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TO IMMEDIATE SAN JOSE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 44 OF 7 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, MEXICO CITY, TEGUCIGALPA,
 PRIORITY PANAMA CITY, BOGOTA, CARACAS, HAVANA
 ROUTINE OTTAWA, MADRID, PARIS, UKMIS NEW YORK, GUATEMALA CITY,
 UGDEL NATO, MOSCOW

INFO SAVING EC POSTS, STOCKHOLM, OSLO, TOKYO

MY TELNO 160 TO WASHINGTON (NOT TO ALL): VISIT TO UK BY
 NICARAGUAN VICE PRESIDENT SERGIO RAMIREZ

1. RAMIREZ IS VISITING THE UK FROM 5-10 FEBRUARY AT HIS OWN INITIATIVE AS PART OF A EUROPEAN TOUR (HE CAME FROM MADRID AND GOES ON TO PARIS). HIS AIM IS TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL RESPECTABILITY AND SYMPATHY FOR NICARAGUA. HIS PROGRAMME HERE HAS BEEN ARRANGED BY THE NICARAGUANS AND INCLUDES MEETINGS WITH ALL OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS AND THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, A DISCUSSION MEETING AT CRATHAM HOUSE, A DEBATE AT THE OXFORD UNION ON US POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA (IN WHICH THE US CASE WILL BE PUT BY CONGRESSMAN NEWT GINGRICH) AND A CALL ON THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. HE IS OBTAINING HIGH PROFILE MEDIA COVERAGE.
2. IN ADDITION THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PRIME MINISTER AGREED TO RECEIVE RAMIREZ ON 6 AND 8 FEBRUARY RESPECTIVELY. THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME PLAIN SPEAKING AND TO COUNTER ANY MISLEADING IMPRESSIONS WHICH HE MIGHT OBTAIN FROM HIS OTHER CONTACTS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDES.
3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE TOLD RAMIREZ THAT WE WERE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LARGE SIZE OF THE NICARAGUAN ARMY, THE BUILD-UP OF SOVIET ARMS AND THE DESTABILISING EFFECT OF NICARAGUAN POLICIES ON NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. HE MADE IT CLEAR

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THAT WE DISLIKED THEIR CLOSE ALIGNMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND QUERIED THEIR PROCLAIMED NON-ALIGNMENT. HE EXPLAINED WHY WE HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE CONDITIONS FOR FAIR ELECTIONS HAD NOT OBTAINED IN NICARAGUA, AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE TOTAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE FSLN PARTY WITH THE STATE, CENSORSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE MEDIA AND MOB ATTACKS ON OPPOSITION PARTY RALLIES.

4. RAMIREZ STRESSED NICARAGUA'S WISH FOR A NEGOTIATED REGIONAL SETTLEMENT AND ASKED US TO CONVEY TO THE AMERICANS THEIR WISH TO RENEW BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS URGENTLY. HE SAID NICARAGUA DID NOT WISH TO CHALLENGE THE INTERESTS OR INFLUENCE OF THE US IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND WAS WILLING TO MAKE A FORMAL COMMITMENT WITHIN CONTADORA THAT THE USSR WOULD BE GIVEN NO MILITARY OR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES OF ANY KIND. SHE WAS ALSO WILLING TO AGREE TO STRENGTHENED PROVISIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND VERIFICATION OF A CONTADORA TREATY, WHICH SHOULD HAVE A FIRM TIME-TABLE FOR FREEZING ARMS LEVELS, WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN ADVISERS AND ENDING CROSS-BORDER ARMS SMUGGLING. VERIFICATION COULD INVOLVE COUNTRIES OUTSIDE CONTADORA (CANADA, WESTERN EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA). THE NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS HAD NOT BEEN PERFECT: BUT NO-ONE HAD SAID THEY WERE FRAUDULENT. HE PROMISED THAT ALL GROUPS, INCLUDING POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS AND THE BUSINESS AND TRADES UNIONS SECTORS, WOULD BE ABLE TO EXPRESS VIEWS ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION THROUGH A JOINT COMMISSION WHICH WAS TO BE SET UP. NICARAGUA HAD OPTED FIRMLY FOR A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM: HE DENIED ANY TENDENCY TOWARDS A ONE-PARTY STATE.

5. BY COINCIDENCE, THE US ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS (MOTLEY) WAS ALSO IN THE UK FROM 4-7 FEBRUARY. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAW HIM ON 6 FEBRUARY AND GAVE HIM AN ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH RAMIREZ. MOTLEY ARGUED THAT PRESSURE FROM THE CONTRAS WAS A NECESSARY INCENTIVE TO MAKE THE NICARAGUANS NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON CONTADORA. THE US HAD POSTPONED FURTHER BILATERAL TALKS BECAUSE THE NICARAGUANS HAD BEEN SEEKING TO USE THEM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONTADORA

PROCESS, RATHER THAN AS AN ADJUNCT TO IT AS THE AMERICANS WISHED. WITHOUT POSITIVE MOVEMENT FROM NICARAGUA ON CONTADORA IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RESUME THE MANZANILLO TALKS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SUGGESTED THAT THE EXAMPLES OF EGYPT AND MOZAMBIQUE SHOWED THAT A POLICY OF CONTINUING CONTACTS DESIGNED TO STIMULATE CHANGE COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN CONFRONTATION.

6. YOU MAY DRAW ON PARAGRAPHS L-4 ABOVE IN CONVERSATION WITH RELIABLE CONTACTS. YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE INDICATE NO CHANGE IN BRITISH POLICY. WE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TO THE NICARAGUANS OUR VIEWS AT A HIGH LEVEL AND OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THEIR POLICIES AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS' MISGIVINGS ABOUT THEIR ARMS BUILD-UP. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES YOU SHOULD SAY THE VISIT WAS A NICARAGUAN INITIATIVE AND THAT APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE WERE IN RESPONSE TO A NICARAGUAN REQUEST. THE SECRETARY OF STATE EMPHASIZED HMG'S SUPPORT FOR THE CONTADORA PROCESS AND OUR WISH TO SEE PEACE, STABILITY, PLURALIST DEMOCRACY AND A SCALING DOWN OF ARMAMENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. YOU MAY CONFIRM, IF ASKED, THAT RAMIREZ EXPRESSED NICARAGUA'S WISH TO RENEW THE MANZANILLO TALKS.

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