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 FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7854  
 INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BELIZE 0108  
 RUESBA/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0223  
 RUESGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0629  
 RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0307  
 RUESLM/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0250  
 RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0425  
 RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0588  
 RUESJO/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0481  
 RUESAL/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0459  
 RUESNA/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0158

BT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 01317 ----- COMBINED SECTION -----

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 01/15/88 (GAVIN, JOHN) DR-M  
 TAGS: OREP, ELAB, PEPR, MX  
 SUBJECT: CODELS BAKER AND SIMPSON VISIT WITH PRESIDENT  
 LOPEZ PORTILLO

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY. DRAFT NOT CLEARED WITH CODELS BAKER AND  
 SIMPSON. CODELS BAKER AND SIMPSON VISITED GDM PRESIDENT  
 JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO AT LOS PINOS, JANUARY 13 AT 1000. THE

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CONVERSATION DEALT ENTIRELY WITH CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CUBAN ISSUES. LOPEZ PORTILO FOCUSED ON WHAT HE TERMED THE THREE BASIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE REGION: THE POLITICAL STANCE OF CUBA; THE STATUS OF NICARAGUA, AND THE CRISIS IN EL SALVADOR.

3. OVERVIEW. AFTER DESCRIBING THE CODEL'S PRIOR VISITS TO LATIN AMERICAN STATES AND PASSING ON PRESIDENT REAGAN'S GREETINGS TO JLP, SENATOR BAKER SAID THAT THE CODEL HOPED JLP WOULD PROVIDE IT WITH AN OVERVIEW OF CENTRAL AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS. JLP AT FIRST GAVE THE OBLIGATORY DEMURRAL THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS ON CENTRAL AMERICA TO U.S. OFFICIALS SO OFTEN HE FELT A BIT INHIBITED FROM REPEATING THEM; HE THEN, HOWEVER, DISCUSSED AT LENGTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HEMISPHERE. POINTING OUT THAT THE ALREADY COMPLEX RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THE REGION HAVE BECOME MORE COMPLEX DUE TO NORTH/SOUTH DEVELOPMENTS AND EAST/WEST RIVALRIES, HE SAID "LATIN AMERICA IS BEING CRUCIFIED ON THE AXES OF THESE CONFLICTING INTERESTS" (HERE HE MOTIONED WITH HIS HAND AS THOUGH BLESSING THE GATHERING). TOUCHING BRIEFLY ON CONDITIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA, HE THEN FOCUSED ON CENTRAL AMERICAN PROBLEMS. HE BEGAN BY NOTING THAT THE TOTAL POPULATION OF ALL FIVE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES IS ABOUT THAT OF MEXICO CITY; YET THE REGION HAS BECOME THE FOCAL POINT OF HEMISPHERIC DEVELOPMENTS BECAUSE IT IS MOST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CRUCIFIXION TO WHICH HE HAD JUST REFERRED. THE AREA'S PROBLEMS, HE SAID, ARE INTIMATELY TIED TO WORLD ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, WITH ALL THE LOCAL ECONOMIES BEING "PUNISHED" BY THE STATE OF THE WORLD ECONOMY. SINCE THEY CANNOT SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS ON THEIR OWN, HE ADDED, MEXICO HAS TRIED TO FOLLOW UP CANCUN BY STIMULATING THE INTEREST OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IN CONTRIBUTING SOLUTIONS--A PROCESS COMPLICATED BY THE EAST/WEST STRUGGLE.

4. EL SALVADOR. JLP EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD NOT REFER TO NON-INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR BECAUSE IT WAS A GIVEN IN HIS ENTIRE ANALYSIS. HE STRESSED THAT MEXICO HAD RECOMMENDED A POLITICAL SOLUTION--AS OPPOSED TO A PURELY ELECTORAL ONE--IN WHICH THE VIEWS OF ALL THE

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PROTAGONISTS ARE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO ELECTIONS EVEN WHEN THEY ARE ANTAGONISTIC. HE ADDED THAT POSSIBLY A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY COULD PROVIDE THE BASES FOR A SOLUTION (AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN HONDURAS).

5. NICARAGUA. MATTERS ARE MORE COMPLICATED IN NICARAGUA. JLP SAID, BECAUSE WE (I.E. PRESUMABLY BOTH MEXICO AND THE U.S.) DID NOT CONTRIBUTE IN TIME TO A PLURALISTIC SOLUTION, NOR DEVELOP A SUPPORT SYSTEM THAT MIGHT HAVE EASED THE POLITICAL PRESSURES ARISING FROM THE POPULAR REVOLUTION. ISOLATING NICARAGUA HAS WORSENED THE SITUATION, WHICH HAS NOW BECOME PART OF THE CLASSIC EAST/WEST CONFLICT. JLP CONCLUDED THAT HAVING FELT CONFRONTED, THE SANDINISTAS ARE NOW ARMING AND MINIMIZING POLITICAL SOLUTIONS, AND THAT THE ISSUE HAS TURNED INTO A U.S.-SOVIET PROBLEM VIA CUBA.

6. GUATEMALA. IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR BAKER'S INQUIRY ON GUATEMALA, JLP RESPONDED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD GO THE WAY OF THE OTHERS. GUATEMALA, HE SAID, IS MORE INTEGRATED, AND ITS GOVERNMENT IS STRONGER. THERE IS VIOLENCE, BUT THE COUNTRY IS ABOUT TO HAVE ELECTIONS WHICH MAY LEAD TO A HEALTHY SOLUTION. MOREOVER, HE SAID, GUATEMALA'S VIOLENCE IS NOT CRITICAL IN THAT IT HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE AND DOES NOT CARRY THE RISK THAT IT DOES IN EL SALVADOR.

7. CUBA. ACCORDING TO JLP, CUBA ENTERED THE SOVIET

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SPHERE OF INFLUENCE FOR MANY REASONS, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WERE A LONG SERIES OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS. HE BELIEVED THAT THE TIME WAS PROPITIOUS FOR AN INTELLIGENT SOLUTION TO THE U.S.-CUBAN PROBLEM BECAUSE CASTRO, UNLIKE THE NICARAGUANS, WAS NOT CORNERED. OF COURSE, HE SAID, THE SOLUTIONS TO BOTH PROBLEMS (I.E. CUBA AND NICARAGUA) COULD BE EITHER CALM OR BLOODY, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE IN BOTH COUNTRIES ARE WILLING TO DIE IF PRESSED. "I UNDERSTAND THESE PEOPLE," HE ADDED, "WE ARE RACIALLY ALIKE." HE REPEATED THAT "MANY ARE WILLING TO DIE."

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--JLP SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR IMPROVED U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS EXIST; IF THEY DO NOT, IT IS BECAUSE THE BASIS FOR SUCH A RELATIONSHIP IS LACKING IN THE U.S.-SOVIET CONTEXT. AS LONG AS THE SUPERPOWERS DO NOT HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING, HE ADDED, NONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH CUBA OR CENTRAL AMERICA CAN BE SOLVED. THAT IS WHY, HE EXPLAINED, MEXICO IS ADVOCATING U.S.-SOVIET UNDERSTANDINGS IN CUBA, POLAND, NICARAGUA, ETC. AS FOR THE FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS, JLP MAINTAINED THAT WHILE THE CUBAN REVOLUTION HAS SOLVED CUBA'S MANY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES, CUBA NOW HAS A STANDARD OF LIVING PROBLEM, WHICH CAN ONLY BE AMELIORATED THROUGH RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., NOT MEXICO. MEXICO, HE NOTED, COULD HELP BY BUYING SUGAR, AND AIDING IN OIL EXPLORATION, BUT THAT IS ALL. SENATOR BAKER ASKED WHETHER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN CUBA WAS SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE U.S. TO NEGOTIATE A DIMINUTION OF CUBAN TIES TO THE SOVIET UNION. JLP SAID YES, SO LONG AS THE AGREEMENT DID NOT DESTROY CUBA'S FUNDAMENTAL "SYSTEM OF LOYALTIES". SENATOR LAXALT ASKED WHETHER IN VIEW OF CUBA'S PRESENT DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR, CUBA COULD HAVE MEANINGFUL TALKS WITH THE U.S. JLP SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MATTER, BUT THAT IF THE U.S. APPROACHED IT IN THE SAME SPIRIT AS IN THE CHINA NEGOTIATIONS, THERE WOULD BE A REAL POSSIBILITY FOR AN ACCORD. HE EXPLAINED THAT NIXON HAD NOT TOUCHED ON IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES OR INTERVENED IN CHINA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD, BUT HAD INSTEAD SOUGHT INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS FOR PEACE. A SIMILAR DETENTE, HE SAID, IS NEEDED WITH REGARD TO CUBA AND THE PACIFICATION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN/CARIBBEAN AREA. JLP CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING OF DETENTE, AND NOTHING MORE, AND INSISTED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOW PROPITIOUS FOR A BEGINNING. SPEAKING FOR THE CODEL, SENATOR HOLLINGS SAID THAT JLP'S LEADERSHIP WAS NEEDED TO SPREAD DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION, AND THAT HE COULD NOT REMAIN NEUTRAL. JLP REPLIED THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING OFFICE IN TEN MONTHS, AND THAT MEXICAN PRESIDENTS FADE AWAY. GAVIN

END OF MESSAGE

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