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TO IMMEDIATE BELMOPAN PERSONAL

TELEGRAM NUMBER PERSONAL 110 OF 7 AUGUST

AND INFO GUATEMALA CITY, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, MEXICO CITY
YOUR TELNO 429 : ARANDA

1. AFTER A PRELIMINARY MEETING WITH OFFICIALS, ARANDA AND ESQUIVEL SAW MR RIDLEY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. THEY STARTED BY DEMANDING THAT THERE SHOULD BE A REFERENDUM OR OTHER TEST OF PUBLIC OPINION IN BELIZE BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. THEY CLAIMED THAT MR RIDLEY HAD GIVEN THEM AN ABSOLUTE UNDERTAKING THAT REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA THERE WOULD BE SUCH A TEST. MR RIDLEY FIRMLY REFUTED THIS ALLEGATION AND MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT A REFERENDUM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE OR ANY POSTPONEMENT OF THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WAS NOW OUT OF THE QUESTION. THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE WAS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE, ELECTED ON A PLATFORM WHICH INCLUDED INDEPENDENCE. THE PROGRESS TO INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING THE SETTING OF THE DATE HAD BEEN MADE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE.
2. IT WAS ONLY WITH CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY THAT ARANDA COULD BE PERSUADED TO BROADEN THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSION, AND HE REPEATEDLY BROUGHT EVERY NEW AVENUE BACK TO HIS BASIC PROPOSITION. HE COMPLAINED BITTERLY, DESPITE BEING REMINDED THAT MR RIDLEY HAD INVITED THE JDP TO PARTICIPATE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, THAT THE BRITISH AND BELIZEAN GOVERNMENTS HAD CONSPIRED TO EXCLUDE THEM FROM BOTH NEGOTIATIONS AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES. HE SAID THAT PRICE HAD CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO MEET WITH HIM TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS. HE CITED HIS NON-DELIVERY OF MR RIDLEY'S INVITATION AS THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE.
3. MR RIDLEY SOUGHT WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS TO EXTRACT FROM ARANDA WHETHER THE JDP WANTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA TO CONTINUE AND WHAT THEY WOULD HOPE TO ACHIEVE THAT HAD NOT BEEN

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COVERED BY THE HEADS OF AGREEMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE HEADS OF AGREEMENT THEMSELVES HAD BEEN THE END PRODUCT OF A PROCESS IN WHICH GUATEMALAN DEMANDS HAD BEEN PROGRESSIVELY REDUCED AS THE UK HAD TAKEN SUCCESSIVE CONSTITUTIONAL STEPS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE. HE TOLD ARANDA IN CONFIDENCE (AND ARANDA PROMISED TO RESPECT THIS) THAT SINCE A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE HAD BEEN SET WE HAD RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT THE GUATEMALANS MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MODIFY THEIR POSITION YET AGAIN. IF THIS PROVED TO BE THE CASE IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH A FAIR CHANCE OF CONCLUDING A TREATY THAT ALL BELIZEANS COULD ACCEPT. WOULD ARANDA BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN SUCH NEGOTIATIONS?

4. ARANDA TRIED TO LINK ANY UDP PARTICIPATION WITH A COMMITMENT TO A REFERENDUM ON THE RESULT BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. HE DID HOWEVER, IN THE END, AGREE TO PUT THIS PROPOSITION TO HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES AND TO ENTER INTO A SERIOUS DIALOGUE WITH THE PREMIER WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS ON EITHER SIDE, IF THE PREMIER FOR HIS PART COULD BE PREVAILED UPON TO DISCUSS THIS AND OTHER MATTERS WHICH PREOCCUPIED THE UDP. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD PREFER SUCH A DIALOGUE TO TAKE PLACE EITHER UNDER YOUR CHAIRMANSHIP OR AT LEAST WITH YOU PRESENT. WE OURSELVES WOULD REGARD YOUR PRESENCE AS VITAL TO ENSURE THAT HMG'S INTERESTS DO NOT GO BY DEFAULT AND THAT WE GET AN ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSION.

5. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD GIVE THE PREMIER AN ACCOUNT OF MR RIDLEY'S MEETING WITH ARANDA AND URGE HIM TO ACCEPT MR RIDLEY'S SUGGESTION OF DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN PRICE AND ARANDA ON THE BASIS THAT THESE SHOULD BE (IN THE FORMULATION HE AGREED WITH ARANDA) 'TO DISCUSS VARIOUS ISSUES CONNECTED WITH PROGRESS TO INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING ANY ACTION TO BE TAKEN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE IN RELATION TO THE DISPUTE WITH GUATEMALA'. PLEASE STRESS THAT MR RIDLEY ATTACHES THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO MAKING THIS EFFORT TO ARREST THE INCREASING POLARISATION IN BELIZE AND TO REMOVE AS MANY OF THE CAUSES OF RESENTMENT AS POSSIBLE AND THAT THEREFORE NO TOPIC SHOULD BE EXCLUDED. BUT THE PRIME PURPOSE SHOULD BE TO TRY TO ESTABLISH A MUTUALLY COMPATIBLE POSITION WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF

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NEGOTIATIONS.

6. ARANDA AND ESQUIVEL LEAVE LONDON TOMORROW EVENING. THEY WILL SPEND A DAY IN NEW YORK AND ARRIVE BACK IN BELIZE ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT ARANDA SHOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU ON HIS RETURN.

CARRINGTON

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

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