

RELEASE IN PART
B5,B6

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2009 11:24 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Honduras Update Nov 16 11:00 pm EST

----- Original Message -----

From: Kelly, Craig A
To: Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mills, Cheryl D; Steinberg, James B; Burns, William J
Cc: Valenzuela, Arturo A; [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon Nov 16 23:22:35 2009
Subject: Honduras Update Nov 16 11:00 pm EST

B6

The hardliners in the regime fought a largely successful counterattack against the deal today, and M appears to be leaning toward their view that if he steps aside he will endanger the elections.

It goes beyond that. For the hardliners this is almost a religious struggle against a Zelaya they view as dangerous, duplicitous and vengeful. As one of the hardliners told me two weeks ago: "We are prepared to die for this."

The modest silver lining is that the military has weighed in on the side of the moderates -- the latter include all three of the de facto negotiators who reached the October 30 Accord.

Hugo believes strongly that I should fly down Tuesday morning for one last, blunt effort. Arturo, Dan Restrepo and I agree. Last time my message, while firm, appealed to M's better angels -- the chance to leave office as a statesman and deal a strategic defeat to Chavez. I will sharpen it tomorrow. The hardliners fail to see how they are playing into the hands of the worst actors in the hemisphere -- ALBA crowing will be part of the de facto legacy. I will also make clear that if the de factos continue down this path we will be forced to underscore our position on the coup in concrete ways [REDACTED] I will make clear that they are undermining any chance we have to increase international support for the elections. As for our stance on elections, Arturo and Hugo will present options to S in coming days.

B5

I depart at 6:00 am and will update you Tuesday evening from Tegucigalpa.

ck