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New York 10014

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✓cc: S. Trahern
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Dear friends:

I watch your morning call-in show as often as I can and when I heard you were going to discuss the Guatemalan elections I was really interested. I used to live in S. Mexico and Guatemala and the lack of coverage of that area in the U.S. media is always distressing.

The coverage Rep. Livingston of Louisiana provided, however, on your show, was worse than none at all. He claimed that this year's election for president in Guatemala is the first in the country's history where one democratically elected president would succeed another. Not so-- Arévalo in 1944 was elected after a dictatorship was overthrown, and his successor Arbenz in 51 was elected and then as you know thrown out by the CIA. So on that score we have to give the Rep. low grades.

And when he said how peaceful it was in Guatemala -- again he either hadn't done his homework, or was wilfully withholding information. The level of violence in Guatemala surrounding the current elections has been well documented by Amnesty International and the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission. In fact, pres. Cerezo's own choice for his party's candidate for president was killed over a year ago, probably because he had played a part in talks between the government and guerrilla groups in Madrid, talks prescribed by Central American peace treaties. So much for peaceful elections. And it's also clear to any unbiased observer that the candidates running this time cover the right and center right of the spectrum.

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The Guatemalan equivalent of Lech Walesa, for example, is Rigoberta Menchu, daughter of ^{Vicente Menchu,} the founder of the peasants union. He was brutally murdered in 1981, as well as his wife and son. Menchu was back in Guatemala in 87 and 88, trying to establish the National Dialogue prescribed, again, by the Costa Rica treaties. Both times death threats and bombings at her offices, forced her to leave the country. So much for democratic elections in Guatemala.

I know Guatemala is a subject you don't cover often. That's why I urge you strongly, next time you want to talk about it, to invite someone who knows something of the history of the country to speak. It's not an academic question. Lives depend on it.

Thank you for giving thorough coverage of the news,

Sincerely,

P.S. — I tried to phone in but the lines were always busy.