



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR  
San Salvador, El Salvador

March 30, 1988

Ms. Mary Pat Clarke  
Office of the President  
Baltimore City Council  
100 North Holliday Street, Room 400  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Ms. Clarke:

I am responding to your Feb. 18 letter decrying an alleged Jan. 5 bombing of El Barrillo, an outlying subdivision of the town of Suchitoto located in Cuscatlan Department. Neither Tutela Legal (The Catholic Archdiocesan Human Rights Office) nor the Governmental Human Rights Commission are aware of any credible accusations of bombing by the Air Force inside El Barrillo. No physical damage to structures in the community or injuries to the residents have been reported.

The Armed Forces of El Salvador (ESAF) did initiate a major offensive called Operation Fenix 14 on Jan. 4 against the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the umbrella organization for the five guerrilla armies seeking to overthrow the constitutional government of El Salvador. Combined Army and Air Force operations were conducted against guerrilla concentrations in northern Cuscatlan Dept. at the beginning of January, but no operations involved engagements with the enemy inside El Barrillo or other population centers.

For your information, the Salvadoran Air Force operates under a set of rules of engagement issued on Aug. 24, 1984 by President Duarte. Airborne fire support missions are to be used only outside populated areas and require the approval of the Joint General Staff (EMC) prior to launching. The unit commander requesting air support is required to provide the following information to the EMC with his request for mission authorization: the location of the objective (i.e. armed guerrillas), the presence of a civilian population in the area and the proximity of Red Cross Activities in the vicinity.

With regard to the El Salvador Friendship-City Project you should be aware that no authorities in El Salvador recognize the action taken by the Baltimore City Council. This action was undertaken with a self-appointed group with no standing with the legitimate municipal authorities in the jurisdiction of El Barrillo.

The Friendship City projects are an outgrowth of activities undertaken by New El Salvador Today (NEST), an organization which describes itself as supporting the FPL faction of the FMLN insurgents in El Salvador. The Executive Director of NEST is former Berkeley, California Mayor Gus Newport who is also a Vice Chairman of the Soviet front group the World Peace Council and Co-Chairman of the U.S. affiliate, the U.S. Peace Council. Two key Communist Party of the U.S. members served with Newport on the U.S. Peace Council: Michael Myerson, a longtime Communist activist and member of the CPUSA Central Committee, and Alexandra "Sandy" Pollack of the CPUSA Central Committee. After helping to found the U.S. Peace Council in 1979, Myerson was named its Executive Director and Pollack the International Solidarity Coordinator. Pollack died in a plane crash on January 19, 1985 in Havana while en route to Managua. In addition to her U.S. Peace Council activities, Pollack was a founding member of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) which, through its paper ALERT, openly raises money for NEST.

Newport's NEST organization provides support to the FPL through programs that link Berkeley, California with San Antonio Los Ranchos, Chalatenango Department; Cambridge, Massachusetts with San Jose Las Flores, Chalatenango; Madison, Wisconsin with Arcatao, Chalatenango; and Baltimore with El Barrillo, Cuscatlan Department. All four towns are in areas known to be influenced by the FPL. Sandra Graham, who helped to set up the Cambridge NEST project in San Jose Las Flores is also a member of the World Peace Council, together with Michael Myerson of the Communist Party of the U.S.

I hope this information is of use to the City Council.

I, too, share your concern about human rights violations in El Salvador whether committed by the Armed Forces or the guerrilla armies. Please be assured that I will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Sincerely,

*Edwin G. Corr*

Edwin G. Corr