12065: GDS 2/15/83 (NEGROPONTE, John D.) OR-M
SRFP, SHUM, HO, UNHCR
SUBJECT: UNHCR'S IMPLEMENTING AGENCY IN HONDURAS

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO: AMBASSADY MANAGUA
AMBASSADY SAN JOSE
AMBASSADY SAN SALVADOR
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TEGUCICALPA 2109

REF: (A) GENEVA 2936, (B) STATE 66567

1. [Redacted] - ENTIRE TEXT

2. In reply to refels, Embassy officer is now visiting
refugee camps along Salvadoran border and expected back
morning March 17. Expect to have fuller report at that
time. Meanwhile, following interim reply is provided.

3. We are inclined to support Bazoche proposal to accept
as GOH requirement of working with CEDEN. This is a
politically loaded question relating to strong, and we
believe justified, opinion of various GOH agencies that
at least some former CEDEN field personnel were diverting
relief supplies to Salvadoran guerrillas. It is this judgment.
on part of GOH which caused it to support new, restructured CEDEN leadership.

3. Our view is that as long as issue of implementing agency remains in slightest doubt, old CEDEN leadership will seize every opportunity to cast doubt on qualifications of its successors. It will also use such arguments as the potential loss of support from various PVO's in Europe and the United States with which it had close ties. Once GOH decision is firmed up, however, and UNHCR and ourselves show our support for new arrangement, then we believe the dust will settle and those genuinely interested in helping the refugees will get back to their humanitarian mission. Illustrative of this point is fact that in December when some of the more politically minded CEDEN relief workers walked off the job at the refugee site at La Virtud, those working in Colomoncagua said they intended to stay on the job and accept whatever arrangement furthered their humanitarian mission.

5. We believe UNHCR has become overly concerned with internal relief agency politics. This posture on their part runs risk of appearing to interfere in political question of great import to GOH in the name of preserving "efficiency". We believe UNHCR would be much better advised to show its support for GOH by falling in with new CEDEN leadership, forgetting about CODE and getting on with the humanitarian task at hand.

NEGROPONTE