

GR 1160A

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY FCO 090900Z

DESKBY BELMOPAN 090400Z

FM MEXICO CITY 082305 AUG 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO 249 OF 8 AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR)

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON GUATEMALA CITY.

Belize
Premi Minister
Quite a long report, but
you may like to read
through it. Had Carrington
spoke to you of these matters
MM
11/8
mf

FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STAT'S MEETING WITH PREMIER OF BELIZE

1. LORD CARRINGTON MET PRICE (WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SHOMAN) FOR HALF AN HOUR ON 8 AUGUST. HARDING WAS PRESENT AND WILL REPORT ORALLY TO MR RIDLEY IN MIAMI ON 10 AUGUST.

2. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE HAD THOUGHT IT SENSIBLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRICE'S PRESENCE IN MEXICO CITY TO MAKE CONTACT, BUT DID NOT WISH TO GO INTO DETAILS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE DID NOT WISH TO CROSS WIRES WITH MR RIDLEY, WHO WOULD BE HOLDING SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH PRICE ON 11 AUGUSTV. HE ASSURED PRICE THAT THE FOUR PRINCIPLES AGREED IN LONDON IN JANUARY HAD BEEN ADHERED TO. IF WE COULD GET THE GUATEMALANS TO AGREE THROUGH NEGOTIATION TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE, IT WOULD BE A CONSIDERABLE BONUS. WITHOUT GUATEMALAN AGREEMENT, LIFE WOULD BE LESS SECURE FOR THE BELIZEANS. HE DID NOT KNOW IF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE: BUT MR RIDLEY HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO THE GUATEMALANS THAT, WHETHER THEY LIKED IT OR NOT, WE INTENDED TO PROCEED TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE. THERE WERE SOME SIGNS THAT THEY WERE INCLINED TO COME TO TERMS WITH THIS REALITY.

3. PRICE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT WE HAD GONE OFF THE RAILS OF THE STRATEGY AGREED IN JANUARY. A TIMETABLE FOR INDEPENDENCE SHOULD HAVE BEEN LAID DOWN. TERRITORIAL CESSION AND THE EROSION OF SOVEREIGNTY SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH THE GUATEMALANS. THE GUATEMALAN PROPOSAL FOR A TEN YEAR CONDOMINIUM FOLLOWED BY A PLEBISCITE WAS UNACCEPTABLE. THE BELIZEANS HAD BEEN TOLD THAT WE WOULD GET THE US GOVERNMENT TO PUT PRESSURE ON GUATEMALA: THIS HAD NOT COME ABOUT. LITTLE WORK APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN DONE ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A MULTILATERAL GUARANTEE OF THE SECURITY OF BELIZE.

4. IN REPLY, LORD CARRINGTON AND HARDING REPEATED THAT MR RIDLEY HAD MADE ENTIRELY CLEAR TO THE GUATEMALANS OUR INTENTION TO PROCEED TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE, THOUGH SPECIFIC

CONFIDENTIAL

/ DATE

DATES HAD NOT YET BEEN MENTIONED. THE NEW YORK MEETING HAD BEEN PURELY AN EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION AT OFFICIAL LEVEL TO LOOK INTO THE 1859 TREATY: COURTENAY HAD ATTENDED: THERE HAD BEEN NO COMMITMENT ON EITHER SIDE. THE AMERICANS UNFORTUNATELY NO LONGER APPEARED TO EXERCISE A STRONG INFLUENCE OVER GUATEMALAN ACTIONS.

5. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION ON BELIZEAN SECURITY, PRICE SUGGESTED THAT A COMMONWEALTH FORCE SHOULD BE ASSEMBLED, AS IN RHODESIA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. HE SAW THE BARBADOS GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE. LORD CARRINGTON POINTED OUT THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN RHODESIA HAD BEEN VERY DIFFERENT: AND THERE HAD NOT BEEN A COMMONWEALTH PEACEKEEPING FORCE, BUT MERELY TROOPS IN A LIMITED MONITORING ROLE. THE CHANCES OF ASSEMBLING A GENUINE COMMONWEALTH FORCE FOR BELIZE SEEMED NEGLIGIBLE. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHICH - IF ANY - COUNTRIES WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS. A BARBADIAN ELEMENT WOULD NOT BE VERY SIGNIFICANT, IN THE FACE OF THE GUATEMALAN ARMY: AND IN LORD CARRINGTON'S TALKS IN BARBADOS ON 2 AUGUST, THE BARBADIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NOT SEEMED KEEN TO COMMIT THEMSELVES. LORD CARRINGTON SUGGESTED THAT, WHILE A FEW COMMONWEALTH TROOPS WOULD NOT MAKE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE, A UN GUARANTEE MIGHT HAVE A CONSIDERABLE DETERRENT EFFECT. HE SUGGESTED THAT PRICE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS WITH THE MEXICANS LATER IN THE DAY. SHOMAN ARGUED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WOULD BLOCK IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL A UN GUARANTEE OF BELIZE'S SECURITY. LORD CARRINGTON DID NOT AGREE.

6. PRICE EXPRESSED SUSPICION ABOUT MR RIDLEY'S FORTHCOMING SOCIAL VISIT TO GUATEMALA AT THE INVITATION OF CASTILLO VALDES (AND SHOMAN LATER COMPLAINED THAT THE BELIZEANS HAD NOT SEEN THE RECORDS OF MR RIDLEY'S TALKS WITH CASTILLO VALDES DURING THE LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO THE UK). PRICE SUGGESTED THAT SPECIFIC AREAS, SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SCOPE OF TALKS BETWEEN MR RIDLEY AND THE GUATEMALANS. LORD CARRINGTON POINTED OUT THAT MR RIDLEY WOULD BE VISITING BELIZE BEFORE GUATEMALA, AND THAT PRICE SHOULD THEREFORE EXPRESS HIS CONCERNS DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTER OF STATE. IN ANY CASE, MR RIDLEY WAS NOT GOING TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE GUATEMALANS.

7. PICKING UP PRICE'S COMPLAINT, HARDING SAID THAT WE HAD NOT BEEN BEST PLEASED BY PRICE'S REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH LORD CARRINGTON THROUGH UNORTHODOX CHANNELS, FOLLOWING HIS FAILURE TO RESPOND TO MR RIDLEY'S INVITATION. THIS WAS NOT THE WAY TO BUILD CONFIDENCE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

8. SHOMAN REVERTED TO THE CESSION OF TERRITORY. THE BELIZEANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR FROM THE OUTSET THAT THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. THEY HAD ALSO TOLD MR RIDLEY IN BERMUDA THAT THEY WERE OPPOSED TO HIS QUOTE COSMETIC UNQUOTE IDEAS, FOR EXAMPLE FOR THE JOINT ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISPUTED TERRITORY. THE GUATEMALANS HAD TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE FLOATING OF COSMETIC PROPOSALS, AND HAD DEVELOPED THE IDEA OF A CONDOMINIUM AND A PLEBISCITE. ALTHOUGH PRICE HAD IMMEDIATELY SAID THAT THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE, THE FCO HAD MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT WHICH REFERRED TO SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN THE TALKS WITH GUATEMALA. LORD CARRINGTON TOLD SHOMAN VERY FIRMLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT NEGOTIATE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BELIZE WITHOUT THROWING OUT IDEAS AND EXPLORING DIFFERENT AVENUES. IT WAS NOT HELPFUL IF THE BELIZEANS REJECTED EVERY IDEA OUT OF HAND, OR INFLEXIBLY OPPOSED EVERY ATTEMPT TO FIND A WAY THROUGH. WE WERE AGREED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND ON THE NEED FOR EARLY INDEPENDENCE. WE WERE NOT GOING TO SELL BELIZE DOWN THE RIVER. IT WOULD DO BELIZE NO GOOD IF WE SIMPLY GRANTED INDEPENDENCE AND LEFT. WE WERE TRYING TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF BELIZE. THE BEST WAY OF DOING THIS WOULD BE THROUGH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT: AS IN THE RHODESIA NEGOTIATIONS, WE COULD NOT HOPE TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT EXPLORING DIFFERENT IDEAS AND SHOWING A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY. WE WERE TRYING TO HELP BELIZE AND NEEDED THE CO-OPERATION OF MINISTERS THERE. IF THE BELIZEANS DID NOT LIKE PARTICULAR IDEAS, WE WOULD TRY OTHERS.

9. PRICE SAID THAT WE SHOULD AVOID THE MISTAKE OF THE PREVIOUS BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF LAND CESSION. LORD CARRINGTON REPEATED THAT WE WERE OPPOSED TO THE CESSION OF TERRITORY. HE SAID THAT THE BELIZEANS SHOULD NOW GO OVER THE GROUND IN DETAIL WITH MR RIDLEY. WE COULD THEN DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT. THE MAIN POINT AT ISSUE WAS THE SECURITY OF BELIZE. THE MEXICANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD NOT GIVE A MILITARY GUARANTEE. WE THEREFORE NEEDED TO DEVISE OTHER WAYS, HENCE HIS SUGGESTION OF A UN GUARANTEE. HE ASKED PRICE TO GIVE THIS SOME THOUGHT. THE BRITISH COULD NOT STAY FOR EVER: AND A BRITISH PRESENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO CHARGES OF NEO-COLONIALISM.

CONFIDENTIAL

10. PRICE ASSERTED THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION WAS UNITED IN ITS APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. AS A FINAL COMPLAINT, HE PROTESTED THAT MR RIDLEY HAD PREVENTED THE ATTENDANCE OF A LEGAL ADVISER FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT THE THE NEW YORK TALKS. HARDING SAID THAT WE HAD AN OPEN MIND ON THE ATTACHMENT OF A LEGAL ADVISER; BUT THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE IN THE TALKS ON THE 1859 TREATY, WHERE THE INSERTION OF A FOURTH ELEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION.

-COX

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

BELIZE/GUATEMALA LIMITED

M & C D
DEFENCE D
S AM D
NAD
UND
PUSD
P & C S
LEGAL ADVISERS
CCD
NEWS D

OID
PS
PS/LPS
PS/MR RIDLEY
PS/PUS
SIR E YOUDE
MR P H MOBERLY
MR HARDING
LORD N G LENNOX
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

BELIZE/GUATEMALA

4
CONFIDENTIAL