

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

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

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

DECERTIFYING GUATEMALA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT TO DO

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

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

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

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

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

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

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

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

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

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CLAUS HUME

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

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

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

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

COMMENDING THE GILES COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

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

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