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EXDIS

S/S-O PLEASE ALERT AMB. SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, MX, X
SUBJECT: CODEL RICHARDSON CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY
- SEPULVEDA ON CONTADORA

1. SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH SOME FIREWORKS, CODEL RICHARDSON EXPLAINED TO FOREIGN SECRETARY SEPULVEDA THE REALITY OF GROWING AMERICAN DISILLUSIONMENT WITH SANDANISTAS. SEPULVEDA PUT HIS FOOT IN IT WHEN HE COMPARED US POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA TO SOVIET POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN AND BROUGHT OUT FOR ALL TO SEE THE MISCONCEPTIONS WHICH SOMETIME GUIDE MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. CODEL RESPONDED STRONGLY AND MEXICANS TOOK CAREFUL NOTE OF CONGRESSMEN'S REMARKS. DESPITE THIS EXCHANGE, MEETING WAS CORDIAL THROUGHOUT WITH SEPULVEDA, IN RESPONSE TO CODEL QUESTIONS, PROVIDING INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO CURRENT MEXICAN ATTITUDES AND STATE OF PLAY OF CONTADORA NEGOTIATIONS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY STRESSED NEED FOR CONTINUANCE OF MANZANILLO DIALOGUE AND SAID THAT NICARAGUANS NEED TO BE TOLD THAT BOTH SIDES MUST MAKE CONCESSIONS; THAT GRN AND PERHAPS GUATEMALA AS WELL, FIND THE TEGUCIGALPA PROPOSALS FOR REVISION OF THE ACTA DRAFT INADMISSIBLE, BUT THAT CONTADORA WAS WORKING TO FIND COMMON GROUND AND TO BRIDGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ACTA AND TEGUCIGALPA DOCUMENTS. END SUMMARY.
2. CODEL RICHARDSON WAS ACCOMPANIED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY BY CHARGE

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BUSBY AND DEPUTY POL COUNSELOR. IN ATTENDANCE ON MEXICAN SIDE WERE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR BILATERAL AFFAIRS IGNACIO VILLASENOR AND DIRECTOR OF OFFICE FOR NORTH AMERICA ROBERTA LAJOUS. MEETING OPENED WITH QUESTION FROM CONGRESSMAN LANTOS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL PLURALISM IN NICARAGUA. SEPULVEDA RESPONDED THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF NON-INTERVENTION AND DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM GO HAND-IN-HAND. HE SAID MEXICO WISHES TO SEE A PLURALISTIC SYSTEM DEVELOP IN NICARAGUA AND HAS TOLD NICARAGUA SO. MEXICO, HOWEVER, CAN ONLY ADVISE. MEXICO ADVOCATES A FREE POLITICAL SYSTEM, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND A MIXED ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN ALL COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, THE LACK OF A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION IN NICARAGUA HAS BEEN A LIMITING FACTOR. SEPULVEDA STRESSED THAT DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE IMPOSED ARTIFICIALLY FROM OUTSIDE. IF CONTADORA CAN SUCCEED IN ELIMINATING THE CLIMATE OF TENSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THEN FAVORABLE CONDITIONS WILL BE CREATED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY.

3. CONGRESSMAN RICHARDSON ASKED WHY THE CONTADORA PROCESS APPEARS TO BE STALLED AND WHAT MEMBERS OF THE CODEL COULD DO TO HELP GET THINGS MOVING. SEPULVEDA REPLIED WITH A LONG RECITATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE MEXICAN POINT OF VIEW CULMINATING IN THE OBSERVATION THAT PRESIDENTS DUARTE AND MONGE HAD MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN EARLY SEPTEMBER OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SIGN THE REVISED ACTA AND THAT THE GOM HAD RECEIVED TELEXES TO THE SAME EFFECT FROM HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA. SHORTLY THEREAFTER OBJECTIONS WERE RAISED IN PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS BY US OFFICIALS AND THE HONDURANS, SALVADORANS, AND COSTA RICANS THEN BEGAN TO RAISE OBJECTIONS. THEY PRESENTED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ACTA WHICH HAD NOT EXISTED EARLIER. SEPULVEDA SAID. THE SUBSEQUENT TEGUCIGALPA MEETING, HE WENT ON, PRODUCED SUGGESTIONS, SOME OF WHICH COULD BE USEFUL IN IMPROVING THE ACTA, BUT OTHERS WHICH WOULD UPSET THE COMMITMENTS MADE EARLIER BETWEEN THE PARTIES, THEREBY DESTROYING THE BALANCE OF THE TREATY. THE TEGUCIGALPA PROPOSALS WERE INADMISSIBLE FOR NICARAGUA AND PROBABLY GUATEMALA TOO, SEPULVEDA CONCLUDED.

4. SEPULVEDA SAID CONTADORA WAS NOW LOOKING FOR COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE TEGUCIGALPA SUGGESTIONS AND THE NICARAGUAN POSITION, BUT THE TASK WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. TO REOPEN THE WHOLE PROCESS IS UNACCEPTABLE AND WOULD TAKE TOO LONG. SEPULVEDA SAID HE ASKED SALVADORAN FOREIGN MINISTER TENORIO IF EL SALVADOR WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT A REDUCTION IN THE DOLS 200 MILLION IN US MILITARY AID PROJECTED FOR 1985, AND SIMILAR QUESTIONS HAD TO BE POSED TO NICARAGUA. NOTING THE GROWING SOPHISTICATION OF ARMS BEING ACQUIRED BY NICARAGUA, SEPULVEDA ALSO UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF LIMITING ARMS GROWTH QUALITATIVELY.

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5. CONGRESSMAN GARCIA STATED THAT MEXICO SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT SUPPORT FOR THE SANDANISTAS WAS WANING IN THE UNITED STATES, AND HE INTENDED TO SAY THIS TO DANIEL ORTEGA. HE SAID MODERATES LIKE HIMSELF WERE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND ORTEGA, AND THAT LITTLE GROUND WAS BEING LEFT FOR COMPROMISE. HE ASKED WHAT THE CODEL COULD DO TO HELP, IN PARTICULAR, WHAT COULD IT SAY TO ORTEGA? SEPULVEDA SUGGESTED THAT THE CODEL STRESS TO ORTEGA THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANZANILLO TALKS AND THE

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NEED FOR BOTH SIDES TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. BOTH SIDES NEED TO MAKE A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO THE TALKS. PROGRESS MADE IN MANZANILLO REINFORCES CONTADORA AND VICE VERSA. CODEL COULD ALSO HELP BY EXPLAINING US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TO THE SANDANISTAS.

6. CONGRESSMAN LAFALCE ASKED WHAT WERE SOME OF THE IMBALANCES THAT SEPULVEDA THOUGHT THE TEGUCIGALPA PROPOSALS WOULD CREATE? THE CONGRESSMAN, OBSERVING THAT HE HAD VOTED AGAINST COVERT AID TO THE CONTRAS, ALSO NOTED THAT NOW THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE SANDANISTAS WAS MOUNTING TO THE POINT WHERE THE CONGRESS MIGHT NOT ONLY GRANT COVERT AID IT MIGHT GRANT OVERT AID. SEPULVEDA REPLIED THAT THE TEGUCIGALPA DOCUMENT, WHILE PURPORTING TO SATISFY THE PRINCIPLE OF SIMULTANEITY, WAS REVERSING THE NATURAL ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROPOSED AGREEMENT BY PUTTING OFF ALL MEASURES TO WITHDRAW MILITARY ADVISORS, ELIMINATE BASES, END MILITARY MANEUVERS, AND SO FORTH UNTIL AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THE LEVEL OF MILITARY FORCES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE PERMITTED IN EACH COUNTRY.

7. REVERTING TO THE THEME THAT IT IS NECESSARY FIRST TO PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE AND REFERRING TO THE MORAL STRAIN IN US FOREIGN POLICY, HE SAID THAT MEXICANS CANNOT ACCEPT THAT MONEY WOULD BE APPROPRIATED BY ONE COUNTRY FOR THE OVERTHROW OF ANOTHER GOVERNMENT. HE THEN COMPARED US POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA WITH THE SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN. THE COMPARISON WAS FOR THE MOST PART MADE IN DIPLOMATIC TERMS AND CONCLUDED WITH THE OBSERVATION: "HOW CAN WE NOT OPPOSE AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA?"

8. CONGRESSMAN LANTOS RESPONDED THAT THE ANALOGY WAS IRRELEVANT. HE FIRST OBSERVED THAT THE US HAD TRIED TO WORK WITH AND HELP THE SANDANISTAS, AND GAVE THEM SOME SUPPORT. BUT THE SANDANISTAS HAD ABANDONED THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES. HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT SEEKING DOMINATION OF NICARAGUA BUT ONLY A MEASURE OF DEMOCRACY FOR ITS PEOPLE. THE SOVIETS WERE BRUTALLY MURDERING PEOPLE. THEY WERE BENT ON TURNING AFGHANISTAN INTO A SATELLITE BUT THE US HAD NO SUCH INTENTION WITH RESPECT TO NICARAGUA. CONGRESSMAN LANTOS DWELT AT LENGTH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VERIFICATION OF ANY REGIONAL CENTRAL AMERICAN AGREEMENT, IMPLYING IT WAS THE DESIRE FOR VERIFICATION NOT OBSTRUCTIONISM WHICH MOTIVATED THE QUEST FOR A BETTER ACTA. HE SAID THAT AMERICAN PRESENCE IN AND DEPARTURE FROM EL SALVADOR WAS IMMEDIATELY VERIFIABLE WHEREAS THE CUBAN PRESENCE IN NICARAGUA WAS SECRETIVE AND NOT EASILY VERIFIABLE. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT SANDANISTA SUPPORT IN THE US HAD ALMOST VANISHED EXCEPT FOR THE FAR LEFT FRINGE.

9. CONGRESSMAN LA FALCE NOTED THAT THE FIVE CODEL MEMBERS WERE ALL MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES, ALL LIBERALS, SUPPORTERS OF MR. MONDALE'S CANDIDACY, AND ALL PREVIOUS CRITICS OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. HE REINFORCED MANY OF LANTO'S POINTS, CONDEMNED THE DRIFT TOWARDS TOTALITARIANISM IN NICARAGUA. HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE 55 AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN EL SALVADOR WHEREAS THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF CUBANS IN NICARAGUA, AND OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND SOVIET TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN. HE CONCLUDED THAT IF THE REMARKS HE HAD HEARD FROM MEXICO COMPARING US POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA TO SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN CHARACTER-

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IZE THE PERSPECTIVE THAT EXISTS WITHIN CONTADORA, HE HAS SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF THE CONTADORA PROCESS.

10. SEPULVEDA TRIED TO DUCK BY EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO POSSIBLE FUTURE AMERICAN INTERVENTION AND NOT TO THE SITUATION AS IT NOW EXISTED WHEN HE MADE HIS COMPARISON, BUT HIS REJOINDER WAS A LAME ONE. ALL THREE MEXICANS PRESENT WERE SURPRISED BY THE VEHEMENCE OF THE CODEL'S REACTION AND ALL REALIZED SEPULVEDA HAD MADE A MISTAKE. THEY TOOK CAREFUL NOTE OF THE CODEL'S REMARKS.
BUSBY

END OF MESSAGE

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