E.O. 12356
TAGS:  LA PRENSA COLUMNIST PRAISES AMBASSADOR NEGRINPONTE
SUBJECT:
ACTION:  INFO:  SECSTATE HS/HC PRIORITY
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1. REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR MARIO GUILLERMO DURON IN HIS COLUMN
IN CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA CHARACTERIZED AMBASSADOR NEGRINPONTE
AS A "SOLID MAN OF PRINCIPLES" WHOSE WORK HAS RESULTED IN A
"MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-HONDURAN RELATIONS." THE PIECE,
WHICH APPEARED ON 18 APRIL, REFLECTS THE SENTIMENT THAT MANY HONDURANS
HOLD FOR THE AMBASSADOR.

2. HEREWTH POST TRANSLATION.

DRAFTED BY: RJCallahan/mtg
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UNCLASSIFIED CLASSIFICATION

[Handwritten note: (Release Extemp Deny Declasify)
Date: 11/28/88 Evasion]
3. (BEGIN TEXT) SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN OUR COUNTRY, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR JOHN DIMITRI NEGROPONTE HAS INSISTED THAT HIS DIPLOMATIC MISSION HAS BEEN - FUNDAMENTALLY - THE ATTEMPT TO SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. THE CRITICISMS OF THIS POLICY TOWARD HONDURAS CAME FROM THE SO-CALLED LIBERAL CIRCLES OF THE AMERICAN PRESS. THESE CIRCLES PREFER TO GATHER LEFTIST INFORMATION FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD - ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE UNTRUE - INSTEAD OF THAT INFORMATION WHICH COMES FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES OR FROM THOSE WHO HOLD MODERATE OPINIONS.

4. HOWEVER, IN MY JUDGMENT, MR. NEGROPONTE'S POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC QUALITY IS FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT OF HIS PREDECESSORS. HIS POSITION AND HIS ATTIITUDES REVEAL THE CONSISTENCY OF A SOLID MAN OF PRINCIPLES. NO HONDURAN, THOUGH HE MAY DISAGREE WITH HIS IDEAS, CAN DENY MR. NEGROPONTE'S HUMAN QUALITIES OR HIS IMPORTANT PRESENCE FOR CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE FOR WORLD HEGEMONY BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT SUPERPOWERS.

5. HIS CONCRETE AND RAPID FORM OF EXPRESSION DISPLAYS HIS BRILLIANT INTELLIGENCE, WHICH WAS PALPABLY SHOWN AT THE TEGUCICALPA ROTARY CLUB LAST WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6. IN A BRIEF BUT SUBSTANTIATIVE TALK MR. NEGROPONTE DELINTEATED THE SPECIAL INGREDIENTS OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD HONDURAS AS THESE: a) SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS; b) ASSISTANCE TO DEFEND THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF HONDURAS.
6. CERTAIN NEWSPAPER COMMENTATORS FROM HIS OWN COUNTRY INSIST ON FINDING OTHER AREAS OF THE AMBASSADOR'S DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN HONDURAS AND PORTRAY HIM AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DIRECTORS OF ANTI-SANDINETISTA GROUPS IN OUR COUNTRY. ALL OF THIS IS UNPROVEN. MEANWHILE, WHAT HE HIMSELF HAS SAID VERIFIES HIS DETERMINED SUPPORT FOR THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT AND HIS EFFORTS TO SECURE LOANS AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS AN INTERMEDIARY FOR SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC ALONG WITH GENERAL ALVAREZ MARTINEZ AND AMBASSADOR NEGRESPORTE MARCH IN CONCERT AND THAT THIS POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC ACCOMMODATION REPRESENTS A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-HONDURAN RELATIONS.

7. THE PRICE FOR HONDURAS WILL BE THE DISTRUST AND ENMITY OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES WHICH ENVY, RESENT, OR HATE AMERICAN POWER. BUT WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR OUR HOMELAND NOT TO CHOOSE A CLEAR AND DETERMINED OPTION IN ITS INTERNATIONAL POLICY? WOULD IT BE REALISTIC FOR HONDURAN GOVERNMENTS TO TENABLE TOWARD THE TOTALITARIAN SYSTEMS OF EASTERN EUROPE AND NOT INCLINE THEMSELVES TO THE GIANT OF THE NORTH? FOR THE TIME BEING, THIS ALLIANCE COULD NOT BE MORE BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH SIDES: FOR HONDURAS, BECAUSE IN ITS WEAKNESS IT FINDS PROTECTION IN A FEDERATION OF STATES WITH IDENTICAL OR SIMILAR SYSTEMS; FOR THE UNITED STATES, BECAUSE CENTRAL AMERICA IS A GEOGRAPHIC ENMITY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN ITS PEACE STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS SOVIET POWER.
8. Ambassador Negroponte has involved himself profoundly in Honduran society. He is a man who is listened to and attended to with interest and respect. His manner of conducting diplomacy does not suggest that he is the type of American diplomat who likes to interfere directly and blantly in the internal problems of our country, but his influence is felt or perceived. It is impossible not to note that whoever the American ambassador is in Honduras, he is listened to because he represents the most important Western nation. But very few ambassadors leave the stamp of their own and unique personality so well defined as Mr. Negroponte. (End Text)

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