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OO GUATEMALA

GRS 470

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FM FCO 311753Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE GUATEMALA CITY

TELEGRAM NUMBER 186 OF 31 JUL

IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN(PERSONAL)

PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TELNOS 323 AND 333 AND BELMOPAN TELNO 411

BELIZE/GUATEMALA: POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS

1. THE CONVERSATIONS REPORTED IN YOUR TURS ARE CERTAINLY ENCOURAGING, BUT WE ARE FAR FROM SURE THAT THEY CAN BE TAKEN ALTOGETHER AT THEIR FACE VALUE. WE SUSPECT THAT THE GUATEMALANS MAY, AT LEAST IN PART, BE RESPONDING TO US PRESSURE AND THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN MAY BE TO PUT THEMSELVES IN THE MOST FAVOURABLE LIGHT FOR THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
2. THERE ARE SOME OBVIOUS PROBLEMS ABOUT AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. MR RIDLEY GAVE AN UNDERTAKING DURING HIS VISIT TO BELIZE IN APRIL THAT IF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE HEADS OF AGREEMENT RESULTED IN A TREATY THIS WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO A REFERENDUM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIT IN NEGOTIATIONS AND A REFERENDUM BEFORE THE 21 SEPTEMBER DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE. EVEN IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE RESUMED AND A TREATY WERE NOT IN SIGHT BEFORE 21 SEPTEMBER WE COULD EXPECT CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION PRESSURE IN BELIZE TO POSTPONE INDEPENDENCE UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE CLEAR. WE SHOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO POSTPONE THE DATE, AND WOULD ONLY CONSIDER DOING SO IF, IN THE LIGHT OF A SERIOUSLY DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION IN BELIZE, PRICE HIMSELF ASKED US TO POSTPONE IT SO THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD CONTINUE.
3. WE CLEARLY CANNOT HOWEVER TURN THE GUATEMALANS DOWN FLAT. OUR STRATEGY MUST BE TO EXPLORE THE GUATEMALAN POSITION FURTHER ON A BILATERAL BASIS AND TO TRY TO PLAY THEM LONG. OUR PRECISE

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REACTION WILL DEPEND ON THE TERMS OF CASTILLO VALDEZ' MESSAGE TO MR RIDLEY, BUT WE SHOULD ENVISAGE A REPLY ASKING THE GUATEMALANS TO CLARIFY WHAT THEIR POSITION NOW IS, AND POSSIBLY PROPOSING PRELIMINARY LOW-KEY BILATERAL TALKS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL WITH THE AIM OF HOLDING OFF FULL SCALE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL AFTER 21 SEPTEMBER (BUT WITHOUT NECESSARILY SAYING THIS AT THE OUTSET). WE SHOULD NEED TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE GUATEMALANS THAT 21 SEPTEMBER IS A FIRM DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE WHICH WE CANNOT AT THIS STAGE CHANGE. WE SHOULD WANT TO ADD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO POINT IN HOLDING TALKS AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL UNLESS WE WERE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THEY WOULD RESULT IN THE SIGNING OF A TREATY. ANOTHER ABORTIVE MEETING WOULD BE OF NO USE TO ANY OF US. FINALLY, IT MIGHT BE WORTH POINTING OUT TO THE GUATEMALANS THAT PRICE WOULD HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING A REFERENDUM ON THE TREATY AFTER INDEPENDENCE, WHEN THERE WOULD BE NO DANGER OF PEOPLE VOTING ON THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE RATHER THAN THE TREATY.

4. WE SHALL BE SENDING INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF CASTILLO VALDEZ' MESSAGE, BUT SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY COMMENTS YOU OR OTHER RECIPIENTS MAY HAVE AT THIS STAGE.

CARRINGTON

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

BELIZE/GUATEMALA LIMITED		ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
M & C D	PS/LPS	BELIZE/GUATEMALA
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*Belize*

PS

PS/LPS

PS/MR RIDLEY

PS/NO 10 DOWNING STREET

PS/PUS

MR DAY

MR URE

*mb*

HD/M &amp; C D (2)

DIO CABINET OFFICE

HD/S AM D

HD/DEF D

HD/NEWS D

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FM GUATEMALA CITY 29/2000Z JUL 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 328

OF 29 JULY

R F I : IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN (PERSONAL)

R F I : PRIORITY WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

BELIZE/GUATEMALA

1. I GAVE A RECEPTION ON 29 JULY TO MARK THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. MY INVITATIONS TO THE OFFICIAL GUATEMALANS WERE REGRETTEED, BUT ON THE MORNING OF THE 29 JULY THE FOREIGN MINISTER TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT HE WOULD BE COMING AFTER ALL, AND SKINNER KLEE AND HERRERA ALSO CAME. THE TWO LATTER EXPLAINED THAT AT FIRST THEIR INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN NOT TO ATTEND, BUT AT A MEETING ON 28 JULY SUMMONED BY PRESIDENT LUCAS THEY HAD BEEN TOLD TO COME AND TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE WANTED TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION.

2. CASTILLO VALDEZ WHO STAYED AT THE PARTY FROM BEGINNING TO END

2. CASTILLO VALDEZ, WHO STAYED AT THE PARTY FROM BEGINNING TO END, CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING THAT HE HOPED THAT WE COULD KEEP TALKING. SKINNER KLEE AND HERRERA WERE MORE EXPLICIT. THEY SAID THAT LUCAS WAS AFRAID THAT IF NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED DURING HIS REMAINING MONTHS OF OFFICE THERE WAS A RISK OF HOSTILITIES UNDER THE NEXT PRESIDENT. LUCAS HAD DESCRIBED THOSE WHO HAD INSISTED ON MILITARY USE OF THE CAYS AS FOOLS, SAYING THAT ANY BASE BUILT ON THE CAYS COULD BE SWEEPED AWAY BY A HURRICANE AT ANY TIME, NO REQUIREMENT FOR MILITARY USE WAS NEEDED, ALL THAT WAS NECESSARY WAS THAT THERE SHOULD FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION, BE NO PROHIBITION OF MILITARY USE. HE HAD SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF DURATION OF GUATEMALAN USE OF THE CAYS WAS AN ARTIFICIAL PROBLEM: IN 15 YEARS EITHER BELIZE AND GUATEMALA WOULD BE FRIENDS OR THEY WOULD BE ENEMIES. ON ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS ALL THAT MATTERED WAS THE SNAKE, NOT THE SUGGESTION THAT THE MARITIME BOUNDARY RUN BETWEEN THE CAYS AND THE MAINLAND.

3. HERRERA WAS DELIGHTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S INSISTENCE ON STARTING AGAIN ON MORE SENSIBLE TERMS, SKINNER KLEE WAS LESS ENTHUSIASTIC BUT THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS NOW A REAL CHANCE OF GETTING AN AGREEMENT. THEY ASKED HOW THIS NEW APPROACH WOULD SQUARE WITH PREMIER PRICE'S CONCERN ABOUT A REFERENDUM. I SAID THAT THE PREMIER MIGHT CONSIDER TALKING AGAIN IF THE TIMING WERE SUCH THAT HE COULD SIGN AN AGREEMENT BEFORE INDEPENDENCE BUT SUBMIT IT TO A REFERENDUM AFTER INDEPENDENCE. THEY SAW NO PROBLEM WITH THIS.

4. SKINNER KLEE SAID THAT A REPLY TO MR RIDLEY'S LATEST MESSAGE WAS BEING DRAFTED. PRESIDENT LUCAS SAW THAT MESSAGE AS OFFERING A GOOD CHANCE OF FINDING A SETTLEMENT.

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HERRERA AND SKINNER KLEE ALL MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT THEIR PRESENCE IN MY HOUSE ON SUCH A PUBLIC OCCASION SHOULD BE SEEN AS A CLEAR GESTURE OF GOODWILL AND READINESS TO TRY AGAIN TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE BEFORE BELIZE BECAME INDEPENDENT. THIS MESSAGE WAS ALSO CONVEYED TO OTHER DIPLOMATS PRESENT.

6. I EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPLY TO MR RIDLEY'S MESSAGE WITHIN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. GRATEFUL TO LEARN WHETHER, IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CONSIDERABLE MOVE IN THE GUATEMALAN POSITION, I SHOULD MAKE ENCOURAGING NOISES ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE 21 SEPTEMBER. THEY ALL SAID THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK AFTER THAT DATE.