbing the maintenance and operating requirements of an additional light observation helicopter with some adjustments in pilot and maintenance strength.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the U.S. Government consider providing the Government of Guatemala a single light observation helicopter, associated equipment, spare parts and essential training for use in countering urban terrorism in Guatemala City.

That this helicopter preferably be a Bell 47G-3B-2 model, equipped with turbo-supercharged engine and as otherwise outlined in this report.

That this helicopter be under the exclusive operational control of the National Police, but operated and maintained by the Guatemalan Air Force, partially on short-notice alert and intermittently on patrol over the city during hours critical for countering terrorist activity.

That a helicopter be considered contingent upon reasonable indications of progress in resolving significant portions of limitations in National Police communications, police foot patrolling dissemination of wanted terrorist information and driver capabilities.

That necessary actions be taken to assure that the planned police Communications Center is given necessary priority action by U.S. and GOG agencies to improve police response.

That in the absence of a police call box system, appropriate action be taken to assure that all police stations, most substations, all check points, and suitable proportions of static post and foot patrol police have sufficient communications equipment to be alerted to terrorist actions and to report any detection of criminal activity.

That necessary coordination be affected between U.S. and GOG agencies to develop an interim helicopter support system for the police, including short-notice alert and patrols, using UH-1H helicopters and existing communications equipment to obviate future operational and training difficulties.

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That the introduction of a police helicopter receive appropriate GOG assurances of UH-1H helicopter backup support in all periods of necessary maintenance for the police equipment.

That appropriate action be taken to assure that at least two experienced GAF helicopter pilots are designated primary duty as police helicopter pilots.

That appropriate action be taken to assure that at least two new helicopter maintenance positions are added to the GAF for police helicopter maintenance, over and above all other planned and programmed changes.