

GRS 1100A

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM GUATEMALA CITY 15/1445Z JAN 81

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 018 OF 15 JANUARY

INFO: PRIORITY BELMOPAN (PERSONAL)

ROUTINE WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK MEXICO CITY

Belize.

*No need to read in full
but see sideline passages.*

overleaf.

Ant

mt

MY TELNO 014 : BELIZE/GUATEMALA

1. HERRERA, SKINNER KLEE, MENDOZA AND RODRIGUEZ CAME TO MY HOUSE ON 14 JANUARY FOR TALKS WITH MYSELF AND NASH.
2. HERRERA BEGAN BY STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MLN AND THE ARMY IN PUTTING ANY SETTLEMENT OVER TO PUBLIC OPINION. HE SAID THAT DESPITE THE PATRIOTIC NOISES MADE BY THE MLN, IF A SETTLEMENT WERE AGREED WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT THE MLN COULD BE BROUGHT INTO LINE TO ACCEPT, OR AT LEAST NOT TO IMPEDE IT, : IF NECESSARY BY MEANS OF THE GOVERNMENT BUYING ENOUGH CONGRESSMEN WHEN IT CAME TO A VOTE IN CONGRESS.
3. THEY THEN SHOWED SURPRISE THAT WE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A REPLY TO MR RIDLEY'S MESSAGES. IT SEEMED THAT THE DELAY IS DUE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S PROCRASTINATION, AND THAT THE REPLY WILL ASK FOR TALKS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY.
4. ON THE CONTENT OF THE TALKS THEY AGREED THAT IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE BRITISH SIDE WOULD WISH TO BEGIN WITH THE SIXTEEN POINTS PUT FORWARD BY MR RIDLEY IN NEW YORK IN OCTOBER : HOWEVER THEY FELT THAT MOST OF THE SIXTEEN POINTS WERE PERIPHERAL TO THE REAL PROBLEMS.
5. I SUGGESTED THAT THE REAL PROBLEMS WERE THEIR OWN LEGAL CASE AND THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE. I SAID THAT IF BOTH SIDES AGREED, AS PART OF A GENERAL SETTLEMENT, TO ACCEPT THAT ARTICLE SEVEN OF THE 1859 TREATY HAD NOT BEEN COMPLIED WITH, AND IF BELIZE RECOGNISED HER CENTRAL AMERICAN STATUS IN HER CONSTITUTION, THIS SHOULD HELP THE LEGAL PROBLEM. THEY AGREED. ON TERRITORY I SUGGESTED THAT THE OFFER , MADE IN NEW YORK IN JULY, OF A LONG LEASE OF THE SOUTHERN CAYS SHOULD SURELY MEET GUATEMALAN REQUIREMENTS. THEY DID NOT AGREE.
6. HERRERA SUGGESTED THAT IF THE SOUTHERN CAYS COULD BE DEMOLISHED, AND THE BOUNDARY OF GUATEMALAN/BELIZEAN TERRITORIAL WATERS REDRAWN ACCORDINGLY, THIS WOULD SUFFICE. I SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE LESS DRASTIC TO IGNORE THE CAYS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DRAWING BOUNDARIES. MENDOZA SAID THAT MARITIME CONCESSIONS MADE IN THIS WAY WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH FOR THE ARMY.
7. RODRIGUEZ RESURRECTED THE IDEA OF JOINT ADMINISTRATION, I SAID THAT THIS WAS A NON-STARTER. HERRERA THEN SUGGESTED THAT GUATEMALA BE GIVEN A LONG LEASE NOT ONLY OF THE SOUTHERN CAYS BUT ALSO OF THE AREA BETWEEN THE MOHO AND SARSTOON RIVERS. WE PURSUED THIS IDEA, AGREEING THAT THE AREA SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION. MENDOZA SAID THAT THE LEASE OF MAINLAND TERRITORY, WHICH WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO MOVE IN A DETACHMENT OF TROOPS AND RAISE THE GUATEMALAN FLAG, WOULD ENABLE HIM TO SELL A SETTLEMENT TO THE ARMY : IN DISCUSSION HE AGREED THAT BOTH GUATEMALAN AND BELIZEAN FLAGS COULD BE RAISED. THEY ALL SAID THAT SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD NOT DEROGATE BELIZEAN SOVEREIGNTY, BUT WOULD GIVE THE GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

/AND

AND THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY TO POLITICAL AND MILITARY OPINION THAT THEY HAD OBTAINED THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET FOR SO MANY YEARS. THEY QUOTED HONG KONG AS A PRECEDENT, AND SAID THAT GUATEMALA WOULD HAPPILY PAY THE ANNUAL BUDGETARY FIGURE OF 10 MILLION DOLLARS, OR MORE, AS ANNUAL RENT.

8. I PROMISED TO PASS THIS IDEA TO YOU, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANY SUCH IDEA WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE BELIZEAN GOVERNMENT. THEY SUGGESTED THAT PRESSURE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON PREMIER PRICE BY HMG, THE US GOVERNMENT, AND EVEN BY GENERAL TORRIJOS TO MAKE HIM SEE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SACRIFICING BELIZEAN TERRITORY OR SOVEREIGNTY, BUT THAT HE WOULD BE GAINING PEACE AND PROSPERITY BY AGREEING TO SUCH A PROPOSAL.

9. THEY STATED VERY CLEARLY THAT IF NO SUCH SETTLEMENT COULD BE AGREED OUR OTHER PROPOSALS WERE IRRELEVANT, AND THAT GUATEMALA WOULD REACT "VIOLENTLY" TO BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE. THEY QUOTED THE MORROCCAN GREEN MARCH AS AN EXAMPLE, AND THEY SAID THAT BELIZE'S ECONOMY COULD BE CRIPPLED BY A FEW BOMBS IN SUGAR MILLS. THEY ALL AGREED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF A SETTLEMENT THE CONSULATE WOULD BE EXPELLED AT THE TIME OF BELIZE'S INDEPENDENCE.

10. HERRERA WAS THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE; SKINNER KLEE THE GLOOMIEST, SAYING THAT GUATEMALA WOULD DO BEST TO LEAVE AS MANY PROBLEMS AS POSSIBLE UNRESOLVED SO THAT THE PROBLEM COULD BE REVIVED AT A SUITABLE TIME IN THE FUTURE. MENDOZA WAS FAIRLY INSCRUTABLE, HE TALKED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE JUDGEMENT OF HISTORY, AND ONLY CAME TO LIFE WHEN THE IDEA OF A LEASE OF MAINLAND TERRITORY WAS DISCUSSED. THEY ALL STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO THE SEA, AND QUOTED BOLIVIA'S RECENT REVIVAL OF HER TERRITORIAL CLAIM AGAINST CHILE AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW SUCH CLAIMS CAN FESTER FOR A CENTURY. THEY ALL, ALSO, MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHAT MATTERED WAS TO CONVINCE PRESIDENT LUCAS OF THE CONTENT OF A SETTLEMENT, SAYING IN PRETTY DIRECT TERMS THAT IF THE PRESIDENT AGREED A SETTLEMENT ANY BODY STANDING OUT AGAINST IT WOULD BE PUTTING HIMSELF IN CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL DANGER. THEY SPOKE WISTFULLY OF A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN THE US ATTITUDE, BUT ACCEPTED THAT TIME WAS AGAINST THEM AND THAT THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION WAS UNLIKELY TO GIVE A HIGH PRIORITY TO THE BELIZE PROBLEM.

11. I SAID THAT I HOPED THAT THE IDEA OF LEASING MAINLAND TERRITORY WOULD BE PUT FORWARD BY THE GUATEMALAN SIDE AT THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS. SKINNER KLEE SHOWED SIGNS OF WANTING TO REVIVE DOCUMENTS TABLED AT MEETINGS OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS OR SO, BUT THE OTHERS AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CONCENTRATE ON IDEAS DISCUSSED AT AND SINCE THE MEETING IN BERMUDA IN MAY 1980.

12. IT BECAME VERY CLEAR THAT THE OCTOBER SIXTEEN POINTS, OR ANY VARIATION ON THEM, WILL BE INSUFFICIENT AND THAT WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT THE GUATEMALAN REACTION WILL HAVE TO BE VIOLENT. THEIR IDEA OF EXPANDING POINT NUMBER 14 OF THE OCTOBER 16 POINTS TO COVER AN AREA OF MAINLAND AS WELL AS THE CAYS SEEMS TO OFFER A COMPROMISE

CONFIDENTIAL

NO CESSION OF TERRITORY OR SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE REQUIRED, BUT GUATEMALA MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT AND OFFER A FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP TO AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE IF THE IDEA WERE ACCEPTED BY BELIZE. WHETHER PREMIER PRICE COULD ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A LEASE, AT A RENT OF TEN MILLION DOLLARS PER ANNUM, AND FOR WHAT AREA AND FOR HOW LONG, IS OF COURSE OPEN TO NEGOTIATION, AND WOULD SEEM LESS OF A DIMINUTION OF BELIZEAN SOVEREIGNTY THAN JOINT ADMINISTRATION. TH GUATEMALANS SEEM TO BE LOOKING TO US TO PERSUADE HIM THAT SUCH A DEAL MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF FACE ON BOTH SIDES. OTHERWISE THEY SEEM HAPPY TO ENTER INTO A PERIOD OF CONTINUAL AND VIOLENT CONFRONTATION.

WILMSHURST

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

BELIZE/GUATEMALA LIMITED

M & C D
DEF D
S AM D
NAD
UND
FUSD
PLANNING STAFF
LEGAL ADVISERS
CCD
NEWS D
INFORMATION D
PS

PS/LPS
PS/MR HURD
PS/MR RIDLEY
PS/FUS
SIR E YOUDE
MR DAY
SIR A ACLAND
MR P H MOBERLY
MR HARDING
LORD N G LENNOX
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

BELIZE/GUATEMALA

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

-3-

CONFIDENTIAL