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## **U.S. House Subcommittee Calls On President Bush To Withhold Military Aid From Guatemala**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On July 17, the US House Subcommittee on Western Hemispheric Affairs, passed a resolution condemning political killings and disappearances in Guatemala, and called on President Bush to withhold military aid until the government can exert greater control over the army. The resolution also calls on the Guatemalan government to investigate the thousands of abuses reportedly committed by government security forces, to provide protection to those citizens who are most at risk, and to monitor the ongoing human rights situation. The 13-member subcommittee heard testimony from Human Rights Watch director Ann Manuel; Dr. Phillip Heyman of the Harvard University Center for Criminal Justice; Frank LaRue, Guatemalan lawyer and fellow of the Commission on US-Latin American Relations; former Guatemalan Defense Minister General Hector Gramajo; and, Dennis Cox, professor of political science at the Francisco Marroquin University. The resolution cites several sources which document the deterioration of human rights under the present Guatemalan administration, including: \* A State Department report issued earlier this year on the deteriorating human rights situation in Guatemala. \* Statement by the Guatemalan Attorney General for Human Rights that "government efforts to protect human rights are useless." \* A decision by the Harvard University Law School Center for Criminal Justice to terminate participation in an Administration of Justice program in Guatemala conducted under the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act because failure to prosecute human rights cases is now clearly "a lack of political will, not a failure of capacity." \* Statements made in late February by US Ambassador to Guatemala Thomas Stroock that if the present human rights situation were to continue, it would "inevitably damage relations" between the two countries. \* Recognition that activists, labor union members and members of political organizations have been targeted for murder and disappearance in the last year. (Basic data from Cerigua Weekly Briefs, 07/16-22/90)

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