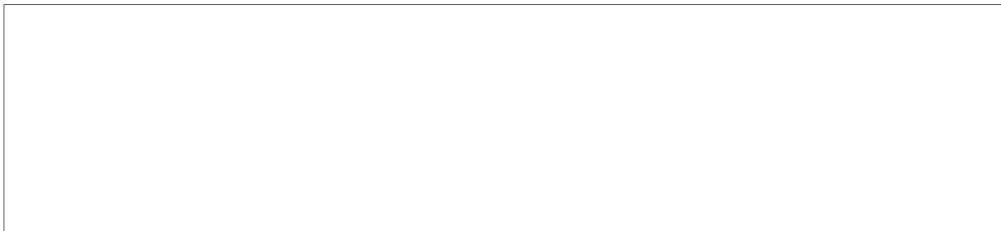


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EXDIS/CONTRA. FOR EXDIS CONTRA DISTRIBUTION

FROM HABIB

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, ES, XK, NU
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH DUARTE: APRIL 18

1. (SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: DUARTE BELIEVES THAT NICARAGUA WILL NOT SIGN A CONTADORA AGREEMENT AND HE INTENDS TO PURSUE THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE BY CONTINUING TO PRESS DEMOCRATIZATION IN COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER DEMOCRACIES. HE SEES COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, AND PANAMA AS MORE HELPFUL CURRENTLY TO THE DEMOCRACIES THAN THE SUPPORT GROUP COUNTRIES. THE LATTER ARE MORE INTENT ON THE "ORIGINAL CONTADORA CONCEPT -- LIMITING U.S. INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA." HE BELIEVES ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, AND EVEN PERU ARE SALVAGEABLE, HOWEVER, IF APPROACHED SO AS NOT TO AROUSE THEIR "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" BENT -- WHICH IS EMOTIONAL WITH THE ARGENTINES AND URUGUAYANS, IDEOLOGICAL WITH THE PERUVIANS. I CAUTIONED THAT THE SANDINISTAS MAY BE FEIGNING OPPOSITION TO A CONTADORA AGREEMENT AND URGED DUARTE NOT TO NEGLECT SUBSTANCE. I STRESSED THAT A GOOD AGREEMENT MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE, AND SIMULTANEOUS. DUARTE AGREED. DUARTE WAS UNAWARE THAT THE GUATEMALANS MAY HAVE BACKED OFF THEIR PROPOSAL TO DELAY ELECTIONS FOR A CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT UNTIL A SECOND STAGE. HE NOTES THAT GUATEMALA WANTS A FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESS AT ESQUIPULAS AND THAT NICARAGUA HAS OBTAINED LEVERAGE BY THREATENING TO PULL OUT. HOWEVER, THE GUATEMALANS HAD JOINED THE OTHER DEMOCRACIES IN A JOINT STATEMENT OF VICE PRESIDENTS EARLIER IN THE DAY IN COSTA RICA, A GOOD SIGN. END SUMMARY.

3. AMBASSADOR CORR AND I HAD A LONG, SUBSTANTIVE TALK ON CONTADORA AND RELATED ISSUES OVER DINNER WITH PRESIDENT DUARTE APRIL 18. DUARTE'S CONTADORA TEAM WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY; HE BROUGHT HIS CLOSEST POLITICAL ADVISERS INSTEAD: MINISTER OF CULTURE REY PRENDES;

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HIS SON ALEJANDRO; SAN SALVADOR MAYOR MORALES ERHLICH;
AND GUEVARA-LACAYO, PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY. EMBASSY STAFF AND MY PARTY WERE ALSO PRESENT.

4. DUARTE RESPONDED AT LENGTH TO MY REQUEST THAT HE
EXPLAIN HOW HE SEES CONTADORA AND WHERE IT IS GOING.
HE SEES THE CARABALLEDA MESSAGE OF LAST JANUARY AS
HAVING NEARLY RETURNED THE PROCESS TO CONTADORA'S
"ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF LIMITING U.S. INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL
AMERICA." FOR THIS HE BLAMES THE SUPPORT GROUP COUN-
TRIES -- WHERE "ANTI-IMPERIALISM" RUNS STRONG. IT
WAS COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, AND EVEN PANAMA THAT HAD GOTTEN
CONTADORA BACK ON TRACK AT THE LAST CONTADORA MEETING.
HE SEES THE SUPPORT GROUP COUNTRIES AS HAVING ALMOST
TAKEN CONTADORA OVER AND IS VISITING URUGUAY, ARGENTINA,
AND PERU NEXT MONTH TO COUNTER NICARAGUAN EFFORTS. HE
PLANS TO SELL SALVADORAN DEMOCRACY, NOT TO BASH
NICARAGUA. CRITICIZING NICARAGUA WOULD RISK RUNNING
AFOUL OF SOUTH AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALISM, AN EMOTIONAL
BENT IN THE ARGENTINES AND URUGUAYANS, AN IDEOLOGICAL
TENET WITH THE PERUVIANS. DESPITE THE RISKS, HE SEES
THE TRIP AS WORTH MAKING BECAUSE ALL THREE PRESIDENTS
ARE GENUINELY DEMOCRATIC -- "EVEN GARCIA."

5. DUARTE SEES NICARAGUA'S REFUSAL TO SIGN A CONTADORA
AGREEMENT AS A COMBINATION OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE
AND SANDINISTA COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY. HE IS CONVINCED
THAT IF THE CENTRAL AMERICANS KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON
DEMOCRATIZATION THE NICARAGUANS WILL NEVER SIGN. EL
SALVADOR IS READY TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT, AND MAY GO AHEAD
AND SIGN ONE JUNE 6 WHATEVER NICARAGUA DOES. I COUN-
SELED CAUTION. NICARAGUA COULD WELL CHANGE ITS POSI-
TION WHEN IT HAS GOTTEN WHAT IT WANTS IN THE AGREEMENT -
AN OLD COMMUNIST TACTIC. THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT IT WOULD
TAKE TO OBTAIN A GOOD AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED,
I SAID. WHAT WE MEAN BY A GOOD AGREEMENT IS THAT IT
MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE, AND SIMULTANEOUS.
DUARTE AGREED. HE SAID THAT IF THE NICARAGUANS SUDDENLY
SHOWED INTEREST IN CONCLUDING AN AGREEMENT, EL SALVADOR
WOULD SAY "FINE, NOW LET'S DISCUSS WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO
MAKE AN AGREEMENT WORK." EL SALVADOR WILL NOT LET
NICARAGUA WEAKEN SECURITY AND OTHER PROVISIONS, HE
ADDED. THERE WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE VERY CAREFULLY
WORKED OUT "MECHANISMS" AND VERIFICATION PROCEDURES.

6. DUARTE AT SEVERAL POINTS EXPRESSED DOUBT ABOUT
GUATEMALA'S SOLIDARITY WITH THE OTHER DEMOCRACIES. HE
S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 05363

EXDIS/CONTRA, FOR EXDIS CONTRA DISTRIBUTION

FROM HABIB

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, ES, XK, NU

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH DUARTE: APRIL 18

SAID THE FOUR CENTRAL AMERICAN VICE PRESIDENTS HAD MET
JUST THAT DAY IN SAN JOSE (ON THE MONGE INITIATIVE)
AND SIGNED A JOINT STATEMENT THAT CONTINUED THE RECENT
EMPHASIS ON DEMOCRATIZATION AS KEY TO PEACE. THE
GUATEMALAN HAD BEEN NERVOUS ABOUT SIGNING, BECAUSE
NICARAGUA HAS THREATENED TO PULL OUT OF THE ESQUIPULAS
SUMMIT IF THE OTHERS GANG UP ON IT. DUARTE WAS UNAWARE
THAT THE GUATEMALANS (ACCORDING TO WHAT CEREZO TOLD US)
MAY HAVE BACKED OFF THEIR PROPOSAL TO APPOINT RATHER
THAN ELECT MEMBERS OF A CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT.
HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GUIDELINES THAT GUATEMALA
RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ALONG THOSE LINES REPRESENTED
GUATEMALA'S POSITION. IT WAS NOT A CONSENSUS DOCU-

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MENT. EL SALVADOR AND THE OTHERS WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR INITIAL, DIRECT ELECTIONS. A PARLIAMENT WITHOUT NICARAGUA IS A POSSIBILITY. GUEVARO-LACAYO SAID.

7. ON THE ESQUIPULAS SUMMIT, DUARTE TOLD US THAT THE GUATEMALAN BISHOP IS INVITING HIS FOUR CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLEAGUES (OBANDO Y BRAVO IN THE CASE OF NICARAGUA) TO ESQUIPULAS. HE SAID THE CONTRA ISSUE WILL BE KEPT OFF THE AGENDA. HE HAS DEFENDED ITS EXCLUSION ON THE GROUNDS THAT IF THE CENTRAL AMERICANS CAN FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTION TO THEIR INTERNAL POLITICAL CRISIS, THEN THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE WILL BE EASY TO TAKE CARE OF. HE SAYS THIS LINE APPEALS TO CEREZO AND WILL BE ADOPTED BY THE FOUR.

8. COMMENT: I TOLD DUARTE THAT HE HAS OBVIOUSLY THOUGHT THROUGH THE ISSUES AND IS FOLLOWING A SOPHISTICATED STRATEGY. IT COMPLEMENTS U.S. POLICY NICELY. I ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS A STRATEGY HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON CENTRAL AMERICAN UNITY AND CAUTIONED SEVERAL TIMES AGAINST COMPLACENCY ON SECURITY ISSUES AND NICARAGUAN INTENTIONS. I MENTIONED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR OUR CONTADORA STAFFS TO COMPARE NOTES AGAIN, AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST, ON PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT DRAFT ACTA. HE READILY AGREED.

CORR
END OF MESSAGE

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