

TELEGRAM

Oct 30 19 37 '82

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FROM

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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TAGS:
SUBJECT:

12356: ~~XXXX~~ DECL: OADR
SOPN, HO
NEWSWEEK COVER STORY ON CENTRAL AMERICA

ACTION:

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO:

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

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1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - ENTIRE TEXT
2. Beth Nissen of NEWSWEEK was here on Wednesday, October 27 in connection with a cover story she says NEWSWEEK is doing on Central America in its forthcoming issue. She came armed with a series of extremely thorny questions which she said she had been instructed to ask by her Washington office. Ambassador met with Nissen for about one hour. Information Officer Callahan also was present and we have copy of tape recording of on-the-record portion of interview.
3. Focus of Nissen's questions related to so-called "secret war" with Nicaragua, alleged covert activities by USG in

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Honduras; and role of U.S. Ambassador in such matters.

4. We answered Nissen's questions to the best of our ability but we feel we should warn Department that questions were pointedly antagonistic to U.S. policies in Central America, in addition to being rather strongly critical of Ambassador personally. We doubt we had much success in deflecting Nissen from the basically hostile thrust of the questions she had been instructed to ask.

5. Nissen told Information Officer after interview that NEWSWEEK was so interested in her findings that they had sent Learjet to take her back to Washington. Nissen also said that most of the sources for the story were Washington-based and that she had just been sent to corroborate certain details.

6. COMMENT: It would appear, with Lebanon off the front pages, and Salvadoran certification once again around the corner, Central America may again become the object of more intense press scrutiny. Also, we would not be surprised if former Colonel Leonidas Torres Arias were one of NEWSWEEK'S principal sources.

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