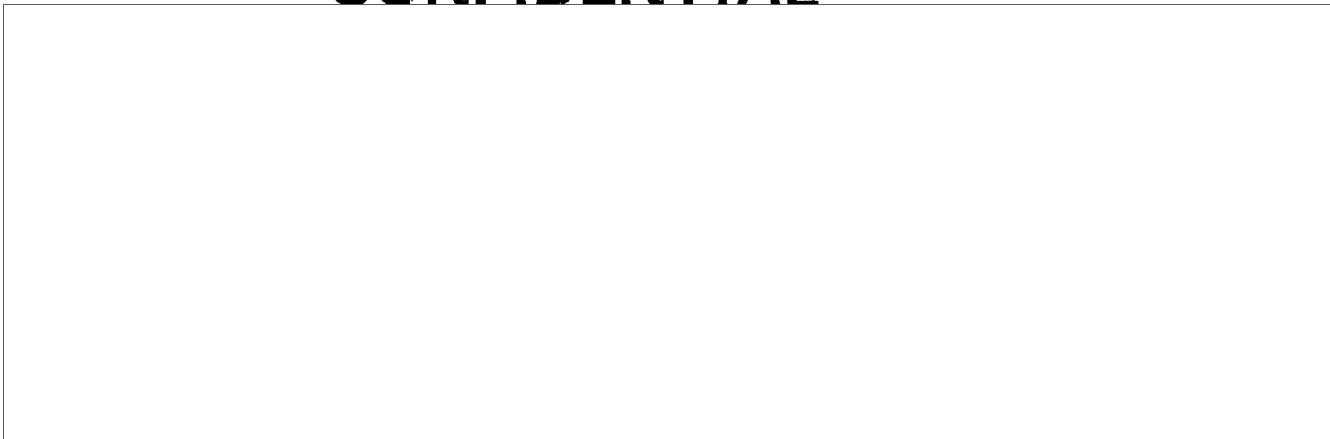


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PAGE 001
TOR: 262141Z JAN 84

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RUEDEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS
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RUESLM/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1789
RUESNA/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2178
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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, XK, CI, PE, AR, CO
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BETANCUR ON CENTRAL AMERICA,
- CHILE, PERU AND ARGENTINA
-

25X1

REF: (A) BOGOTA 00744
- (B) BOGOTA 00663
- (C) BOGOTA 00719

1. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. FOLLOWING ARE PRESIDENT BETANCUR'S REMARKS TO CODEL SOLARZ IN THE COURSE OF AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF MEETING ON JANUARY 18. BETANCUR'S VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO FORTHCOMING CONTADORA NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SANDINISTAS ARE CONTAINED REF A. HIS OBSERVATIONS ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA ARE REPORTED IN REF B, WHILE HIS COMMENTS ON THE U.S.-COLOMBIAN EXTRADITION TREATY ARE IN REF C.

3. BETANCUR STATED THAT THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THE BASIS OF MANY FICTIONS, ONE OF WHICH IS THAT THE TROUBLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA IS NOT REPEAT NOT A PART OF THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT. WHY DO WE DENY THIS? BECAUSE IF WE DO, IT MAKES IT EASIER FOR US TO DIVORCE OUR CONSIDERATION OF CENTRAL AMERICA FROM THAT CONFLICT. BUT THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES IN FACT OPERATE ON THE BASIS THAT THE IMPORTANT NICARAGUAN DECISIONS ARE CLEARED WITH MOSCOW AND THOSE OF THE CORE FOUR WITH WASHINGTON. THE FICTION AMONG THE CONTADORA MEMBERS IS THAT DECISIONS ARE NOT CLEARED IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW,

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84 3213097

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PAGE 002

NC 3213097

TOR: 262141Z JAN 84

BUT THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES KNOW BETTER.
EVERY TIME A CONTADORA COUNTRY MAKES A PROPOSAL IT
WONDERS WHAT MOSCOW OR WASHINGTON WILL THINK.

4. BETANCUR SAID THAT, DURING THE PAST YEAR, HE HAS COME TO HAVE AN INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES. BOGOTA IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE. THE CENTRAL AMERICAN BISHOPS CONSTANTLY PASS THROUGH BOGOTA, AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL IS A FRIEND OF HIS. BETANCUR RECEIVES THE BISHOPS' EVALUATIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN SITUATION WHICH ARE MORE OBJECTIVE THAN THOSE OF THE POLITICIANS. A GREAT DEAL OF WORK WENT INTO OBTAINING THE JANUARY 8, 1984 CONTADORA AGREEMENT ON THE SPECIFIC PROCEDURES TO GUIDE THE NEGOTIATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE SEPTEMBER DOCUMENT OF OBJECTIVES. BETANCUR MENTIONED AS SPECIFIC, DIFFICULT PROBLEMS THE SUPERVISION OF THE SAN JUAN RIVER BETWEEN NICARAGUA AND COSTA RICA AND THE GULF OF FONSECA. HE SAID THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAD ACCEPTED A RIGID TIMETABLE FOR THE INSPECTION OF ARMAMENTS AND PHASE-DOWN OF MILITARY ADVISERS. HE ADMITTED THAT THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE DIFFICULT. HE SAID THAT AT TIMES THE CONTADORA GROUP IS NOT SURE IF THE U.S. AND THE USSR REALLY WANT PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

5. IN RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ' QUESTIONS, BETANCUR STATED THAT IT IS THE EXPECTATION OF THE CONTADORA GROUP THAT IT WILL MONITOR THE EVENTUAL PEACE TREATY; THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES WILL ACCEPT THE ENTRY INTO THEIR TERRITORY OF PERSONS TO VERIFY COMPLIANCE WITH THE PEACE TREATY; AND THAT THE INTENT OF THE TREATY IS GRADUAL REDUCTION OF FOREIGN MILITARY ADVISERS WHILE MAINTAINING A CERTAIN SYMMETRY OR EQUILIBRIUM. BUT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN WORKED OUT IF THIS WOULD MEAN A PARITY BETWEEN U.S. AND CUBAN ADVISERS. BETANCUR NOTED THAT THERE ARE MORE CUBAN ADVISERS IN NICARAGUA THAN U.S. ADVISERS IN EL SALVADOR.

6. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ, BETANCUR EXPLAINED THAT THE RECENT PANAMA AGREEMENT ON SPECIFIC PROCEDURES CONTEMPLATED THE EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF FOREIGN MILITARY ADVISERS IN PHASES. HE SAID THAT THE AGREEMENT ENVISIONS THAT NO CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY WILL ACQUIRE ANY MORE ARMAMENTS OTHER THAN SPARE PARTS; THAT EACH CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY WILL PROVIDE TO THE CONTADORA GROUP AN INVENTORY OF ITS ARMAMENTS; AND THAT A FUND WOULD BE CREATED WITH THE MONEY THAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN SPENT ON ARMS TO BE USED FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. THE IDEA, SAID BETANCUR, IS NOT TO ELIMINATE EACH

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COUNTRY'S ARMS, BUT RATHER FREEZE THEM.

7. ASKED ABOUT SPARE PARTS, BETANCUR SAID THAT GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA WILL ALL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO IMPORT SPARE PARTS, BUT THEY WILL BE INSPECTED. ASKED IF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES ARE SATISFIED THAT A FREEZE IN THE ARMAMENTS THAT EACH CAN POSSESS WOULD TRANSLATE TO AN EQUILIBRIUM IN THOSE ARHAMENTS, BETANCUR SAID NO, THAT U.S.-SUPPORTED COUNTRIES HAVE MORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT PUT TOGETHER THAN DOES NICARAGUA, ALTHOUGH NICARAGUA IS VERY WELL ARMED. BETANCUR SAID THE CTNTADORA FOUR PRIVATELY REFERRED TO THE CORE FOUR COUNTRIES AS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3213097

SCD

PAGE 003

NC 3213097

TOR: 262141Z JAN 84

"THE SYNDICATE."

8. ASKED WHY NICARAGUA WOULD ACCEPT A FREEZE IN THE ACQUISITION OF ARMAMENTS, BETANCUR REPLIED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS WITH A NUMBER OF THE SANDINISTA LEADERS, INCLUDING DANIEL ORTEGA, AND TOLD THEM NOT TO HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS THAT CUBA OR THE USSR WOULD COME TO THEIR RESCUE IN CASE OF AN ATTACK BY THE U.S. THE USSR RATHER WOULD APPLY PRESSURE I BERLIN OR PAKISTAN OR SOME SUCH PLACE IF THE UWMS. WERE TO INVADE NICARAGUA. NOR WOULD CASTRO INTERVENE TO HELP THE SANDINISTASWN AS SHOWN BY GRENADA. BETANCUR SAID HE HAD URGED THE SANDINISTA LEADERS TO CREATE A POLITICAL OPENINL TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY COULD HAVE A FREE PRESS, FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND FREE ELECTITNS. HE SAID HE HAS TOLD THE SANDINISTAS THAT IF THEY PREPARED FOR FREE ELECTIONS, PRESIDENT REAGAN WOULD NEVER DARE TO INVADE NICARAGUA. "IF YOU DON'T DO IT FOR CONVICTION'S SAKE, DO IT FOR CONVENIENCE'S SAKE." BETANCUR SAID THAT MAYBE THESE ARGUMENTS HAD HAD SOME EFFECT ON THE SANDINISTAS, ALTHOUGH HE EXPECTED THAT THEY WERE "NOT VERY CONVINCED."

9. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ASKED IF UNDER THE JANUARY 8 CONTADORA AGREEMENT IN PANAMA EL SALVADOR IN PRINCIPLE WOULD BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY NEW WEAPONS FROM THE U.S. AND NICARAGUA WOULD BE UNABLE TO ACQUIRE NEW WEAPONS FROM THE USSR. IN PRINCIPLE, YES, BETANCUR REPLIED, BUT SO LONG AS THE CONTRAS OPERATE IN NICARAGUA AND THE GUERRILLAS IN EL SALVADOR, THIS AGREEMENT SUFFERS "PERTURBATIONS." NO COUNTRY SHOULD BE INTERFERING IN THE AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER, HE SAID.

10. ASKED IF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FORESEEN BY THE JANUARY 8 CONTADORA AGREEMENT ARE CONTINGENT UPON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, BETANGUR SAID THAT IT IS "BASIC" FOR THIS TO HAPPEN IN ALL COUNTRIES. THUS BOTH GUATEMALA AND PANAMA SHOULD SPEED UP ITS PROCESS OF DEMTCRATIZATION. THE PROBLEM IN PANAMA IS THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. NICARAGUA HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED ELECTIONS, WHICH MIGHT BE HELD AS EARLY AS LATE 1984.

11. AFTER A DISCUSSION CONCERNING COMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SANDINISTAS (REPORTED REF A), THE DISCUSSION TURNED TO EL SALVADOR. BETANCUR STATED THAT THE DEATH SQUADS THERE ARE NOT THE REAL PROBLEM, WHICH RUNS DEEPER. THE GOES AND THE SALVADORAN ARMY ARE CORRUPT, HE ARGUED. NEITHER THE U.S. NOR THE CONTADORA GROUP HAS A HEALTHY INTERLOCUTOR IN THAT COUNTRY. THE ARMY HAS LOST ITS MYSTIQUE. IT IS FIGHTING A 9 TO 5 WAR. THE ARMY SELLS ARMS TO THE GUERRILLAS. GOES LEADERS RECOGNIZE THIS IN THEIR TALKS WITH THE CONTADORA FOUR. AS A RESULT OF ALL THIS CORRUPTION, D'AUBUISSON COULD WIN THE MARCH ELECTIONS. HE WAS HELPED POLITICALLY BY THE U.S. REFUSAL TO GIVE HIM A VISA. ASKED WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO ABOUT EL SALVADOR, BETANCUR REPLIED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD STIMULATE THE FORMATION OF A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH GUERRILLA PARTICIPATION. THERE COULD BE, FOR EXAMPLE, A FIVE-MAN JUNTA WITH ONE MAN FROM THE GUERRILLAS. THEN A FREE ELECTION WITH, SAY, SUPERVISION BY THE UNITED NATIONS COULD FOLLOW. BETANCUR THOUGHT THAT ALTHOUGH THE GUERRILLAS MIGHT PICK UP A FEW MINOR OFFICES, THEY WOULD NOT WIN THE "POWER OF DECISION." ASKED AGAIN WHAT SHOULD THE U.S. DO IN EL SALVADOR, BETANCUR COMMENTED THAT THE U.S.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3213097 SCO

PAGE 004
TOR: 262141Z JAN 84

NC 3213097

IS DISCREDITING ITSELF BY SUPPORTING A CORRUPT REGIME, WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD COLLAPSE IF THE U.S. STOPPED ITS ASSISTANCE TO IT. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A COLLAPSE WOULD BE "VERY GRAVE." THE SALVADORAN

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GUERRILLAS ARE NOT PREPARED TO GOVERN. THEIR TRIUMPH NOW WOULD USHER IN AN ERA OF HATRED IN EL SALVADOR. THE U.S. SHOULD TRY THE OTHER TACK, FREE ELECTIONS SUPERVISED BY THE UN, WITH PARTICIPATION BY THE GUERRILLAS. ASKED WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO IF THE GOES CONCLUDED THAT THE GUERRILLAS ARE ABOUT TO WIN AND WERE TO SEEK U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR TO PREVENT A GUERRILLA VICTORY, BETANCUR RESPONDED MERELY THAT U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS, AS IT WOULD PIT ALL CENTRAL AMERICA AGAINST THE U.S.

12. ASKED IF HONDURAS IS A DEMOCRACY, BETANCUR REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE. ASKED IF GENERAL ALVAREZ IS THE REAL POWER THERE, BETANCUR SAID THAT THE REAL POWER THERE IS THE UNITED STATES, JUST AS IN EL SALVADOR.

13. TURNING TO CHILE, CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ASKED WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY THERE. BETANCUR RESPONDED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD HELP INDUCE PINOCHET TO RESIGN WITH FREE ELECTIONS TO FOLLOW -- PERHAPS THERE COULD BE A TRANSITIONAL JUNTA, AS IN COLOMBIA IN 1957-58. ACCORDING TO BETANCUR, THE ALIANZA DEMOCRATICA HAS THE SUPPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF CHILEAN POPULAR OPINION. THE ALIANZA GROUP HAS TAKEN A BIG STEP FORWARD BY PRESENTING ITSELF AS ONE POLITICAL FORCE WHICH WILL RESPECT THE RESULTS OF A FREE ELECTION. IF PINOCHET DOES NOT AGREE TO YIELD POWER, BETANCUR FORESAW INCREASED TERRORISM AND URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY.

14. WITH RESPECT TO PERU, BETANCUR SAID THAT IT SUFFERS FROM THE HEMISPHERE-WIDE ECONOMIC RECESSION. IF PERU ONLY HAD "A LITTLE SPACE" IN WHICH TO SOLVE ITS DEBT PROBLEM AND TO SPUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HE MUSED. THE U.S. COULD HELP BY INDUCING THE REFINANCING OF PERU'S EXTERNAL DEBT, AS IN THE CASE OF MEXICO.

15. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ASKED PRESIDENT BETANCUR IF ANY SERIOUS THREATS TO DEMOCRACY EXIST IN COLOMBIA. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT THERE ARE NONE, ONLY SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. HE ADDED THAT EARLIER IN THE DAY THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE MAJOR STEP OF ACCEPTING THE RESIGNATION OF DEFENSE MINISTER LANDAZABAL AND APPOINTING THE NEXT MOST SENIOR OFFICER, GENERAL MATAMOROS, TO REPLACE HIM.
(SEE SEPTELS ON THIS DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT.)

16. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ SAID HE'D JUST BEEN IN ARGENTINA. THE "DIRTY WAR" THERE WAS CLEARLY IMMORAL AND UNJUSTIFIED, BUT WHAT DOES A COUNTRY DO TO PROTECT ITSELF AGAINST MASSIVE GUERRILLA TERRORISM, HE QUERIED. BETANCUR REPLIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO WILL ON THE PART OF THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES TO CORRECT ABUSES. THEY HAD NO THOUGHT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY. THERE WAS NO JUSTICE. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN "AN ABSOLUTIST SYSTEM ENMESHED IN ITS OWN AUTHORITARIAN IDOLATRY" WHICH WAS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE COUNTRY'S SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3213097

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PAGE 005

NC 3213097

TOR: 262141Z JAN 84

17. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ
ASKED AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S BROTHER JAIME BETANCUR,
KIDNAPPED BY TERRORISTS IN BOGOTA IN NOVEMBER 1983.
THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT ALTHOUGH UNHARMED PHYSICALLY,
HIS BROTHER HAD BEEN CHAINED AND A MACHINE GUN HELD
AGAINST HIS HEAD. AS A RESULT, HE SUFFERED
PSYCHOLOGICALLY, AND HAS STILL NOT RECOVERED.
WATSON

END OF MESSAGE

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