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EXDIS CONTRA, FOR EXDIS CONTRA DISTRIBUTION FROM HABIB

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, CS, XK
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MONGE

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MONGE AND FOREIGN MINISTER GUTIERREZ TOLD ME THAT COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT BETANCUR HAD ADVISED THEM THAT NICARAGUA WAS PREPARED TO SIGN THE CONTADORA ACTA ON JUNE 6. BOTH REMAINED SKEPTICAL, HOWEVER, AND BELIEVED THAT NICARAGUA WAS JUST PLAYING A GAME TO BUY TIME. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TWO REMAINING ISSUES OF ARMS LEVELS AND MANEUVERS WOULD RESUME SHORTLY. I STRESSED THAT ANY AGREEMENT MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE, AND SIMULTANEOUS, AND THAT CONCESSIONS WHICH WEAKENED THE TREATY MUST NOT BE MADE IN ORDER TO GET NICARAGUA TO SIGN. THEY FULLY AGREED AND BELIEVED THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES WERE BECOMING MORE UNIFIED IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO NICARAGUA, WITH GUATEMALA MOVING CLOSER TO THE CORE 3.

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3. MONGE AND GUTIERREZ WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEVEL OF U.S. REPRESENTATION AT THE ARIAS INAUGURATION. THEY NOTED THAT VICE PRESIDENT BUSH HAD ATTENDED THE INAUGURATIONS IN GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS, AND THAT THE LEVEL OF OUR DELEGATION WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION OF U.S. COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY IN COSTA RICA. THEY SAID THAT THEY WERE DISCOURAGING DANIEL ORTEGA FROM ATTENDING THE INAUGURATION. ARIAS INTENDED TO HOLD A MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTS ATTENDING THE INAUGURATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON NICARAGUA. WITHOUT COMMENTING ON THE NATURE OF U.S. REPRESENTATION I UNDERScoreD THE IMPORTANCE THAT NOTHING OCCUR WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS OR CRITICIZE THE U.S., AND THEY READILY CONCURRED.

4. THEY EXPECTED A CONFRONTATION AT ESQUIPULAS OVER THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT, WITH NICARAGUA REFUSING DIRECT ELECTIONS. THEY BELIEVED THAT BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES WERE MOVING TO ISOLATE NICARAGUA. END SUMMARY

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5. ON APRIL 20, AMBASSADOR TAMBS AND I MET WITH PRESIDENT MONGE AND FOREIGN MINISTER GUTIERREZ. MONGE SAID THAT BETANCUR HAD NOTIFIED HIM ON APRIL 18 THAT THE SANDINISTAS WOULD BE PREPARED TO SIGN THE ACTA ON JUNE 6. MONGE AND GUTIERREZ WERE NOT CONVINCED, HOWEVER, AND THEY BELIEVED THAT THE SANDINISTAS WERE SIMPLY PLAYING A GAME TO BUY TIME. THEY EXPECTED THAT WHEN JUNE 6 CAME, NICARAGUA WOULD NOT SIGN THE AGREEMENT. I SUGGESTED THAT NICARAGUA'S SUPPOSED WILLINGNESS TO SIGN MIGHT BE LINKED TO ITS DEMAND THAT THE U.S. MAKE FORMAL COMMITMENTS AND THUS MIGHT BE NOTHING NEW AT ALL. MONGE ADDED THAT HE WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT NICARAGUA SIGNING THAN REFUSING TO SIGN, SINCE THE SANDINISTAS WOULD NOT LIVE UP TO THE AGREEMENT.

6. GUTIERREZ BELIEVED THAT THE SANDINISTAS WOULD TAKE PART IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT WOULD THEN REFUSE TO SIGN. HE SAID THAT NICARAGUAN FOREIGN MINISTER D'ESCOTO'S PERFORMANCE AT THE APRIL PANAMA MEETING REVEALED CLEARLY THE SANDINISTAS' INTENTION NOT TO SIGN. HE REFERRED TO D'ESCOTO'S REMARKS ABOUT THE SAN ANDRES ISLAND DISPUTE AS ONE INDICATION. HE ALSO CITED THE INTENSIVE EFFORT BY THE OTHER 12 FOREIGN MINISTERS TO PERSUADE D'ESCOTO TO SIGN A DRAFT STATEMENT. THE OTHER 12 EXTENDED THE MEETING UNTIL MONDAY AND WROTE A SECOND DRAFT JUST TO SATISFY NICARAGUA, BUT THEN D'ESCOTO REJECTED THE SECOND DRAFT AS WORSE THAN THE FIRST. IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT THE CONTADORA AND SUPPORT GROUPS DECIDED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT IN THEIR OWN NAMES THAT CALLED UPON THE FIVE CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES TO RESPOND. THEY SAW THIS AS A WAY OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON NICARAGUA.

7. GUTIERREZ SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON THE REMAINING TWO ISSUES, ARMS LEVELS AND MANEUVERS, HAD BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE OF THE NUMBER OF OTHER MEETINGS IN THE PAST WEEKS. HE EXPECTED THE NEGOTIATIONS TO RESUME SHORTLY, WITH EITHER A SERIES OF SHORT MEETINGS OR POSSIBLY ONE LONG MEETING. HE STATED THAT THE JUNE 6 DATE WAS FIRM AND THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE CONTADORA PROCESS WOULD BE DAMAGED IF IT WERE NOT MET. I STRESSED THAT THE U.S. COULD ONLY SUPPORT A TREATY WHICH WAS COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE, AND SIMULTANEOUS. I ADDED THAT THE
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AGREEMENT MUST FULLY INCORPORATE ALL OF THE 21 CONTADORA OBJECTIVES AND MUST CONTAIN PRECISE LANGUAGE DEFINING THE COMMITMENTS MADE. IN THE POLITICAL AREA, FOR EXAMPLE, NICARAGUA'S OBLIGATIONS MUST BE SPELLED OUT SO THAT THE SANDINISTAS CANNOT CLAIM THAT THEIR 1984 ELECTION AND THEIR CONSTITUTION CURRENTLY BEING DRAFTED SATISFY THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIZATION. I FURTHER WARNED ABOUT THE DANGERS OF PARTIAL AGREEMENTS AND THOSE WHICH MIGHT LET THE SANDINISTAS ESCAPE IN THE FUTURE. WE BELIEVED THAT NO TREATY WAS BETTER THAN A BAD TREATY. GUTIERREZ GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THE DEMOCRACIES WOULD NEVER GIVE NICARAGUA THE CHANCE TO WEAKEN THE ACTA, AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT FALL INTO A SANDINISTA TRAP. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT AS THE FINAL LANGUAGE WAS PREPARED. I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD

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SOON SEND DOWN A TEAM OF EXPERTS TO CONSULT WITH HIS NEGOTIATORS.

8. MONGE ASKED ABOUT THE U.S. POSITION ON ORTEGA'S DEMAND FOR SPECIFIC U.S. COMMITMENTS AS PART OF THE FINAL AGREEMENT. I RESPONDED THAT NICARAGUA HAD NOT MADE ANY FORMAL PROPOSAL TO US ABOUT THIS. IT APPEARED TO BE ANOTHER SANDINISTA EFFORT TO RETURN TO BILATERALISM. I ADDED THAT THE SANDINISTAS SHOULD LOOK TO CONTADORA FOR SOLUTIONS, NOT BILATERAL DEALS WITH THE U.S. MONGE SUGGESTED THAT ORTEGA'S DEMANDS WERE REALLY DIRECTED AT AFFECTING THE U.S. CONGRESS.

9. MONGE AND GUTIERREZ EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE CORE 4 WERE COOPERATING EFFECTIVELY. THEY WERE PLEASED THAT GUATEMALA WAS DRAWING CLOSER TO THE OTHER DEMOCRACIES. GUTIERREZ REMARKED THAT THE PANAMA MEETING HAD BEEN GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER QUINONEZ' FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THE SANDINISTAS, AND IT HAD BEEN A REAL EYE-OPENER.

ARIAS INAUGURATION

10. GUTIERREZ EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LEVEL OF THE U.S. DELEGATION WHICH WILL ATTEND THE ARIAS INAUGURATION. HE RECALLED THAT VICE PRESIDENT BUSH HAD ATTENDED THE INAUGURATIONS OF BOTH CEREZO IN GUATEMALA AND AZCONA IN HONDURAS. HE INSISTED THAT THE LEVEL OF THE DELEGATION WOULD BE WIDELY INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO COSTA RICAN DEMOCRACY, CLEARLY IMPLYING THAT A DELEGATION LED BY ANYONE BELOW THE VICE PRESIDENT WOULD BE PERCEIVED AS A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO COSTA RICA. HE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE PRESS HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO SPECULATE ABOUT THIS. REPLIED THAT THE LIBYAN CRISIS HAD BEEN THE DOMINANT FOCUS IN WASHINGTON IN RECENT WEEKS, BUT THAT A DECISION ON THE DELEGATION WOULD BE MADE SHORTLY. I STRESSED THAT IT WOULD BE VERY BAD IF ANYTHING EMBARRASSING OR CRITICAL OF THE U.S. WERE TO OCCUR DURING THE INAUGURATION. THEY FULLY AGREED.

11. MONGE SAID THAT WHILE COSTA RICA HAD GENERALLY SENT OUT INVITATIONS TO HEADS OF STATE BY NAME, THEY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY INVITE NICARAGUA'S DANIEL ORTEGA. FOR MONGE'S OWN INAUGURATION SEVERAL YEARS AGO, COSTA RICA SENT OUT AN INVITATION SIMPLY TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT AND NOT SPECIFICALLY TO THEN JUNTA COORDINATOR ORTEGA WITH THE RESULT THAT ORTEGA FELT SLIGHTED AND REFUSED TO ATTEND. THE COSTA RICANS SENT THE CURRENT INVITATION IN THE SAME WAY IN HOPE OF ACHIEVING THE SAME RESULT. IN ADDITION, THEY SENT ORTEGA A MESSAGE SUGGESTING THAT HE NOT COME ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE INAUGURATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN A STADIUM HOLDING TENS OF THOUSANDS PEOPLE. SINCE ORTEGA WAS VERY UNPOPULAR IN COSTA RICA, HE MIGHT WELL BE JEERED AT BY THE CROWD, AND THERE WOULD BE NOTHING THE GOCR COULD DO TO PREVENT IT. MONGE ADDED THAT COSTA RICA STILL DID NOT KNOW WHO WOULD LEAD THE DELEGATION FROM MANAGUA.

12. MONGE SAID THAT ARIAS WOULD HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON MAY 8 FOR THE PRESIDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WOULD BE TO PUT PRESSURE ON NICARAGUA. HE ANTICIPATED THAT THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE SUCH AS PERU'S ALAN GARCIA COULD LIMIT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS PRESSURE, HOWEVER. GUTIERREZ ADDED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A DRAFT DECLARATION.

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13. I INQUIRED ABOUT ARIAS' CALENDAR FOR NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIZATION. GUTIERREZ RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED THE ISSUE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE MADRIGAL. I COMMENTED THAT A CALENDAR WITH SPECIFIC
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DEEDS AND DATES MAY BE VERY HELPFUL.

ESQUIPULAS AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT

14. GUTIERREZ SAID THAT HE EXPECTED A CONFRONTATION OVER THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT DURING THE ESQUIPULAS MEETING. HE SAID THAT THE DEMOCRACIES WOULD DEMAND DIRECT ELECTIONS, AND THAT COSTA RICA EVEN WANTED A COMMON REGIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION. HE EXPECTED THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO NICARAGUA. HE SAID THAT ORIGINALLY, GUATEMALA HAD PROPOSED HAVING APPOINTED MEMBERS FOR SIX MONTHS. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO VICE PRESIDENT CARPIO, WHO INTENDED IT TO BE A CONCESSION TO NICARAGUA. GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER QUINONEZ HAD BEEN AGAINST THIS POSITION AND FAVORED DIRECT ELECTIONS.

15. MONGE NOTED THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES WERE DRAWING CLOSER IN ECONOMIC MATTERS JUST AS THEY WERE IN POLITICAL MATTERS. HE JUDGED THIS TO BE ESSENTIAL TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE REGION. NICARAGUA WAS BEING ISOLATED, AS ONLY DEMOCRACIES WERE ALLOWED IN THIS NEW CLUB. NICARAGUA WAS IRRITATED OVER ITS GROWING ISOLATION. IT HAD SENT A LETTER TO THE CORE 4 COMPLAINING ABOUT THEIR TIES WITH THE U.S. AND THE FACT THAT THE U.S. GAVE THEM LARGE SUMS OF AID BUT GAVE NICARAGUA NOTHING. MONGE HAD RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE PROVIDING MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF AID TO NICARAGUA BUT NONE TO THE REST OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

16. I EXPRESSED OUR GRATITUDE FOR THE COOPERATION MONGE HAD GIVEN US THROUGHOUT HIS ADMINISTRATION. I WAS GRATIFIED THAT OUR VIEWS WERE SO SIMILAR. I SUGGESTED THAT AS HE MOVES INTO RETIREMENT, HE SHOULD BECOME A MAJOR SPOKESMAN FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES, TRAVELING PARTICULARLY TO WESTERN EUROPE TO EXPLAIN THE REALITIES OF THE REGION.

17. COMMENT: I BELIEVE MONGE WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL TO OUR INTERESTS IN RETIREMENT. HE IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF PRESIDENT REAGAN AND OUR POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA. I WAS STRUCK BY THE STRENGTH OF MONGE AND GUTIERREZ' NEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VICE PRESIDENT BUSH HEADING THE U.S. DELEGATION TO ARIAS' INAUGURATION. TAMBS WILL BE FOLLOWING UP ON THIS. IN THAT REGARD, I WISH TO RECORD MY VIEW THAT IT WILL BE A GRATUITOUS AND REGRETTABLE INSULT TO A FRIENDLY, DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY TO ALTER OUR REPRESENTATION FROM WHAT IT WAS ON THE TWO RECENT SIMILAR CENTRAL AMERICAN OCCASIONS. IT WOULD ALSO BE VIEWED CRITICALLY ELSEWHERE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN AND WITH GLEE IN MANAGUA. GILLESPIE##

END OF MESSAGE

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