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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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February 17, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

From: Alexander M. Haig, Jr. 

1. Congressional Briefings on Central America and the Iranian Agreements: At a State Department breakfast this morning, we briefed the Congressional leadership on Central America (El Salvador and Nicaragua) and the Iranian Agreements.

The Congressional leaders were impressed by our presentation and supportive of our policy, Senator Pell being an exception. Senator Percy offered to cable legislators in Mexico and the NATO countries, supporting the briefings by our diplomats there; it will be signed by most of the bipartisan leadership. Speaker O'Neill, Representatives Wright, Zablocki and others discussed the strong opposition of the Roman Catholic Church to our association with the Government of El Salvador. The unsolved murder of the four Catholic women clearly presents a hindrance to Church support for our efforts and we were urged to encourage the Government of El Salvador to cooperate with the investigation of the crime.

The entire leadership supports your position on the cycle of the Iranian Agreements and have begun to let the press know of their approval. (S)

2. U.S. Mission to Europe on El Salvador: Ambassador Lawrence Eagleburger, acting as my personal representative, has briefed the West Germans, French and NATO about the situation in El Salvador. The Germans are most concerned that we should portray our policy as an effort to strengthen moderate forces in El Salvador. This will help the Schmidt Government with its own domestic opinion and assist German efforts to persuade less developed countries to support us. The visit of German Foreign Minister Genscher this Friday will tell us more.

French Foreign Minister Francois-Poncet offered his country's support. He could not yet endorse the actions of the El Salvador Government but said that France would oppose outside interference and disapprove violence.

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The briefing for Permanent Representatives of the North Atlantic Council was well-received. NATO Secretary General Luns noted that use of intelligence material could make a favorable impact on European public opinion. (C)

3. Visit of Italian Christian Democratic Leader, Piccoli. I met briefly this afternoon with the leader of Italy's Christian Democratic Party, Mr. Flaminio Piccoli. In Piccoli's opinion, the U.S. should have direct contact with the political parties, most particularly his Christian Democrats, if we wanted to build support for our policies in Italy. Piccoli asserted that terrorism was being defeated in Italy but he criticized the Socialist Party for lack of firmness in dealing with terrorists. Piccoli also declared that the Christian Democrats would be helpful on El Salvador. He looked forward to a thorough briefing by U.S. officials on the subject next week in Rome. (C)

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The President has seen

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET ATTACHMENT

February 18, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICHARD V. ALLEN

SUBJECT: Secretary Haig's Evening Report

Herewith Secretary Haig's Evening Report of February 17, 1981.

cc: The Vice President
Ed Meese
James Baker

SECRET ATTACHMENT

RW
3/8/83