

GUATEMALA

US knew about 1980s abuses

Mar. 18, 2009: The National Security Archive (NSA), a Washington, DC-based nonprofit institute, posted declassified US government documents on its [website](#) that it says show **the US government knew US-backed Guatemalan officials were behind the disappearance of thousands of people during Guatemala's 1960-1996 civil war.** "Government security services have employed assassination to eliminate persons suspected of involvement with the guerrillas or who are otherwise leftwing in orientation," a 1984 State Department report said. "The government is obviously rounding up people connected with the extreme leftwing labor movement for interrogation," then-US ambassador Frederic Chapin wrote in a 1984 cable.

The NSA obtained the documents from the U.S. State Department under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). State Department spokesperson Fred Lash told the Associated Press that he was unaware of the declassified documents and could not immediately comment. More than 200,000 people, mostly Mayan civilians, died in the 36-year conflict.

Miami Herald 3/19/09