

that you have to always work for your best and never settle for anything less because, even if you don't deserve it, people will try to put you down and slight your name and your character. If you haven't made sure that you are at the top of your game, these attacks can break you.

The obstacle that I was forced to face was racism. Racism is, unfortunately, a common obstacle for African-American people, but my situation was unique in that it allowed a great number of people to learn of it. At the end of my junior year, a student who worked as the sports editor of the school yearbook decided, for reasons I still do not know, to deliberately and maliciously misrepresent me in print. Instead of putting my name under the Cross-Country Team picture, this student editor put the slur "Blacky". The yearbook staff and faculty advisor submitted then published the yearbook and it was distributed to the entire school.

When I was confronted with what this boy did it blew me away. I couldn't understand why this had happened to me and it sent me through a myriad of emotions. At first I was confused, then anger set in to cloud my thinking even more. I was filled with self-pity and fear of what people might say or do. I worried what this boy's hateful actions would do to my future and there wasn't much anyone could say to make me feel any better. I had to sort it out on my own and come up with my own answers.

Over time, and after much thought, I was left with two realizations. The first did not take me too long to reach. I decided that I should not feel any self-pity because the slur did not reflect on my character, but rather on the character of the boy who did this to me. The second realization took much more time because of its importance and its impact on my life. I realized that up to that point, I had not accomplished much in my high school career, and had not made a lasting mark to show that the slur was not a reflection of who I am. I decided to remain at my high school and complete my senior year, rather than allow the pain of racism to drive me away. I would face the racism and work to correct it. I joined the "Project LOVE" student group to begin this task.

Although the long-term ramifications of this one horrific event can never be speculated upon with accuracy or fully understood there are few things that I know for sure. I know that our society often projects the guilty behind a veil of obscurity while the victim is hung out to dry. I know that there are poor people who will rush to defend, or even worse, condone racism in our society. But, I also know that I must show, by my deeds, that character and integrity mean something in this world, because I believe as professed by Mahatma Gandhi, that education without character is one of the seven deadly social sins in our society. I know that my actions must reflect my beliefs and that my life must be a testimony to this fact.

On behalf of the people of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio and the United States Congress, I extend my sincere condolences.

---

GUATEMALA

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 8, 2003*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in the past year, Guatemala has relapsed into some of the same anarchic behavior it demonstrated

during its brutal civil war from 1960 to 1996, which pitted leftist guerrillas against the military and associated right-wing death squads. An alarming escalation is now taking place not only in the country's general level of violence, but also in the activity of death squads linked to the military. There has been an ominous increase in human rights violations. HIJOS, a humanitarian organization based in Guatemala, released a study on January 29 which reported that 61 young people have been murdered in Guatemala City during just the first 3 weeks of the new year.

These covert paramilitary groups, which are remnants of the anti-Communist military and civil institutions that existed during the country's bitter civil strife, have reemerged to protect a burgeoning drug trade.

Guatemala's government, led by President Alfonso Portillo, is hopelessly mired in corruption, intertwined with illicit activity on the part of the military, and is complicit with the expansion of the drug trade. Since Portillo took office, drug seizures have decreased dramatically. According to a 2001 United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) study, Guatemala's reported seizure of cocaine steadily increased from 956 kg in 1995 to 9,959 kg in 1999. In 2000, however, the year after Portillo took office, this trend reversed and the number plunged to 1,517 kg of cocaine.

The country's difficulties with drugs, corruption, and human rights abuses are germane because they jeopardize the White House's plans for the development of a U.S.-sponsored free-trade agreement with Central America. The Bush administration, by decertifying Guatemala but not suspending its \$53 million in aid, is purposefully misusing the decertification process by sacrificing its war on drugs for a potential trade accord, continuing aid to the corrupt Portillo regime in order to maintain relations with Guatemala at all costs.

The following research memorandum was authored by Jason Ballet, a research associate with the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that has been long committed to addressing issues associated with democracy and human rights throughout the hemisphere.

GUATEMALA'S DRUG WOES AND THE MISUSE OF THE DRUG CERTIFICATION PROGRAM  
(By Jason Ballet, Research Associate,  
Council on Hemispheric Affairs)

In the past year, Guatemala has relapsed into some of the same anarchic behavior it demonstrated during its brutal civil war from 1960 to 1996, which pitted leftist guerrillas against the military and associated right-wing death squads. The latter groups were responsible for most of the 200,000 deaths that occurred during the conflict. An alarming escalation is now taking place not only in the country's general level of violence, but also in the activity of death squads linked to the military. These groups have reemerged with a new motivation—to protect a burgeoning drug trade. By deferring to the military, a weak government led by Alfonso Portillo is either unwilling or unable to halt rights violations and impede the now booming narcotics trade. The Bush administration, by maintaining normal relations with Guatemala through decertifying it but not suspending its \$53 million in aid, is sacrificing the drug war in favor of cultivating a free trade agreement with Central America. Today, Portillo's government more closely resembles a "drugocracy" than a democracy; it is corrupt, an utter captive of

the drug trade, and linked to growing rights violations.

#### THE RETURN OF DEATH SQUADS

Rightist death squads have resurfaced, relying on an arsenal of tactics ranging from death threats, to the intimidation of prominent political figures, judges, and human rights activists, and political assassinations. These groups have committed numerous rights violations just within the past month. On January 9, 2003, unidentified gunmen assassinated the former congressional leader and head of the Christian Democrats, Jose Lubon Dubon. A few weeks later, on January 27, assailants attacked the opposition leaders of the National Unity for Hope (UNE) party, resulting in 5 injuries. Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Guatemala recently revealed that more than 130 judges received death threats since 2001. The majority of international and local observers attribute such activities to illegal arms groups.

High profile assassinations are not a new phenomena in Guatemala, occurring in the thousands during the 1980s. Former foreign Minister Alberto Fustes Mohr, Myrna Mack, an anthropologist who investigated displaced indigenous populations during the civil war, and Bishop Juan Gerardi, the head of the Guatemalan Archdiocese who published a major Truth Commission study implicating the military in the vast majority of deaths during the war, were all murdered by clandestine groups due to their democratic standing.

Preliminary statistics recorded this year demonstrate an ominous increase in murder rates compared to the already substantial levels over the past two years. HIJOS, a humanitarian organization based in Guatemala, released a study on January 29 which reported that 61 young people have been murdered in Guatemala City during just the first 3 weeks of the new year. The report explains that "50 percent of the victims showed a bullet wound to the head," indicating that many were premeditated executions designed by organized groups.

#### A NEW MOTIVATION AND PORTILLO'S COMPLICITY

Why have the death squads reemerged? The escalation of violence and the reintroduction of death squads have accompanied an expansion of the drug trade under the tenure of Portillo, beginning in December of 1999. The government is hopelessly mired in corruption and intertwined with illicit activity on the part of the military. Both the military and government are complicit in protecting and expanding the drug trade in Guatemala, from which they handsomely benefit.

The illegal armed groups now being found in Guatemala are in fact remnants of the anti-Communist military and civil institutions that existed during the country's bitter civil strife of the 1980s. According to a 2002 Canadian Disarmament Information Service (CANDIS) report, retired military officers often transformed their entire units into criminal enterprises. These former soldiers possess intimate knowledge of the nation's facilities that in the past were used in covert operations, such as secluded landing strips, and safe houses for the monitoring of local populations. This knowledge, along with an easy access to weapons, has facilitated the expansion of the drug trade and incidents of political intimidation, making attempts to restrain drug trafficking more difficult.

These tainted groups are capitalizing on the pivotal geographic location of Guatemala to advance the drug trade. Occupying the southern border of Mexico, it plays a strategic role in trafficking and storing the cocaine being moved from South America to the United States.

Many of these officials have a history of human rights abuses. The United Nations

Mission to Guatemala (MINIGUA) observed that "the army and former military officials are all too often appointed to carry out and supervise strictly civilian work." The current president is a protégé of Efraim Rios Montt, the former military dictator of the nation from 1982 to 1983. The ex-general, who now leads the nation's congress, conducted brutal genocide campaigns during the civil war and many believe he still exerts enormous influence on Portillo. Rios Montt's brother, Bishop Mario Rios Montt, became the Catholic Church's new head of its human rights office after the murder of Bishop Gerardi. His appointment created a situation of a radical conflict of interests; Mario Rios Montt's job is to investigate the same rights violations for which his own brother was allegedly responsible while he ruled.

Portillo has done little to discourage the expansion of the illicit drug trade. Since he took office, drug seizures have decreased dramatically. According to a 2001 United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) study, Guatemala's reported seizure of cocaine steadily increased from 956 kg in 1995 to 9,959 kg in 1999. In 2000, however, the year after Portillo took office, this trend reversed and the number plunged to 1,517 kg of cocaine.

A corrupt anti-narcotics police force is partially culpable. The scope of the problem, however, extends beyond this inadequate anti-narcotics unit, penetrating deep within Portillo's complicit, corrupt administration. Gabriel Aguilera, Guatemala's vice minister of foreign relations, as cited by the Washington Times on January 31, stated that his own government "hasn't yet achieved a control of the criminal organizations that are behind these illegal activities." Many speculate, including some senior U.S. officials, that Portillo's acknowledged failure to curb the drug trade is no accident and is due to his links to criminal organizations. Otto Reich, the former Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere who now has shifted to the National Security Council (NSC), testified before a House subcommittee in October 2002 that since Portillo has taken office, "narcotics trafficking and alien smuggling are on the rise. Some of the leaders of these activities have very close ties to the highest levels of government and regularly influence decisions, especially with respect to personnel nominations in the military and the ministry of government."

#### DECERTIFYING GUATEMALA

On January 31, President Bush decertified Guatemala, declaring it, along with Haiti (which hardly deserved such treatment) and Burma, to be "demonstrably failing" in the past 12 months in their anti-drug efforts. Established in 1986 by Congress, the drug certification program annually evaluates whether a foreign nation is cooperating with Washington in its international war on drugs. If decertified, the U.S., according to the program, should have suspended the \$3.5 million it contributes to Guatemala's antinarcotics unit and close to \$50 million in general assistance it sends annually to the nation.

The suspensions of Guatemala, Haiti, and Burma, however, were more empty and symbolic than meaningful policy formulations. Burma receives no U.S. aid and President Bush granted Guatemala and Haiti vital national interest waivers, which allows for, despite decertification, the continuation of U.S. aid to each designated country.

While a strong case can be made for Haiti's waiver on humanitarian grounds (because of the impact on that beleaguered island of benighted U.S. policies), no such case can be made for the continuation of aid to Guatemala. Unlike the latter, Haiti does not have death squads, a president who is indifferent to drug trafficking, or a military which is

the prime factor in both rights violations and the drug trade.

Furthermore, the drug traffickers and the political figures that support the drug trade give minimal credence to the decertification branding, as long as U.S. aid continues. Directly following the announcement, congressional leader Rios Montt declared the U.S.'s negative assessment as an "eminently political" maneuver that "seeks to affect the government but will not have, from any point of view, any social, economic, or financial repercussions." Montt correctly, if insolently, affirms that there is essentially no U.S. policy change towards Guatemala. As a result, government activity, including its corrupt practices and complicit actions with organized crime, will continue unimpeded.

Guatemala's difficulties with drugs, corruption, and rights abuses are germane because they jeopardize the White House's plans for the development of a U.S. sponsored free-trade agreement with five Central American nations: El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. The U.S. would be hard put to exclude Guatemala from the potential arrangement because it is Central America's most populated nation and is critical to making any free-trade pact a success.

The Bush administration is purposefully misusing the decertification process by sacrificing its war on drugs for a potential trade agreement, continuing aid to the corrupt Portillo regime in order to maintain relations with Guatemala at all costs.

#### WHAT TO DO

Cleaning up Guatemala demands not only the accountability on the part of the Guatemalan government, but the moral fortitude of U.S. authorities to suspend all aid to that country, if need be. Despite potential economic gains, the U.S. cannot establish a free trade pact with Central America until Guatemala reforms and becomes a sound investment, both financially and morally. Guatemala should serve as a warning to Washington as well as to the rest of Latin America of the increasing power and influence of the drug trade and its implications on vulnerable governments throughout the region.

#### HONORING TENNESSEE'S NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS FOR SERVICE TO OUR NATION

#### HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the thousands of men and women who serve in the Tennessee National Guard, many of whom have dutifully answered the call to serve our country in this time of war.

In Tennessee, we have always been proud of our strong volunteer spirit, made famous when volunteers from Tennessee traveled with Davy Crockett in 1836 to defend the Alamo in Texas' fight for independence. Today, the volunteer spirit is still alive, and one fine example is in the more than 14,000 men and women who serve in the Tennessee Army National Guard and Tennessee Air National Guard, under the leadership of Tennessee Adjutant General Gus Hargett.

I have had the privilege of working alongside Tennessee National Guard members during my 26 years in the Tennessee Army National Guard. I know from working with these men and women that their dedication to Tennessee and to our nation is unequalled. That dedication has been proven time and time again.

Immediately following the attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001, members of the Tennessee National Guard responded. Guard members secured airports and Tennessee landmarks, refueled fighters for battle and prepared for deployment overseas. The 164th Airlift Wing from Memphis deployed four C-141 aircraft within 20 hours of the attacks. The 118th Airlift Wing helped save the life of a small child on September 11th of that year by transporting a liver transplant from Nashville to Texas.

Now, thousands of Tennessee's National Guard troops are again answering the call to duty, leaving their families, homes and jobs to serve our country in its time of need.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in honoring the thousands of Tennessee volunteers who are serving our country honorably as members of the Tennessee National Guard.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO CLAUS HUME

#### HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Claus Hume and thank him for his extraordinary contributions to Colorado. Judge Hume is officially retiring as the Chief Judge of the Colorado Court of Appeals, and today I would like to honor his long and distinguished career of service to his community before this body of Congress and this nation.

Judge Hume's legal career has spanned three decades. After a brief stint as a photographer, he graduated from the University of Colorado law school in 1965 and moved to Craig, Colorado, where he began his career and started a family. One of few lawyers in Craig, Judge Hume began working for the local prosecutor's office and was elected District Attorney in 1972, serving for two years until he was appointed to a district court judgeship. He served on the 14th Judicial District bench for thirteen years, until he received his appointment to the Colorado Court of Appeals in 1988. Judge Hume's service to Colorado is a credit to our state and I am grateful for his dedication to justice for all Coloradans.

Mr. Speaker, Claus Hume is an exemplary servant to his community and to the State of Colorado, and it is with great pride that I recognize his career before this body of Congress and this nation. Judge Hume's presence in the courtroom will be greatly missed throughout the state, and I would like to extend to him my congratulations on his retirement and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

#### COMMENDING THE GILES COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

#### HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the Giles County High School boy's basketball team, who recently won the Tennessee Class AA championship. This is the first such championship for the boy's basketball team in school history.

I want to commend this team not only for winning the championship, but the fashion in which they accomplished this great feat. They