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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

JULY 26, 1983

Mr. Paul L. Healy
City Clerk
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Cambridge City Council resolution calling for an end to hostilities in Central America. I am highly supportive of the City Council's action. As you know, the Reagan Administration has taken a highly controversial approach to the turmoil in Latin America. I have been very skeptical of this policy direction, since it aggravates the high level of tension in the region.

I believe that Congress must investigate and closely monitor the actions of the Reagan Administration in the Hemisphere. The consequences of any covert adventures can be enormous. Such activities can ultimately lead us into wars in which we do not belong and could alienate friendly governments. The United States should under no circumstances underwrite the effort to destabilize Nicaragua. My colleagues on the House and Senate Intelligence Committees are investigating the Administration's role in illegal covert activities in that country.

In El Salvador, the Administration appears tied to an exclusively military approach, which I regard as both short-sighted and counterproductive. Last year I introduced a Senate resolution advising the Administration to pursue a policy which would encourage negotiations in El Salvador. I also sent letters urging negotiation to the leaders of both sides of the conflict in El Salvador. I have opposed the Reagan Administration's efforts to increase emergency funding to El Salvador, and supported a Foreign Relations Committee resolution to impose a \$76 million cap on military aid to that country. It is important for the Reagan Administration to understand that its unconditional support of the Salvadoran military is a serious mistake that can only lead to the further deterioration of our position, not only in El Salvador, but in the larger context of Central America.

The Administration continues to press for military support of President Rios Montt's government in Guatemala. As you may know, the situation in Guatemala has seriously deteriorated in the last year. The ruling junta has launched a counterinsurgency program in the countryside which has resulted in the massacre of several thousand Indian and peasant farmers. Amnesty International has

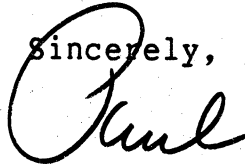
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reported mass executions, and the destruction of entire villages in at least 112 separate incidents. The Reagan Administration, however, in the face of such atrocities, is requesting \$10 million in military aid to Guatemala. I consider this request a display of extraordinary insensitivity to the suffering of the Indians and peasantry at the hands of the Guatemalan military.

Cuba presents a special problem for any Administration. With its close ties to the Soviet Union and its support for revolutions in Latin America, Cuba is indeed an adversary to U.S. interests. However, it is all too easy and tempting to overstate the Cuban threat and its impact. I have long stated that the United States should confer diplomatic recognition on Cuba and use economic incentives to lure Cuba away from the Soviets. I spoke out against a Senate resolution which singled out Cuba and urged retaliatory U.S. action. I have also opposed plans to establish the anti-Cuban broadcasting station, Radio Marti. Such actions only serve to strengthen Soviet-Cuban ties and maintain a high level of tension in the area. The Administration must work toward reducing the tension in Latin America, if it is to prevent a further deterioration of the United States' position in the Region. I intend to continue my efforts to reach this goal.

Again, thank you for writing on this important issue. I appreciate hearing your views.

Sincerely,



PAUL E. TSONGAS
United States Senator

PET/tcy

Comm. from Paul E. Healy, City Clerk, transmitting a comm. from Senator Paul Tsongas in acknowledgement of resolutions adopted by the City Council Re: hostilities in Central America.

In City Council,

August 8, 1983

- 8/8/1983 -

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