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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO 261 OF 26 JANUARY

INFO GUATEMALA CITY, BELMOPAN (PERSONAL FOR GOVERNOR), MEXICO CITY,
UKMIS NEW YORK, TEGUCIGALPA, SAN JOSE, HAVANA.

MY CALL ON HAIG: CENTRAL AMERICA

1. WHEN I CALLED ON HAIG TODAY, I MENTIONED OUR INTENTION TO BRING BELIZE TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE AND EXPLAINED WHY WE FELT THAT, DESPITE POSSIBLE GUATEMALAN OBJECTIONS, WE WOULD STICK TO OUR PLAN. I SAID THAT WE WOULD HOPE FOR AMERICAN SUPPORT IN THIS. HAIG REPLIED BY REFERRING TO THE PRESSURES TO WHICH WE HAD BEEN SUBJECTED FROM WASHINGTON IN THE DAYS WHEN WE WERE BUILDING UP OUR BELIZE GARRISON. HE HIMSELF AS SACEUR HAD SUPPORTED US (THOUGH IT MEANT WITHDRAWING TROOPS FROM NATO). HE AFFIRMED THAT WE WOULD NOT QUOTE GET ANY STICK UNQUOTE FROM HIM PERSONALLY OR FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, NOR WOULD WE FEEL ANY HOT BREATH ON OUR NECKS FROM WASHINGTON AS REGARDS THE TIMING OF THE DECISIONS WE TOOK OVER BELIZE. HAIG EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT WE COULD PROCEED ON THIS IN TANDEM AND IN STEP.

2. HAIG CONTINUED THAT HE WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF LEAVING UNTENDED CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA. HE DESCRIBED THEIR INCURSIONS AS RAMPANT, AND THE SITUATION AS ONE OF HAEMORRHAGE. HUNDREDS OF TONS OF ARMS HAD BEEN AIR-LIFTED FROM NICARAGUA TO THE INSURGENTS IN EL SALVADOR. THERE WOULD BE NO AGONISING ON THE AMERICANS' PART ABOUT HEARTS AND MINDS: THEY WERE FACED WITH A CLEAR-CUT CASE OF EXTERNAL SUBVERSION.

3. I SUGGESTED THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THE TALKS ON THE CARIBBEAN THAT WE HAD PERIODICALLY HELD WITH THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. HAIG WELCOMED THIS, BUT SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED BETWEEN THE TWO CANDIDATES HE WAS CONSIDERING FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS. I SUGGESTED THAT, ONCE HE WAS CHOSEN, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD TALK TO HIM PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT.

HENDERSON

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

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