E.O. 12333: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, K
SUBJECT: CONTADORA NEXT STEPS, BIPARTISAN COMMISSION VISIT AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

1. SECRET — ENTIRE TEXT

2. WE SEE TWO SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THE CONTADORA PROCESS AND THE NBCGA VISIT TO THE REGION.

3. FIRST, IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IF NICARAGUA WERE TO ENGAGE IN ONE OF ITS PERIODIC HYSTERICAL EFFORTS TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF IMMINENT REGIONAL WAR, THUS REINFORCING ITS WELL-KNOWN BILATERAL THERAPY. WE CANNOT RULE OUT THEREFORE THAT, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WEEK THAT THE NBCGA TRAVELS TO THE REGION, NICARAGUA AND ITS SUPPORTERS WILL CHOOSE TO DRAMATIZE VARIOUS BORDER AND OTHER INCIDENTS IN THE MEDIA AND POSSIBLY AT THE UNGA.

4. THE OTHER POINT, PERHAPS SOMewhat LONGER TERM BUT NONTHELESS DOVETAILING WITH THIS STRATEGY, IS THAT NICARAGUA WILL LIKELY SINGLE OUT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AGREED TO IN THE CONTADORA PROCESS FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WILL SELECT THOSE OBJECTIVES WHICH SUIT THEIR CONVENIENCE, ARGUE THAT THEY SHOULD BE WORKED OUT AND IMPLEMENTED RIGHT AWAY, AND LEAVE OBJECTIVES OF LESSER OR NO INTEREST TO THEM FOR LATER. MOST LIKELY THEY WILL INSIST ON IMMEDIATE BORDER AGREEMENTS WITH HONDURAS AND COSTA RICA AS THEY HAVE BEEN DOING PRETTY MUCH FROM THE BEGINNING. THIS PREFERRED NICARAGUAN APPROACH COULD EASILY FIND SUPPORT FROM CERTAIN CONTADORA COUNTRIES, EITHER BECAUSE OF POLITICAL AFFINITY OR OUT OF FEAR OF NBCGA

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[Redacted]
THE CONTADORA PROCESS.

5. WHAT CONCERNS US IN THIS LATTER REGARD IS THE APPARENT LACK OF INSISTENCE IN THE CONTADORA DOCUMENT THAT THE AGREED OBJECTIVES WERE NEGOTIATED AND IMPLEMENTED ON A COMPREHENSIVE AND SIMULTANEOUS BASIS, THERBY LEAVING THE DOCUMENT WIDE OPEN TO THE PREFERRED NICARAGUAN INTERPRETATION. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THIS PROBLEM IS THE FACT THAT MANY INVOLVED IN THE CONTADORA PROCESS ARE NOW SPEAKING IN TERMS OF MULTIPLE AGREEMENTS RATHER THAN ONE COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENT. ALSO, WE UNDERSTAND THAT DIFFERENT COUNTRIES MAY BE DRAFTING DIFFERENT PARTS OF THESE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS. IN SHORT, THE EFFORT APPEARS TO US AS FRAGMENTED AND SUSCEPTIBLE TO EXPLOITATION BY THOSE WITH INTERESTS INIMICAL TO OUR OWN.

6. THEREFORE WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT UNTIL THE CORE FOUR HAVE ESTABLISHED MORE CONCERNED STRATEGIES WITH REGARD TO NEXT STEPS WE SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN OUR COMMENTS ON THE CONTADORA PROCESS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT PRAISE FOR THE DOCUMENT OF OBJECTIVES WOULD BEST BE ACCOMPANIED BY REMINDERS THAT WHILE WE LAUD THESE OBJECTIVES, WE SEE THEIR ATTAINMENT AS PART OF A SIMULTANEOUS PACKAGE DEAL WITH ADEQUATE MEASURES OF VERIFICATION AND SUPERVISION, AND DEFINITELY NOT AS A PIECEMEAL EFFORT. INDEED A PIECEMEAL APPROACH WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE. WE NOTE THAT THIS CAUTIONARY TONE WAS CLEARLY PRESENT IN PRESIDENT SUAZO'S LETTER TO HERRERA CAMPINS ACCEPTING THE DOCUMENT OF OBJECTIVES (FIS CHIVA CHIVA 29253Z OCT 82). SUAZO TOLD THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT THAT THE DOCUMENT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A REGIONAL SOLUTION AS LONG AS THE TERMS OF REFERENCE CONTAINED THEREIN ARE BASED ON A FIRM POLITICAL COMMITMENT. SUAZO ALSO WARNED THAT HONDURAS WOULD BE FORCED TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON THE DOCUMENT IF NICARAGUA PERSISTED IN FRUSTRATING THE CONTADORA FOUR'S EFFORTS BY INSISTING ON DEBATING CENTRAL AMERICAN ISSUES AT THE UNGA. THIS LATTER POINT ALSO SEEMS ONE WE COULD WISELY ECHO IN OUR OWN REMARKS ON THE CONTADORA PROCESS.

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