2. AS THIS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE PAST, THERE APPEARS TO BE A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN NICARAGUAN-INSPIRED INCIDENTS ON THE HONDURAN BORDER AND EFFORTS BY NICARAGUA AND OTHERS TO REINFORCE THEIR "BILATERAL THESIS" ABOUT TENSIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. THAT THESIS HOLDS THAT THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF TENSION IN THE REGION IS THE ABSENCE OF AN INTERNATIONALLY MONITORED BORDER BETWEEN HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA. THAT SAME THESIS TREATS OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE SITUATION SUCH AS THE INSURGENCY IN EL SALVADOR, THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY ADVISORS IN EACH OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, AND THE DISPROPORTIONATE ARMS BUILD-UP IN NICARAGUA AS ISSUES OF SECONDARY RADIUS THAT CAN BE DEALT WITH SEQUENTIALLY AFTER HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER IS RESOLVED OR, DEPENDING ON WHO YOU TALK TO, NOT DEALT WITH AT ALL. CLEARLY, IT SUITS THE PROONENTS OF THE BILATERAL THESIS TO PUBLICLY USE AND INFLATE THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL BORDER INCIDENTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE RISK OF WAR BETWEEN HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA AND THEREBY ACCENTUATE THE URGENCY OF THEIR BILATERAL APPROACH.

3. IN THE FOREGOING CONNECTION WE ARE STRUCK BY THE CONVERGENCE OF THREE DISTINCT SETS OF EVENTS. FIRST IS THE KILLING OF TWO UNITED STATES CITIZEN JOURNALISTS ON THE HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER ON JUNE TWENTY-FIRST. THE SECOND IS THE MEXICAN/COLOMBIAN PROPOSAL FOR A POSSIBLE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE FOR CENTRAL AMERICA, REPORTEDLY MADE TO UNSG BY MEXICAN AND COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THE SAME DATE. AND THIRD IS THE FACT THAT BOTH THESE EVENTS TOOK PLACE DURING THE ONGOING CONTADORA WORKING GROUP MEETINGS IN PANAMA. BY PUTTING FORWARD THE
CART OF A PEACEKEEPING FORCE BEFORE THE HORSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL PEACE SETTLEMENT, WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT OUR MEXICAN AND COLOMBIAN FRIENDS ARE DRIVING AT A HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER FORCE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. AND WE THINK IT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT EVERY INCIDENT ALONG THE HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER, DELIBERATE OR ACCIDENTAL, BIG OR SMALL, WILL BE USED IN SUPPORT OF THIS APPROACH.

4. FACED WITH THIS KIND OF CLEVER, BUT RATHER TRANSPARENT ORCHESTRATION, IT SEEMS TO US THAT PUBLIC FOCUS ON THE TOTALITY OF CAUSES OF REGIONAL TENSION AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES ASSISTANCE TO THE FOUR FRIENDLY CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN MAINTAINING A COMMON FRONT ARE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE MUST SEEK TO KEEP PUBLIC ATTENTION ON NICARAGUAN ARMS BUILD-UP, GROWING CUBAN INVOLVEMENT THERE, AND THE CENTRAL ROLE CUBA HAS PLAYED IN UNIFYING AND TRAINING LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTIES. ALSO, WE MUST CONTINUOUSLY DISABUSE PEOPLE OF NOTION THAT WE STAND ABOVE-CENTRAL AMERICAN SITUATION AS IMPARTIAL MEDIATORS BETWEEN EITHER GOES AND FDR/MLN AND/OR CENTRAL AMERICA/FOUR AND CONTADORA GROUP. IN OUR VIEW OUR INTERLOCUTORS SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE STAND FIRMLY BEHIND OUR CENTRAL AMERICAN FRIENDS. IT IS THEIR CONCERNS AND INTERESTS THAT SHAPE THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR POLICIES. CONTADORA IS MERELY A PROCESS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT EVENTUALLY SUIT OUR INTERESTS.

5. THE GOH'S NIGHTMARE IS ONE OF THE THREE FOLLOWING EVENTUALITIES OR A COMBINATION THEREOF. FIRST, THEY ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT CONTINUED UNIT OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN FOUR, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE SOLIDARITY SHOWN AT THE RECENT CONTADORA MEETINGS. NONETHELESS, THE CONCERN REMAINS THAT, PLACED UNDER SUFFICIENT PRESSURE BY NICARAGUA AND/OR ONE OR MORE OF THE CONTADORA MEMBERS, THIS UNITY COULD BE BREACHED. NEXT, GOH FEARS BEING GANGED UP UPON BY ENTIRE CONTADORA GROUP. IN THIS CONNECTION, GOH WATCHES VENEZUELAN PERFORMANCE VERY CAREFULLY. GOH HAS PRETTY MUCH WRITTEN OFF MEXICANS AS SUPPORTERS OF NICARAGUAN POSITION. THEY SEE PANAMANIANS AS WAFFLERS WHO IN THE END FOLLOW MEXICAN LEAD, AND THEY FIND COLOMBIANS ERRATIC. SO MUCH DEPENDS, IN THEIR VIEW, ON VENEZUELAN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY COUNTERWEIGHT WITHIN THE CONTADORA ET

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GROUP. ADDED TO THIS ALREADY PRECARIOUS SITUATION IS THE UNCERTAINTY OF VENEZUELA'S OWN UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. FINALLY, GOR FEARS THAT, IF ALL OTHER STRATEGIES FAIL, NICARAGUA AS AN ULTIMATE STEP OF DESPERATION, MIGHT ACTUALLY CONDUCT A LIMITED CONVENTIONAL INCURSION INTO HONDURAS AS A WAY OF CAUSING HONDURAS/ NICARAGUA RELATIONSHIP TO PRE-EMPT ALL OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES AND REINFORCING ITS BILATERAL TIES. DON'T GIVE AS MUCH CREDENCE TO THIS LAST POSSIBILITY AS THE GOR DOES AND BELIEVE NICARAGUA WOULD HAVE TO WEIGH MANY IMPORTANT DISADVANTAGES TO SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION. NONETHELESS, IT EXISTS AS AN OPTION AND IS VIEWED AS A DISTINCTLY POSSIBLE CHOICE BY GOR AS A CLEVER NICARAGUAN WAY TO ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL BORDER SUPERVISION.

6. IN LOOKING AT THIS ARRAY OF POSSIBILITIES, WE CANNOT RULE OUT PROSPECT THAT AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE WE MAY BE CONFRONTED WITH SOME DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY UNPOPULAR CHOICES. THERE ARE NUMEROUS PERMUTATIONS CONCEivable; BUT THE BASIC PROPOSITION WILL MOST LIKELY BE THAT HONDURAS (AND PROBABLY EL SALVADOR) FIND THEMSELVES ALONE AMONG THE FOUR IN DEFENSE OF THEIR REGIONAL AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH. ALTERNATELY OR AS A VARIANT OF THE FOREGOING, THE CONTADORA FOURS WILL BE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR SUPPORT OF A HONDURAS/NICARAGUA BORDER PATROL AS THE FIRST (AND PROBABLY LAST) STEP IN A REGIONAL PEACE PROCESS. AT THAT POINT, STANDING UP FOR THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL APPROACH WILL PUT US IN CONFLICT WITH THE CONTADORA "PROCESS" WE SAY WE SUPPORT. SUCH AN EVENTUALITY IS AN UNPLEASANT THOUGH NOT UNREALISTIC ONE TO CONTEMPLATE; AND IT BRINGS HOME THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF OUR SUPPORTING THE CENTRAL AMERICA FOUR, KEEPING VENEZUELA ON BOARD, AND KEEPING TO THE FOREFRONT BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, TOGETHER WITH AS MUCH SUPPORTING ARGUMENTATION AND FACTS AS POSSIBLE, THE OTHER ELEMENTS OF TENSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA. NEGRONPONTES ET #6735

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