

~~SECRET~~OCA
INCOMING

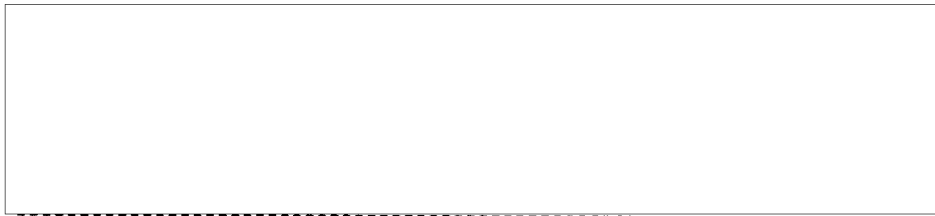
/44/

~~SECRET~~
IMMEDIATE

FRP: . . . 4

STATE

25X1



86 0317037 SSO

PAGE 001
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

OO RUEAIIB
ZNY SSSSS ZOC STATE ZZH
UTS4955
OO RUEHC
DE RUEHMJ #1942 0830208
ZNY SSSSS ZZH ZZK
O 240103Z MAR 86 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9659
BT

~~SECRET~~ MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA
MARCH 21-23, 1986

1. (C) SUMMARY: CODEL MONTGOMERY COMPOSED OF CONGRESS-
MEN G. V. MONTGOMERY (D-MS), KENNETH GRAY (D-IL),
GEORGE DARDEN (D-GA), AND SANDER LEVIN (D-MI) VISITED
NICARAGUA MARCH 21-23. DURING THE VISIT THEY SPOKE WITH
VICE PRESIDENT RAMIREZ, CARDINAL OBANDO Y BRAVO, PRIVATE
SECTOR OPPOSITION LEADERS, LABOR LEADERS, LINDO HERNANDEZ
OF THE INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND SEVERAL
INDIVIDUALS OPPOSED TO MILITARY AID TO THE CONTRAS. THE
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HELD INCOMING AND OUTGOING PRESS
CONFERENCES AND MET WITH PRESS REPRESENTATIVES SEVERAL
TIMES DURING THE VISIT. THEY ATTENDED A PRIVATE DINNER
BRIEFING HOSTED BY THE AMBASSADOR, A BREAKFAST BRIEFING
WITH DAO PERSONNEL AND A LUNCH WITH LA PRENSA LEADERSHIP
HOSTED BY THE DCM. ALTHOUGH NO NEW GROUND WAS UNCOVERED
DURING THE MEETING WITH RAMIREZ, THE MEETING WAS CORDIAL
AND THE EXCHANGE FRANK. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, NICARAGUAN
INTERLOCUTORS MADE IT PLAIN THAT THE INTERNAL SITUATION
CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE. THEIR FREEDOM OF ACTION IS
INCREASINGLY RESTRICTED AND WHILE A SMALL NUMBER SEE SOME
HOPE THROUGH CONTADORA, MOST ARE DECIDEDLY PESSIMISTIC
ABOUT THE FUTURE. BOTH SIDES OF THE AID TO THE CONTRA
QUESTION BELIEVE THAT THE CONGRESS WILL REVERSE ITSELF
IN MID-APRIL AND VOTE SOME KIND OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.
END SUMMARY.

2. (U) CODEL MONTGOMERY ARRIVED FRIDAY EVENING AT
SANDINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND WAS MET BY THE
AMBASSADOR AND OTHER EMBASSY PERSONNEL. THE DELEGATION
BRIEFED THE PRESS, JOURNALISTS AND TV, FOR APPROXIMATELY
15 MINUTES. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF
THE VISIT WAS A FACT-FINDING MISSION AND THAT THE DELE-
GATION WAS BALANCED BY TWO CONGRESSMEN WHO HAD SUPPORTED
THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY AID FOR THE CONTRA
AND TWO WHO HAD VOTED AGAINST. EACH OF THE DELEGATION
MEMBERS EXPLAINED WHAT HE HOPED TO OBTAIN FROM THE TRIP.

3. (LOU) MEETING WITH VIRGILIO GODOY, PRESIDENT OF THE
LIBERAL INDEPENDENT PARTY (PLI).

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

86 0317037

SSD

PAGE 002

NC 0317037

TOR: 240256Z MAR 86

MANAGU 01942

 THE DELEGATION WENT IMMEDIATELY FROM THE AIRPORT FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE LIBERAL INDEPENDENT PARTY, VIRGILIO GODOY. SUMMING UP THE MEETING, GODOY MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- DESPITE DISCLAIMERS, THE SANDINISTAS WOULD HAVE ACTED VERY MUCH THE WAY THEY HAVE WHETHER OR NOT THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTED THE CONTRAS. HE BELIEVES THAT WHILE AT PRESENT NICARAGUA IS NOT COMPLETELY TOTALITARIAN, IT IS MOVING RAPIDLY IN THAT DIRECTION.

-- U.S. INTERFERENCE RESULTS FROM SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN NICARAGUA. THE PROBLEM HAS TAKEN ON AN EAST/WEST DIMENSION BECAUSE OF SOVIET ACTIONS.

-- THE UNITED STATES IS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION BECAUSE IT IS SUPPORTING A GROUP, THE CONTRA, OUTSIDE THE LAW. THIS, PLUS THE SIZE OF THE UNITED STATES, ALLOWS THE SANDINISTAS TO POSTURE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THAT THEY ARE A SMALL DAVID TO THE U.S. GOLIATH.

-- THE PROBLEM FOR NICARAGUANS AND FOR AMERICANS IS THIS: CAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE IN NICARAGUA, CENTRAL AMERICA AND LATIN AMERICA?

-- THE RECENT VOTE IN CONGRESS IS VIEWED IN NICARAGUA AS A VICTORY FOR THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS.

-- U.S. POLICY MAKING IS HAMPERED AS COMPARED TO SOVIET POLICY MAKING BECAUSE WHILE GORBACHEV ORDERS, THE U.S. DISCUSSES; WHILE PRAVDA PRINTS THE COMMUNIST LINE, THE U.S. PRESS MAKES DAILY SCANDALS ABOUT AID TO THE CONTRA; AND WHILE SOVIET AID IS SECRET, U.S. AID IS INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN, CREATING SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ONE DAY THE RESULT OF ALL THIS WILL BE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE TO BUILD A "WALL AS HIGH AS CHINA'S ABOUT THE COUNTRY" BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE NO FRIENDS LEFT.

4. (LOU) GODOY ALSO SAID THAT WHETHER NEW U.S. AID TO NICARAGUA WAS USEFUL DEPENDED ON WHO GOT IT. HE ALSO NOTED THAT SOVIET MILITARY AID WOULD NOT END IF U.S. MILITARY AID STOPPED. HE ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES OF ALWAYS SEEING CENTRAL AND LATIN AMERICA IN A UNILATERAL WAY, RESISTING THE TRUTH THAT THIS IS A CONFRONTATION WITH
 S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR

TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

THE USSR. WHEN ASKED WHAT THE ANSWER WAS, GODOY SAID THAT DISCUSSION IS IMPORTANT; IT COULD LEAD TOWARD CONSENSUS. HE HIMSELF HAD JUST MET WITH THREE POLITICAL PARTIES, TWO MARXIST, AND MARCH 22 PLANNED TO MEET WITH CONSERVATIVES. GODOY ALSO SAID THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY IS LIMITED IN ITS RIGHTS, BUT THE POOR SUFFER FROM A DETERIORATING ECONOMY. ASKED HOW THE UNITED STATES COULD HELP, GODOY SAID FULL U.S. SUPPORT OF CONTADORA WAS IMPORTANT. IF CONTADORA FAILS, IT WILL BE BECAUSE OF THE SANDINISTAS AND THIS WILL SHOW THEM UP FOR WHAT THEY ARE. HE ADDED THAT A PROBLEM WILL RESULT IF THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAWS UNILATERALLY FROM CENTRAL AMERICA. WHO CAN SAY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS WILL DO THE SAME? HE INDICATED A MAJOR DIFFERENCE EXISTS BETWEEN THE DICTATORSHIP OF SOMOZA, WHO HAD A SMALL ARMY AND FEW MODERN WEAPONS, AND THE SANDINISTAS, WHO HAVE OVER 125,000 MEN AND 250 TANKS. GODOY SAID THE CONTADORA FORMULA WHICH CALLS FOR INTERNAL

SECRET

SECRET-----
86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 003
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

DEMOCRACY IS WHAT IS NEEDED. A NUMBER OF PARTIES HAVE CALLED UPON THE SANDINISTAS TO NEGOTIATE, BUT ONLY SILENCE COMES FROM THE GOVERNMENT. GODOY BELIEVES THE SANDINISTAS PRACTICE A FORM OF "MIEVEAL FANATICISM AND OPPORTUNISM" AND IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DISLUDGE THEM, BUT THE ONLY PEACEFUL SOLUTION APPEARS TO BE STRONG SUPPORT OF CONTADORA.

5. (U) MEETING WITH LEADERS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (COSEP).

TO CLOSE THE EVENING, THE DELEGATION HAD A DINNER MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS:

- ING. ENRIQUE BOLANOS, PRESIDENT OF COSEP
- DR. JAIME BENGOCHEA, PRESIDENT, CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES
- DR. LEON RUIZ AMADOR, PRESIDENT, NICARAGUAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- ING. PEDRO CUADRA, PRESIDENT, CHAMBER OF CONSTRUCTION
- ING. GILBERTO CUADRA, PRESIDENT, NICARAGUAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (INDE)
- DR. CARLOS QUINONEZ, PRESIDENT, NICARAGUAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONALS (CONAPRO)
- ING. MARIO HANON, PRESIDENT, NICARAGUAN RICE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

6. (C) THE COSEP LEADERS AGREED THAT IT IS THE SANDINISTAS WHO HAVE CHANGED THE POPULAR 1979 REVOLUTION INTO A MARXIST-LENINIST NIGHTMARE. THE NICARAGUANS DESCRIBED EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE REVOLUTION, THE EVENTS WHICH FOLLOWED, AND SOME OF THE PRESENT OPPOSITION LEADERS IN THE ARMED OPPOSITION AND HOW THEY CAME TO BE OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME. BOLANOS SAID THE OAS IS "PRESENTLY IN BAD SHAPE. IN 1979 IT CALLED PUBLICLY FOR SOMOZA'S OUSTER, BUT TODAY THE SAME COUNTRIES WHO VOTED FOR THAT RESOLUTION STAND SILENT FOR FEAR OF THEIR OWN LEFT." BOLANOS WAS CRITICAL OF BOTH OAS INACTION AND THE CONTADORA PROCESS. HE SAID THE CONTADORA PROCESS HAS "NO CARROT AND NO STICK." WHEN ASKED WHAT COULD BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN THE OAS NOW, BOLANOS REPLIED THAT IT CANNOT BE STRENGTHENED AT THE PRESENT TIME. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE WEAKNESS OF BOTH THE CONTADORA PROCESS AND THE OAS, THE COSEP LEADERS AGREED THAT WHILE A "TRUE MILITARY SOLUTION" IS UNOBTAINABLE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP UP MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE SANDINISTAS. ASKED POINT BLANK IF THEY SUPPORTED MILITARY AID TO THE CONTRA, THEY REFUSED TO REPLY. IN PRIVATE REMARKS LATER SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS TOLD CONGRESSMEN THEY BELIEVED THE USG SHOULD "SEND IN THE MARINES." THEY MADE THE POINT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY GIVEN OVER USDOLS 600 MILLION IN MILITARY AID TO THE SANDINISTAS AND URGED THE U.S. TO "CATCH UP."

7. (C) ONE COSEP LEADER SUGGESTED A POWERFUL SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY SUCH AS ARGENTINA OR BRAZIL BE URGED TO USE ITS INFLUENCE IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT. THIS MIGHT REMOVE SOME OF THE EAST/WEST IMPLICATIONS FROM THE PRESENT STALEMATE. WHEN QUERIED IF AN ADDITIONAL USDOLS 100 MILLION IN AID WOULD MERELY BE MATCHED BY THE USSR, LEADERS SAID THAT THE USSR DOES HAVE LIMITATIONS TO WHAT IT CAN SPEND, ALTHOUGH NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THOSE LIMITS WILL BE. SEVERAL POINTED OUT THAT THIS IS ESSENTIALLY A WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION WITH NICARAGUA CAUGHT IN BETWEEN.

8. (C) BOLANOS MADE THE POINT, SUPPORTED BY OTHERS, S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 004
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PGOV PREL NJ, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

THAT THE NICARAGUAN OPPOSITION IS REQUESTING ONLY MILITARY AND POLITICAL AID FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND INDIVIDUALS ARE WILLING TO MATCH U.S. MONEY WITH NICARAGUAN BLOOD. AND WHILE BOLANOS CONCEDED THAT THERE APPEARED TO BE LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY VICTORY AGAINST THE SANDINISTAS, STATING THAT THEY HAD AT LEAST A QUARTER OF A MILLION ARMED AND TRAINED MEN, HE ALSO SAID THAT NICARAGUA WAS NO PHILIPPINES EITHER, AND THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO POSSIBILITY OF A POPULAR UPRISING THANKS TO THE TOTALITARIAN CONTROLS AND FEAR WHICH THE SANDINISTAS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GENERATE.

9. (C) MEETING AT THE CPDH.

LINO HERNANDEZ BEGAN BY DISCUSSING THE HISTORY OF THE CPDH, ITS ESTABLISHMENT DURING THE SOMOZA DICTATORSHIP AND ITS PRESENT FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE SANDINISTAS. HERNANDEZ SAID A COMPLICATING FACTOR IS THAT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS AMERICAS WATCH AND OTHERS, WHICH SHOULD BE OBJECTIVE, BECAUSE OF POLITICAL BIAS GLOSS OVER VIOLATIONS BY SANDINISTAS AND SENSATIONALIZE THOSE BY THE CONTRAS. HE BELIEVES THESE GROUPS DO DAMAGE TO NICARAGUA BY DISTORTING REALITY. HERNANDEZ DESCRIBED THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION UNDER THE SANDINISTAS AS ONE OF THE WORST IN THE AMERICAS. HE ACCUSED LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS OF "KEEPING SILENT IN COMPLICITY." WHILE HE SAID THE UNITED STATES CANNOT SOLVE ALL NICARAGUA'S PROBLEMS, LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE NOT "TAKEN THEIR TRUE POSITION," DESCRIBING THE PRESENT CONTADORA PROCESS AS A VEHICLE FOR NEUTRALITY WHICH BUYS TIME FOR THE SANDINISTAS TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR TOTALITARIAN REGIME. HE DESCRIBED EL CHIPOTE PRISON AS THE WORST IN LATIN AMERICA OR PERHAPS IN THE WORLD, AND SAID STATE SECURITY PRISONS, OF WHICH MANY ARE SUBTERRANEAN, WERE TERRIBLE. PRISONERS ARE KEPT IN THE DARK WHERE THEY BREATHE AIR COMING FROM A TUBE IN THE CEILING, ADDING THAT NO HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OR THE RED CROSS HAVE EVER HAD ACCESS TO THESE PRISONS. INSTEAD, THEY GO TO MODEL PRISONS WHERE SMALL GROUPS ARE TREATED BEAUTIFULLY AS A REWARD FOR SPYING IN OTHER PRISONS ON INMATES. HE DECLARED PART OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LITTLE INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CONDITIONS IN NICARAGUA LIES WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WHO SAY NOTHING. RELIGIOUS AND PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS PERSONS ALSO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT. SOME ARE DUPED BY CAREFULLY MANIPULATED VISITS; OTHERS ARE BIASED FROM THE BEGINNING AND RETURN TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH SUPPORT GROUPS WHICH THEN PRESENT A FALSE PICTURE OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN NICARAGUA.

10. (C) HERNANDEZ SAID THE CPDH HAS EVIDENCE THERE ARE BETWEEN 6,000 AND 7,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS. AN ADDITIONAL 2,500 FORMER NATIONAL GUARDSMEN ARE ALSO UNDER DETENTION. HE SAID THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER NOW THAN DURING SOMOZA'S TIME IN POWER. ALSO, TODAY THERE ARE SOME 20 MAJOR PRISONS, SOME FOR COMMON CRIMINALS AND SOME UNDER CONTROL OF STATE SECURITY (THE DGSE) FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS. NINE OF THESE DGSE PRISONS ARE MAJOR INSTALLATIONS SUPPORTED BY MANY SMALLER DGSE-CONTROLLED PRISONS WHICH ARE LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

11. (C) HERNANDEZ ALSO DISCUSSED THE SO-CALLED POPULAR ANTI-SOMOZA TRIBUNALS WHICH, HE SAID, IS ONE KANGAROO COURT OPERATING IN MANAGUA, RUN OUTSIDE THE REGULAR JUDI-

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 005
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

CIAL SYSTEM. IT IS COMPOSED OF THREE PEOPLE, TWO DELEGATES OF THE SANDINISTA BLOCK COMMITTEES (CDS) AND ONE WHO BELONGS TO THE SANDINISTA LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION. LESS THAN ONE PERCENT ARE ACQUITTED AND CHARGES ARE BASED UPON WHAT A PERSON "MIGHT HAVE DONE" SINCE EVIDENCE IS RARELY AVAILABLE. HERNANDEZ SAID THE TRIBUNAL IS ACTUALLY A MEANS OF EXACTING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VENGEANCE. IN THE LAST TWO YEARS SOME 1,500 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CONVICTED. HE ALSO SAID THAT IN THE PAST TWO TO THREE MONTHS SOME 700 NICARAGUANS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED AND ACCUSED OF COOPERATING WITH THE CONTRAS. THEY HAVE BEEN HELD WITHOUT PROOF. HERNANDEZ BELIEVES THEY ARE ACTUALLY ARRESTED BECAUSE THEY DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN SANDINISTA ORGANIZATIONS, DO NOT ATTEND BLOCK COMMITTEE MEETINGS, AND HAVE SHOWN BY THEIR INACTIVITY THAT THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE SANDINISTA SUPPORT NETWORK, MAKING THEM ENEMIES OF THE REGIME BY DEFAULT.

12. (C) CONCLUDING THE MEETING, HERNANDEZ SAID THAT, IN HIS JUDGMENT, THE CPDH IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE BECAUSE IT WOULD DO MORE DAMAGE TO CLOSE IT DOWN. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE DAY IT APPEARS THE ORGANIZATION IS DOING MORE DAMAGE TO THE SANDINISTAS THAN ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE IS WORTH WILL BE THE DAY IT DISAPPEARS.

S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

13. (S) MEETING WITH CARDINAL OBANDO Y BRAVO

THE DELEGATION SPENT APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR WITH CARDINAL OBANDO Y BRAVO. ASKED TO GIVE A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION, OBANDO SAID THAT, IN HIS JUDGMENT, THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE SANDINISTA REGIME. SOME OF THIS RESULTS FROM MARXIST IDEOLOGY AND SOME FROM THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE CARDINAL SAID THAT TODAY THE POOR IN SOME BARRIOS OF MANAGUA GO HUNGRY AT NIGHT. WATER SHORTAGES ARE SERIOUS IN THE CAPITAL. HE HIMSELF HAD "NOT SEEN WATER DURING THE DAY FOR TWO MONTHS" AT HIS RESIDENCE. THE WAR OBVIOUSLY COMPLICATES PROBLEMS, BUT THE MAJORITY OF PROBLEMS ARE CREATED BY THE "MARXIST-LENINIST REGIME." OBANDO EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH THE CHURCH IS CRITICAL OF THE SANDINISTA REGIME IT WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE SOMOZA REGIME. TODAY, HOWEVER, THE SANDINISTAS HAVE LAUNCHED A "CAMPAIGN OF HATRED" AGAINST THE CHURCH AND AGAINST HIMSELF PERSONALLY.

14. (C) THE CARDINAL NOTED THAT THE SANDINISTAS RECENTLY HAVE TAKEN A SERIES OF MEASURES AGAINST THE CHURCH. HE SAID THE CHURCH BULLETIN, IGLESIA, WAS CONFISCATED ALONG WITH PRINTING EQUIPMENT. THE RADIO STATION, RADIO CATOLICA, WAS CLOSED DOWN PERMANENTLY RECENTLY AFTER HAVING BEEN SUSPENDED SEVERAL TIMES, ONCE FOR QUOTING THE CARDINAL WHEN HE SAID IN A HOMILY THAT "LIBERTY IS A GIFT FROM GOD." OBANDO ALSO SAID THAT THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCY, COPROSA (A FORMER RECIPIENT OF USAID FUNDING), WAS TAKEN OVER BY ARMED SOLDIERS WHO HAVE SINCE STRIPPED THE OFFICES OF EQUIPMENT, AIR CONDITIONERS, ETC. A COPROSA BANK ACCOUNT HAS ALSO BEEN SEIZED. WHEN ASKED IF DONATIONS OF U.S. SURPLUS FOOD COULD BE SENT TO THE CHURCH FOR DISTRIBUTION, OBANDO EXPRESSED STRONG DOUBT THAT IT WOULD EVER REACH THE POOR.

15. (C) WHEN ASKED WHY THE GON SEES THE CHURCH AS A THREAT, THE CARDINAL SAID THE CHURCH IS TRYING TO "MAINTAIN ITS OWN CHARACTER." IT IS A POOR CHURCH, BUT STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE 80 PERCENT OF NICARAGUANS WHO ARE CATHOLIC. OBANDO SAID THAT THE

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 006

NC 0317037

TOR: 240256Z MAR 86

MANAGU 01942

SANDINISTAS PROBABLY SEE THE CHURCH AS A DANGER BECAUSE THE PEOPLE LISTEN TO THEIR BISHOPS. HE GAVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF PIETY THE NEED FOR PEOPLE TO WALK MANY MILES TO ATTEND MASS OR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES SUCH AS HOLY WEEK EVENTS. THE CARDINAL SAID THAT THOUSANDS CAME WHILE THE SO-CALLED POPULAR CHURCH COULD ONLY ATTRACT SCORES OR A FEW HUNDRED TO HIGHLY PUBLICIZED POLITICAL/RELIGIOUS EVENTS MEANT TO SUPPORT THE SANDINISTAS. OBANDO ALSO MENTIONED THAT SEVERAL COMANDANTES HAVE SAID THAT ONCE THEY FINISH WITH THE CONTRA PROBLEM THEY WILL "FINISH WITH THE CHURCH."

16. (C) WHEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED BY CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY IF HE SUPPORTED CONTRA AID, THE CARDINAL PREFACED HIS REMARKS BY REMINDING THE CODEL THAT THEY WERE NOT IN THE UNITED STATES AND THAT "A PERSON COULD BE KILLED" FOR SPEAKING OUT ON CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS. MILITARY AID IS ONE OF THOSE SUBJECTS. THE CARDINAL ADDED THAT HE IS A "PASTOR AND NOT A POLITICIAN" AND HAD NO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS. HE THEN PROVIDED, HOWEVER, A COMMENT BY WAY OF THE FOLLOWING ANECDOTE: "WHEN A FATHER SEES TWO OF HIS CHILDREN FIGHTING, HE NATURALLY WANTS TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO STOP THEM FROM FIGHTING. IF ONE HAS A KNIFE AND REFUSES TO STOP, WHILE THE OTHER ONE IS UNARMED AND WILL SURELY BE KILLED BECAUSE HE DOES NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO DEFEND HIMSELF, THEN PERHAPS THE UNARMED CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO RECEIVE A WEAPON HIMSELF." HE QUICKLY NOTED THAT, AS THE BISHOP OF LEON, JULIAN BARNI, WAS RECENTLY REPORTED SAYING TO THE PRESS, THE SOVIET UNION HAS ALREADY DELIVERED TO THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT MORE THAN USDOLS 100 MILLION WORTH OF ARMS AND NOW THE GOVERNMENT DEMANDS THAT THE "IMPERIALISTS," I.E. THE UNITED STATES, NOT INTERFERE IN NICARAGUAN AFFAIRS. THE CARDINAL SAID NOTHING FURTHER ON THE SUBJECT AND IT WAS NOT PURSUED BY THE CODEL.

17. (C) THE CARDINAL STRESSED THAT THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH IS THAT ALL PARTIES NEGOTIATE IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. BUT HE LEFT CLEAR HIS DOUBTS THAT THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT WOULD PURSUE SUCH A SOLUTION AND REPEATED THE OFT-QUOTED COMMENT OF COMANDANTE TOMAS BORGE THAT "WE WILL ONLY NEGOTIATE WITH THE CONTRAS THROUGH THE BARREL OF A MACHINE GUN."

18. (C) WHEN ASKED HOW COULD THE COUNTRY SOLVE ITS OWN DESTINY, THE CARDINAL SAID THAT NO INTERFERENCE FROM
S E C R E T SECTION 05 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

EITHER PRO OR ANTI SANDINISTA SUPPORTERS WOULD BE THE IDEAL. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT UNDER A MARXIST-LENINIST SYSTEM SUCH AS IS BEING ESTABLISHED IN NICARAGUA THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT. HE SAID THE WAR IS NOT MERELY ONE BETWEEN NICARAGUANS, BUT OUTSIDERS, TOO. A DIFFERENCE IS THAT SOMOZA ONLY HAD FROM 4,000 TO A MAXIMUM OF 16,000 SOLDIERS AT THE END. TODAY THE SANDINISTAS HAVE 100,000 PLUS SOPHISTICATED ARMS TO MAINTAIN THEMSELVES IN POWER. PEACE, IF IT CAN BE ACHIEVED, IS BASED UPON TRUTH, JUSTICE, LOVE AND FREEDOM.

19. (S) ASKED IF HE WOULD ACCEPT AID FROM THE UNITED STATES, HE SAID IT DEPENDED UPON HOW IT WAS GIVEN. IF IT WERE ACCOMPANIED BY PUBLICITY, IT WOULD PROBABLY HURT THE CHURCH AND HE WOULD HAVE TO REFUSE IT. LATER, CONGRESSMAN GRAY TOOK HIM ASIDE AND ASKED IF IT COULD BE GIVEN INDIRECTLY THROUGH THE VATICAN AND THE CARDINAL

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037 SSO

PAGE 007
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

AGREED THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY. AS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IT WOULD BE DIVERTED BY GON AUTHORITIES FOR USE BY THE MILITARY. MAINTAINING CONTROL OF FOOD COMMODITIES, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

20. (C) THE CARDINAL SAID ADDITIONAL ARMS, FROM WHATEVER SOURCE, WOULD ONLY RESULT IN MAKING THE COUNTRY POORER. HE STRESSED THAT TIME IS ON THE SIDE OF THE SANDINISTAS. MOST CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS ARE BEING SUCCESSFULLY UNDERMINED. EVEN THE CHURCH SUFFERS SOME FROM THIS ATTEMPT. MANY OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AND YOUNG HAVE LEFT NICARAGUA. THERE IS A "BRAIN DRAIN" THAT IS TERRIBLY SERIOUS FOR THE FUTURE. MARXIST EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS IS ALSO DISTURBING AND SERIOUS FOR PARENTS WHO DO NOT WISH THIS KIND OF INDOCTRINATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

21. (S) OBANDO ALSO EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE CONTADORA PROCESS, DESPITE HIS ADMIRATION FOR ITS ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL AMERICA. HE SAID THAT THE DANGER IS EXTERNAL PRESSURES WILL BE REMOVED AND THUS LEAVE THE SANDINISTAS FREE TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR TOTALITARIAN REGIME INSIDE THE COUNTRY. HE SAID THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT WILLINGLY WITHDRAW THEIR INFLUENCE IN SUCH A STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT COUNTRY. THE CARDINAL NOTED THAT "THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY TENSE, MORE TENSE THAN ANYTIME SINCE THE REVOLUTION."

22. (C) WHEN QUERIED AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD DO, OBANDO SUGGESTED THAT OBJECTIVE JOURNALISTS BE SENT TO TALK WITH PEOPLE, EXPOSE THE TRUTH OF THE SITUATION HERE. HE SAID THAT PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO TALK TO TV REPORTERS FOR FEAR OF BEING ARRESTED, BUT JOURNALISTS CAN STILL TRAVEL RELATIVELY FREELY AND SHOULD DO SO. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OBJECTIVE REPORTERS BE SENT AND NOT THOSE ON THE LEFT WHO MASK THE REALITIES. IF A COMMISSION WERE SENT OBANDO BELIEVES IT WOULD BE MANIPULATED BY THE SANDINISTAS. THE COMMISSION MEMBERS WOULD BE PRESENTED WITH A SANITIZED VERSION OF THE TRUTH AND IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR MEMBERS TO TRAVEL BY THEMSELVES.

23. (C) MEETING WITH ALVIN GUTHRIE, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF UNIFIED LABOR (CUS).

THE DELEGATION MET WITH ALVIN GUTHRIE, PRESIDENT OF CUS FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES. MR. GUTHRIE SAID HIS UNION IS UNDER CONTINUOUS ATTACK BY SANDINISTA AUTHORITIES. DESPITE MANY PROBLEMS IT MAINTAINS A MEMBERSHIP OF SOME 22,000 PEOPLE PLUS SUPPORT OF PERHAPS ANOTHER 100,000. GUTHRIE BELIEVES THE SANDINISTAS ARE OUT TO DESTROY THE UNION, BUT SAID HE USES THE LAW TO CARRY ON HIS UNION ACTIVITIES AND FIGHT THE SANDINISTAS. HE SAID THE LATEST INCIDENT OCCURRED FEBRUARY 22, 1986, WHEN 19 OF HIS MEMBERS WERE IMPRISONED, ACCUSED OF MURDER AND CATTLE STEALING--BOTH TRUMPED-UP CHARGES. WHEN ASKED HOW THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COULD HELP, GUTHRIE REPLIED, "GIVE US A PLURALISTIC, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. THAT IS WHAT WE NEED MOST."

24. (C) MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT SERGIO RAMIREZ.

EACH SIDE MADE OPENING REMARKS PRIOR TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS. RAMIREZ PREFACED HIS REMARKS BY A SHORT DISCUSSION OF THE NEED FOR CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR AMICABLE RELATIONS. HE NOTED THAT CONSIDERATION FOR A COMPROMISE BILL ON CONTRA AID IS LIKELY TO BE PRESENTED IN MID-APRIL AND THAT SOME FORM OF AID WILL PROBABLY PASS.

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 008

NC 0317037

TOR: 240256Z MAR 86

MANAGU 01942

S E C R E T SECTION 06 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR

TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

25. (C) AFTER THE OPENING REMARKS, THE VICE PRESIDENT SAID THAT COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA HAVE SIGNED A BORDER AGREEMENT WHICH SHOULD BRING PEACE TO NICARAGUA'S SOUTHERN BORDER. HE HOPES THE SAME TYPE OF AGREEMENT CAN BE NEGOTIATED WITH HONDURAS. IT IS THE KIND OF ARRANGEMENT WHICH THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES ARE SEEKING TO BRING ABOUT. RAMIREZ SAID NICARAGUA'S MAJOR PROBLEM IS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S ANTI-COMMUNIST CRUSADE, WHICH HAS GROWN TO PARANOIA AS FAR AS NICARAGUA IS CONCERNED AND NOW IS A MAJOR DISTORTION OF REALITY. HE SAID HE WATCHED THE PRESIDENT'S SUNDAY SPEECH AND WAS ASTOUNDED BY ITS ACCUSATIONS. PORTRAYING NICARAGUA AS SPREADING COMMUNISM TO BRAZIL WAS ONE EXAMPLE. HE FINDS IT EXTRAORDINARY HOW ALIENATED OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES ARE WITH THE UNITED STATES ON THIS ISSUE, DESCRIBING THE SITUATION AS THE WORST MOMENT SINCE THE FALKLAND ISLANDS WAR. TO HAVE BRAZIL, ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY CALL IN THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND REQUEST EXPLANATIONS OF A U.S. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH IS EXTRAORDINARY AND UNHEARD OF, ACCORDING TO RAMIREZ. THE VICE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED THAT NICARAGUA SEEKS "INDEPENDENT, DIGNIFIED" RELATIONS. IT WILL NOT "SUBMIT" TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT WANTS MUTUAL RESPECT.

26. (C) WHEN ASKED ABOUT PROBLEMS WITHIN THE COUNTRY, HUMAN RIGHTS, PRESS CENSORSHIP, ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH, RAMIREZ INSISTED THAT NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNS ARE LEGITIMATE AND REQUIRE SPECIAL MEASURES. TRUE, RELATIONS ARE NOT EASY, INDEED VERY DIFFICULT, WITH THE CHURCH. BUT THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR THE PROBLEMS, AND IT IS POSSIBLE FOR GROUPS LIKE CARITAS TO FUNCTION. HE SAID THAT ANY FOOD DONATIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE ACCEPTED. AS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, ETC., THESE STORIES WERE NOT TRUE AND HE SUGGESTED THE DELEGATION STAY LONGER TO SEE THE REALITY FOR THEMSELVES. RAMIREZ SAID SUSPENSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS RESULTS FROM THE CONTRA WAR, A CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES. ALL WOULD CHANGE WITHOUT THE CONTRAS.

27. (C) RAMIREZ, IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ON THE ARMS BUILD-UP, SAID THE GON DOES NOT WANT TO "CONTINUE" TO ARM ITSELF. "WHEN OUR RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED, WE WILL NOT NEED TO DEFEND OUR TERRITORY." RAMIREZ DISPUTED THE STATEMENT THAT THE LEVEL OF ARMAMENTS IN NICARAGUA DESTABILIZES THE REGION. HE SAID THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN HONDURAS DESTABILIZED THE REGION. HE CALLED ON THE UNITED STATES TO SUBSTITUTE WORDS FOR ARMS. AS FAR AS A U.S. INVASION IS CONCERNED, RAMIREZ SAID THAT NICARAGUA WAS NOT GRENADA AND WOULD "FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN" IF NEED BE. HE ALSO SAID THAT UNDER CONTADORA THERE ARE GUARANTEES OF ALL BORDERS AND A COMMITMENT BY ALL NATIONS TO NOT SUPPORT SUBVERSIVES. HE SAID NICARAGUA COULD AGREE TO THESE CONTADORA PROVISIONS AND SEEKS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT IF THERE IS SIMULTANEOUS REDUCTION IN ARMAMENTS NICARAGUA WILL ALSO REDUCE. "IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL IF WE COULD ALL REDUCE TO THE LEVEL OF COSTA RICA," HE STATED. HE ALSO SAID THE GON WOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH THE 700 CUBAN ADVISORS IN THE COUNTRY LEAVING IF U.S. ADVISORS DEPARTED THE REGION. RAMIREZ SAID THE BEST MEANS TO AVOID A COLLISION IS BY SUPPORTING CONTADORA. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT NICARAGUA WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE AT CONTADORA NEGOTIATING APRIL 4-6 IN PANAMA.

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSO

PAGE 009

NC 0317037

TOR: 240256Z MAR 86

MANAGU 01942

28. (C) AS THE TWO GROUPS WERE PART MEMBERS WENT UP TO RAMIREZ AND SAID, STAND THAT WE CAME HERE IN COMPLETE SINCERITY PRESIDENT SMILED AND REPLIED, WAS SHAKING HANDS WITH CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY, DELEGATION TO LEAVE WITH HIM AND ATTEND A "FACE THE PEOPLE" RADIO-TV PROGRAM SCHEDULED A FEW MINUTES LATER. THE DELEGATION EXPRESSED ITS APPRECIATION, BUT TOLD HIM THAT SCHEDULING WOULD NOT PERMIT IT. BOTH SIDES INVITED THE OTHER TO COME AGAIN AND ONE MEMBER ASKED IF PRESIDENT REAGAN COULD COME DOWN. RAMIREZ SAID THE GON WOULD WELCOME HIM AT ANY TIME AND THAT HE HIMSELF HOPED TO OBTAIN A VISA TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES.

29. (C) LUNCH WITH PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS OF LA PRENSA.

THE DCM HOSTED A LUNCHEON MEETING FOR THE CODEL WITH THE PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS OF LA PRENSA, THE OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER. INCLUDED WERE: JAIME CHAMORRO, CRISTIANA CHAMORRO, HORACIO RUIZ, AND CARLOS RAMIREZ. EXAMPLES OF CENSORSHIP WERE SHOWN TO THE DELEGATION AND A DETAILED DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE ON THE METHODS OF CENSORSHIP AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE PAPER DUE TO SANDINISTA RESTRICTIONS.

S E C R E T SECTION 07 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR

TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA

30. (U) MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COORDINADORA DEMOCRATICA.

THE DELEGATION MET WITH THE FOLLOWING LEADERS OF THE COORDINADORA DEMOCRATICA (CD):

- DR. EDUARDO RIVAS GASTEAZORO, PRESIDENT
- DR. ANDRES ZUNIGA, VICE PRESIDENT
- DR. RODOLFO MEJIA, LIBERAL CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY
- LIC. ADAN FLETES, SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY
- LIC. AZUCENA FERREY, SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY
- DRA. MYRIAM ARGUELLO, CONSERVATIVE PARTY
- DR. MANUEL MATUS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY
- LIC. JACAN LOPE, CONFEDERATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
- DR. JORGE RAMIREZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COORDINADORA.

31. (C) THE DELEGATION FIRST DISCUSSED THE NOVEMBER 1984 ELECTIONS AND REASONS THE CD DID NOT PARTICIPATE. SPEAKERS SAID THAT THE SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE OCTOBER 15 SUSPENSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES, THAT POLITICAL SPACE IS NARROWING AND CENSORSHIP IS DEFEATING EFFORTS AT GETTING OUT THE MESSAGES OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. SOME OF THE PARTIES APPEAR MORE SUCCESSFUL IN ORGANIZING AND CARRYING ON SOME POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

32. (C) THE LEADERS ALSO NOTED THAT TODAY THE SANDINISTAS ARE "ARMED TO THE TEETH" AND THAT WHAT IS NEEDED URGENTLY IS INTERNAL DIALOGUE TO DIFFUSE AN INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION. ONE SPEAKER NOTED THAT SANDINISTA STRATEGY IS TO SPIN OUT CONTADORA AS LONG AS POSSIBLE IN THE HOPES THAT ONCE SIGNED THEIR NEGLECT OF KEY PROVISIONS WOULD BECOME EVIDENT TOO CLOSE TO THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN TO DO ANYTHING. THE DELEGATION WAS GIVEN A COPY OF THE SIX-PARTY LETTER CALLING ON DANIEL ORTEGA TO CALL FOR A CEASE FIRE IMMEDIATELY AND BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES. ADAN FLETES OF THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY ADDED THAT HIS PARTY HAD

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037

SSD

PAGE 010
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

WRITTEN ANOTHER LETTER TO ORTEGA MARCH 22 AGAIN RENEWING THE CALL. ONE LEADER SAID THAT THE REASON THE SANDINISTAS DO NOT WISH TO NEGOTIATE INTERNALLY IS THAT THIS WOULD REMOVE THE EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION ASPECTS TO THE PROBLEM, ALLOWING THE UNITED STATES TO WITHDRAW. THIS WOULD NOT BE THE DESIRE OF THE SOVIET UNION WHICH ENJOYS SEEING ITS ADVERSARY TIED DOWN IN A SMALL CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY.

33. (C) WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE "BIRTH" OF THEIR ORGANIZATION. PARTICULAR NOTE WAS MADE OF THE FACT THAT, THOUGH PERHAPS FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, MOST OF THE PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE COORDINADORA WERE ESTABLISHED IN OPPOSITION TO SOMOZA. IN SPITE OF THAT FACT, IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT ALL OF THE PARTIES HAD MUCH MORE "POLITICAL SPACE" UNDER SOMOZA THAN UNDER THE SANDINISTAS.

34. (C) AS MEMBERS OF COORDINADORA, THE PARTIES COLLECTIVELY SUPPORT A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO NICARAGUA'S PROBLEMS AND, AS SUCH, DO NOT FAVOR MILITARY AID TO THE CONTRAS. ALL AGREED THAT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE MUST BE INCREASED AGAINST THE SANDINISTAS, ESPECIALLY FROM OTHER LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS. HOWEVER, SEVERAL INDIVIDUAL PARTY LEADERS, WHEN ASKED BY A MEMBER OF THE CODEL, DID OPENLY SUPPORT U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE CONTRAS (BY A SHOW OF HANDS). THEY ARGUED THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO "RESTORE" SOME MILITARY BALANCE AND THE ONLY EFFECTIVE PRESSURE THAT COULD BE PUT ON THE GON TO FORCE IT TO NEGOTIATE.

35. (C) MEETING WITH OPPONENTS OF CONTRA AID.

THE CODEL HELD A PRIVATE MEETING WITH A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS AND LAY WORKERS OPPOSED TO AID TO THE CONTRAS AND U.S. POLICY GENERALLY. THE GROUP INCLUDED REV. NORMAN BENT, A MORAVIAN PASTOR, REV. GUSTAVO PARAJON, AND SEVERAL AMERICANS RESIDING IN NICARAGUA. THE DELEGATION DID NOT PROVIDE A SPECIFIC READ-OUT OF THEIR MEETING, BUT DID MAKE THE FOLLOWING GENERAL COMMENTS:

A) THEY WERE GENERALLY "UNIMPRESSED" BY THE PRESENTATION OF THE GROUP;

B) THEY FOUND THE GROUP "EXTREMELY BIASED." ONE MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THEY MUST HAVE ARRIVED WITH SOME OF THEIR "PREJUDICES" AND NOW THEY RE-
S E C R E T SECTION 08 OF 08 MANAGUA 01942

E.O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PGOV PREL NU, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY TO NICARAGUA
FUSED TO "SEE ANY WRONG;"

C) TWO MEMBERS OF THE CODEL REMARKED THAT "THEIR IDEA OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS NOT THE SAME AS OURS"

D) THE DELEGATION COMMENTED THAT EVEN IN THE FACE OF "STIFF QUESTIONS" AND "SPECIFIC EXAMPLES," THE GROUP DENIED THAT THE SANDINISTAS WERE MARXISTS AND WERE VIOLATING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE.

36 (C) THE CONTRA AID OPPONENTS PORTRAYED THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIERARCHY AS A RESULT OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY SEEKING TO MAINTAIN ITS PRIVILEGED POSITION WITHIN NICARAGUA. OBANDO Y BRAVO WAS DESCRIBED BY ONE GROUP MEMBER AS "A TOOL OF SOMOZA."

SECRET

SECRET

86 0317037 SSO

PAGE 011
TOR: 240256Z MAR 86

NC 0317037
MANAGU 01942

37. (C) PRIVATE DINNER BRIEFING WITH AMBASSADOR.

THE AMBASSADOR HOSTED A PRIVATE DINNER-BRIEFING FOR THE DELEGATION SATURDAY EVENING.

38. (C) SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1986.

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM MANAGUA, THE DELEGATION HELD A 30-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE AT SANDINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN WHICH THEY DISCUSSED THEIR FINDINGS AND IMPRESSIONS. A TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED SEPTEL. BERGOLD

END OF MESSAGE

SECRET

SECRET