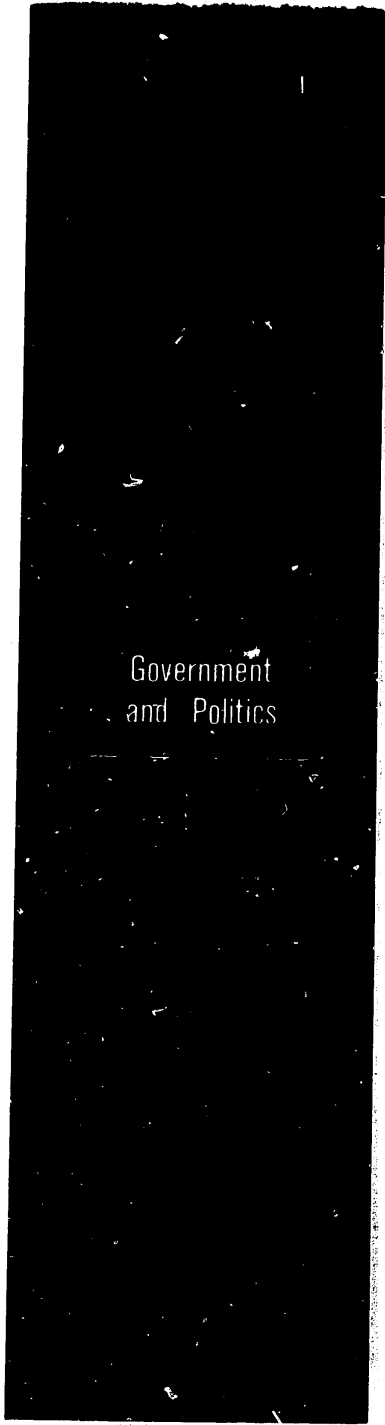


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Government
and Politics

Honduras

August 1973

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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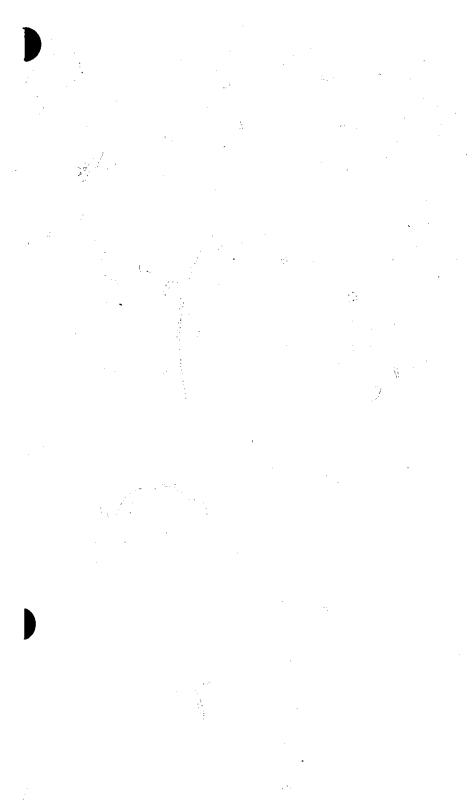
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Honduras

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Government and Politics

A. Introduction (S)

On 4 December 1972, General Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, Chief of the Honduran Armed Forces (Figure 1), ousted President Ramon Ernesto Cruz and resumed the presidency of Honduras after only 18 months out of office. Although the coup was triggered by a hunger march of several thousand peasants protesting Cruz' lack of interest in the needs of the rural poor, pressure for the coup had been building up for over a year. Under Cruz, Honduras had experienced an unusually high level of internal disorder and administrative chaos and little, if any, progress. The main cause of the instability was that Cruz had been placed in office by a coalition of forces with divergent interests under the guise of "unity." He lacked the political muscle to control those forces, and Honduras lacked the political maturity to make a "unity" government work.

Honduras has no tradition of democratically elected government or orderly transfer of power. Many of the political concepts and processes taken for granted in the United States are scarcely recognizable in Honduras, though the language of democracy is widely used and there is no lack of legal provisions setting forth the political and economic rights of Honduran citizens. The two major political parties, each consisting more of personal followings than of persons devoted to common principles, have competed bitterly for the spoils of office, unrestrained by mutual respect or by any strong inhibitions against gaining or retaining political power by force. The result has been a turbulent history, retarded development, and continual plotting against the group in power. It is this basic situation which primarily explains the armed forces' frequent interference in the political processes. The stability imposed by the armed forces on such occasions has been artificial and temporary, but through most of Honduran history it has been the only stability available.

The internal violence which characterized the early years of Honduran history was influenced significantly by the general instability of the Central American area. Toward the end of the 19th century Honduras achieved some degree of internal peace. The first period of prolonged domestic tranquillity, however, came with the dictatorship of Gen. Tiburcio Carias Andino (1932-48). The Carias regime was succeeded by the relatively mild regime of Juan Manuel Galvez (1948-54) and by the dictatorship of Julio Lozano (1954-56). In 1957, following Lozano's ouster, a military junta conducted elections for a Constituent Assembly. These elections were the most orderly and democratic in Honduran history. The resulting Constituent Assembly elected as President Ramon Villeda Morales of the Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH), the less conservative of the country's two major parties. Shortly before the end of Villeda's 6-year term, the military, anticipating the probable election of another Liberal, Modesto Rodas Alvarado, whom they considered hostile to military interests, overthrew the Villeda government in order to prevent Rodas from becoming President. As a result of this coup, on 3



FIGURE 1. Gen. Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, head of state, and Chief of the Armed Forces (C)

October 1963, a military government headed by Gen. (then Col.) Oswaldo Lopez Arellano was formed, with elements of the other major party, the National Party of Honduras (PNH), providing the civilian support.

The United States refused to recognize the Lopez regime until a schedule for the return to constitutional-ty was announced: Lopez subsequently promised elections by 1965. The 16 February 1965 elections for deputies to a Constituent Assembly were carefully controlled by Ricardo Zuniga Augustinus, Lopez' adviser, so as to obtain a majority for the Nationalist candidates, who were predominantly from Zuniga's faction of the party. The assembly elected Lopez President for a 6-year term, drafted a constitution, and changed its own status to that of the National Congress. With the inauguration of Lopez on 6 June 1965, the facade of constitutional government was restored.

In 1970, with the end of his term approaching, Lopez appeared reluctant to step down, but he was constitutionally barred from seeking reelection. Some observers believe he devised the unity pact in a sincere effort to reduce political antagonisms. Others believe it was done with the expectation that the government would not hold together and that he would eventually find it "necessary" to resume direct control. In any case, a more unworkable government for Honduras could hardly be contrived. The unity pact was essentially an agreement for dividing up political offices and other government jobs between the National and Liberal parties, placing the best qualified persons in government instead of staffing the entire government from the party of the winning presidential candidate. The Presidency and Vice Presidency were the only national offices filled by election, and with the backing of the better organized National Party, its candidate, Cruz, though having no political strength of his own, won the presidency and was inaugurated in June 1971. The experiment of sharing governmental responsibility foundered on the reefs of political bickering, however, and Cruz spent his first few months in office refereeing the resulting scramble for office. With his own party controlled by former Minister of Government Ricardo Zuniga, Cruz was allowed to select only two of his cabinet members and spent considerable time and energy after his inauguration trying to keep one of the two—the Minister of Education—from being forced out by Zuniga. The real power over the military resided not in the president but in the Chief of the Armed Forces, General Lopez. The semi-independent status of the Chief of the Armed Forces, who is elected by and responsible to the congress frustrated Cruz' efforts to

maintain public order on a number of occasions. His own limitations as a leader and the ambitions of various self-seeking groups working at cross-purposes not only prevented any real accomplishments, but fostered internal disorder and stalled settlement of several foreign relations problems. The coup led by Lopez was predicted early in the Cruz administration.

The major political forces in the country continue to be the military and the two mutually antagonistic political parties. In addition, a strong democratic labor movement is taking an increasingly active and independent part in national affairs. The most important of these forces by far is the military, without whose approval no government has remained in power very long. There are three Communist parties, all of which are illegal, small, and divided and constitute no real threat to the government. They attempt, however, to exploit the general turmoil, the poverty, and the underdevelopment of the country, and can contribute significantly to the unrest generated by these factors.

B. Structure and functioning of the government

1. Constitutional history (U/OU)

In 1965 Honduras enacted its 12th operative constitution. (One constitution, written in 1831, was never put into effect.) With the exception of the first (1825), which provided for confederation with other Central American states, Honduran constitutions have been similar, but the inclusion of many social and economic guarantees did not begin until 1957. Honduran constitutions have had an average life of 12.5 years. The longest lived, that of 1894, lasted 25 years including both its original period of operation (1894-1906) and a second period (1908-24) following its restoration; the shortest lived constitution was written in 1904; it did not become effective until 1906 and was replaced in 1908.

The 1965 constitution is almost identical to its predecessor, written in 1957, and makes no significant changes in the structure of the government; both documents accord the armed forces a degree of autonomy that is highly unusual in constitutional governments. The three biggest differences in the 1965 constitution are that it gives a more precise definition of national territorial limits, provides for more congressional control over autonomous institutions, and prohibits reelection of the President. The 1965 constitution states that the Honduran Government is republican, democratic, and representative, and that it operates through three complementary, but

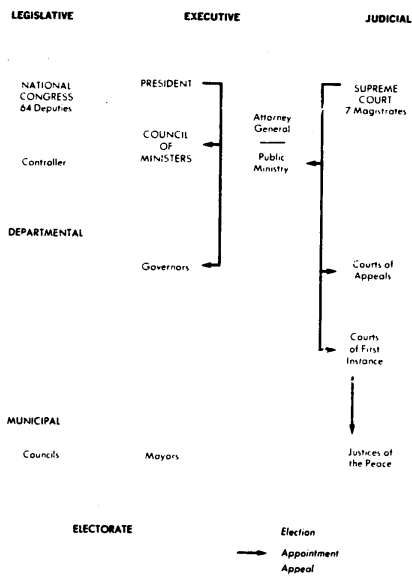


FIGURE 2. Constitutional structure of the government (U/OU)

independent, powers: legislative, executive, and judicial (Figure 2). The constitution provides for a unitary form of government.

Prior to the election in March 1971, an amendment sponsored by the two major parties, business and labor representatives, and the military provided for a "government of national unity." In essence, the amendment deleted for one 6-year administration the constitutional provision for popular election of the legislature, dividing the 64 seats equally between the two parties and submitting the slate to the voters for ratification.

The "unity pact" agreement also included a "minimum plan of government." A supplementary agreement called the "pactito" (the little pact) divided cabinet posts, judicial positions, ambassadorial appointments, and many other governmental jobs somewhat equally between the two parties. In practice, the pact and *pactito* diluted the power of the President by specifying the direction his government should take and removing a large number of official appointments from his exclusive domain.

No change in the constitutional structure has been made since the coup of 4 December 1972. Theoretically the 1965 constitution and the 1971 "unity" amendment are still in force, "insofar as they are not opposed to the dispositions of the present government." Some aspects of the constitutional structure apparently are "opposed" and are being ignored, at least for the moment. Congress, for instance, has been dissolved, and Lopez is governing by decree through the Council of Ministers. The National Elections Council has also been dissolved.

2. Executive branch (U/OU)

Executive power is vested in the President, who is elected for a 6-year term by a "simple majority" (plurality) of direct popular votes. The constitution stipulates that the President must be Honduran by birth, in possession of his political rights, at least 30 years of age, and not a member of the clergy. A person may not be elected President if he has previously held that office—by any title—for more than half of a constitutional term. Persons who have exercised any of the following functions during the 12 months prior to the election may not be elected to the Presidency: 1) President of the Republic, 2) the president of Congress, 3) secretary or subsecretary of state, 4) Chief of the Armed Forces, 5) member of the National Elections Council, and 6) official chosen by the National Congress. Others ineligible for the Presidency are the spouse and relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity of persons serving as President, Chief of the Armed Forces, or member of the National Elections Council during the previous 12 months.

Three Presidential Designates (frequently called Vice Presidents) are elected at the same time and in the same manner as the President, and serve in the absence of the President. If the absence is to be temporary, the President may choose any of the three to replace him, or he may entrust the executive functions to the Council of Ministers if the absence is to be less than 30 days. If the absence of the President is permanent, Congress chooses one of the designates to replace him. If the three designates are also permanently absent, the executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers, which must call a presidential election within 15 days. The person thus elected takes office immediately, but his 6-year presidential term is counted from the following 6 June.

The President is in charge of the conduct of foreign affairs, national defense, and general administration of the nation, for which purposes the constitution grants him considerable unrestricted power. The main

constitutional restrictions on presidential action are derived from the congressional power to override a veto by a two-thirds vote and from the necessity for congressional ratification of treaties. For this reason—and because the President is usually a strong personality with considerable support among the important interest groups—the chief executive is traditionally the dominant figure in the government. Former President Ramon Ernesto Cruz had not been typical of Honduran presidents. Although popularly elected, he was in many respects a puppet president.

The constitution states that there shall be at least 10 ministries headed by secretaries of state frequently called ministers, who jointly compose the Council of Ministers.¹ In 1973 they were:

- Government and Justice
- Foreign Affairs
- Public Health and Social Assistance
- Public Education
- Economy
- Finance
- National Defense and Public Security
- Communications, Transport, and Public Works
- Labor and Social Security
- Natural Resources

In order to have legal force, all decrees, regulations, resolutions, orders, and executive acts of the President must be countersigned by the appropriate secretary of state. In addition, the Council of Ministers may make decisions by majority vote on all matters submitted to it by the President. Under normal circumstances, however, the Council of Ministers does not provide a check on actions of the President, since he appoints all secretaries of state without congressional approval and can remove them from office at his pleasure. Furthermore, the council serves an important advisory function, and, in addition, individual secretaries may represent the executive branch before Congress, either on their own initiative to attend debate or on the initiative of Congress to answer questions concerning their departments of government.

3. Legislative branch (U/OU)

The unicameral National Congress is composed of deputies representing the 18 departments, elected by direct vote on the basis of one deputy and one alternate for each 30,000 inhabitants or fraction thereof over 15,000. Departments having fewer than 30,000 inhabitants are entitled to one deputy and one alternate. A system of proportional representation is employed to determine the winning candidates, but,

¹For a current listing of key government officials consult *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments*, published monthly by the Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.

as mentioned earlier, the legislature elected in 1971—now dissolved—was, by prior agreement, divided equally between the National and Liberal parties, with the former having an extra tie-breaking vote.

A deputy must be 25 years of age or older, a Honduran citizen by birth, and in possession of his political right. Deputies enjoy congressional immunity and may not be compelled to perform military service. The National Congress, which normally meets in regular session from 26 May to 26 October each year, exercises the usual lawmaking functions, subject to approval by the President, and can override a presidential veto by a two-thirds vote. In addition, the Congress elects magistrates of the Supreme Court, the Controller and Assistant Controller, and the Attorney General and Assistant Attorneys General. It acts jointly with the President in conferring military ranks of major and above and selects the Chief of the Armed Forces from three candidates submitted by the President. Congress has the power to declare war and to make peace, and it exercises some control over the nation's finances through review and approval of the budget. Congress also has the power to decide if grounds exist for the impeachment of officials. While Congress is not in session, its place is taken by a nine-member housekeeping organ called the Permanent Committee. This committee has no lawmaking function; its primary duty is to prepare business for the next session.

In theory Congress has sufficient powers to prevent complete control of the government by the executive. In practice, however, it has generally been controlled by the President's party and has acted as a rubberstamp for the executive. During the Cruz administration when the President was not supported by a strong congressional majority, Congress was ineffective because of internal disunity and partisan antagonisms.

4. Judicial branch (C)

The judicial power of the nation is exercised by the Supreme Court of Justice, by the courts of appeals, and by other courts established by law. A magistrate of the Supreme Court or of a court of appeals must be Honduran by birth, in possession of his political rights, a lawyer, at least 30 years of age, and nonclerical. A magistrate of the Supreme Court must have been a judge of a court of first instance or magistrate of a court of appeals for at least 1 year, or have practiced law for 5 years. A magistrate of a court of appeals must have held the position of judge of a court of first instance for at least 1 year or have practiced law for 5 years. Supreme Court magistrates are elected by the National Congress for a 6-year term. In 1971, the congress, in accordance with the terms of the *pactito*,

elected four Liberal and three Nationalists to the Supreme Court. After the December 1972 coup, Lopez, in consultation with the Council of Ministers, appointed a new seven-member Supreme Court. Magistrates of the courts of appeals, judges of courts of first instance, labor judges, registrars of property, and officials of the Public Ministry (similar in function to the Office of the Attorney General in the United States) are appointed by the Supreme Court. Justices of the peace are appointed by the judges of courts of first instance. Magistrates, judges, and officials of the Public Ministry may not be compelled to perform military service.

The Supreme Court has both original and appellate jurisdiction. Among the cases in which it has original jurisdiction are 1) impeachment proceedings, 2) cases of protection against abuse of authority, and 3) questions of constitutionality of laws. The Supreme Court may declare a law to be unconstitutional after its enactment by hearing a specific case. It may also be called upon by Congress to give its opinion on the constitutionality of a proposed law which has been vetoed by the President on grounds of unconstitutionality. In general, however, the judiciary has not exercised its constitutional status as an independent branch of government. The court system is often characterized as weak and hesitant to hand down a verdict of guilty in controversial cases, especially those involving public order and subversion. The Honduran legal system is based on Roman and Spanish civil law with some influences of English common law.

5. Civil service (C)

A civil service law was passed in September 1968 and became effective in January 1969. Although a board has been established to set salaries of various government jobs, no real merit system has yet evolved for hiring and promoting government employees. One of the aims of the unity government was to place the best qualified persons available in government; with few exceptions, however, the public administration continued in the same poor state as in the past. The unity pact and the *pacifto* did not abolish the spoils system; they merely divided the spoils more evenly between the two major parties. Government jobs, as has been the tradition, are still being used to pay political debts and reward loyal party workers, although Lopez has stated his intention to replace unqualified civil servants. The scarcity of trained, competent manpower, however, is nowhere more visible than in government service. Given the very best of intentions on the part of an administration, it would probably be difficult to find several thousand Hondurans who are dedicated, efficient, and well enough educated to staff the various agencies.

6. Local government (U/OU)

The country is divided into 18 departments, about 275 municipalities, and 1 central district, comprising the capital city, Tegucigalpa, and a suburb, Comayagua² (Figure 3). These divisions are merely

²For diacritics on place names see the list of names on the apron of the Summary Map in the Country Profile chapter and the map itself.



FIGURE 3. Administrative divisions (U/OU)

for administrative purposes, since the only local autonomy granted to municipalities is a slight degree of financial responsibility regarding expenditures. There are no legislative bodies on the departmental level, and governors are presidential appointees. Municipal councils and mayors are elected by popular vote at 3-year intervals and serve mostly administrative and ceremonial functions.

C. Political dynamics

The most important political forces in Honduras are the military establishment and the political parties. A strong, democratically oriented labor movement, which includes the most powerful peasant organization, has emerged as a significant interest group since an unsuccessful general strike in August 1968, when it demonstrated an unaccustomed cohesiveness. Private enterprise groups are becoming increasingly more active in the political arena as well. Student organizations, most of them under considerable Communist influence, have become the most vocal and disruptive forces in the society and have bent government policy to student will on several occasions. (C)

1. Military (S)

The military is by far the most significant political force in the country. The approval of the military establishment has traditionally been so important to the stability of any regime that it has frequently been called "the final political arbiter." This special status, which the military officers have generally shown themselves resolved to maintain, is reflected even in the constitution, the provisions of which emphasize the power of the military in political matters. Article 319 of the constitution, like constitutions of several other Latin American countries, charges the armed forces with defending the constitution and assigns them the mission of guaranteeing free suffrage and legal succession to the presidential office. Their partially autonomous position is derived from Articles 322 and 324, which state that the President must exercise his constitutional functions with respect to the armed forces through the Chief of the Armed Forces, who is appointed by and is removable only by the National Congress. The special position of the armed forces is further emphasized by the nature of the "oath," actually a promise, which Article 325 of the constitution prescribes for the Chief of the Armed Forces; the oath states that the armed forces will not respect any orders which violate the letter or the spirit

of the constitution "even if they come from our superiors." This in theory makes the armed forces practically independent of the President.

In a country that is notably lacking in the stabilizing factors supplied in other societies by political restraint and the sense of common interest, the military regards itself as justified in providing stability by extrapolitical means and is fond of referring to itself as the guardian of "constitutional order." Honduran military leaders are by no means immune, however, to the varied influences motivating the politicians and have generally lacked the maturity and self-restraint found in the military of some other Latin American countries. In some cases the actions of the military have coincided with the wishes of the public, such as the overthrow of the repressive Lozano dictatorship in 1956 and the inept Cruz administration in 1972. In others, the military has acted in its own self-interest, becoming an unsettling factor at a time when orderly change might otherwise have occurred. An example of the latter took place during the presidential campaign of 1963, when the Liberal Party candidate, Modesto Rodas Alvarado, severely criticized the military, stated his intention to restrict their influence in Honduran affairs, and caused the military leaders to fear that he meant to disband the armed forces, keeping only the Civil Guard, which was made up mainly of Liberal Party members. The military accordingly seized the government on 3 October to prevent his election.

2. Political parties (S)

The two legally registered political parties are the National Party of Honduras (PNH) and the Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH). Three other parties have been formed but are still unregistered. They are the Progressive Popular Party (PPP), the Orthodox Republican Party (PRO), and the National Innovation and Unity Party (PINU). There are, in addition, three illegal Communist parties, one Soviet-oriented and two Chinese-oriented. A growing number of persons espousing a Social Christian philosophy are active in civic activities, and are organizing under the name of the Christian Democratic Movement (MDC). So far, however, leaders are few, and legal and bureaucratic barriers make it almost impossible to register new parties.

The PLH is the older of the two legal parties, having come into existence in 1890; the PNH was formed about 1903. Membership in these two parties has become largely a matter of family tradition rather than ideology. The intense partisan rivalry between them has retarded rather than encouraged democratic

development. The chief aim of each is to achieve and retain control of the government, mostly for personal gain. Neither party feels a necessity for accommodation with the other when it is in office, nor does it regard itself as a loyal opposition when out of power. Both parties are weakened by internal dissension.

As one of its first acts following the coup of December 1972, the government banned all political activities "contrary to the present order." The government also relieved civil servants of the obligation to contribute 3% of their salaries to their chosen party. This had been the largest single source of political financing. As a result, the two major parties, while legally still in existence, are confronted with the problem of maintaining themselves as functioning bodies; they have no role, no paid functionaries, no regular income, and there is a virtual ban on formal meetings. The two parties have displayed great persistence historically as a result of family loyalties, but the present dilemma is acute. Indeed, several ministers in the new government have claimed that the ban aims at causing the traditional parties to "wither away."

a. National Party

The PNH, the more conservative of the two legally registered parties, has technically been the government party since the coup of 1963. It has earned a reputation as a party of dictators, having supported the regimes of Gen. Tiburcio Carías Andino (1932-48) and Julio Lozano (1954-56). In an effort to divest itself of this label, the party since 1963 has offered a progressive program of public health, welfare, and aid to housing and education similar to that of the Liberals in the elections. The PNH has claimed experience and ability to execute such a program, although its record of accomplishment while in office does not substantiate this claim. With the exception of the Cruz administration, most PNH governments have been reasonably successful in maintaining internal stability with varying degrees of repression but have not utilized that stability to develop the country either socially or economically to any great degree. The Cruz government could barely maintain public order.

The National Party has suffered a number of splits, all of which have been the result of personality clashes rather than ideological differences. Present divisions are, for the most part, between the majority faction, which supports party boss Ricardo Zuniga (Figure 4), and several smaller factions, which oppose him. Composed of the younger members of the PNH, the Zuniga faction has demonstrated by its methods of gaining and maintaining control of the party and—for



FIGURE 4. Ricardo Zuniga Augustinus, leader of the National Party (C)

a while—the country that it intends to stay in control despite opposition, even from within the party.

Following the coup in October 1963, Zuniga, from his position as chief adviser to Lopez, began to gain control of the party machinery. By February 1965 he controlled both the party and the national election machinery sufficiently to insure the election of a majority of pro-Zuniga Nationalists to the Constituent Assembly. In October of that year several changes in the PNH party statutes—specifically one forbidding officers of the party to hold elective or appointive posts in the government—brought the central committee under his control by requiring the resignation of several anti-Zuniga members who were also government officials. The PNH central committees elected since October 1967 have been composed entirely of friends of Zuniga.

The anti-Zuniga portion of the party is not well organized and is unable to offer any effective opposition to him and his group within the party. The only faction within the PNH which has attempted to organize behind an alternate leader is a small segment called the National Velasquista Movement (MNV). The MNV supports Col. Armando Velasquez Cerrato, the Honduran ambassador to Peru, and claims to have the backing of 80% of the PNH rank and file, although most observers believe this faction is much smaller. Velasquez and his principal backers have attempted to gain some representation on the PNH central committee by writing to all deputies to the party convention, but to no avail.

The governing body of the National Party is the party convention, which meets every 2 years and elects a 12-man central committee and an 18-member consultative council. The central committee governs the party between conventions, and party officers are selected from among its membership. The president of the party is Supreme Court Justice Alejandro Lopez Cantarero. The consultative council is an advisory body with no real power. In addition to the 3% civil service donations, the PNH was also financed by funds siphoned from various government projects until the 1972 coup eliminated both sources of income. Most of the National Party's support comes from conservative businessmen and professionals and members of the military.

The Constituent Assembly election in 1965 and the municipal elections in 1968 (Figure 5), in which the National Party polled 55% and 65% of the total votes respectively, are poor indicators of the party's actual strength, since fraud and intimidation were used extensively by Zuniga and his collaborators. The municipal elections in 1962 (in which the party won 41% of the total vote), the Constituent Assembly election in 1957 (38.5% of the total vote won) and the presidential election of 1971 (52.5% of the total vote won) are believed to have been conducted fairly and are much better indicators of the strength of the National and Liberal parties at the time the elections took place. The voting strength of the National Party in the 1957 election includes, for purposes of comparison, those votes cast for the National Reformist Movement, a faction which had separated from the National Party in 1954 but rejoined it in February 1962.

b. Liberal Party

The PLH is the more liberal and progressive of the two major parties. It is also believed to be the larger, although reliable statistics are lacking, and its

membership encompasses a wide range of political opinion. The party draws some support from conservatives and some from the extreme left, but in general is considered to be somewhat left of center; the party position was officially described by the PLH central executive council in 1967 as "democratic left." The PLH normally has had the support, though not the overt assistance, of north coast organized labor. Since 1932 the party has controlled the government only during the Ramon Villeda Morales administration (1957-63). Under the leadership of Villeda, the Honduran Government embarked on a program of land reform and improved public health and housing.

Since the coup of October 1963, the Liberal Party has vacillated between cooperation with the PNH and all-out opposition. On several occasions the Liberals have accepted a token assortment of government jobs, thus giving the government a bipartisan facade in exchange for assurances of free elections. In 1965 and 1968, when extensive electoral fraud made it obvious that these promises had not been made in good faith, Liberals sought to embarrass the government by ordering PLH members to resign their posts. Lack of unity within the party and inability to enforce party discipline rendered these efforts futile. In 1971 under the terms of the unity pact, Liberals were given half the seats in Congress, half the cabinet posts, many ambassadorships, and four of the seven seats on the Supreme Court. With all this representation the PLH still had no real influence on government policy. In late 1972, the President's dismissal of two PLH ministers—replacing them with Nationalists—caused the PLH to again consider withdrawing from the government.

The moderate faction led by Carlos Roberto Reina Idiaquez and Jorge Bueso Arias tightened its control over the party in April 1972 when it won control of the PLH convention. Other members of the Bueso-Reina

FIGURE 5. Election results (U/OU)

PARTY	MUNICIPAL						CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY						PRESIDENTIAL*	
	1962			1968			1957			1965			1971	
	Votes	Per- cent of votes	Munici- palities	Votes	Per- cent of votes	Munici- palities	Votes	Votes	Dep- uties	Votes	Per- cent of votes	Dep- uties	Votes	Per- cent of votes
Liberal . . .	258,788	59	203	160,755	55	35	209,109	61.5	36	272,071	45	29	276,777	47.5
National . . .	184,794	41	71	297,822	65	241	130,763	38.5	22	335,376	55	35	306,028	52.5

*Presidents were elected by constituent assemblies in 1957 and 1965.

faction are Max Velasquez Diaz and former Foreign Minister Andres Alvarado Puerto. Former presidential candidate (1963) Modesto Rodas Alvarado leads a smaller faction.

The highest governing body of the PLH is the party convention, which meets at 2-year intervals. It elects the party president and the other six members of the central executive council which governs the party between conventions. No information is available on PLH finances. It is believed that the main source of funds is contributions from members.

c. Progressive Popular Party

The PPP is composed of followers of the late Gen. Tiburcio Carias Andino, who broke away from the National Party in 1963 when the national party chose Ramon E. Cruz as its presidential candidate. Carias and his faction felt that Carias' son, Gonzalo Carias Castillo, should have received the nomination. The PPP has not yet been granted legal status (nor is legality likely to be granted in the future), and the National Party has been unable to persuade the PPP to return to the fold. In 1969 the PPP claimed to represent 80,000 to 100,000 voters—a claim which is believed exaggerated but which was partially substantiated by the reluctance of the National Party to admit loss of this faction. The political orientation of PPP supporters covers a wide range and includes conservatives as well as persons suspected of pro-Communist sympathies.

d. Orthodox Republican Party

The Liberal Party lost a small portion of its rightwing in 1962 when Roque Jacinto Rivera and his followers split off and formed the PRO. It has repeatedly applied for legal status since the coup of 1963, but inscription has never been granted.

e. National Innovation and Unity Party

The latest group to request inscription as a legal party is the PINU led by Miguel Andonic Fernandez. According to Andonic, the party has some 24,000 members and supports progress in social and economic development and an end to the petty squabbles that have retarded the country's development. The PINU is represented in the new Lopez cabinet.

f. Communist parties and front groups

The presence of the three Communist parties in Honduras illustrates the fragmentation of the movement rather than its strength. One party, the Communist Party of Honduras/Soviet (PCH S), is

Moscow-oriented, while the other two, the Communist Party of Honduras-China (PCH C), and a PCH C splinter group, the Workers Party of Honduras (PTH) adhere to the Chinese line. All are illegal, and none is a well-indoctrinated or disciplined group. The bickering which had caused the PCH to split into two warring factions in 1965 resulted in a complete ideological divorce in 1971. Until early in 1973 each of the two parties had approximately 200 to 400 members and from 500 to 1,000 sympathizers. The split in 1973 of the PCH C and the subsequent formation of the PTH left the PCH C with slightly more than half of its original strength. The capabilities and influence of the three groups are now less than at any time since the formation of the original parent party in 1954.

The Communists have been active in Honduras since the 1920's and have been responsible for some of the upheaval and unrest among the workers. Even so, the Communist party, as such, was not founded until the north coast general strikes in the summer of 1954; the founding group received considerable assistance from Guatemalan Communists. The Lozano regime, which took power in October 1954, suppressed the Communists along with all other opposition to the government. At the end of the Lozano regime in 1956 the PCH was estimated to have no more than 600 members, with an equal number of sympathizers.

During the years in which Ramon Villeda Morales was President (1957-63), opposition groups, including the Communists, were permitted considerably more freedom of action. The PCH made significant gains, not only in expanding its influence among student and labor groups, but also in infiltrating the government, especially the Ministry of Public Education. Villeda, while admitting his concern over the possible danger of communism to Honduras, continued to display what many observers considered a "soft" attitude toward the PCH. He maintained that communism could not be destroyed by suppression but rather by constructive governmental action which would rob it of its appeal. Furthermore, he sought the support of as much of the leftist element as possible, apparently in the belief that he could control and use the PCH for his own purposes. He reportedly met with PCH leaders occasionally to inform them of the degree of opposition his government would tolerate.

After the coup which brought the Lopez government to power in 1963, there was a more restrictive policy toward Communist activity. Most of the Communist leadership, as well as many leaders of the non-Communist opposition, went into exile—mostly in Mexico and El Salvador—where the

Communists were able to establish international Communist contacts more easily than in Honduras. Within the country government harassment caused the party to become so disorganized that by late 1964 only two of the 10 municipal committees and a few cells were functioning. In November 1964 an amnesty decree permitted the return of all exiles except 10 of the Communist leaders who were considered by the government to be dangerous. Most of the 10 have since returned clandestinely to the country.

Efforts to rebuild the party structure were defeated by deepening dissension within the party. Two factions emerged, each one identified by the name of its leader. Tomas Erazo Pena headed the larger faction, while Dionisio Ramos Bejarano led the smaller. When the split first became evident, both factions claimed to be the legitimate heirs of Marxism-Leninism and the true disciples of the Soviet line. As the intraparty fight developed, however, what began as a power struggle became an ideological split. The old guard—or Ramos—faction remained loyal to Soviet leadership and advocated a cautious tactical approach. The dissident—or Erazo—faction advocated a more aggressive policy and eventually aligned itself with the Chinese Communists. Erazo, who was educated in Communist doctrine at the Marxist-Leninist Cadre School in Moscow, reportedly turned his faction toward the Chinese line in retaliation for having been excluded from the Budapest Consultative Conference in March 1968.

The weakened condition of the Communist parties is reflected in the curtailed propaganda effort. There are three Communist Party publications in Honduras—one published by the PCH/S and two by the PCH/C. *Voz Popular* (Voice of the People) is published by the PCH/S. The PCH/C publishes *Unidad* (Unity) for general distribution and *Abril* (April) for circulation within the party. All of these publications are poorly printed and appear irregularly because of the limited financial resources of the parties. Favorite themes in Communist publications include criticism of the United Fruit Company, brutality of the Honduran police, and U.S. responsibility for acts of the Honduran Government caused by diplomatic pressure.

The disorganized and weakened condition of the parties is further demonstrated by the fact that there is only one actively functioning front group—the University Reform Front (FRU), which is controlled by the PCH/C. The PCH/S has tried with little success to offset its rival's strength at the university by forming its own front group, the Socialist Student Front (FES). Although its strength has been eroded to

some extent, the FRU, which gained control of the student federation in 1969, has maintained its domination of student politics, has several sympathizers among the faculty members, is well armed, and has become one of the most troublesome groups in Honduras. Although the government is capable of controlling student disturbances, the willingness appears to be lacking, and students, generally with FRU providing the ringleaders, have been able to keep public disorder at an all-time high since early 1971.

The Communist movement has had only limited success in maintaining control of any portion of organized labor and has failed notably in organizing women and campesinos. While the Central Federation of Unions of Free Workers of Honduras (FECEST-LIH) was Communist-controlled until late 1965, when non-Communist leaders gained control of a majority of the member unions, no major labor federation is now controlled by Communists. The unions which remain under Communist leadership have little influence in the labor movement.

3. Interest groups (C)

The main factors prompting the formation of interest groups and encouraging organizations formed for other purposes to act as interest groups have been the inactivity on the part of the government in developing the country economically and socially, and the corruption and inefficiency which have pervaded most administrations. Two organizations—the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP), and the National Alliance of Social Organizations of Honduras (ANOSH)—include influencing government policy among their stated objectives. Several labor organizations, business associations and other groups have also acted as interest groups or have demonstrated the potential to do so. Among these the most active are the National Workers Trade Union Federation of Honduras (FESITRANH), the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes (CCIC), the National Federation of Farmers and Cattlemen of Honduras (FENAGH), and the National Association of Honduran Campesinos (ANACH). Students and teachers have also become more vocal in the past few years, and their activities, while largely disruptive, have influenced government policy on occasion.

The most active interest groups are organized labor, especially FESITRANH and the Confederation of Honduran Workers (CTH) of which it is the strongest component, and the various business organizations represented by COHEP. FESITRANH and COHEP were supporters of the unity government and met several times following the inauguration of Cruz to

review the government's accomplishments—or the lack thereof—and make recommendations. Until early 1968 FESITRANH stayed out of the political arena for the most part, believing that the federation could do more for the worker by maintaining a low political profile and thereby avoiding potential harassment. In that year FESITRANH joined with the CCIC, an organization of businessmen in San Pedro Sula who had also stayed out of politics, in presenting the government with a series of requests for increased attention to economic development, personnel changes in the cabinet and judiciary, and closer supervision of the frequently irresponsible local police. Both FESITRANH and CCIC view economic stagnation as injurious to both labor and management, and as a result of their joint petition, four of the seven Supreme Court Magistrates were replaced by persons generally considered more qualified, and the Director of the National Agrarian Institute (INA) was relieved of a second job so that he could concentrate his efforts on agrarian reform. Realizing that these were only token concessions, FESITRANH and CCIC again wrote to the President in late August 1968, expressing thanks for the changes he had made but indicating that they also expected action on the other items. In September their efforts were set back by an illegal strike—believed by some labor and business leaders to have been instigated by the government to weaken labor's moral position—but in 1970 FESITRANH and business groups resumed their efforts to influence government policy and became backers of the unity government.

The group through which businessmen have generally worked since 1970 has been COHEP, which was formed during late 1966 or early 1967 and became officially recognized as a *personalidad juridica* (a legal person, i.e., a corporation) on 8 May 1967. Its membership consists of the various Chambers of Commerce and industrial associations throughout the country. Its objectives are to strengthen the role and image of the private sector in the economic and social development of Honduras and to provide a forum through which private sector views may be channeled to the government. The private sector is split between Honduran north coast businessmen and *Turcos* (now increasingly meaning native-born Hondurans of Lebanese and Palestinian descent) manufacturers concentrated in Tegucigalpa. The former tend to be more internationalist in outlook and have long had good labor relations. The *Turcos* dominate the National Association of Manufacturers (ANDI), are mostly antilabor, and are less than enthusiastic about Honduran participation in the Central American

Common Market. The tension between these groups often breaks into open hostility and seriously detracts from the influence the private sector might otherwise exert on government.

Stating that "the unity of all cultural and labor organizations is necessary in order to face the conflicts and problems which derive from the . . . inefficiency, lack of qualifications, and dishonesty of some public officials," three groups organized ANOSH in November 1967. The component organizations were FESITRANH, the Professional College for Improvement of Teaching in Honduras (COLPROSUMAH), and the National Federation of Land Transport Cooperatives (FENACOTRAL). The president of FESITRANH, Celso Gonzalez, was also the president of ANOSH. The objectives of ANOSH were to defend the rights of its component organizations, to cooperate with the government in economic and social development, and to maintain inviolate the laws thus far obtained governing labor, cooperatives, education, and agrarian reform. The general tone of the organization's declaration of principles appeared to be reformist and antigovernment, although it proclaimed itself free of commitments to any political group. Since around 1970, however, it has been inactive as an organization, with its various components exerting pressure independently through other channels. This organizational dormancy may be only temporary.

FENAGH, although formed for other purposes, has also attempted to influence government policy, particularly in the field of agrarian reform. FENAGH is made up mostly of owners of large tracts of land. These men consider even the limited accomplishments of the National Agrarian Institute on behalf of the campesino a threat to their future and have attempted, with only limited success, to persuade the government to halt what they consider "illegal" invasions of private property by the campesinos. In many cases the landlord's title to the land has been questionable, but the campesinos who have worked the land for decades have been evicted when the landlord has decided to put the land to other use. Under the Agrarian Reform Law such evictions are illegal without the approval of the INA. FENAGH has thus far accomplished little beyond obtaining a promise from the government that "illegal" occupation of privately owned land will not be tolerated and an agreement that the Agrarian Reform Law needs some revision.

On the other side of the land reform controversy is the 30,000-member campesino organization, ANACH. This basically nonideological group which concentrates on increasing productivity, wages, and

access to land, has done much to dispel the apathy and fatalism prevalent among the rural poor and bring their depressed conditions to the policymakers' attention. Troubled throughout the Cruz regime by what amounted to a reversal of previous gains for the small farmer, ANACH became influential in a very dramatic way in December 1972. Having presented Cruz with a list of demands which included dismissal of the unsympathetic INA director, ANACH went ahead with plans for a hunger march on the capital when its petition was ignored. General Lopez' sympathy for the campesinos combined with the prospect of disorders resulting from the presence of several thousand marchers in the capital triggered the coup which overthrew Cruz on 4 December.

Student demonstrations are frequent and have been especially so since about 1969 when the FRU gained control of the student federation. Much of the disorder caused by students is involved with university affairs or is an expression of antigovernment or anti-U.S. sentiment. On occasion, however, students have influenced government policy as in 1971, when in collaboration with COLPROSUMAH, a teacher's organization, they presented the then President Cruz with one of the first crises of his administration and succeeded in obtaining revisions to an AID-sponsored secondary educational program. In September 1972 a group of secondary students effected a change in their school administration by engaging in a disruptive strike. Teachers, too, have used the strike medium effectively to obtain pay raises, pension benefits, and dismissal of unpopular faculty members. Much of the chaos in the educational field during the Cruz administration seemed to have been aimed at embarrassing, or obtaining the dismissal of, the then Minister of Public Education, Gertrudis Bogran de Guell, one of the only two cabinet members whose appointment Cruz had been able to dictate. National Party boss Ricardo Zuniga, who wanted to name all National Party cabinet members, was believed to be manipulating students and teachers for his own purposes.

4. Electoral law and practices (S)

a. Electoral law

The law which governs the registration of voters, inscription of parties, and the conduct of elections became effective in November 1966. It is substantially the same as the 1964 law, which it replaced, except that it provides for a single ballot printed by the government instead of ballots supplied by the individual parties.

All Honduran citizens 18 years of age and over who have been inscribed in the National Electoral Census are qualified to vote. Criminals, vagrants, and other persons outside the law are excluded, as are persons on active duty in the armed forces. The 1965 constitution declares that the exercise of suffrage is a duty and is, therefore, compulsory. The law imposes a fine of \$5.00 for not voting, but in practice the fine is seldom levied.

To be inscribed as a legal political party, the petitioning group is required to furnish the National Elections Council with notarized signatures of 15,000 adherents who are qualified voters. This procedure is required for all new parties and for any existing party which has not polled a comparable number of votes in the most recent national election. The 1966 electoral law recognized both the National Party and the Liberal Party as having already established their legal status by the support they received in previous elections. All parties are required to furnish the National Elections Council with a declaration of their principles and programs. Furthermore, parties must be independent of any foreign organization, must carry a name having neither a religious nor racial character, and must not proclaim or practice doctrines contrary to the democratic spirit of the Honduran people. Parties which, because of their ideological programs or international ties, threaten the sovereignty of the state are prohibited: Central American unity, pan-Americanism, or doctrines of "continental solidarity" are specific exceptions to this prohibition. All parties are required to function under a standard form of organization including a national assembly, a central directorate, and a directorate for each department and local community.

Electoral bodies are the National Elections Council, a council for each department and each municipality, and precinct committees for each 500 citizens or fraction thereof over 100. A council member must be a literate Honduran in possession of his political rights. Members of Congress, judges, members of the armed forces, the police, and most government officials are prohibited from serving on any electoral councils. All council members have at least limited personal immunity; members of the National Council enjoy the same immunity as do members of Congress. Although theoretically still in existence, the electoral councils, like the National Congress, are no longer functioning.

Members of the National Elections Council are named by the Chief Executive. The council is composed of the following representatives: 1) one member from each legally registered party, 2) one jointly nominated by the commercial, industrial, and agricultural associations, and 3) one jointly nominated

by labor federations, university student groups, teachers, women's clubs, and professional organizations. Besides inscribing parties, the National Elections Council compiles the electoral census, gives legal sanction to election results, and decides such questions as those involving voting fraud. Decisions of the council are by a simple majority of votes.

Departmental and municipal councils and the precinct committees are composed of one member from each legal party. The minimum number on each council or committee, however, is three, and until a third party is registered, the additional seats will be divided equally between the Liberals and the Nationalists.

The electoral law treats election procedures in detail, providing numerous legal safeguards for freedom and honesty. These include examination of the election urns before witnesses, careful checking of a voter's credentials, application of an inkstain to the voter's hand to avoid multiple voting, meticulous procedures for counting votes, prohibition of liquor sales on election day, prohibition of campaigning on election day, and the requirement that all employers grant time off for their workers to vote. Also covered are procedures to be followed in such matters as reporting results to the next higher council and penalties for illegal acts.

Restrictions on political propaganda are determined by the "requirements of public morality" and order and by the need to preserve equality between the parties. Propaganda which encourages abstention from the polls and attacks human dignity and respect for law is prohibited. The text of radio and television propaganda must be submitted in advance to station owners or their representatives. Political meetings and parades must receive permission of the local electoral council; such gatherings are scheduled so as to avoid clashes between rival groups. Military, police, and other government employees are prohibited from participating in political meetings during working hours.

b. Electoral practices

Election practices often bear little resemblance to those prescribed by law. The most prevalent violation is altering the electoral census. Both major parties have been accused of this practice. The Nationalists have accused the Liberals of granting thousands of minors the right to vote in order to substantiate their claim to being the majority party. The Liberals have accused the Nationalists of deliberate slowdowns in registering voters in districts believed to be heavily Liberal, claiming that because of this thousands of persons, mostly Liberals, have been prevented from voting.

The 16 February 1965 Constituent Assembly election provided numerous examples of fraud—mostly on the part of the governing National Party. Among the reported abuses were confiscation by the government of voters' identification documents, arrest of opposition members in order to prevent both campaigning and voting, use of government vehicles by the National Party for transporting its members to the polls, and intimidation of Liberal voters by armed civilians suspected of National Party affiliation. Opposition parties are reported to have engaged in illegal practices as well. The Liberal Party was accused of attempting to steal the voting urns in two precincts, and the Progressive Popular Party, which had been unable to obtain inscription, illegally requested voters to boycott the election.

The municipal elections held 31 March 1968 provided further examples of electoral abuse. The National Party's victory was carefully engineered by Zuniga, who used government resources, organizational superiority, intimidation, fraud, and hard work to secure 240 of the 276 municipal councils—many of these in areas which are traditional Liberal strongholds. Although troops were confined to their barracks on election day, the Nationalists made effective use of armed civilians. Abstentions were numerous (43.4% of the registered electorate), and many of the Liberals who stayed away from the polls claimed to have done so because of intimidation. Of some 900,000 persons of voting age, 805,195 (89%) registered to vote in the 1968 municipal elections; only 458,577 (56.9%) of the registered voters actually voted. In 1971 approximately 1,200,000 persons were of voting age; of these 900,658 registered and 614,007 (68.17%) actually voted.

D. National policies (S)

I. Domestic

a. Historical perspective

Both the Cruz administration (1971-72) and the Lopez regime which preceded it (1963-71) have been described as "do-nothing" governments, a charge for which there is substantial basis, although this situation is not unusual within the context of Honduran history. Most Honduran governments have been concerned with maintaining themselves in power and providing internal stability; in doing so they have suppressed political opposition. Long-range social and economic planning and development are not part of the general Honduran experience. The two exceptions have been the governments of Juan Manuel Galvez (1948-54) and Jose Ramon Villeda Morales (1957-63). Galvez,

although concerned with maintaining internal stability, displayed a more enlightened attitude toward opposition groups than did his predecessors, and the freedom allowed at that time permitted labor unions to develop overtly under non-Communist leadership. Villeda was the first President to attempt any significant programs to alleviate the poverty and general backwardness of the country. The limited accomplishments of his administration were a Social Security Law (1959) which had been originally approved by the military junta in 1957 but not implemented; a Labor Code (1959), and an Agrarian Reform Law (1962). Education, public health, and housing were also given attention.

The government headed by Lopez, which came to power in 1963, was more like the majority of its predecessors than those of either Galvez or Villeda. Much energy and many resources were expended on keeping the regime in power and on preserving a facade of constitutionalism. Little was done to extend the scope of reforms begun by Villeda. Under Cruz the government had difficulty even maintaining internal order, and, although Cruz agreed to a "minimum plan of government" drafted by the major parties and leaders from the military, business, and labor, hardly anything was accomplished during his 18 months in office. Among the more important items of domestic policy in the minimum plan to which Cruz agreed were: 1) implementation of a broad economic development plan, 2) adoption of an agrarian policy which would increase production, aid the campesino, and guarantee respect for private property, 3) implementation of plans for education and vocational training, 4) establishment of a merit system governing civil service, 5) investigation into the need for tax reforms, and 6) adoption of a policy to provide for adequate housing. Lopez, on his return to office in 1972, stated his intention to work toward these goals, and his appointment of energetic, qualified persons to the cabinet indicates that he may be sincere.

b. Policy toward development planning

With so many problems to overcome, Honduran development planning has fluctuated between hesitancy and unrealism. The 1965-69 plan was an overly ambitious statement of goals which the government made no attempt to achieve. The lack of strong, committed leadership at the highest level of government precluded any real accomplishment during the Cruz administration. A new development plan for the years 1972-77 was released by the planning council but was not acted upon by the Cruz government before its fall.

c. Policy toward agrarian reform

Some progress had been made in agrarian reform during the first Lopez administration, even though interest in campesino problems appeared to be lacking in the higher echelons of government; no plan or overall program yet exists for the betterment of the living standard of the approximately three-fourths of the population who live in rural areas. The Agrarian Reform Law, enacted in 1962, was virtually ignored until 1967, when Rigoberto Sandoval, a specialist in agricultural problems, was appointed director of the INA. Sandoval showed considerable interest in attacking the many problems of the campesinos; he approached the job with energy, albeit with little support from his superiors. Cruz demonstrated his cynicism toward the plight of the campesino by replacing Sandoval with Horacio Moya Posas, a political hack with strong political and friendship ties to landed interests. Instead of settling additional campesinos on land of their own, Moya Posas had several groups evicted from land awarded to them prior to 1969. Since the coup of 1972 was triggered by a campesino march, Lopez has demonstrated serious interest in this sector. In January 1973 he appointed a respected U.S.- and British-educated agricultural economist, Mario Ponce Cambar as the new director of INA and issued a decree calling for massive rentals of land and financial assistance to peasants pending completion of the complicated legal and cadastral formalities necessary for full land reform.

d. Policy on public administration

One reason for the lack of accomplishment by most Honduran governments is the constantly poor state of public administration. Government employment and appointment to public office have traditionally been governed by the spoils system, with government jobs, including cabinet-level positions, being used to pay political debts. Thus, with few exceptions, the caliber of public officials and employees has generally been low, even by Central American standards. One of the aims of the unity government was to place the best qualified persons available in government service. The chaotic state of the Cruz government, the lack of leadership on the part of the President, and the tendency of diverse interests to work at cross-purposes diluted much of the effort expended by a few conscientious members of the cabinet. In September 1968, a civil service law was passed, but no merit basis has yet been established for hiring and promoting government employees, even though the law became effective in January 1969.

e. Policy toward other major needs

Much needed tax reform has been neglected in favor of emergency *ad hoc* measures. For example, in order to alleviate a severe budget deficit in late 1971, Cruz reduced by 50% the tax and duty exemptions previously awarded to businesses under the industrial incentives law. Other such spur-of-the-moment solutions were attempted with no overall plan in mind. The inertia and disorganization of the Cruz government apparatus was typified in the field of housing construction where no coherent plan existed to meet the pressing need for housing.

The educational system was one of the most troublesome sectors during the Cruz regime, with progress completely halted by a power struggle, in which students—probably at the instigation of Ricardo Zuniga—tried to dislodge the Minister of Public Education, Gertrudis de Guell, one of the two cabinet ministers whom Cruz had been allowed to choose. When Cruz, who was dependent on Lopez, Chief of the Armed Forces, to enforce his authority over student agitators, tried to protect Mrs. Guell, he received no support from the military. There were rumors that Zuniga was responsible for some of the unrest and that Lopez was unwilling to move against his old friend.

2. Foreign

Foreign relations are characterized by close cooperation with the United States on international issues, active participation in international organizations, and a continuing rupture in relations with neighboring El Salvador.

Traditionally, relations between Honduras and the United States have been close, and the United States has been the principal source of economic aid, providing approximately US\$65.6 million in loans and \$54.8 million in grants between 1946 and 1970. Honduras has supported the United States on most international issues, notably the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the disorders in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and Vietnam. The minor territorial dispute involving ownership of the Swan Islands which had strained relations between the United States and Honduras occasionally over the past half century was settled in 1971 when the United States recognized Honduran sovereignty over the two small islands.

Honduras' most serious international problem is with neighboring El Salvador. Over the past years, immigration problems, the fact that a portion of the border has been undefined, and a dispute over the ownership of Isla Meanguera, an island in the Golfo

de Fonseca have periodically exacerbated relations between the two countries. These strains led to an open break in relations and a brief war in July 1969.

The immigration problems stem from the migration to Honduras of large numbers of Salvadorans seeking employment and escape from the overcrowded conditions in El Salvador. These immigrants have been the object of some discrimination and have occasionally been deported. Although a treaty concerning immigration and the treatment of each other's nationals became effective in 1967, the problem persisted, chiefly because of a lack of compliance with registration requirements on the part of the Salvadoran immigrants and delays in processing Salvadoran residence applications on the part of the Honduran Government. The treaty, renewable after 2 years, was allowed to lapse in 1969, leaving a solution to the perennial problem as distant as ever.

The disputed portion of the border between El Salvador and Honduras had been under study by a joint commission in 1962 and 1963 and was apparently progressing toward settlement when the Honduran Government was overthrown in October 1963. Following the coup, demarcation of the border was ignored until troops from the two countries clashed in the disputed area in May 1967. By July 1967 hostilities had ceased, and the two countries agreed to reconstitute the joint border commission. The border commission never became reality, for in June 1969 a soccer match touched off smoldering antagonisms, with the result that nationals of both countries were subjected to varying degrees of violence by the other. A break in diplomatic relations was followed by a 5-day war, and, although the OAS was able to obtain a cease-fire, withdrawal of forces, and the establishment of a pacification zone in the border area, formal relations have not been restored nor any of the problems settled. The insistence of former President Cruz that the frontier be settled before any other problems could be taken up constituted the main obstacle to the resumption of diplomatic relations. He also remained intransigent on the mechanism for defining the border, insisting on juridical solutions instead of a negotiated settlement. Lopez is believed to be more flexible on the method of settlement.

Honduras is a member of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). Honduras had threatened to leave the Central American Common Market before the 1969 hostilities with El Salvador, claiming that the market benefited only the more developed partners at the expense of Honduras. An attempt to secure reform of the CACM failed in

late 1970, and Honduras took unilateral measures to protect its economy. It considers restructuring of the Common Market and a settlement with El Salvador prerequisites to resuming its participation in the five-member market. As a member of the United Nations, Honduras has supported the United States and other Western nations. Although disenchanted with the OAS—and for that matter with the United States—for not taking its side in the 1969 hostilities, Honduras nevertheless prefers to see disputes between nations of the Western Hemisphere settled within the OAS rather than the United Nations. On regional matters Honduras normally acts in concert with other Central American states, but has been less than enthusiastic about Central American unity since the "soccer war." Among Communist nations Honduras has diplomatic relations with Poland and Yugoslavia, whose ministers reside in Mexico.

E. Threats to government stability (S)

1. Discontent and dissidence

Political instability in Honduras results from a political system that forces the opposition parties into a conspiratorial role and from the underdevelopment of the country with consequent social and economic grievances. The lack of traditional respect for democratic processes and the intense rivalry between the two major parties create a climate favorable to subversion. Despite a brief experiment in governmental cooperation which began in early 1971 with the signing of the unity pact, neither party has demonstrated any responsibility as a constructive opposition when out of power, nor, apparently, has either party seen any advantage in securing the cooperation of the other when in power. Elections have usually been fraudulent, giving the opposition little hope of gaining power by any means short of violence. Even under the terms of the unity pact, the Liberal Party was still the minority partner, and found itself alternately begging and threatening in order to obtain compliance with the provisions of the pact by the President and the National Party. Under such a system all opposition parties are potentially subversive to some extent because they have never had cause to develop any other concept of politics. In addition, the small Communist parties constantly try to build up their capability for subversion.

The general poverty of the country, unemployment, poor health, inadequate housing and educational facilities, and the subsistence level of many of the farmers provides fertile ground for the growth of social

and political unrest. The groups which are possibly most discontented and receptive to subversive agitation are the urban unemployed and the impoverished campesinos. Urban unemployment has increased in recent years because industry cannot absorb the numbers of unskilled workers who have moved to the cities. Campesinos, heretofore apathetic and fatalistic, are becoming increasingly cognizant of their plight and aggressive in acquiring land by which to support their families. For the most part uneducated and unable to differentiate between ideologies, they will follow any leader who promises to help them improve their situation. The democratically oriented labor unions—especially the National Association of Honduran Campesinos (ANACH)—have done much to channel campesino discontent into constructive directions, but Communist agitators have occasionally led them into skirmishes with large corporations and clashes with government troops.

2. Subversion

Neither of the three Communist parties has, as yet, any real strength among campesinos, but a continuing lack of government response to the real needs of this large segment of the population could weaken the more reasonable leadership of ANACH and strengthen the position of subversive elements who would use the campesinos for their own purposes.

The strongest Communist influence is among students, especially the university students, and the Chinese-line communist party, PCH C, controls the most active student front, the University Reform Front (FRU). The FRU has provided the ringleaders for almost every significant disturbance in recent years. Generally these disturbances serve no particular purpose; many have been directed against the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. military group headquarters, and other official U.S. installations and have resulted in considerable damage. In at least one case, however, students were able to influence government policy. In 1971, using the theme of "cultural imperialism," students opposed an educational loan project sponsored by AID and were successful in having the project revised. Realizing that the government is unlikely to use troops against them, the students have become increasingly more daring in their tactics to disrupt the political and social order. Advance requests from the U.S. Embassy for protection have often been to no avail.

On the whole, however, the Communist movement has no capability for undermining the government. It does have the capability for generating unrest.

F. Maintenance of internal security (S)

1. Police

The Special Security Corps (CES) is the national police force under the administrative control of the Minister of National Defense and Public Security. It is operationally subordinate to the Chief of the Armed Forces. It has a strength of approximately 3,000 men and is territorially organized into 18 regional districts corresponding to the 18 political departments; functionally it is divided into five sections: criminal investigation, rural police, highway patrol, traffic control, and police training center.

Although the CES still bears the scars of originally having been composed of the poorly trained, poorly educated dregs of the army, it has improved significantly since 1968. Established as a separate corps of the army on 9 October 1963—just after the coup—the CES replaced the Civil Guard, which was considered virtually the private army of the Liberal Party. Its original personnel came entirely from the army and included many undesirables. Its organization was inefficient; its leadership lacked dedication; and the corps was riddled with political corruption. The public image of the CES was understandably low. Several police-inspired incidents of violence in 1967 and the poor judgment and harsh methods used during the general strike of 1968 caused General Lopez (then President) to initiate a series of changes. The first change was the removal of Lt. Col. Antonio Perez Izaguirre from his position as chief of the CES. Perez, a poor leader and administrator, was so corrupt and politically oriented that the north coast labor leaders considered his removal a major improvement in the corps. Another step in the improvement of the CES was its separation from the army and the establishment of its own command structure. New, distinctively police, uniforms were issued to underscore the separation, and the CES was allowed to conduct its own recruitment. As of 1 January 1971, most army personnel remaining with the CES were permanently transferred to that corps.

The establishment, with U.S. AID assistance, of the police training center at El Ojo de Agua near Tegucigalpa in 1967 was another major step in upgrading the efficiency of the CES. The facility can handle two classes a year of approximately 125 students each. Since 1970 all recruits have been civilians and all must have a minimum of 6 years education. The students are kept busy and appear to enjoy their training. The instructors are enthusiastic,

and the curriculum is designed to produce knowledgeable, effective police officers.

An important step in improving the CES was the appointment of Col. Juan Antonio Melgar Castro as director. Melgar has long been recognized as one of the most professional, apolitical officers of the army, and, following his appointment in January 1972, he began an immediate housecleaning within the CES—starting at the top with the retirement, dismissal, or transfer of 14 of the 18 regional police chiefs. During his previous assignment as Commander of the Second Military Zone at San Pedro Sula, Melgar was known for his fairness and restraint in dealing with the public. The CES had already begun to show Melgar's influence by the end of 1972, when he left the CES to accept a cabinet position. His successor, Col. Policarpo Paz Garcia, is also a highly regarded military professional and has pledged to continue development of the CES along the lines begun by Melgar.

While significant improvement has been made, the CES still has deficiencies, mostly in numbers of personnel, in arms, and in transportation equipment. The CES is equipped with an assortment of small arms such as pistols, carbines, M-1 rifles, and, in some outlying districts, old Mausers. The number of vehicles available to the CES is insufficient for the performance of its mission, and the CES laboratory and methods of investigation are thus far inadequate. The CES communication system, however, is the most modern in Honduras. The corps received considerable U.S. AID assistance in establishing the network, and the network repair facility, inadequate thus far, is improving under AID guidance.

2. Countersubversive and counterinsurgency measures and capabilities

In coping with widespread outbreaks of terrorism, rioting, or other disorders, the police would need the direct involvement of the military forces. The military forces and police combined are probably capable of containing and eventually controlling such internal disorders. The police alone are probably capable of containing strictly localized disorders, but the willingness of General Lopez (even during his own previous administration) to commit the police to such activity has been notably lacking, especially when students are involved. On a number of occasions students have been allowed to inflict considerable property damage on U.S. official installations, Honduran government offices, and schools with no response—or a late response at best—from the police.

Given the fact that this attitude was especially apparent after Cruz took office in June 1971, Lopez' willingness to combat threats to the Cruz administration was definitely suspect.

Although not a major activity of the security forces, there is a small civic action program in operation. The

armed forces have engaged in road construction and provision of potable water facilities. The air force has occasionally transported medical assistance to inaccessible areas. The scope of this program, however, is not sufficient to make any real impact as a counterinsurgency measure.

Chronology (u/ou)

1502

Columbus reaches coast of Honduras during fourth voyage.

1539

Honduras and four other provinces of Central America are incorporated into captaincy general of Guatemala, administrative division of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, in the Spanish Indies.

1821

September

Independence from Spain is gained and Honduras becomes part of Mexican Empire.

1823

Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica form United Provinces of Central America. Francisco Morazan of Honduras serves as President from 1830 to collapse of federation in late 1838.

1838

November

Honduras declares independence from federation.

1932-48

Dictatorship of Gen. Tiburcio Carías Andino provides first period of prolonged domestic peace.

1948

October

Juan Manuel Galvez (handpicked successor of Gen. Carías) is elected President on National Party ticket.

1949

January

President Galvez and Vice President Julio Lozano are inaugurated for 6-year term.

1951

May

General strike paralyzes entire north coast area.

November

President Galvez leaves country for "medical treatment" following indecisive elections; Vice President Lozano becomes Acting President.

December

Newly elected Congress with mandate for settling presidential election fails to convene; Lozano declares himself *de facto* Chief of State.

1956

August

Revolt against Lozano's authoritarian tactics is quickly suppressed; Liberal Party leaders are exiled.

October

Fraudulent election of Lozano's handpicked Constituent Assembly results in bloodless military coup; interim military junta assumes power.

1957

July

Defense Minister Col. Oswaldo Lopez Arellano emerges as strong military leader with ouster of Gen. Roque J. Rodriguez from interim junta.

September

Constituent Assembly is elected; Liberals win control by wide margin.

November

Dr. Ramon Villeda Morales, Liberal leader, is named constitutional President-elect by Constituent Assembly; Col. Oswaldo Lopez Arellano becomes member of junta.

December

Villeda Morales is inaugurated President for 6-year term. Constituent Assembly becomes National Congress; new constitution is promulgated; Lopez is appointed Chief of the Armed Forces.

1960

November

Longstanding border dispute with Nicaragua is settled by the International Court of Justice; disputed territory awarded to Honduras.

1963

October

Military coup by Lopez overthrows Villeda, thus preventing elections scheduled for 13 October.

1965

February

Constituent Assembly elections are held; Nationalists "win" 35 seats to Liberals' 29.

March

Constituent Assembly elects Lopez President of Honduras. Constituent Assembly changes status to National Congress.

June

Lopez is inaugurated for 6-year term.

1967

May

Honduran and Salvadoran troops clash in undemarcated border area.

1968

March

Government party "wins" 241 of the 276 municipalities through extensive fraud and coercion.

July

Honduras and El Salvador exchange prisoners captured during the border clash in 1967.

1969

June

Honduras and El Salvador break relations over mistreatment of one another's nationals.

July

Hostilities erupt between El Salvador and Honduras. The Organization of American States obtains cease-fire with great difficulty.

1971

January

Major interest groups sign unity pact governing March election and government that will follow.

June

Ramon Ernesto Cruz, elected on 26 March, is inaugurated for 6-year term.

1972

December

Lopez ousts Cruz in bloodless military coup; dissolves congress and governs by decree.

Glossary

ABBREVIATION	ENGLISH	SPANISH
ANACH.....	National Association of Honduran Campesinos	<i>Asociacion Nacional de Campesinos Hondurenos</i>
ANOSIL.....	National Alliance of Social Organizations of Honduras	<i>Alianza Nacional de Organizaciones Sociales de Honduras</i>
CCIC.....	Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes	<i>Camara de Comercio e Industrias de Cortes</i>
CES.....	Special Security Corps.....	<i>Cuerpo Especial de Seguridad</i>
COHEP.....	Honduran Council of Private Enterprise	<i>Consejo Hondureno de la Empresa Privada</i>
COLPROSUMAH..	Professional College for Improvement of Teaching in Honduras	<i>Colegio Profesional de Submimento Magisterio Hondureno</i>
CTH.....	Confederation of Honduran Workers	<i>Confederacion de Trabajadores Hondurenos</i>
FECESITLH.....	Central Federation of Unions of Free Workers of Honduras	<i>Federacion Central de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Libres de Honduras</i>
FENACOTRAL...	National Federation of Land Transport Cooperatives	<i>Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas de Transporte Limitada</i>
FENAGH.....	National Federation of Farmers and Cattlemen of Honduras	<i>Federacion Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos de Honduras</i>
FESITRANH.....	National Workers' Trade Union Federation of Honduras	<i>Federacion Sindical de Trabajadores Nacional de Honduras</i>
FES.....	Socialist Student Front.....	<i>Frente Estudiantil Socialista</i>
FRU.....	University Reform Front.....	<i>Frente de Reforma Universitaria</i>
INA.....	National Agrarian Institute.....	<i>Instituto Nacional Agrario</i>
MDC.....	Christian Democratic Movement	<i>Movimiento Democratico Christiano</i>
MNV.....	National Velasquista Movement..	<i>Movimiento Nacional Velasquista</i>
PCH C.....	Communist Party of Honduras China	<i>Partido Comunista de Honduras China</i>
PCH S.....	Communist Party of Honduras Soviet	<i>Partido Comunista de Honduras Soviet</i>
PINC.....	National Innovation and Unity Party	<i>Partido Inovacion Nacional y Unidad</i>
PLH.....	Liberal Party of Honduras.....	<i>Partido Liberal de Honduras</i>
PNH.....	National Party of Honduras.....	<i>Partido Nacional de Honduras</i>
PPP.....	Progressive Popular Party.....	<i>Partido Popular Progresista</i>
PRO.....	Orthodox Republican Party.....	<i>Partido Republicano Ortodoxo</i>
PTH.....	Workers' Party of Honduras.....	<i>Partido de Trabajadores de Honduras</i>