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SUBJECT:

TAGS:

PROPOSED LETTER CONCERNING HONDURAS TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

ACTION:

SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO:

AMEMBASSY BELIZE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

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TEGUCIGALPA 6639

. XX I request the Department's permission to send the following letter to the editor of the New York Times.

AMB BEGIN PROPOSED TEXT:

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Mr. White's piece on Central America (NYT magazine, beyond recognition
July 18) distorts/the image of democratic Honduras and our policies here. **NEXMEDIAL HIS article suggests that Honduras has an unjust political system backed with our blessing by a repressive military establishment. He also implies that hūman rights and press fræedoms are

IAGS DRAFTED BY:

AMB:JDNegroponte:kjl

B-9-82

TEL. EXT. 211

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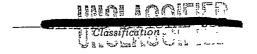
Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir. () Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify Date 4 28 Exemption

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better observed in neighboring Nicaragua. The facts are civilian that Honduras has a freely elected wiwiliam/government and liberal democratic institutions, including a free and privately owned radio, press and television.

Honduras can also be proud of its vigorous labor movement, considered a model in the region, and of its land reform program whose origins date back more than twenty years. The United States, continuing a policy established by the previous administration, fully supports Honduras' commitment to this democratic and pluralistic process.

Honduras' increasingly professional armed forces are dedicated to defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country; and they are publicly committed to civilian constitutional rule. Neighboring Nicaragua has an army more than twice the size of Honduras' and a stated intention to double the figure yet again, far beyond any plausible defensive need. Honduras is also concerned by the turbulence in neighboring El Salvador and Guatemala. Faced with this difficult situation, Honduras, as a traditional friend, has quite understandably asked for some additional U.S. military We have responded positively with modest assistance. increases. But there are no United States Air KKKKK Force officers flying helicopter : missions as Mr. White so incorrectly alleges and the since-departed Special



Classification

Forces personnel to whom Mr. White refers emphasized training in the interdiction of arms and other supplies transiting from Nicaragua to El Salvador guerrillas in violation of Honduran sovereignty. To put our military effort here in perspective, your readers will be interested in knowing that MAN at any given time there may be between thirty and fifty United States military personnel on temporary training duty in Honduras as compared to an estimated 2000 Cuban personnel engaged in military and security activities in Nicaragua. Also, our current AID program, some five times the cost of U.S. military assistance here, reflects the United States' longstanding commmutment to Honduras' economic development.



Classification

Honduras is/friendly democratic nation in an increasingly difficult position. It needs and deserves our sympathetic support and assistance. END PROPOSED TEXT.

2. Please advise.

NEGROPOWTE

